THE STRUCTURAL MODEL OF SELF-EFFICACY, ACHIEVEMENT GOALS, AND LEARNING STRATEGIES OF SECONDARY STUDENTS IN HK

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Abstract

The present study aims to examine the relationship between self-efficacy, achievement goals, and language learning strategies. One hundred and two form 5 to form 6 secondary students from the same school participated to complete three questionnaires. Path analyses and structural equation modeling were used for analyzing data. The model indicated self-efficacy is a positive significant predictor for achievement goals. Also, achievement goals are significant mediatior between self-efficacy and language learning strategies. The present study also indicated the achievement goals are significant related to language learning strategies. This may be the first study investigate this relationship.

Keywords: Self-efficacy; Achievement goal; Language learning strategies (Word: 102)
Introduction

Learning a second language for students is difficult, as they have to learn two languages at the same time. In Hong Kong, English are the second language of most of the students in common. Studies suggested that students would have different motivations and strategies used in assisting on learning a second language. It is hoped that more potential factors which affect students in learning foreign language can be found through this study.

This study is designed from Hong Kong students who learn English as second language. This study examines how self-efficacy and achievement for students choosing language learning strategies, and also examining how self-efficacy, achievement goal, and English learning strategies as second languages are related to each other. Thus, the medication effect of achievement goal between self-efficacy, and language learning strategy on English is also examined in this study.

Literature Review

Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is defined as a judgment of a person on his or her own ability on organizing and executing action on performance (Bandura, 1986). Pintrich (1999) also states that self-efficacy is a belief of a person of his or her ability on performing a task and their confidence to learn. If a person has a high efficacy, the more like that
person would take the task, strive, and persist when facing failure (Kassin, Fein & Markus, 2011). Self-efficacy also has impacts on regulating thought, emotions, motivation, and behavior (Bandura, 1977).

**Achievement goals**

Achievement goals are viewed as purpose of a person engaging in competence-relevant behavior (Elliot & McGregor, 2001) and provided a framework on how student interpret and experience achievement setting (Elliot, 1999). There are four kinds of achievement goals. They are mastery approach, mastery avoidance, performance approach, and performance avoidance goals.

People who have mastery-approach goal would concern on developing academic competence (Ryan & Shim, 2006), they use self-improvement to measure competence and mastering new tasks (Huang, 2012). People who have mastery-avoidance goal emphasize on avoiding misunderstand and failure in learning and use avoiding performance decrement to measure competence (Huang, 2012). Thus, people with performance-approach goal would concern on demonstrating academic competence related to others (Ryan & Shim, 2006). People who have performance-avoid goal concern on avoiding in demonstrating individuals’ lack of academic competence with others (Huang, 2012).

**Language Learning Strategy**
Learning strategy is the behavior and skills which consciously adopted by learner in learning process (Demirel, 2009). They are the ways which students used for assisting their learning (Chan, Wong, & Lo, 2012). Language learning is special from learning other subjects. They are the special tactics or actions students used to perform on language skills as reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Demirel, 2009), also assist student on enhancing learning (Scarcella & Oxford, 1992). For learning a foreign language, the strategies used could be different. Students could use these strategies to help in retaining new information of a target language. Oxford (1990) classified foreign language learning strategies in six aspects: memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social.

Memory strategies are the techniques which can help learner to store new information in memory and retrieval (Oxford & Crookall, 1989). It is particularly useful in vocabulary learning. Cognitive strategies are the skills of transformation of language in direct way (Oxford & Crookall, 1989), including process from repeating to analysis expression and summarizing (Oxford, 1990). Compensation strategies help learner in order to overcome knowledge discrepancy and continuing communication (Oxford, 1990), such as guessing. Metacognitive strategies help learners to regulate own cognition and planning, focusing, and evaluating in language learning process in communication competence (Oxford, 1990). Affective
strategies help learners develop self-confidence to be involved in language learning (Oxford, 1990). Social strategies provide learners more interaction and understanding which they are among between people (Oxford, 1990).

