A STUDY ON LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES (LLSs) Of UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN HONG KONG[*]

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ABSTRACT

The major purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between gender, second language proficiency, socioeconomic status, and language learning strategies (LLSs). The data for this research were provided by 50 first year university students from the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, using SILL test version 7.0 developed by Oxford (1990) as the measurement instrument. The Use of English Examination Results (HKALE) was used as a proficiency indicator.

It was found that gender, second language proficiency, and socioeconomic status would affect the user's use of LLSs. The major finding was that males and females had a significant difference in using Memory, Compensation, Cognitive, Metacognitive, and Social Strategies to learn English, with females using all of these strategies more frequently than males. A positive correlation was found between Compensation, Cognitive, and Social Strategies and the users' second language proficiency. It was also found that socioeconomic status would greatly influence local university students' use of Social Strategies. This result provides area for future research since the relationship between socioeconomic statuses since LLSs was seldom investigated in previous studies.

Keywords: Language Learning Strategies, Gender, Socioeconomic Status,
Second Language Acquisition, English Learning

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1. INTRODUCTION

English, being one of the official languages in Hong Kong, is the second language of most local students. Due to its great importance, English is introduced in early childhood education. However, Hong Kong students are continuously criticized for their poor English standard by teachers and employers. One of the most common problems is that they do not have a correct learning pattern to apply in learning a foreign language. In the past 20 years, much evidence has shown that language-learning strategies (LLSs) are closely related to a learner's language proficiency (O'Malley & Chamot 1990; Oxford 1990; Wenden & Rubin 1987; among others). With an improved knowledge of appropriate LLSs, learners can actively monitor their learning pattern and greatly improve their language proficiency (Oxford 1990). Research exploring the effects of LLSs has its practical value since it can provide clues for appropriate LLS training to students.

Gender is an important factor affecting the choice of LLSs in second language learning and is said to have "a profound effect on strategy choice" of learners (Oxford & Nyikos 1989: 294). As shown in previous studies, females perform better in second language learning. Many researchers relate this result to females' better use of LLSs. In order to effectively educate learners on LLSs, teachers must be aware of gender difference among males and females.

LLSs are also reported to be closely related to the language proficiency of learners (Green & Oxford 1995; Oxford & Burry-Stock 1995). Many studies have shown learners with different language proficiency adopt different patterns and frequencies of LLSs in foreign language learning (Oxford & Burry-Stock 1995). For example, Park (1997) examined 332 Korean university students and reported a significant relationship between LLSs and English proficiency, using the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) scores as proficiency indicator. The correlation between LLSs and second language proficiency cannot be neglected since it provides valuable information for teachers to design appropriate teaching methods to students with different language proficiencies.

Besides gender, other factors are found correlated to the choice of LLSs, including year of study, motivation, culture, and self-perception of language proficiency (O'Malley & Chamot 1990; Oxford & Nyikos 1989). However, research on the correlation between LLSs and socioeconomic status is limited. People with different socioeconomic statuses have different resources to support personal development. For instance, students from more affluent homes can afford to go to tutorial schools to strengthen their learning while poorer students cannot. As a result, the learning achievements on second language acquisition may vary to a certain degree. This study will examine the relationship between socio-economic status and second language proficiency to better understand its impact on language studies, as well as the influence on LLSs of gender and second language proficiency.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous studies have often pointed out that females perform better than males in second language acquisition (Larsen-Freeman & Long 1991; Dionne et al. 2003). Similar patterns have been observed in China, Korea, and the United States, among others. Linguists have tried to explain the observed gender difference in terms of language learning behavior. Oxford (1990) reported that females are more aware of their use of strategies to facilitate their learning. As a result, their overall performance in language acquisition is generally better than that of males. Further evidence for female dominance in language learning has been observed in other disciplines as well, including neurology and sociolinguistics.

2.1 Neurological Explanation

A number of neurological research studies show females have an advantage in language learning since their verbal and cognitive skills in language-related tasks are better. Language learning abilities are related to the laterality of hemispheres in the brain (Gur et al. 1982; McGlone

1980). The female brain is found to be less lateralized for language functions, that is, they are distributed more diffusely in both hemispheres. This could explain why their overall language performance is better than that of male learners. The female brain has been shown to be more sensitive to changes of sound intensity. This results in better auditory performance in language learning among females (Gandelman 1983; Hull et al. 1971; McGuinness 1972).

A recent study (Burman, Bitan & Booth 2008) has found that the bilateral activation in the inferior frontal and superior temporal gyri of the female brain is greater than in the male brain, which contributes to greater linguistic accuracy among females compared to males. In addition, the activation in the left fusiform region of the female brain is closely correlated to their better performance of standardized language tests.

2.2 Sociolinguistic Explanation

Sociolinguists focus on gender difference in communication styles and learning styles, especially in verbal performance. Tannen (1990) indicates that the superior language-related communicative skills of females are related to their difference in communicative styles. Females generally have an inferior social status than males. Due to male-dominant social frameworks, males and females often adopt different communicative behavior (Oxford 1992).

The communicative style of females focuses on seeking harmony in interpersonal relationship, supporting other's ideas and opinions, elaborating other's speech and maintaining conversational interaction, while the male communicative style focuses on arguing, interrupting, rejecting, or ignoring others' ideas and opinions (Hirshman 1994). Tannen (1990) characterizes male speech as conflictive and female speech as cooperative. This results in better communicative competency among female language learners since they are more active in listening and able to convey the message in a harmonious way.

2.3 Previous Research on LLSs

Research on LLSs started in the mid 1970s. Initial studies focused on the language learning habits of successful learners. Rubin (1975) and Stern (1975) reported that good language learners are more actively engaged to improve their language proficiency. Seven common strategies were identified, and as a whole Rubin (1975) characterized the better language learner as a "good and accurate guesser" (45), as having a "strong drive to communicate" (46), as attending to both form and meaning, and as not being inhibited and seeking practice opportunity.

Early studies focused on describing and classifying the language-learning patterns of learners. Starting from the 1980s, the research focus shifted to classifying the framework of language learning strategies.

2.3.1 Defining LLSs

There is still no agreed definition of language learning strategies. However, most definitions are similar, and Oxford's definition is used most frequently by scholars (Ellis 1994). The current study uses the definition given by Oxford (1990), identifying language-learning strategies as "specific actions taken by the learner to make learning faster, more enjoyable, more effective, and more transferrable to new situations" (8).

2.3.2 Classifications of LLSs

A number of scholars have constructed different definitions and classifications of LLSs. Two well-known classifications have been developed by O'Malley, Chamot, and Walker (1987) and Oxford (1990), and the latter was used in the current study.

