CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0   Introduction

This study investigated Malaysian university students' perceptions towards their problems in speaking English and their strategies to improve in spoken English. The researcher surveyed and interviewed University of Malaya undergraduates on their language-related and affective-related problems in speaking English and their cognitive and functional-use strategies to enhance oral proficiency. The researcher also compared between the English-major and non-English-major students because they received different total hours of exposure to the English language. Past studies such as those by Rujipornwasin (2004) and Carhill et al. (2008) mentioned that the amount of time of exposure to English language can affect students' proficiency level. The English-major students receive longer hours of exposure to English and are therefore assumed to have higher English language proficiency level than the non-English-major students. The researcher wished to find out if there were any significant differences between these groups' perceptions towards problems in speaking English and between their strategies to improve in spoken English. In turn, students, teachers, and the institution can take the necessary actions to bridge the gap. For instance, the non-English-major students can increase their use of the language learning strategies employed by the English-major students; the teachers can work on improving students' specific language areas and affective barriers; and the University can increase the number of hours of English courses in the non-English-major programmes.

1.1 Background of the Study

1.1.1 English Language in the University of Malaya (UM)

English is the second most important language in Malaysia after the national language which is the Malay language. The significance of English is apparent in education and employment. Most job opportunities nowadays put emphasis on the candidates' written and spoken English proficiency. The educational system has long since made English a compulsory subject in primary and secondary schools. At the tertiary level, many public universities and private institutions offer compulsory and/or optional English language courses for foundation and undergraduate students. For example, the University of Malaya (henceforth UM) incorporates two compulsory English courses in the Foundation Studies in Science and Built Environment programmes with the aim of developing students' listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills. At the undergraduate level, the university makes it compulsory for the students to take at least two English courses throughout their studies. Students can choose from a list of English courses offered by the Faculty of Languages and Linguistics. Apart from that, there are Degree programmes in UM that revolve around the English Language as a study major. These programmes are the Bachelor of Education (Teaching English as a Second Language (henceforth TESL)), the Bachelor of Languages and Linguistics (English), the Bachelor of Arts (English Studies), and the Bachelor of Arts (English Literature). Students in these programmes are exposed to more English-language and linguistic courses than students in other programmes.

Some non-English-major undergraduates mentioned that their faculty courses were conducted in English but some reported that theirs were taught in Malay, Chinese, or Tamil language. For instance and as supported by the 'Programme Handbook of The Faculty of Economics and Administration for Undergraduates Session 2008/2009', the core courses in

this faculty which in total are of 60 credit hours, are conducted in English. Meanwhile, their elective courses are taught either in English, Malay, or both languages. Only the university courses which include *Hubungan Etnik*, *Tamadun Islam Dan Tamadun Asia* (henceforth TITAS), *Kemahiran Maklumat*, and *Asas Pembangunan Keusahawanan* which are compulsory for all faculties, are conducted in the Malay language. Unlike the Economics and Administration Faculty, the Arts and Social Sciences Faculty used to have various mediums of instructions depending on the departments. Malay language was mostly used in classes under the Departments of Anthropology and Sociology, Geography, Social Administration and Justice, History, and Gender Studies; Tamil language was normally used in the Indian Studies classes; and Mandarin language was usually used in classes under the Chinese Studies Department. Teachers in other departments in this faculty used to teach in both Malay and English depending on the core courses, and these departments included the International Relations and Strategic Studies, Southeast Asian Studies, East Asian Studies, Media Studies, and Urban Studies and Planning. Only the English Department conducted its core courses fully in English. Such information was only valid until the year 2011 because from 2012 onwards, all instructors in this faculty are mandated to use English as the medium of instructions. Nonetheless, the change does not affect this study because during the period it was conducted, the teachers were given a freedom on the language they used in the classroom. As reported by students from this faculty, most teachers used their native languages. Thus, for the purpose of this study, students from other than the English Department in the Arts and Social Sciences Faculty were chosen to represent the non-English-major population because they were taught in languages other than English. This factor might add a variety to the findings when compared to the other chosen population, the English-major whose programmes are fully conducted in English.

