THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MOTIVATION, ATTITUDE, LEARNING STYLE AND ENGLISH GRAMMATICAL COMPETENCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

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By

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The purpose of the present study was to examine performance of UPM freshmen in English grammar according to motivation, attitude, and learning style (i.e. tolerance of ambiguity) on the one hand and according to gender, socio-economic status, location, and exemption status on the other. Based on Dunkin and Biddle’s model, tolerance of ambiguity is classified as one of the process variables, while the other six independent variables come under the category of context variables.

The samples of the present study comprised 349 freshmen at Universiti Putra Malaysia. The samples enrolled in May semester 1998. The samples were divided into 227 non-exempted students and 122 exempted students. The non-exempted students, unlike the exempted students, were required to sit for one of the English proficiency courses administered by the Faculty of Modern Languages
Studies (i.e. BB12401, BB12402, BB12403). The 227 non-exempted students included 100 students from BB12401, 47 students from BB12402, and 80 students from BB12403. The 122 exempted students comprised 72 students from the Faculty of Medicine, 30 TESL students from the Faculty of Educational Studies, 12 students from the Faculty of Veterinary, and 8 students from the Faculty of Forestry.

Written data were collected through selected instruments, namely (1) discrete-point exercises both multiple choice and fill-in-the blank, (2) grammaticality judgment exercises, (3) translation-based task, (4) two sets of structured questionnaire adopted from Noran Fauziah Yaakub, Habibah Elias, Rahil Mahyuddin, Hajjah Nora Mohd. Nor and Mohd. Faiz Abdullah (1993a) for attitude (34 items) and for motivation (31 items), and (5) 12 item questionnaire for learning style; which was developed based on Christopher Ely’s second language tolerance of ambiguity scale (Reid, 1995).

The findings showed that exemption status was the most significant contributing factor towards respondents’ performance in English grammar. The second immediate significant factor was respondents’ tolerance of ambiguity in the classroom during the teaching process. Respondents’ attitudes and motivation came as the third and fourth significant contributors towards performance respectively.
Students who held positive attitudes towards learning English outperform those who had negative attitudes. The more tolerant of ambiguity on the part of UPM freshmen, the better performance in English grammar. Urban students obtained the highest performance scores. Even though gender was not a significant factor to grammatical competence, female students outperformed their male counterparts with slight difference.
Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah.

PERHUBUNGAN DIANTARA MOTIVASI, SIKAP, STAIL PEMBELAJARAN DAN KECEKAPAN NAHU BAHASA INGGERIS PELAJAR-PELAJAR PENDIDIKAN TINGGI

Oleh

MARGHANY MAHMOUD MARGHANY

Januari 2000

Pengerusi: Profesor Dr. Noran Fauziah Yaakub

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Tujuan kajian ini ialah untuk menerangkan prestasi nahu bahasa Inggeris pelajar baru UPM dari segi motivasi, sikap dan stail pembelajaran (iaitu toleransi kepada kekaburan) pada satu pihak dari segi jantina, status sosio-ekonomi, lokasi dan status pengecualian pada pihak yang lagi satu. Berpandukan kepada model Dunkin dan Biddle, stail pembelajaran telah diklasifikasikan sebagai satu daripada pembolehubah proses, manakala enam pembolehubah bebas yang lain adalah di bawah kategori pembolehubah konteks.
Sampel bagi kajian ini terdiri daripada 349 pelajar-pelajar tahun pertama di Universiti Putra Malaysia yang telah mendaftar pada semester Mei 1998. Mereka terdiri daripada 227 pelajar yang tidak dikecualikan dan 122 pelajar yang telah dikecualikan daripada mengambil kursus kemahiran Bahasa Inggeris. Tidak seperti pelajar-pelajar yang dikecualikan, pelajar-pelajar yang tidak dikecualikan dikehendaki mengambil satu kursus kemahiran Bahasa Inggeris yang ditawarkan oleh Fakulti Pengajian Bahasa Moden (iaitu BBI2401, BBI2402, BBI2403).

Seramai 227 pelajar yang tidak dikecualikan terdiri daripada 100 pelajar dari BBI2401, 47 pelajar dari BBI2402, dan 80 pelajar dari BBI2403. Seramai 122 pelajar yang dikecualikan terdiri daripada 72 pelajar dari Fakulti Perubatan, 30 pelajar TESL dari Fakulti Pengajian Pendidikan, 12 pelajar dari Fakulti Veterinar dan 8 pelajar dari Fakulti Perhutanan.

Data bertulis telah dipilih melalui beberapa instrumen, iaitu: (1) latihan diskret yang menggunakan soalan anika pilihan dan mengisi tempat kosong, (2) latihan nahu, (3) terjemahan, (4) dua set soalselidik yang berstruktur yang diubahsuai daripada Noran Fauziah Yaakub, Habibah Elias, Rahil Mahyuddin, Hajjah Nora Mohd. Nor, dan Mohd. Faiz Abdullah (1993a) untuk sikap (34 item) dan untuk motivasi (31 item), dan (5) soalselidik 12 item untuk stail pembelajaran yang digubal berdasarkan kepada skala toleransi kekaburan bahasa kedua oleh Christopher Ely (Reid, 1995).
Keputusan kajian menunjukkan status pengecualian adalah faktor yang paling signifikan kepada prestasi nahu bahasa Inggeris. Faktor kedua yang signifikan ialah toleransi kepada kekaburan di dalam kelas semasa proses mengajar. Sikap dan motivasi responden adalah penyumbang ketiga dan keempat yang signifikan kepada prestasi.