2.3.3 O'Malley, Chamot, and Walker's classification

This model has been recognized for its comprehensive classification and strong theoretical base. Three broad categories are introduced,

including Metacognitive, Cognitive, and Social/Affective Strategies. There are in total 25 strategies identified, with 8 for metacognitive, 15 for cognitive, and 2 for Social/Affective Strategies. The characteristic of each strategy is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Definitions and examples of LLSs

Strategies	Definition	Examples
Metacognitive	Executive processes in planning for learning	Directed attention, self-management, and self-evaluation
Cognitive	Direct manipulation of the material to be learnt	Repetition, note-taking, anddeduction
Social/affective	Direct interaction of learners with other people in order to assist their learning	Cooperation and asking for clarification

The major criticism against this model is that there is little development and elaboration of the social/affective aspect, which has received much attention from scholars in recent work.

2.3.4 Oxford's classification

Oxford's classification is regarded as the most comprehensive classification and has been used by many researchers (Ellis 1994). The most influential area of Oxford's classification is that it involves both direct and indirect strategies. In total there are 6 categories of direct and indirect strategies. Direct strategies are defined as "strategies involving mental process and directly influencing the target language, while indirect strategies are those supporting and managing language without directly involving the target language" (Oxford 1990: 14).

The direct class is made up of Memory Strategies, Cognitive Strategies, and Compensation Strategies.

Table 2. Functions and examples of direct strategies

Strategies	Function	Examples
Memory	Enable learners to store and retrieve new information of a new language	Grouping, imagery, and rhyming
Cognitive	Enable learners to understand and produce new language	Reasoning, analyzing, summarizing, and generally practising
Compensation	Allow learners to use the language despite knowledge gaps	Guessing meaning in context, using synonyms and body gesture

Indirect strategies work in tandem with the direct strategies. The indirect class is made up of Metacognitive Strategies, Affective Strategies, and Social Strategies.

Table 3. Functions and examples of indirect strategies

Strategies	Functions	Examples
Metacognitive	Allow learners to evaluate their own language learning pattern and coordinate the learning process	Paying attention and self evaluation
Affective	Help learners gain control and regulate personal emotions, attitudes, and values	Anxiety reduction, self encouragement, and self-reward
Social	Allow users to interact with users	Asking questions and cooperating with native speakers

The six categories of direct and indirect strategies are correlated to each other and their relationships are shown in Figure 1 below.
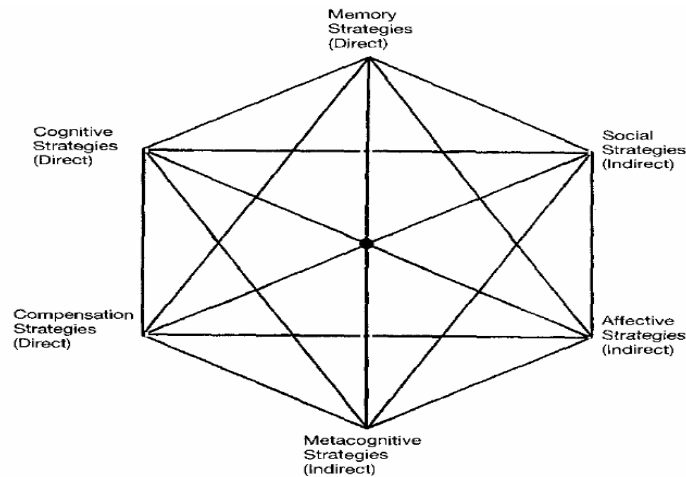
Figure 1. Inter-relationships between direct and indirect strategies among the six strategy groups (Oxford 1990: 15)

2.4 LLSs and Gender

Many studies have investigated the correlation between LLSs and gender, and significant differences have been reported by most studies focusing on the relationship between LLSs and gender. For example, Green and Oxford (1995) found that females use more Social and Affective Strategies. Kato (2005) obtained the same result in her study examining a group of Japanese EFL (English as Foreign Language) students.

The results however were not always consistent. Ghadessy (1998) investigated a group of university students in the Hong Kong Baptist University. She reported there was a significant gender difference in five of the six categories of LLSs, except Memory Strategies. Rahimi, Riazi, and Saif (2008), on the contrary, claimed there was no relationship between LLSs and gender in their research on Persian EFL learners. Nisbet, Tindall, and Arroyo (2005) also obtained similar results in their study, which examined 168 third-year English majors at Hanan University in China. Therefore, there is a need to further investigate the correlation between the variation in the use of LLSs and gender, which

was recommended in previous studies (Bremner 1999; Dreyer & Oxford 1996; Foong & Goh 1997; Green & Oxford 1995).

2.5 LLSs and Language Proficiency

Previous studies have also pointed out that a high level of proficiency is associated with an increased use of both direct and indirect strategies (Green & Oxford 1995; Kato 2005; among others). For example, Park (1997) examined the relationship between the use of LLSs and English proficiency of 332 Korean students, and found a linear correlation between LLSs and language proficiency. Bremner (1999) obtained a similar result in his study involving Hong Kong learners. He found that there was a significant variation of Cognitive and Compensation Strategies between users with different English levels. The higher their overall English proficiency, the more frequently they used these strategies. This will also be examined in the current study due to its importance.

2.6 LLSs and Socioeconomic Status

There is thus far limited research focusing on the correlation between socioeconomic status and LLSs. Language learning is closely related to the social environment of learners. Since students from different socioeconomic statuses have different resources to facilitate their language learning, the language-learning environment of students with different social backgrounds should be different. Previous studies have shown a linear relationship between academic achievement and socioeconomic classes. Students with higher socioeconomic status generally perform better than their poorer counterparts due to their richer economic capital and linguistic capital (Bourdieu 1973; Flowerdew & Miller 2008). However, the relationship between LLSs and socioeconomic status was seldom examined. Since previous studies have shown that LLSs are closely related to the user's English proficiency, it is worthwhile to examine if students with different socioeconomic statuses adopt LLSs differently. In order to know more about the correlation between socioeconomic status and LLS, and how it is related

to student's English proficiency, it is important to investigate the effect of socioeconomic status on second language acquisition. However, there is as yet no widely agreed upon classification system of socioeconomic status in Hong Kong. Literatures defined one's socioeconomic status in many different ways. For instance, Hess, Markson, and Stein (1988) defined socioeconomic status as a measure based on a combination of income, occupational prestige, and education while Hauser and Warren (1997) defined socioeconomic status as "[...] a shorthand expression for variables that enable the placement of persons, families, households and aggregates such as statistical local areas, communities and cities in some hierarchical order, reflecting their ability to produce and consume the scarce and valued resources of society" (178). The present study adopted the definition given by Hess, Markson, and Stein (1988) since it consists of most of the components mentioned in previous literature.