There are a total of 60 credit hours of compulsory English-language or linguistic courses in each English-major programme. Table 1.1 lists some of the core courses in these programmes.

Table 1.1: Core Courses in English-Major Programmes

English-Major Programme	Core Courses
Bachelor of Education (TESL)	Linguistics for Language Teachers; Introduction to Grammar of English; Listening and Speaking in the English as a Second Language (henceforth ESL) Classroom; Reading in the ESL Classroom; Writing in the ESL Classroom; Language Learning and Language Use; Language Testing and Assessment. (Source: 'Programme Handbook of The Faculty of Education for Undergraduates Session 2009/2010')
Bachelor of Linguistics and Languages (English)	Introductory Linguistics; Introductory Semiotics; Academic Writing; Introductory History of Linguistics; Language Skills; Language Phonetics and Phonology; Language Morphology; Language Syntax; Language for Special Purposes; Language Discourse and Text. (Source: 'Programme Handbook of The Faculty of Languages and Linguistics for Undergraduates Session 2009/2010')
Bachelor of Arts (English Studies)	Basic Techniques of Writing for the Arts and Social Sciences; Oral Skills; Grammar and Practice; Background to English Literature; Literature and Language; Critical Thinking and Writing. (Source: 'Programme Handbook of The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences for Undergraduates Session 2008/2009')
Bachelor of Arts (English Literature)	Basic Techniques of Writing for the Arts and Social Sciences; Oral Skills; Linguistics; Ways of Reading Literature; Exploring Genres; 19th Century English Literature; Augustan Literature; American Literature; 20th Century British Literature; Literary Criticism; Postcolonial Literature in English. (Source: 'Programme Handbook of The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences for Undergraduates Session 2008/2009')

On the contrary, it is compulsory for the non-English-major students to learn a total of only six credit hours of English-language courses. They are required to choose any two English

courses from a list that are offered by the Faculty of Languages and Linguistics, consisting of English for Academic Purpose, Professional Writing in English, and Effective Presentation Skills, with references to the 'Programme Handbook of The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences for Undergraduates Session 2008/2009', 'Programme Handbook of The Faculty of Economics and Administration for Undergraduates Session 2008/2009', and 'Programme Handbook of The Faculty of Engineering for Undergraduates Session 2009/2010'. However, students who obtain a Band 1 or a Band 2 in their Malaysian University English Test (henceforth MUET) must register for the Fundamentals of English course aside from any one of the three English courses mentioned above. Therefore, the difference between the number of hours of classroom exposure to English language between the English-major and non-English-major students is quite vast.

At the entry level, English-major Degree programmes in UM demand higher English language qualifications in choosing their student candidates. TESL requires the applicants to pass their *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia* (henceforth SPM)-level English Language examination with at least a C3. They must also obtain not lower than a Band 4 in their MUET. The English Studies and English Literature programmes also require their candidates to obtain at least a C in their SPM-level English to gain entry to the university. On the other hand, non-English-major programmes do not place any minimum grade for English at SPM level, and set the minimum MUET qualification at Band 1 for their applicants. Thus, it is well-known that students accepted in the English-major programmes possess higher English language proficiency. This language proficiency includes oral proficiency which is the focus of this study. According to Byrne (1998), the number of hours for which students are exposed to English in the classroom plays a role in developing their oral skills. Thus, in this study, the English-major students are not only assumed to have high English language competency at the entry level but are also presumed to be more

advanced in spoken English because they receive longer hours of exposure to English in the university.