Pelajar yang bersikap positif terhadap pembelajaran bahasa Inggeris mempunyai prestasi yang lebih tinggi daripada mereka yang bersikap negatif. Lebih tinggi toleransi kepada kekaburan, lebih baik prestasi nahu bahasa Inggeris. Pelajar dari bandar memperolehi skor prestasi yang tertinggi. Walaupun jantina tidak menjadi satu faktor yang signifikan kepada kecekapan nahu, pelajar perempuan mengatasi prestasi pelajar lelaki.
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I certify that an Examination Committee met on 25th January, 2000 to conduct the final examination of Graduate Student on his Doctor of Philosophy thesis entitled "The Relationship between Motivation, Attitude, Learning Style, and English Grammatical Competence of Higher Education Students" in accordance with Universiti Putra Malaysia (Higher Degree) Act 1980 and Universiti Putra Malaysia (Higher Degree) Regulation 1981. The Committee recommends that the candidate be awarded the relevant degree. The Committee Members for the candidate are as follows:

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xii
This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and was accepted as fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Date: 11 MAY 2000
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citations which have been acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at UPM or other institutions.

Date: 3/3/2000

(MARGHANY MAHMOUD MARGHANY)
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ........................................................................................................... ii
ABSTRAK ........................................................................................................... v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ..................................................................................... viii
APPROVAL SHEETS ......................................................................................... xii
DECLARATION FORM ....................................................................................... xiv
LIST OF TABLES ................................................................................................. xxii
LIST OF FIGURES ............................................................................................... xxvi
GLOSSARY OF TERMS ....................................................................................... xxvii

CHAPTER

I INTRODUCTION ................................................................................................. 1
  Background of the Study .................................................................................. 1
  The Position of English Under the National Education Plan ......................... 2
  The Position of English in Universiti Putra Malaysia ..................................... 5
  Problem Statement ......................................................................................... 10
  Objectives ....................................................................................................... 12
  Research Questions ......................................................................................... 13
  Significance of the Study ............................................................................... 14
  Why Should We Focus on Grammar? .............................................................. 16
  Scope and Limitation of the Study ................................................................. 22
  Operational Definitions .................................................................................. 24
    Grammatical Competence .......................................................................... 24
    Motivation .................................................................................................... 24
    Attitude ......................................................................................................... 25
    Learning Style .............................................................................................. 26
II REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE 28
Introduction 28
Learning Theories 29
Gardner and Lambert’s Socio-psychological Theory 30
John Schumann’s Acculturation Theory 31
Gagne’s Behaviouristic Eclectic Theory 33
Bruner’s Cognitive Theory 34
Bandura’s Blend of Behaviouristic Reinforcement Theory and Cognitive Psychology 35
Grammatical Competence 36
Grammatical Competence of Malaysian Learners of English 43
Error Analysis of Form Four English Composition 45
General Features of Malaysian English 46
Lexical Items 46
Omission 47
Overgeneralization 48
Substitution 48
Reduction 49
Grammatical Competence of ESL in General 49
Motivation 51
Motivation in English Language and Performance 54
Attitude 60
Attitude and Performance 61
Learning Style 64
Learning Style and Performance in English language 65
Gender and Performance 70
Location, Socio-Economic Status and ESL Performance 73
III METHODOLOGY

Introduction ................................................. 76
Conceptual Framework ....................................... 76
Description of Variables ..................................... 79
Measurement of Variables ................................... 80
  Dependent Variable: Grammatical Competence ........ 80
  Independent Variables: Psychological .................. 82
  Motivation .................................................. 82
  Instrumental/Integrative Motivation .................... 84
  Motivational Intensity .................................... 84
  Encouragement .............................................. 86
  Parents’ and Friends’ Ability ............................. 87
  Attitude ...................................................... 87
  Learning Style ............................................. 89
  Independent Variables: Demographic .................. 90
Statements of Hypotheses .................................. 91
  First Phase .................................................. 92
  Second Phase ............................................... 93
Time and Fieldwork ......................................... 94
The Sample .................................................... 94
The Sample Size ............................................. 95
  ANOVA ....................................................... 96
  T-Test ....................................................... 96
  Multiple Regression ...................................... 96
Pilot Study ................................................... 97
Instrumentation ............................................. 99
  Discrete-Point Exercises ................................. 100
  Grammaticality Judgment Exercises .................... 103
  Translation-Based Task .................................. 105
Validity of Grammatical Competence Items .............. 106
Administration of Instruments ............................ 109
Scoring Procedures ......................................... 110
Analytical Procedure ....................................... 111
  T-Test ....................................................... 111
  ANOVA ....................................................... 111
MULTIPLE REGRESSION OF MOTIVATION