There are three generally accepted socioeconomic statuses, namely, upper class, middle class, and lower class. However, the definition of each group varies in different countries. To solve this problem, the classification given by the Middle Class Force (2006), a group defending the rights of the middle class in Hong Kong, was used. According to this classification, the middle class in Hong Kong refers to "families with a monthly income of between HK$25,000 and HK$120,000" (Middle Class Force 2006). In the current study, families with a monthly income lower than HK$25,000 are defined as 'lower class' and those with more than HK$120,000 are defined as 'upper class'.

It is assumed that the socioeconomic status of subjects can be reflected by their family income since the income of local workforce is generally in direct proportion to their educational level. Professional occupations with better income normally require a higher educational level in Hong Kong. In order to maximize the response rate, only income was collected in the questionnaire of this study to avoid the participants' negative feeling of exposing excessive personal information. As pointed out by White (1982), income is one of the most frequently used variables to show participants' socioeconomic status in educational research. Blau and Duncan (1967) also indicated that income is a reliable indicator which accounts for 91% of the variation in socioeconomic status of

participants. This further confirms the reliability of using family income as the indicator of socioeconomic status of subjects in the current study.

3. PRESENT STUDY

This study aims to (1) examine the language learning strategies (LLSs) currently used by university students in Hong Kong, (2) find out the relationship between gender, English proficiency, socioeconomic status, and LLSs, and (3) offer suggestions on LLS training to teachers to facilitate language teaching at the tertiary level. There are five major research questions in this study, namely:

(1) What are the current LLSs used by Hong Kong university students?
(2) Do males and females prefer different language learning strategies?
(3) Is there a relationship between LLSs and English proficiency among Hong Kong university students?
(4) Is there any correlation between socioeconomic status, LLSs, and English proficiency?
(5) Which LLSs are appropriate for Hong Kong university students to help them improve their English standard?

3.1 Methodology

In this study, the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) test version 7.0 designed by Oxford (1990) was used as a tool for data collection. Certain changes were made in the questionnaire to obtain data such as the socioeconomic status of the participants and their HKALE scores. At the end of the questionnaire, an open-ended question was included to allow the subjects to give extra information about their English learning habit.

The SILL strategy test is the most extensive questionnaire for obtaining information on the language learning strategies of subjects and is frequently used in studies worldwide (Ellis 1994). The reliability of

the SILL (Cronbach's alpha) was found as .93 to .98 (Green & Oxford 1995). High validity of SILL was also reported in previous studies and the SILL was significantly related to language performance (Oxford & Burry Stock 1995). The SILL test consisted of fifty questions divided into six parts. Part A included 9 questions related to Memory Strategies. Part B involved 14 questions about Cognitive Strategies. Part C consisted of 6 questions on Compensation Strategies. Part D contained 9 questions about Metacognitive Strategies. Part E consisted of 6 questions for affective strategies, and part F consisted of 6 questions on Social Strategies. The test took about 25-30 minutes to finish. (For a sample of the questionnaire, please refer to Appendix I). All subjects were required to respond on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (i.e., Never or almost never true of me) to 5 (i.e., always or almost always true of me) to indicate their frequency of using the strategies involved.

Based on Oxford's (1990) classification of language learning strategies, learners with a mean of 2.5 and under are identified as low strategy users, while those with a mean of 2.5 to 3.5 are identified as moderate strategy users, and the mean for high users is more than 3.5.

3.2 Background of Participants

The participants in this study were a group of university students from the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. The participants were selected regardless of their major, given that Ghadessy (1998) has shown the major of students is unrelated to their use of LLSs.

There were in total 50 participants in the current study, with 30 male and 20 female subjects. Regarding the socioeconomic status of subjects, 18 participants were from 'lower class', 25 were from 'middle class', and 7 of them were from 'upper class'. The classification of socioeconomic status was based on the definition given by the Middle Class force (2006), using the participants' family income as the classifying factor.

All subjects were first year students aged between 19 to 21 years old. Their scores in the Use of English examination ranged from A to F. No occurrence of U (i.e., unclassified) was gathered. The mean scores for male and female participants were different, with the females performing

better. The mean score of male participants was 1.67 (i.e., between grades D and E), while that of female participants was 2.90 (i.e., between grades C and D, but closer to C).[1] All subjects in this study enrolled in their undergraduate program via the Joint University Programme Admission System (JUPAS).

JUPAS is the main route of application designed to assist students with Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (HKALE) results to apply for admission to government-funded full-time bachelor's degree programs offered by eight JUPAS participating-institutions, namely, The University of Hong Kong, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, The City University of Hong Kong, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, The Hong Kong Baptist University, Lingnan University, and The Hong Kong Institute of Education.

3.3 UE Examination Results as a Proficiency Measure

The Use of English (UE) Examination results were used as a proficiency measure to assess the second language proficiency levels of the participants in this study. This was the most objective data for measuring the English levels of the participants since all the students admitted by local universities through JUPAS must obtain a passing grade, i.e., A, B, C, D, or E, in the UE examination. The examination consisted of four papers with different weightings, including listening (18%), writing (18%), reading (6%), language systems (12%), oral English (18%), and practical skills for work and study (28%). Students applying for undergraduate study via the Non-JUPAS route may be exempted from the requirements of the UE examination. Because of the comprehensiveness and objectiveness of this examination, it was selected as an instrument for measuring subjects' English proficiency.

3.4 Procedures

The subjects were randomly selected in the PolyU campus from February 1 to February 20, 2010. Only students with UE examination

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[1] Each letter grade is correlated with a numerical value as follows: A= 5, B=4, C=3, D=2, E=1, and F=0.

results and who enrolled in an undergraduate program through JUPAS were invited to complete the questionnaire. All participants were administered a set of SILL tests with a separate answer sheet. The purposes of this study were explained during the distribution of the questionnaire. A total of 25-30 minutes were given to each subject to finish the questionnaire. Upon the completion of the questionnaire, all data were input into the computer for data analysis.

All data collected in the questionnaire were input into the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS 18.0 for Windows). A descriptive analysis of language learning strategies was generated to show the general LLS habits of local university students in this study. A one-way ANOVA (analysis of variance) was used to determine the relationship between gender, socioeconomic status, English proficiency, and LLSs at the 0.05 level of significance. A correlation analysis was then employed to investigate the relationship between strategy variables and English proficiency to show their positive or negative impact on the Use of English examination scores.

