

## The relationship between language teaching styles and strategies on the learning of third language



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### ABSTRACT

This study intends to examine the relationship between teaching styles and learning styles among Universiti Kuala Lumpur Malaysian Institute of Industrial Technology (UniKL MITEC) students who have enrolled in Mandarin 1 and Mandarin 2 course. Systematic sampling were used to identify the samples and a set of questionnaires were distributed as a means of data collection. Eventually, this paper provide insight to the teaching methods of foreign language by considering learners' learning styles and strategies.

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### 1. Introduction

Mastering a third language is a privilege to anybody in this world, especially in multiracial countries such as Malaysia. This leads to the offering of third language courses in Malaysian higher institutions. Students have been offered with Mandarin language either as a compulsory subject or free courses at the university level. Mandarin is one of the most favorite courses enrolled by students as it is deemed important since "Malaysian Chinese accounts for 24.6% of the total population according to The 2010 Population and Housing Census of Malaysia" (Loon, 2014). In Malaysia, services provided by Malaysian Chinese is not only restricted to tourism as mentioned by Loon (2014) but also logistics, telecommunication and a few more others. Ergo, the need to learn the language is pivotal. The objectives of this research are:

1. To study the relationship between the use of visual aids as a strategy of teaching with students' perception.
2. To investigate the relationship between teaching styles and learning styles.

### 2. Literature review

Language is one of the means of communication between people who use their voice as a medium for

exchanging information (Tian, 2011) Mandarin is the official language in three countries such as China, Taiwan and Singapore. Now, Mandarin has become the second language that is widely used around the world (Wu, 2011).

Nowadays, foreign languages are recognized and used to meet the needs and demands whether public and private organizations. Hence, leading the government to take initiative to furnish future graduates with communication skills. Mandarin has been the subject of education in Malaysia, since its application in the Malay medium secondary schools in the public education system. The government's efforts have proven that by introducing or learning a foreign language has its own advantages in the economic, political and social culture. Hence, one who could speak multi languages are deemed to be of advantage as the ability will be an extra credit to a working environment since Mandarin is widely used especially among residents of Malaysia's multi-racial society (Yin and Ho, 2013). Yin and Abdullah (2014) also supported that "the ability to speak Mandarin is an added benefit and skills to students not only in personal interest but greater social benefit and importance to the country, especially in meeting the human resource needs that require Mandarin as a medium of communication."

The teaching and learning of Mandarin is similar to the teaching and learning of any languages. Language learning has always affected by the learning styles and strategies. So does learning a foreign language such as Mandarin. The level of education, the teaching style taught by students is the same as learning in kindergarten or primary school. The learning styles and strategies could influence one's performance. It is found through

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observation that learning of Mandarin starts with the basic principles of the language before moving on with the different skills namely reading, writing, listening and speaking. In addition, students will also learn to master the methods of reading and writing Chinese (Met, 2012). The 21st education classroom is very challenging as teachers face with students with multiple intelligences, various learning styles and strategies. The uses of audio visual aids are very important in the process of teaching and learning in the classroom every day, especially in language, audio visual aids are one of the tools used in the classroom to enhance teaching and learning process easier, interesting and effective (Rasul et al., 2011). This is also to cater audio-visual learners as outlined by Kykalová and Anatolievna (2015). Audio-visual aids can clarify the material more easily in teaching learning process. By using audio visual aids can also improve the delivery of teacher education process and help student's process information (Madhuri, 2013). Besides, teaching style plays a major role in the classroom as to meet different language learning styles. This determines the quality of learning in students' knowledge or obtained by each individual student in the university (Markwell, 2003). Students from Asian cultures, for instance, were often highly visual, with Korean being the most visual based on Reid (1987) study. Rebecca and Oxford (2003) language learning strategy inventory consists of a few statements on language learners' strategy in learning a language, which includes the use of pictures and other means of visual aids. The effectiveness of a learning style and strategy depends on the process of teaching shown. Diversity of teaching and learning styles shown will increase the motivation to a student to learn (Larkin and Budny, 2005).

### 3. Methodology

This study implemented the quantitative research method where a set of questionnaire were distributed as a mean of data collection to 300 samples that are selected among students who enrolled in Mandarin 1 and Mandarin 2 in UniKL MITEC. Microsoft Excel and Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) were used as tools for data input. The data were analyzed and hypothesis was tested using the Spearman's Rho Correlation and Chi-Square.