RESULTS

Phases I: Motivation, Attitude, and Learning

- Style in Learning of English
- Profile of Respondents
- Introduction
- Motivation in English Language Learning
  - General Outlook
  - Motivation by Gender
  - Motivation by Socio-Economic Status
  - Motivation by Location
  - Motivation by Exemption Status
- Overall Model of Motivation
- Frequencies of Responses to Motivation

Multiple Regression of Motivation
- Overall Model of Motivation

Phase II: Motivation, Attitude, and Learning

- Attitude toward Learning English
  - General Outlook
  - Attitude by Gender
  - Attitude by Socio-Economic Status
  - Attitude by Location
  - Attitude by Exemption Status
- Overall Model of Attitude

SUMMARY
V SUMMARY, DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ........ 186

Summary ............................................................... 186
Problem ............................................................. 186
Objectives ........................................................... 187
Data Analysis and Tools ............................................. 187
Results ............................................................... 191
Discussion and Implications for Teaching English
as a Second Language ................................................ 202
Conclusion ............................................................ 212
Recommendations ..................................................... 214

BIBLIOGRAPHY .......................................................... 218

APPENDICES ............................................................. 230

A Description of English proficiency courses .......... 231
B Motivation items .................................................. 232
C Description of attitude’s items .............................. 240
D Description of learning style’s items ....................... 242
E Respondents’ data .................................................. 244
E1 Discrete-point exercises ....................................... 245
E2 Fill-in-the-blank ................................................... 274
E3 Grammatically judgment exercises ....................... 250
E4 Translation-based task ......................................... 255
E5 Learning style’s items .......................................... 257
E6 Attitude’s items ................................................... 260
F1 Frequencies of responses to motivation items ......... 265
F2 Frequencies of responses to attitude’s items .......... 267
F3 Frequencies of responses to learning style’s items ... 270
G1 Examples of errors in multiple choice ................... 272
G2 Examples of errors in fill-in-the blank exercises .... 275
G3 Grammatically judgment ....................................... 278
G4 Translation-based task ......................................... 282

VITA ............................................................................. 286
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The Criteria for Placing Students into the Various English Proficiency Courses</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Scheme of Motivational Intensity Scores</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Scheme of Desire Scores</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Scheme of Encouragement Scores</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Scheme of Self-Rating Scores</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Scheme of Parents’ and Friends’ Ability</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Scheme of Attitude Scores</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Scheme of Learning Style Scores</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Blueprint for Grammatical Test</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Respondents’ Socio-Economic Status by Gender</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Exemption by Residential Origin</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Summary of Descriptive Statistics of Motivational Dimensions (Phase I)</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Mean Scores of Motivational Dimensions by Exemption Status</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. T-Test for Motivation by Gender</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. ANOVA of Motivation by Socio-Economic Status</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Scheffe Test for Motivation Scores by Socio-Economic Status</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page</td>
<td>Section Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>T-Test for Motivation by Location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>T-Test for Motivation by Exemption Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Overall Results of Multiple Regression Analysis of Motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Multiple Regression Analysis of Motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Attitude and Exemption Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Percentage of Attitude Measurement by Exemption Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>ANOVA of Attitude by Socio-Economic Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Scheffe Test for Attitude by Socio-Economic Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>T-Test for Attitude by Location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>T-Test for Attitude by Exemption Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Overall Results of Multiple Regression Analysis of Attitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Multiple Regression Analysis of Attitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Percentage of Learning Style by Exemption Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>T-Test for Learning Style by Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>ANOVA of Learning Style by Socio-Economic Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Scheffe Test of Learning Style by Socio-Economic Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>T-Test for Learning Style by Location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>T-Test for Learning Style by Exemption Status</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

xxii
35 Overall Results of Multiple Regression Analysis of Learning Style 150
36 Multiple Regression Analysis of Learning Style 151
37 Descriptive Statistics of Performance in Grammatical Competence and Components 155
38 Performance of Exempted and Non-Exempted Students 156
39 Overall Results of Multiple Regression Analysis of Discrete-Point Exercises 159
40 Multiple Regression Analysis of Discrete-Point Exercises 159
41 Overall Results of Multiple Regression Analysis of Grammaticality Judgment Exercises 164
42 Multiple Regression Analysis of Grammaticality Judgment Exercises 165
43 Overall Results of Multiple Regression Analysis of Translation-Based Task 170
44 Multiple Regression Analysis of Translation-Based Task 171
45 T-Test for Total Scores of Grammatical Competence Test by Gender 172
46 ANOVA of Grammatical Competence and Socio-Economic status 173
47 Scheffe Test of Performance 173
48 T-Test of Grammatical Competence by Location 175
49 T-Test of Grammatical Competence by Exemption Status 176
50 Overall Results of Multiple Regression Analysis of Grammatical Competence 178

xxiii
51. Multiple Regression Analysis of
Performance in Grammatical Competence .................. 179

52. Summary of Phase II Regression Results .................. 184

F1. Frequencies of Responses to Integrative and
Instrumental Items ............................................ 265

F2. Frequencies of Responses to Attitude Items ............. 267

F3. Frequencies of Responses to Learning Style items ........ 270

xxiv