4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The results of the statistical analysis will be shown to indicate a relationship between LLSs, gender, social status, and scores on UE examinations.

4.1 Current LLSs Used by Local University Students

Table 4 shows the frequencies of all 50 items included in the SILL test. The mean of each of the most frequent 11 items was equal to or over 3.5, indicating a high use of these items (Oxford 1990). All these items fell under Cognitive and Compensation Strategies.

Table 4. The ranking of frequency level of 50 items in SILL (N=50)

Ranking	Item no.	Mean	S.D.	Ranking	Item no.	Mean	S.D.
1	29	3.96	.925	26	39	3.18	1.137
2	17	3.96	.925	27	37	3.10	.974
3	15	3.88	.918	28	42	3.06	.956
4	24	3.80	.904	29	48	3.06	1.168
5	13	3.66	1.002	30	35	2.98	1.040
6	27	3.58	.883	31	46	2.92	1.158
7	31	3.58	.731	32	36	2.90	.931
8	10	3.58	.731	33	47	2.90	1.216
9	32	3.56	.644	34	26	2.86	1.050
10	20	3.56	.812	35	4	2.82	1.063
11	22	3.52	.974	36	16	2.82	1.224
12	45	3.50	.953	37	28	2.82	1.044
13	19	3.48	1.015	38	9	2.80	1.030
14	49	3.46	.908	39	38	2.76	.960
15	21	3.46	.646	40	3	2.74	1.084
16	25	3.44	.907	41	34	2.74	1.065
17	33	3.40	1.143	42	14	2.72	1.070
18	11	3.36	.875	43	5	2.68	.935
19	12	3.32	.999	44	23	2.68	.819
20	50	3.30	1.165	45	41	2.42	.835
21	2	3.30	.909	46	8	2.42	.810
22	1	3.28	.834	47	7	2.16	.955
23	30	3.26	.922	48	44	2.10	.814
24	40	3.22	.840	49	6	1.90	.763
25	18	3.18	1.119	50	43	1.76	1.001

The least frequent 6 items had a mean score lower than 2.5, indicating little use of such strategies (Oxford 1990). These items involved Memory and Social Strategies. Each of the remaining 33 items had a mean between 2.4 to 3.4, indicating medium use of such strategies (Oxford 1990).

Table 5 shows the overall strategies of the subjects in terms of the six categories of LLSs. The results show that the most frequently used category was Compensation Strategies, followed by Cognitive, Social, and Metacognitive Strategies. Memory Strategies are the second least popular group while Affective Strategies are the least frequently selected. The results were consistent with O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) observation that not all strategies are equivalent. As displayed in table 5, the mean scores of all LLSs groups in this study fell within the range of 2.4 to 3.4, which was an indicator of medium strategy use (Oxford 1990).

Table 5. Descriptive analysis of 5 groups of LLSs of all subjects

		Strategy					
		Memory	Cognitive	Compensation	Metacognitive	Affective	Social
Total (N=50)	Mean	2.68	3.37	3.41	3.14	2.62	3.19
	SD	0.52	0.55	0.51	0.69	0.53	0.82

By combining the results shown in table 4 and table 5, it was found that Compensation Strategies were the most popular for learning English among Hong Kong university students, while Memory and Affective Strategies were the least popular. The prevalence of Compensation Strategies has been reported in other similar studies in Asia as well. For example, in Huang (1997)'s study, it was found that Compensation Strategies were the most popular LLS group among Taiwanese college students, while in the study by Goh and Kwah (1997), Compensation Strategies were the second most popular strategies among Chinese EFL learners in Singapore.

4.2 The relationship between Gender and LLSs

Table 6 shows that male and female subjects used the six groups of LLSs with different frequencies. Females used all six categories more frequently than male subjects. The preferences of male and female

subjects were also different. The greatest difference was in the use of Social Strategies, which were ranked as the most popular strategies by females, but the fourth by males. The above results indicate that male subjects in this study were medium users of all six groups of LLSs, while female subjects were high users of three strategy categories (Social, Compensation, and Cognitive) fell within Oxford (1990)'s high use range of 3.5 to 5.0, and medium users for Memory, Metacognitive, and Affective Strategies.

Table 6. The variation of the use of LLSs between male and female subjects

Strategies	Mean score of male subjects (N=30)	Ranking of strategies among male subjects (N=30)	Mean score of female subjects (N=20)	Ranking of strategies among female subjects (N=20)	F-Statistics	P-value	Significant (Y=Yes, N=No)
Memory	2.47	6	2.99	6	**15.313**	**.000**	**Y**
Cognitive	3.18	2	3.66	3	**11.103**	**.002**	**Y**
Compensation	3.22	1	3.70	1	**13.626**	**.001**	**Y**
Metacognitive	2.94	3	3.45	4	**7.521**	**.009**	**Y**
Affective	2.51	5	2.80	5	3.958	.062	N
Social	2.85	4	3.70	1	**17.923**	**.000**	**Y**

In order to test whether the difference between gender and each category of LLSs was significant, a one-way ANOVA test at the significance level of 0.05 was used to analyze the data. The one-way ANOVA results indicated that apart from Affective Strategies (F=3.958, r=.062), there was a significant difference between gender and the other five strategy groups. It can be concluded that the use of these five groups of LLSs was significantly different between male and female subjects in the current study. This result was consistent with the finding of previous studies. A number of previous studies indicated gender differences are the most obvious in the use Affective Strategies, and females generally

use LLSs more widely and frequently than their male counterparts (Green & Oxford 1995; Yang 1992).

However, the finding above was different from that obtained by Green and Oxford (1995). In their study, a significant difference was found in Memory, Metacognitive, Affective, and Social groups, but no difference was shown in Cognitive and Compensation groups.

The difference between the findings in this study and that in Green and Oxford's study may be related to the cultural differences between Hong Kong and the United States. The difference in the education system between Hong Kong and America may account for the variation in the choice of LLSs of male and female students. The education system in the United States puts more emphasis on developing students' interest in learning and is more student-oriented when compared to the examination-oriented education system in Hong Kong. Getting good grades is regarded by many local students as the ultimate goal of education, thus few of them can really nurture an 'affection' towards the English language, regardless of their learning achievements. This may partly explain why the differences in Affection Strategies between high and low achievers were not significant in this study. Such kind of variation in strategy use across different cultural background has been shown in other studies as well (Nyikos & Oxford 1993; Oxford & Burry-Stock 1995).