**Self-efficacy and Achievement goals**

Self-efficacy is cognitive thinking of an individual. And achievement goals are the purpose of competence-relevant behavior. Self-efficacy is concerning the understanding of students themselves. Being having beliefs and expectation on their capabilities, students could develop their own goals according to their capabilities (Heish et al., 2008). According to Coutinho & Neuman (2008), “Self-efficacy is related to goal orientation independent of ability” (p.136). Students with high self-efficacy are more likely to develop more tendencies to complete tasks by trying more strategies, spending more effort. Mastery goals are reported with positive relationship with self-efficacy (Locke et al, 1984). Some researches cited a positive relationship between performance goals and self-efficacy (Ford et al, 1998), but there were also negative relationship reported in studies (Phillips & Gully, 1997). Studies suggested that there are significant relationships between self-efficacy and achievement goals (Elliot and Church, 1997; Gao et al, 2013, Hsieh et al; 2008). From this, self-efficacy can be the antecedent of achievement goals.

**Achievement goals and language learning strategies**
Achievement goals as a motivation of learning, how it motivates students are intensively discussed. Shih (2005) found that both approach goals positively predicted learning strategies. Meece et al. (1988) had conducted a research on the relationship between goal orientations and the usage of learning strategies. There are significant results between the two variables. Similar results are found (Ainley, 1993; Pintrich & Garcia, 1991). Different kinds of achievement goals indicate difference behavior in completing goals. Different achievement goals imply different cognitive thoughts and learning behaviors student, therefore, they may choose in using different learning strategies. There are studies found that some achievement goals has relationship with learning strategies.

**Research hypothesis**

Referring to the literature review, three hypotheses are formed in order to show the expectations about the results of the research.

1. There are significant relationships among the four achievement goals with language learning strategies on secondary language.

2. There are significant relationships among self-efficacy and the four achievement goals.

3. There is significant mediation effect of achievement goal between self-efficacy and language strategy on English academic achievement.
Method

Participants

There are 102 participants. They are Form 5 to Form 6 students. They are in the same secondary school and had reported that English as second language. Samples are collected as convenient sampling. Three sets of questionnaires were given to participants after consent form are signed.

Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ)

It is developed by Pintrich et. al (1991). 8 items are extracted from MSLQ to assess the self-efficacy of student (e.g., “I’m certain I can master the skills being taught in this class.”). It is a 7-point Likert scales from “not at all true of me” to “very true of me”. The Cronbach alpha reliability is .91.

Achievement Goal Questionnaire-Revised (AGQ-R)

It is developed by Elliot & Murayama (2008). It is used to measure students’ achievement goals. The questionnaire contains 12 items with format of 5 points scales (1 = “strongly disagree” to 5 = “strongly agree”). 3 Items are serving as indicators for each four goals: mastery-approach (e.g., “My aim is to completely master the material presented in this class.”), performance approach (e.g., “My goal is to perform better than the other students.”), mastery-avoidance (e.g., My aim is to avoid learning less than I possibly could.”), and performance-avoidance (e.g., I am
striving to avoid performing worse than others.”). The Cronbach alpha reliability of ACQ-R is .83.

**The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)**

It is developed by Oxford in 1990. It is used to investigate the frequency of language learning strategies which learners (English as second language) used. It contains 50 items with format of 5 points scales, on which 1 = “Never or almost never true of me”, 2 = “Usually not true of me”, 3 = “Somewhat true of me”, 4 = “Usually true of me”, and 5 = “Always or almost always true of me”. The 50 items are serving as indicators of 6 learning strategies: memory (e.g., “I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in the English.”), cognitive (e.g., I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand.”), compensation (e.g., “I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in the English.”), metacognitive (e.g., “I think about my progress in learning English.”), affective (e.g., “I write down my feelings in a language learning dairy.”), and social (e.g., “I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk.”). The Cronbach alpha reliability of SILL is .94.

**Result**

**Descriptive Statistics and Correlational Analysis**

Mean, standard deviations and correlational analysis for the 11 observed
variables from the three instruments in this study were conducted by using SPSS which was shown in Table 1. Fifty five out of 55 correlations were statistically significant.
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<th>Variables</th>
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<td>2. Mastery Approach</td>
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<td>4. Performance Approach</td>
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<td>5. Performance Avoidance</td>
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<td>6. Memory</td>
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<td>7. Cognitive</td>
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<td>8. Compensation</td>
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<td>9. Meta-cognitive</td>
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<td>.396**</td>
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<td>10. Affective</td>
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<td>.383**</td>
<td>.371**</td>
<td>.236*</td>
<td>.787**</td>
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<td>11. Social</td>
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**M**
|       | 4.38  | 3.71  | 3.37  | 3.47  | 3.58  | 3.06  | 3.38  | 3.48  | 3.38  | 3.00  | 3.35  |

**SD**
|       | .81   | .63   | .64   | .59   | .72   | .54   | .52   | .52   | .51   | .60   | .59   |

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001
Reliability Analysis

Reliability analyses were conducted by using SPSS. In the research, the reliability analysis with Cronbach’s alpha was also conducted for the three instruments (see Table 2). For the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire, subscale of self-efficacy indicated good reliabilities, $\alpha = .91$. For the Achievement Goal Questionnaire-Revised, four subscales indicated good reliabilities, $\alpha > .63$. For The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning, six subscales indicated good reliabilities, $\alpha > .61$. One item of the affective subscale needs to be deleted for reaching the satisfactory reliability.

Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reliability Cronbach’s Alphas for the Three Instruments in the Study</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Scales</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Self-Efficacy</td>
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<td>Achievement Goal Questionnaire-Revised</td>
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<td>1. Mastery Approach</td>
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<td>2. Mastery Avoidance</td>
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<td>3. Performance Approach</td>
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<td>4. Performance Avoidance</td>
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<td>The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning</td>
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<td>1. Memory</td>
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<td>2. Cognitive</td>
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<td>3. Compensation</td>
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<td>4. Meta-Cognitive</td>
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<td>5. Affective</td>
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<td>6. Social</td>
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Confirmatory Factor Analysis
Confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) would be conducted after parceling and deleting some items for making the models be fitter (Holt, 2004). After item parceling and deletion, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted.

For the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire, $\chi^2(20) = 68.73$, RMSEA = 0.16, GFI = 0.85, CFI = 0.94. All factor loadings were significant, and the average factor loading was .74.

For the Achievement Goal Questionnaire-Revised, $\chi^2(48) = 81.08$, RMSEA = 0.08, GFI = 0.89, CFI = 0.94. All factor loadings were significant, and the average factor loading was .66.

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was computed by using SPSS for item parceling before confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). For The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning, $\chi^2(104) = 220.08$, RMSEA = 0.11, GFI = 0.80, CFI = 0.96. All factor loadings were significant, and the average factor loading was .73.

**Path Analyses**

Path analyses were conducted by using SPSS. Figure 6 showed the relationships between self-efficacy, achievement goals (mastery approach goal, mastery avoidance, performance approach goal, performance avoidance), and language learning strategies (memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, social).
For the relationship between self-efficacy and achievement goals, the result indicated that self-efficacy was a significant positive predictor of all achievement goals, including mastery approach goals ($\beta = .32, p < .001$), mastery avoidance goal ($\beta = .31, p < .01$), performance approach goal ($\beta = .40, p < .001$) and performance avoidance goal ($\beta = .23, p < .05$).

For the relationship between achievement goals and language learning strategies, the result showed that mastery approach goal was a significant positive predictor of three language learning strategies, including memory ($\beta = .21, p < .05$), cognitive ($\beta = .21, p < .05$) and metacognitive ($\beta = .31, p < .001$). Mastery avoidance goal was significant positive predictor of three learning strategies, including memory ($\beta = .21, p < .05$), affective ($\beta = .29, p < .01$) and social ($\beta = .21, p < .05$).

Performance approach goal was a significant positive predictor of two language learning strategies, cognitive ($\beta = .27, p < .05$) and social ($\beta = .24, p < .05$). Performance avoidance goal was a significant positive predictor of one language learning strategy, which is metacognitive ($\beta = .25, p < .01$).
Figure 6. The path model of the relationship between self-efficacy, achievement goals, and language learning strategies.

Note: *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001, NSp > .05
4.1 Structural Equation Model

Based on the results of path analysis, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is conducted by using LISREL 9. Structural equation modeling is used to estimate the direct and indirect relationship between the latent variables (self-efficacy, achievement goals and language learning strategies). Several observed variable were used in measuring a latent variable. The relations between the observed variables and their underlying latent variables including self-efficacy, achievement goals, and language strategies were show in Figure 7. A structural model could be established, \( \chi^2(42) = 94.50, \) RESEA = 0.11, GFI = 0.86, CFI, 0.96.

Self-efficacy included one observed variable as efficacy. Self-efficacy is \( p < .001 \) significantly related with efficacy \( (\beta = 1.00) \).

Achievement goals included four observed variables concerning mastery approach goal, mastery avoidance goal, performance approach goal and performance avoidance goal. Achievement goals were \( p < .001 \) significantly related with mastery approach goal \( (\beta = .65) \), mastery avoidance goal \( (\beta = .54) \), performance approach goal \( (\beta = .78) \) and performance avoidance goal \( (\beta = .62) \).