## 4. Results and discussion

### 4.1. Descriptive statistics

The average mean for the four variables is reported. As the variables are measured on five Likert-scales, the average audio visual teaching and learning as neutral. The average mean on Audio Visual 1 (audio visual method of teaching and learning = 3.64), Audio Visual 2 (use of text easily understood = 3.56), Audio Visual 3 (audio visual

presentation = 3.66) and Audio Visual 4 (visual material = 3.70) which is close to the neutral score. The respondents' responses are reported as neutral in terms of audio visual teaching and learning on Mandarin subject at UniKL MITEC.

Meanwhile, the average mean for the nine variables is reported as follow. As the variables are measured on five likert-scales, the average learning style as neutral. The average mean on Learning Style 1 (classroom activities = 3.43), Learning Style 2 (small group discussion = 3.55), Learning Style 3 (oral instruction = 3.51), Learning Style 4 (aggressive in Mandarin subject = 3.42), Learning Style 5 (learning material = 3.38), Learning Style 6 (sharing their ideas = 3.54) Learning Style 7 (Supervised by teachers on related projects = 3.67), Learning Style 8 (exact material = 4.02) and Learning Style 9 (motivation to students learning Mandarin = 4.02) which is close to the neutral score. The respondents giving the scores are neutral in learning style on Mandarin subject at UniKL MITEC.

### 4.2. Chi-square test

The biggest residual value of the neutral (92.0) indicates that it is the most preferred methods of teaching and learning, and the smallest residual value of strongly disagree (-58.0) indicates that it is least preferred methods of teaching and learning on Mandarin subject perception.

Based on the result, the researcher reports that there is a significant difference where the biggest contributor to this difference are Likert-scale neutral and strongly disagree (standard residual value = 92.0 and -58.0). This means the students' perceptions on Mandarin subject prefer neutral for methods of teaching and learning compare strongly disagree for methods of teaching and learning. It can be seen clearly through the observed frequency (observed n: neutral = 152, strongly disagree = 2) and the residual value (neutral = 92.0 and strongly disagree = -58.0) for the methods of teaching and learning.

### 4.3. Spearman's rho correlation

Based on the Spearman's rho correlation, there was a positive strong spearman's rho correlation between two variables ( $r = 0.102$ ,  $n = 300$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) with context used method teaching and learning and language skills. In this relationship, the correlation is  $r = 0.102$  means that value of  $r^2$  variance is  $(0.102)^2 = 0.010$ . These variances values show that 1% of context used method teaching and learning is influence the language skills.

Additionally, there was a positive strong spearman's rho correlation between two variables ( $r = 0.114$ ,  $n = 300$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) with audio visual method of teaching and learning and language skills. In this relationship, the correlation is  $r = 0.114$  means that value of  $r^2$  variance is  $(0.114)^2 = 0.0129$ . These variances values show that 1.29% of audio visual method of teaching and learning influence language

skills. Moreover, there was a positive strong spearman's rho correlation between two variables ( $r = 0.171$ ,  $n = 300$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) with visual materials and language skills. In this relationship, the correlation is  $r = 0.171$  means that value of  $r^2$  variance is  $(0.171)^2 = 0.0292$ . These variances values show that 2.92% of visual materials influence the language skills.

The teaching and learning of Mandarin is deemed to be effective when it suits the students' learning styles and perception. Based on the data obtained in this research, on the contrary, students were not entirely sure that the teaching styles meet their learning styles and needs as most of them resort to responding 'neutral'. However, there is still a strong relationship and it is found that the teaching style influences the learning style when learning a language. Hence, this study managed to conclude that learning styles and strategies can be influenced by teaching styles with the use of visual aids, the insertion of motivation by lecturers and the list goes on.

## 5. Conclusion

Finally, this research represents the learning styles of non-Chinese speaking students and factors influencing their learning styles are which mainly focusing on the teaching styles.

One of the purposes of learning the language in Malaysian higher institutions is to equip future graduates with the necessary communication skills that would be useful in the workplace.

The result of this study is hoped to shed lights on the teaching pedagogy of Mandarin to non-Chinese speaking students in relation to the students learning styles and strategies. This research encounters a few limitations which open room for future research.

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