4.3 The relationship between English Proficiency and LLSs

Table 7 shows the correlations between the six groups of LLSs and the English proficiency of subjects. Three LLS clusters had a significant correlation with the UE scores of subjects, including Cognitive, Compensation and Social Strategies.

Among these three factors, Compensation Strategies (r=.004, p<.01) and Social Strategies (r=.002, p<.01) had a significant correlation at the significance level of .01 on the UE scores. Cognitive Strategies (r=.018, p<.05) had a significance correlation on the English proficiency of subjects at the significant level of .05 on the UE scores. Memory, Metacognitive and Affective Strategies were not significantly related to English proficiency.

Table 7. Pearson's correlation coefficient between English Proficiency and strategy groups

	Strategies					
	Memory	**Cognitive**	**Compensation**	Metacognitive	Affective	**Social**
Grade (r)	.067	**.018***	**.004****	.058	.800	**.002****

*p< .05   ** p<.01

The above results varied from that obtained from similar studies targeting university students in Hong Kong. In Peacock and Ho (2003)'s study which examined the relationship between LLSs and English proficiency of 1006 undergraduate students in Hong Kong, significant correlations were found between Cognitive Strategies, Metacognitive Strategies and English proficiency, while in Ghadessy (1998)'s research, significant correlations were found in all LLS groups except Affective Strategies. The results obtained by the study conducted by Bremner (1999) was relatively similar to the current study, indicating a significant correlation between Cognitive Strategies, Compensation Strategies, and English proficiency.

By comparing the result of these previous studies (Bremner 1999; Ghadessy 1998; Peacock & Ho 2003) and the current study, the only similarity is that Affective Strategies were not significantly correlated to the English proficiency of subjects. To confirm whether this is the feature among Hong Kong students, more studies have to be conducted on this area.

The information in table 8 shows the results of correlation analysis between overall UE scores and separate items in the SILL test. There were 15 significant items identified, with 8 of them having a significant correlation at the significance level of .01. The breakdown of these 8 items are as follows: Memory Strategy (item 2) "I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them", Cognitive Strategies (items 11, 15, and 17) "I try to talk like native English speakers", "I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English," and "I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English", Compensation Strategy (item 27) "I read English without

looking up every new word", and Social Strategies (items 48, 49, and 50) "I ask for help from English speakers", "I ask questions in English", and "I try to learn about the culture of English speakers."

Table 8. The results of Pearson's correlation coefficient among the 50 items and UE scores

Item no.	UE Scores (r)	Item no.	UE Scores (r)
1	.443	26	.130
2	**.000****	**27**	**.000****
3	**.019***	28	.114
4	**.029***	29	.771
5	.777	**30**	**.017***
6	.544	**31**	**.029***
7	.258	32	.064
8	.427	33	.215
9	.744	34	.720
10	.321	35	.402
11	**.006****	36	.126
12	.151	37	.208
13	.215	38	.140
14	.380	39	.679
15	**.001****	40	.386
16	**.019***	41	.813
17	**.005****	42	.595
18	.543	43	.148
19	.625	**44**	**.028***
20	.289	45	.659
21	.691	46	.078
22	**.029***	47	.416
23	.951	**48**	**.001****
24	.252	**49**	**.000****
25	.803	**50**	**.000****

*p< .05   ** p<.01

Seven items had a significant correlation with the UE scores at the significance level of .05. The breakdown of these 7 items are as follows: Memory Strategies (items 3 and 4) "I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help me remember the word" and "I remember an English word by making a mental picture in which the word can be used", Cognitive Strategy (item 16) "I read for pleasure in English", Compensation Strategy (item 22) "I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand", Metacognitive Strategies (items 30 and 31) "I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English", "I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better", and Affective Strategy (item 44) "I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English."

Strategies without any significant correlation with English proficiency are categorized as "bedrock strategies", as suggested by Green and Oxford (1995: 289), since such strategies are used both by successful and unsuccessful users.

4.4 The relationship between Socioeconomic status, English Proficiency and LLSs

Table 9. The variation in result of use of English and Socioeconomic status

Item	F-Statistics	P-value	Significant (Y=Yes, N=No)
Socioeconomic status	7.267	.002	Y

Table 10. The average score of UE examination of all subjects

Socioeconomic status	Mean	N	S.D.
Lower Class	1.89	18	1.32
Middle Class	2.12	25	1.20
Upper Class	3.86	7	0.69

As displayed in table 9, there was a significant difference between different socioeconomic statuses (F=7.267, p= .002) and English

proficiency. Table 10 shows the average score for the UE examination for three different socioeconomic statuses, namely, upper class, middle class, and lower class. The mean score of subjects from lower class families was 1.89 (i.e., between grades D to E), while that of middle class subjects was 2.12 (i.e., between C to D) and 3.86 (i.e., betweens grade B and C) for subjects from upper class families, indicating that the UE examination score was directly proportional to the subject's socioeconomic status.

Table 11. The mean scores of LLSs of different socioeconomic status

Socioeconomic status		Strategies					
		Memory	Cognitive	Compensation	Meta-cognitive	Affective	**Social**
Lower Class (N=18)	Mean	2.56	3.35	3.40	3.03	2.47	**2.98**
	S.D.	0.52	0.64	0.51	0.65	0.52	**0.79**
Middle Class (N=25)	Mean	2.64	3.36	3.41	3.22	2.70	**3.25**
	S.D.	0.53	0.46	0.52	0.754	0.51	**0.79**
Upper Class (N=7)	Mean	2.68	3.45	3.45	3.14	2.74	**3.52**
	S.D.	0.24	0.63	0.56	0.58	0.59	**0.85**

Table 11 shows the mean scores of six groups of LLSs of all socioeconomic classes. It is indicated that the greatest difference was in the use of Social Strategies between different socioeconomic classes. In order to test whether the difference was significant, a one-way ANOVA test at 0.05 level of significance was used to determine which type of LLS(s) was most sensitive to socioeconomic status differences. The one-way ANOVA results are shown in table 14. Owing to the unequal distribution of subjects from different socioeconomic classes, the Levene's Test for Equality of Variance was taken prior to the one-way ANOVA test to test the homogeneity of variances. The results are shown in Table 12 below.