Language learning strategies included six observed variable concerning memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and social. Language learning strategies were \( p < .01 \) significantly related with affective \( (\beta = .74) \), and \( p \)
< .001) significantly related with memory (β = .86), cognitive (β = .94), compensation (β = .61), metacognitive (β = .86) and social (β = .84).

For the relationship between latent variables, self-efficacy was a significant positive predictor of achievement goals (β = .51, p < .001) and achievement goals was a significant positive predictor of language learning strategies (β = .72, p < .001). Therefore, the result revealed that achievement goals were significant positive mediators between self-efficacy and language learning strategies.
Figure 7. The structural model of the interrelationship between self-efficacy, achievement goals and language learning strategies.

Note: RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; GFI = Goodness of Fit Index; CFI = Comparative Fit Index. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

\[ \chi^2(42) = 94.50 \]
RMSEA = 0.11
GFI = 0.86
CFI = 0.96
A structural model is computed for the relationship between self-efficacy and language learning strategies. The relations between the observed variables and their underlying latent variables including self-efficacy, and language strategies were show in Figure 8. A structural model could be established, $\chi^2(13) = 50.66$, RESEA = 0.17, GFI = 0.87, CFI, 0.95.

Self-efficacy included one observed variable as efficacy. Self-efficacy is ($p < .001$) significantly related with efficacy ($\beta = .78$).

Language learning strategies included six observed variable concerning memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and social. Language learning strategies were ($p < .001$) significantly related with memory ($\beta = .86$), cognitive ($\beta = .94$), compensation ($\beta = .61$), metacognitive ($\beta = .85$), affective ($\beta = .74$) and social ($\beta = .84$).

For the relationship between latent variables, self-efficacy was a significant positive predictor of language learning strategies ($\beta = .54$, $p < .001$). Therefore, the result revealed that self-efficacy is also a significant predictor of language learning strategies.

Comparing Figure 7 and Figure 8, the relationship between achievement goal and language learning strategies ($\beta = .72$) is strengthen than the relationship between self-efficacy and language learning strategies ($\beta = .54$). It reveals that there is a
meditation effect for achievement goal between self-efficacy and language learning strategies.
Figure 8. The structural model of the interrelationship between self-efficacy and language learning strategies.

Note: RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; GFI = Goodness of Fit Index; CFI = Comparative Fit Index. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001
Discussion

This study has presented an investigation into the relationship between self-efficacy, achievement goals and language learning strategies for senior form students who learn English as second language. It was hypothesized that self-efficacy will be a positive predictor of achievement goals. The result of this study is highly consistent with the hypotheses. Self-efficacy was found as positive predictors of the achievement goals. Self-efficacy is the cognitive thoughts of an individual of self. It refers to how they believe themselves in capable of finishing a task. Achievement goals are the competence-relevant behaviors. They are the motivation of learner in learning. Researchers suggested self-efficacy is a good predictor on academic motivation (Graham & Weiner, 1996; Pintrich & Degroot, 1990; Pintrich & Schunk, 1995).

Mastery goals refer the development of ability on mastery and doing task. Former study proven that mastery goal is related to higher self-efficacy (Locke et al., 1984). Performance goals indicate that the motivation of students is desire of outperform others (Bong, 2004). Significant relationship between self-efficacy and performance goals has been found in study (Ford et al., 1998). Approach goals indicate the motivation of learning is approaching success. On the other hand, people who had avoidance goals tend to avoid failure. From the result, mastery
approach goal and performance approach goal are mostly significant to self-efficacy among the four achievement goals. Gao et al. (2013) proved that self-efficacy is positive related to mastery approach goal and performance approach goals. This result shows that self-efficacy has a large intensity on learning to mastery success.

The avoidance goals are also significant related to self-efficacy. Performance avoidance goal is less significantly related to self-efficacy in the result. Students with low efficacy show less motivation in learning (Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000; Pajares et al., 2000). This may explained the reason of the less significant relationship between self-efficacy and performance avoidance goal.

This study was hypothesized that achievement goals are significantly related to language learning strategies. The result of the study is consistent to the hypothesis. It was found that achievement goals and language learning strategies. There are not much study have investigated the relationship between achievement goals and language learning strategies, but there were studies found significant relationship between achievement goals and learning strategies (Pintrich et al., 1993; Sultan & Hussain, 2012).