1.1.2   Spoken Language versus Written Language

In the classroom, ESL students are trained to develop their academic language skills, namely listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Listening and speaking are involved in spoken language, while reading and writing are involved in written language (Byrne, 1998). Spoken language is different from written language because of several features like stress and intonation, lack of speech organization, simpler vocabulary and syntax, and pauses and fillers (Underwood, 1989). While reading and writing are receptive skills which involve receiving and understanding a language, writing or speaking are productive skills as they require production of the language (Byrne, 1998). Out of the four skills, speaking has been viewed as the most important skill because it encompasses the knowledge of all the other language skills, according to Ur (1996) as quoted by Khamkien (2010). In order to produce spoken language, students need to have a broad base of receptive knowledge that is gained from listening or reading (Byrne, 1998). They also need knowledge of the sounds and structure of the language in order to achieve spoken language accuracy. However, training students to be fluent is as important as teaching the accurate forms of the language because real-life oral communications are bound to "the time-constraint and reciprocity conditions inherent in listener-speaker situations" (Lim, 1994: 2). In a natural speech, the speaker needs fluency which is the ability to convey a message without too much hesitation because hesitation can cause communication breakdown as the listener may lose interest or patience (Byrne, 1998). The production of spoken language in real-life situations requires real-time processing that is not needed in writing in which there is no immediate audience. "Participants in a spoken interaction produce and process texts as they go along" but

written texts are produced as complete expressions by the writer before they are separately interpreted by the reader (Widdowson, 2007: 7). In other words, a produced spoken text is interpreted simultaneously by the listener who also has to think quickly in order to respond to it while the conversation is going on. On the other hand, one can take more time to think when producing a written text because it is one-way and no simultaneous interaction with another person is involved. Hence, a verbal language is usually produced within a shorter time frame than a written language. Due to the real-time processing of spoken language, the researcher chose to focus on the difficulties that students faced in speaking English.

This study was also interested in the strategies that learners used to improve their spoken English. Many journals have explored the strategies for written language but few have studied the strategies for spoken language (Huang, 2004). For example, Johnson (2011) studied the teachers' implementation of writing strategies in the New Jersey Writing Project in Texas (henceforth NJWPT) and found that their top-four most-implemented writing strategies were 'in-class writing', 'prewriting', 'journal writing', and 'teacher writing with students'. This article also proved the availability of an instrument to measure writing strategies use, such as the Self-Assessment Writing Implementation Survey (Eads, 1989) which was employed by Johnson (2011). Johnson also examined the teachers' attitudes towards writing and the teaching of writing as a result of the three-week NJWPT, and found that they were positively impacted by the professional development. This in turn can enhance the teachers' implementation of writing strategies in the classroom which can then improve students' writing performance (Johnson, 2011). Thus, the teaching of writing strategies to teachers can result in the increase of the teachers' attitudes towards writing and classroom implementation of writing strategies. Although few studies explored the strategies for spoken language in the same way, there is a study by Huang (2004: 2) who combined "Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and Halliday's systemic functional linguistics

to explore the effects of raising awareness of strategy use on learners' strategy use and oral production". The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (henceforth SILL) (Oxford, 1990), Reflective Cards, Strategy Recall Checklists, and audio-taped recordings were used and students were divided into experimental and comparison groups. For the part on oral production, the experimental group who received awareness-raising in strategy use showed advancement in 'lexical richness', 'lexico-grammatical resources', and 'grammatical intricacy' as compared to the comparison group who did not receive the treatment. However, "the effect size analysis indicated that raising learners' awareness of strategy use had only a small effect on the grammatical intricacy scores associated with learners' oral production" (Huang, 2004: 205-206). Aside from the mentioned research, studies on spoken language strategies were noticeably fewer than those on written strategies, and therefore, the area caught the researcher's interest. Thus, this study fills a gap in the research area of spoken language learning strategies.

1.1.3 The Importance of Spoken English

Spoken English competency is important for employment chances and career advancement. Graduates with better English speaking competency are more likely to be employed, especially in the business and industry areas (Hadley, 1993 in Rujipornwasin, 2004). In Malaysia, "generally, companies are searching for potential candidates who are, while fulfilling certain requirements, able to speak and write in both *Bahasa Malaysia* and English" and "there are also general understanding that job interviews for professional vacancies in critical fields like Law, Accountancy, and Engineering are expected to be conducted in English" (Hanapiah, 2002: 5). In terms of career development, employees who can speak English well are usually preferred for higher level positions because they are seen as the better representatives of the business or the organization (Hanapiah, 2002). For

an occupation that is directly related to the English language such as an English teacher, spoken English proficiency is even more essential because he or she also acts as a model speaker in the classroom. This is supported by O'Dwyer (2006) who believes that the quality of an ESL teacher's spoken English may affect the oral performance of the students. Therefore, university students who are in training to be future English teachers like the TESL students may perceive spoken English to be more important.