Table 12. Levene's test for equality of variances of LLSs among subjects from different socioeconomic statuses

Strategies	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Memory	.036	2	47	.965
Cognitive	.430	2	47	.653
Compensation	.424	2	47	.657
Metacognitive	.765	2	47	.471
Affective	.199	2	47	.820
Social	1.884	2	47	.163

Table 12 shows that the p-values of all groups of LLSs among subjects from different socioeconomic statuses were greater than .05. Therefore, the null hypothesis that the variance of the LLSs of subjects from different socioeconomic statuses was different was rejected. The data collected in this study were homogenous and suitable for undertaking the one-way ANOVA test.

Table 13. The variation in the use of LLSs and socioeconomic status

Strategies	F-Statistics	P-value	Significant (Y=Yes, N=No)
Memory	1.276	.289	N
Cognitive	.083	.921	N
Compensation	.029	.972	N
Metacognitive	.393	.677	N
Affective	1.175	.318	N
Social	**3.431**	**.041**	**Y**

As shown in table 13, there is a significant difference in the use of Social Strategies between socioeconomic statuses (F=3.431, p= .041). However, there is no significant difference in the use of other types of LLSs. Since there has so far limited research papers focusing on the relationship between socioeconomic status and language learning strategies, more information is needed to understand how the subjects in the current study varied in terms of their use of Social Strategies in

English language learning. The breakdown of all items in Social Strategies is given below in table 14.

Table 14. Descriptive analysis of items in Social Strategies of all subjects

Socioeconomic status		F45	F46	F47	**F48**	**F49**	**F50**
Lower Class (N=18)	Mean	3.5	2.44	2.94	**2.5**	**3.33**	**3.17**
	S.D.	1.043	0.98	1.21	0.92	0.91	1.04
Middle Class (N=25)	Mean	3.68	3.00	2.92	**3.12**	**3.48**	**3.28**
	S.D.	0.80	1.04	1.29	1.13	1.01	1.14
Upper Class (N=7)	Mean	2.86	3.86	2.71	**4.29**	**3.71**	**3.71**
	S.D.	1.07	1.46	1.11	0.95	0.49	1.60

Table 14 shows that the average scores of all items of Social Strategies in the SILL test. The results indicated that the mean scores of item 46, "I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk", item 48, "I ask for help from English speakers", item 49, "I ask questions in English", and item 50, "I try to learn about the culture of English speakers" were directly proportional to the socioeconomic status of subjects. The higher the socioeconomic status the more frequently the subjects adopted these items. Since the common feature of items 46, 48, 49, and 50 is that all of them involve interaction with English-speaking persons, the finding in this section implied that access to native speakers is essential to improving one's English proficiency.

However, opposite results were obtained in items 45 (i.e., If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again). The average scores of upper class students were particularly lower than their counterparts from middle and lower classes. This result was not surprising since students from the upper class had a relatively higher English proficiency level, as shown in table 10. Therefore, these wealthier students were less likely to seek repetition or

explanation to learn English when compared to their less wealthier counterparts.

For item 47 (i.e., I practise English with other students), the scores of all participants were similar. One possible explanation for this result is that English conversation is confined to oral practice in lessons only in most local universities. When the lesson is finished, students will use their mother tongue (i.e., Cantonese) for daily interaction. As a result, the chances of practising English with each other in school were of little difference between subjects with different socioeconomic classes.

4.5 Extra Information

There was an open-ended question included in the questionnaire to collect extra information about possible additional English language learning strategies of the subjects. Four out of the 50 subjects gave further information in this section. All of them were from the upper class families. They both indicated there was an English speaking domestic helper in their families. They quoted sentences such as "I practise my oral skills with my foreign maid at home" or "I talk in English with my maid from Indonesia" in this section.

An investigation was done to indicate the impact of foreign maids on specific strategies. Unsurprisingly, all subjects with foreign domestic helpers at home all indicated "5" for item 48 "I ask for help from English speakers" and item 49 " I ask questions in English".

5. DISCUSSION

The findings in this study have several useful implications to teachers to help ESL university students in Hong Kong to improve their English language learning.

5.1 Current Use of LLSs of Subjects

In this section we will focus on the current pattern of LLS use of university students in Hong Kong. As seen from table 5, Compensation Strategies, which include guessing the meaning of unknown words, are widely used by students.

Memory Strategies and Affective Strategies, on the other hand, were the least popular among the subjects in this study. These results were consistent with the findings of Bremner (1999) and Nisbet, Tindall, and Arroyo (2005), showing that students from similar cultural backgrounds tend to use the same LLSs.

The LLS pattern of subjects in this study contradicted to the general perception of English learning habits of HK university students. Instead of adopting a memorization-based language learning method, subjects in this study preferred a conscious use of language when learning English. Memory Strategies, which require continuous practice and memorization, were by no means the only way to acquire the second language for students in Hong Kong. This result was contrastive to the learning style of Chinese English learners reported in other studies. A number of previous studies reported that Chinese learners rely heavily on memorization of grammatical rules in second language acquisition (Biggs & Watkins 2001; Kohn 1992; among others). As a result, a teacher-centered and grammar-based approach for teaching English was reported to be prevalent in China (Campbell & Zhao 1993; Shih 1999). However, in the current study, the subjects preferred other language strategies to Memory Strategies. As table 8 shows that Memory Strategies are not effective in improving student's English proficiency, education providers should not provide 'memorization-oriented' teaching to university students. Traditional teaching methods such as reading aloud, rote learning, and repetitive practice may not be useful for Hong Kong students in improving their English proficiency. Instead, teachers can reinforce trainings on significant strategies, namely Cognitive, Compensation, and Social Strategies, to effectively help students enhance their English proficiency.

5.2 Gender and LLSs

The average UE scores of female subjects were higher than that of the male subjects in this study. This variation might be related to the difference of the use of LLSs between male and female students. This confirmed the observation from Green and Oxford (1995), who stated that "gender differences trends in strategies use are quite pronounced within and across cultures, and this means women and men are using different approaches to language learning" (291). Similar to previous studies (Green & Oxford 1995; Wharton 2000; Yang 1992; among others), there was a significant difference in LLSs between male and female students in this paper. Female subjects in the current study used all six groups of LLSs more frequently than male subjects. A significant difference was found in five groups of LLSs, except Affective Strategies.