The difference between the previous studies and this study is the learning strategies. The learning strategies investigated in this study are about language, especially in second language. They are more specific strategies which are used in
language. There are six strategies, memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and social. From the result, there are significant relationship between different achievement goal and language learning strategies. Mastery approach goal is a positive significant predictor to memory, cognitive and metacognitive. Mastery approach goal refers to develop academic competence, use self-improvement to mastery academic success. Students with mastery approach goals seek for challenging task and being positive in facing failure (Coutinho & Neuman, 2008). They response to “solution-oriented instructions” when they face failure (Elliot & Dweck, 1988). They seek for solution to solve difficulties and strive for success.

Memory, cognitive and metacognitive strategies are the strategies which students can choose to use initiatively when they are learning. They are strategies that students could use when they are facing difficulties on learning language. As students learn as approach success with self-improvement, they would use these three strategies to learn. Meece et al. (1988) and Pintrich & Garcia (1991) also had found that mastery goals is significantly related to deep cognitive strategies.

Mastery avoidance goal is a positive significant predictor to memory, affective and social strategies. Mastery avoidance goal indicates avoiding misunderstand and failure in learning. Avoidance coping is a coping mechanism in psychology, identifying the effort in avoidance to deal with a stressor (Friedman &
Silver, 2006). Failure is a huge stressor for students obviously. In avoiding failure in language learning, students use indirect strategies, according to their own affective and social environment. They would try to avoid their failure in using the environmental around them. Emotions can help them in easing the negative feeling from dealing with failure. Social circles as friends and families can be assistants in helping them in encountering difficulties.

Performance approach goal is a positive significant predictor to memory, cognitive, affective and social strategies. Performance approach goals indicate to perform better than others. Students with this goal want to become better than others. They seek for means to enhance their performance. Memory and cognitive strategies would be used to improve their own competence. They can practice on their own. Research indicated the relationship between performance goals and surface process (memorizing and rehearsal) is significant (Elliot et al., 1999; Green & Miller, 1996).

On the other hand, affective and social strategies refer to the environment factors which can help them too. Emotions and social circles are assisting in indirect way.

Performance avoidance goal is a positive significant predictor to compensation, and metacognitive strategies. Performance avoidance goal refers to avoid being lack competence than others. Compensation is a strategy which a person tries to cover up own weakness or feelings of incompetence. Students use
compensation strategy to compensating their own learning discrepancy. They avoid being worse than others. Metacognitive strategy refers to the introspection of students when they are learning language. As students which performance avoidance goals want to avoid being worse than others, they introspect on their own weakness and frustration on learning process.

Memory strategy is significant related to three achievement goals. In learning second language, it is difficult in tuning from mother language to second language. As the achievement goals are about second language learning, memory and cognitive strategies are the most significant way for learning a new language. They could help students link the second language with their mother language.

Referred to hypothesis, the path model and structural equation models showed that achievement goals were a significant positive mediator between self-efficacy and language learning strategies. It indicated that self-efficacy has more influence on language strategies through achievement goals. To further discuss the relationships, it is divided into the following two parts.

The first part is about the relationship between self-efficacy and achievement goals (mastery approach goal, mastery avoidance goals, performance approach goal, and performance avoidance goal). Self-efficacy is a good predictor to achievement goals as it was significantly related to all four achievement goals. It showed that
self-efficacy affects in having achievement goals. The second part is about the
relationship between achievement goals and language learning strategies (memory,
cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social). Through
achievement goals, self-efficacy has more influence on language learning strategies.
Achievement goals are the motivation of students on learning language. Various
motivations affect learning behavior and thoughts, also how they adapt learning
strategies in learning language. Through achievement goals, learning strategies can
be used coordinating with confidence. Students used the learning strategies which
according to their confidence on the learning process.

Conclusion

The present study contributes to prove the relationships among self-efficacy,
achievement goals, and language learning strategies. From theoretical perspective,
the present study formulated and validated a structural equation models. It reveals
achievement goals were important mediators between self-efficacy and language
learning strategies. It also provides more understanding of self-efficacy and leading
to further study.

Also, this study has its limitations. The present study adapted convenient
sampling rather than random sampling. The participants are from the same school
and they are all form 5 and 6 students. The result may not be significant in
generalizing to other schools.

From an applied perspective, students can be aware of the influence of achievement goals on language learning strategies. According to different achievement goals, there are varies language learning strategies be suitable with them. Therefore, it is implicated students can use corresponding achievement goals and language learning strategies to improve their English learning as second language.
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