Table 6 indicates that the use of Social Strategies of male subjects was much lower than that of female subjects. The dominant use of Social Strategies of female learners was reported in previous studies as well. For example, Green and Oxford (1995) and Yang (1992) reported that gender differences were the most obvious in the use of socially-based strategies, while Politzer (1983) indicated that female English learners in college adopted Social Strategies more widely and frequently than their male counterparts. This finding implies that male students are less willing to take a proactive role in communicating and seeking help from other English learners or speakers to improve their English skills. The reluctance of male subjects to seek help from other learners/English speakers may be related to the gender-related behavior difference. Tannen (1990) indicates that males value status and independence more, whereas females value connection, cooperation, and intimacy more. Seeking help from others, which is a sign of showing a sense of inferiority, hampers male subjects' interest in cooperating with others in learning English. As table 7 shows that Social Strategies had a very positive correlation to the English proficiency, education providers should encourage male students, who are less willing to ask for help, to cooperate with other learners to improve their language proficiency. One possible suggestion would be to encourage male students to form study groups among themselves. By doing so, male students can adopt a habit

of seeking assistance and evaluation from others to improve their English proficiency whenever necessary. After the male students have adopted such a habit, their interest in seeking assistance from others should be less hampered by the face threatening effect brought about by such act.

Table 6 also shows a significant gender-related difference in the use of Compensation Strategies. Due to its significant correlation with English proficiency, teachers should provide appropriate training on Compensation Strategies to male students. A possible training is to teach male students on how to make up new words to communicate the desired idea. For instance, teachers can encourage students to create new words to replace the word they do not know. Appropriate training on the use of body gesture to replace or accompany and reinforce oral expressions can also be considered.

5.3 LLSs and English Proficiency

Table 7 shows that Cognitive, Compensation, and Social Strategies had a positive correlation with the English proficiency of subjects. Besides knowing the types of strategies, it is important for teachers to identify specific strategies with a significant correlation with English proficiency. The rationale behind this is that language learners do not use a single strategy to learn foreign languages. By figuring out items having a significant correlation with language proficiency but low frequency levels, teachers can reinforce their training on the items involved since they are essential to English learning among university students. Table 15 shows the comparison between the significant items (i.e., the effective strategies) and their ranking in terms of frequency of use.

Table 15 shows that a number of strategies, which had a high correlation with English proficiency, were ranked in low positions by subjects in this study. This suggests that the subjects in this study did not realize the contribution of such strategies to improving their English proficiency. This result implies it is essential for teachers to educate students on the 'beneficial' strategies for improving one's English standard. For instance, item 44 (i.e., I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English), which had a very significant

correlation with the UE scores, is ranked as the second least popular item in the SILL test. Allowing learners to show their reflection on their own language learning process can lead learners to a greater sensitivity on their own language progress over time (Nunan 1995). Educators can therefore encourage students to report their own feeling about their own learning process so as to enhance their sense of responsibility for their own leanring. One possible way to do so is to invite students to write reflective journals or language learning diaries regularly. As reported by Oxford et al. (1996), writing language diaries in a second language can help learners be more aware of their own language strategies and foster their uses of Affective Strategies. It is therefore recommended that reflective journals and language diaries should be included in regular English classes in universities in Hong Kong.

Table 15. Comparison between items with significant correlation with UE score and rankings

Item no.	UE Scores (r)	Ranking	Item no.	UE Scores (r)	Ranking
2	.000**	21	27	.000**	6
3	.019*	40	30	.017*	23
4	.029**	35	31	.029*	7
11	.006**	18	44	.028*	48
15	.001**	3	48	.001**	29
16	.019*	36	49	.000**	14
17	.005**	2	50	.000**	20
22	.029*	11			

  *p< .05   ** p<.01

5.4 Socioeconomic Status, English Proficiency, and LLSs

There was a significant difference of UE scores between subjects with different socioeconomic statuses. As shown in table 10, the higher the student's socioeconomic status, the better their UE scores. This implies students from wealthier families learnt English better than

students from poorer families. Such a difference may have resulted from the difference in the use of LLSs.

As indicated in table 13, there was a significant difference between different socioeconomic statuses in the use of Social Strategies. The higher the socioeconomic status of subjects, the more frequently they applied such skills in learning English. Since Social Strategies had a high correlation with the English proficiency, it is advisable for language learners to use Social Strategies more frequently to learn English, especially those from less wealthy families. As stated in the extra information given by subjects from upper class families, their high frequency in the use of Social Strategies might be related to their daily interaction with their English-speaking maids. As a result, wealthier students can get more chance to practise their oral English, or seek help from their English-speaking domestic helpers outside the classroom. This provides a possible reason why students from upper class families had a higher English proficiency level than students from middle and lower class families. Education providers can therefore design different types of training for students from different social backgrounds in order to improve their English levels. For example, teachers can provide more chances to access foreigners for students from less wealthy families, such as inviting exchange students to attend the class since poorer students normally have a limited chance to interact with English speakers when compared to their wealthier counterparts. Another possible method is to organize intercultural activities similar to 'buddy programs', which can allow less-wealthy students to explore chances to interact with English speakers more frequently to allow them to improve their use of Social Strategies in English learning.

The finding in this section shows that access to native speakers was essential to improving student's English proficiency. The ENET Scheme (Enhanced Native-Speaking English Teacher Scheme)[2], which has been

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[2] Under the Enhanced NET Scheme by the Hong Kong Education Bureau since 1998, native-speaking English teachers (NETs) have been introduced to all secondary schools. Under the ENET Scheme, all government aided primary and secondary schools are allocated one NET. The NET is responsible for undertaking teaching duties and organizing extra-curricular activities related to English for students. In the 2011/12 school year, there are about 415 NETs working in secondary schools and 457 NETs in primary schools.

implemented in local primary and secondary schools, definitely has its practical function to helping students improve their English proficiency. In order to enable students to have adequate chance to communicate and interact with the native English speakers in school, more resources should be put to allocate more NETs in local schools if possible. After students adopt a habit to interact with foreigners in English, they will therefore be more willing to devote their time to practise and seek help from native speakers to improve their English proficiency.

5.5 Recommendations to Education Providers

As shown in the above results, it can be concluded that LLSs, English proficiency, and social status were correlated with each other. Teachers must take these factors into consideration when designing appropriate LLS training to students. As suggested by Oxford (1990), appropriate LLS training can result in improved proficiency and self-confidence in language learners. It has also been pointed out that language learners receiving LLS training perform better than those who do not (Oxford 1990). Educators should consider providing LLS training to their students in order to help them adopt a fruitful and beneficial English learning pattern. The LLSs training can be divided into a few phases.

Phase I: Identification of LLSs of students

Teachers can identify the LLS pattern used by students through the SILL test or other means. By doing so, education providers can gather information about the LLS patterns of their students and provide suitable training for them. Teachers should assess the current use of LLSs of students and identify their needs, as well as introduce some real examples of successful use of LLSs to them so as to let students recognize the power of using SILL to facilitate their English learning. By showing real life examples to students, the practicability of SILL can be realized by students. Teachers can also set some language learning objectives with students before the start of training. These objectives can serve as an indicator for assessment on the effectiveness of LLS training.

Phase II: Preparation of teaching materials and learning activities

After identifying the need of students, teachers can start designing appropriate learning activities. Activities based activities which compose of different tasks to be accomplished by using the strategies included in the SILL test should de designed. Careful planning has to be made and authentic materials should be used whenever possible. Strategy training can be contextualized into regular classroom activities on a regular basis to maximize the benefit to students (Chamot & Kupper 1989; Oxford 1990; Wenden 1991). Consultation with education experts can also be considered for a better outcome of the training. If it is difficult to arrange consultations with education experts, another possible way would be following the suggestions given by Oxford (1990) on LLS training planning in her book *Language Learning Strategies: What every teacher should know.*

Phase III. Implementation of training

Education providers should provide training in accordance with student's proficiency level, gender, and social status. Direct strategies, namely, Memory, Cognitive, and Metacognitive Strategies, should be taught first since they are easier to apply. Indirect strategies, which are more difficult and interactive in nature, can be taught at a later phase. To achieve a better understanding of LLSs of students, educators are suggested to demonstrate how to apply LLS in different circumstances and give students implicit explanations.

Phase IV: Evaluation and modification

After implementing LLS training for a period of time, such as one semester, students are required to submit reflective journals to show their opinion about the program. Previous studies have pointed out that allowing language learners to voice their feelings and attitudes about their learning process can allow educators to understand the need of students and thus adopt a more student-centered approach to empower

students with the skills they need (Flowerdrew & Miller 2008). Teachers should also evaluate the implementation of LLSs at regular intervals. Students' English learning performance is a good indicator of student's progress. Further modification and instruction should be made if the students' improvement in English proficiency is not obvious.

6. CONCLUSION

This study has investigated the current use of LLSs of university students in Hong Kong, in particular the relationship between three factors, namely, gender, English proficiency and socioeconomic status, and LLSs. All three factors were found to be significantly related to the LLS strategies used by students. The findings indicate that female students used LLSs more effectively and more frequently than male students. Students with higher English proficiency also showed more and better use of LLSs than poorer learners. Students from wealthier families used Social Strategies more successfully than poorer students, which was a possible explanation for their better performance in English learning.

These findings provided useful information for teachers to provide LLSs training to university students to improve their English learning skills. Education providers should be aware that students with different backgrounds, including gender, socioeconomic status and language proficiency, behave differently when learning English. In order to fulfill the needs of students, these factors should be taken into consideration when designing training programs on language learning strategies.

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APPENDIX I

Dear student,

This questionnaire aims at finding out the language-learning habits of local university students. The data collected will be useful for improvement in language education in Hong Kong. Please answer the following questions. Your information will be used for research purposes only. Thank you.

Section One
For this section, please indicate the most appropriate answer on the separate answer sheet.

1. What is your gender?
    Male   Female

2. Which range below does your family's monthly income lie in?
    Below or Equivalent to $ 25,000   Between $25,001-120,000
    More than $ 120,001

3. What grade did you obtain in the HKALE Use of English Examination?
    A   B   C   D   E   F   U

Section TWO
Read each statement carefully in this section. Place an X on the separate answer sheet to select the most appropriate choice. There are no right or wrong answers to these statements. The meaning of each number is as follows:

1. Never or almost never true of me.
2. Usually not true of me.
3. Somewhat true of me.
4. Usually true of me.
5. Always or almost always true of me.

If you have any questions, please ask the instructor for clarification.

Part A

1. I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English.
2. I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them.
3. I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help me remember the word.
4. I remember an English word by making a mental picture in which the word can be used.
5. I use rhymes to remember new English words.
6. I use flashcards to remember new English words.
7. I physically act out new English words.
8. I review English lessons often.
9. I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign.

Part B

10. I say or write new English words several times.
11. I try to talk like native English speakers.
12. I practice the sounds of English.
13. I use the English words I know in different ways.
14. I start conversations in English.
15. I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English.
16. I read for pleasure in English.
17. I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English.
18. I first skim an English passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back and read carefully.
19. I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English.
20. I try to find patterns in English.
21. I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand.
22. I try not to translate word-for-word.

23. I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English.

Part C
24. To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses.
25. When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures.
26. I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English
27. I read English without looking up every new word.
28. I try to guess what the other person will say next in English.
29. If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing

Part D
30. I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English.
31. I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better.
32. I pay attention when someone is speaking English.
33. I try to find out how to be a better learner of English.
34. I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English.
35. I look for people I can talk to in English.
36. I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English.
37. I have clear goals for improving my English skills.
38. I think about my progress in learning English.

Part E
39. I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English.
40. I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake.
41. I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English.
42. I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English.
43. I write down my feelings in a language learning diary.
44. I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English.

Part F

45. If I do not understand something in English, I ask the speaker to slow down or say it again.
46. I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk.
47. I practice English with other students.
48. I ask for help from English speakers.
49. I ask questions in English.
50. I try to learn about the culture of English speakers.

Extra information that you think is related to your English learning:

Kevin Chi-Him Tam

有關香港大學生的語言學習策略(LLSs)研究

譚志謙
香港大學

本文利用由 Oxford (1990) 所設計的語言學習策略量表(SILL 7.0) 作為研究工具，嘗試找出性別、第二語言程度、社會經濟地位及語言學習策略(LLSs)相互間之關係。此研究訪問共 50 名香港理工大學一年級學士學位學生，並以其香港高級程度會考 (HKALE) 中英語運用科 (USE OF ENGLISH) 的考試積點作為第二語言的程度指標。

研究結果顯示，性別、第二語言程度及社會經濟地位皆會顯著影響受訪者對語言學習策略(LLSs)之運用。在性別範疇上，男性與女性在運用記憶策略 (memory strategies) 、認知策略(cognitive strategies)、補償策略(compensation strategies) 、後設認知策略(meta-cognitive strategies) 及社交策略(social strategies)上有顯著分別，而女性相對男性較頻繁運用上述策略。另外，補償策略 (compensation strategies) 、認知策略(cognitive strategies) 及社交策略(social strategies)與使用者的第二語言程度有正相關關係。研究結果亦指出，香港大學生的社會經濟地位對於對其於社交策略 (social strategies) 的運用有重要影響。由於先前有關學習策略的較少提及社會經濟地位，此項發現將可能提供新的研究方向。

關鍵字：社會經濟地位、語言學習策略、第二語言習得