Besides for career pursuit, the English-major students may also perceive spoken English with a higher importance for academic purposes as compared to the non-English-major students. In Rujipornwasin's (2004) findings, the English-medium Engineering students in Assumption University (henceforth ABAC), Thailand rated higher for the items '*Speaking English fulfils a school requirement*' and '*Speaking competence allows me to pass the exam*', in comparison to the Thai-medium Engineering students in Mahidol University *(see 2.3 for details)*. The reason for the significant differences as justified by Rujipornwasin is the use of different mediums of instructions between these two universities. While English is used in ABAC for teaching and learning processes and in the examination, Thai language is used in Mahidol University for the same academic purposes. Similarly, the medium of instructions for the English-major students in this study is English, while native languages were used in some of the non-English-major programmes *(1.1.1)*.

Although this study did not examine students' perceptions towards the importance of spoken English, it assumed that the English-major students viewed spoken English with a higher level of importance, similar to the perceptions of the English-medium students in Rujipornwasin's (2004) study. Therefore, they may be more motivated to improve their spoken English and in turn, may become more successful English speakers. More successful English speakers may perceive themselves to have fewer problems in speaking

English and may use more strategies for spoken English; these were the two aspects investigated in this study.

1.1.4 Problems in Speaking English

Among the most common problems related to students' spoken English are inhibition and a lack of confidence to speak English. Inhibition can be a defence mechanism to protect a weak self-esteem or a low self-confidence (Brown, 2000). In Huang, Cunningham, and Finn's (2010: 74) article, two teacher participants mentioned that English to Speakers of Other Languages (henceforth ESOL) students were usually nervous and uncomfortable when they had to speak English for "oral presentation in content classes". Huang, Cunningham, and Finn added that one of the teachers believed that this problem is related to self-esteem and self-confidence. English as a Foreign Language (henceforth EFL) teachers in private universities in Bangladesh reported that most students are shy and lack courage to speak English in front of the class (Farooqui, 2007). According to Farooqui (2007: 104), the teachers blamed the problem on the educational system in schools where lessons are conducted in 'Bangla' and "creativity is not encouraged". Farooqui added that the teachers also mentioned about monolingualism in the country which has further lessened the students' oportunities to practice speaking English outside the classroom. Meanwhile, Inegbeboh (2009) discovered that the female students in Benson Idahosa University, Nigeria were more reserved in Spoken Class than the male, as a result of gender discrimination. The female gender in the society are expected to only "be seen and not heard", so they become shy to speak up (Inegbeboh, 2009: 572). Inhibition to speak up can also be cultural as found by Han (2007) in a study of Asian students who were studying in the United States at graduate level. According to Han, the students were not used to speaking up because the education systems back in their home countries are usually

teacher-centred. They were also withdrawn by their lack of proficiency in spoken English as well as their lack of understanding of spoken and written English. Based on these examples, inhibition to speak English can be caused by a lack of opportunities, a low self-esteem, gender, and culture. According to Brown (2000), low self-esteem and inhibition are among the affective factors that impede success in language learning, with 'affective' being emotion-related or feelings-related.

Students' feelings about speaking English can also be influenced by the teachers, peers, classroom condition, and speaking activities in the classroom. Rujipornwasin (2004) found some differences between the Thai-medium and English-medium students' perceptions towards their problems in speaking English that were related to these aspects. For instance, the Thai-medium students reported on feeling less comfortable communicating in English with teachers who are also Thais because it felt strange to them and because some teachers did not listen. On the contrary, Rujipornwasin found that the English-medium students did not have this problem as much because their learning and teaching processes are conducted in English. Some Thai-medium students in her study also reported to be mocked by peers when they tried to converse in English, that their motivation to speak English was reduced because the class had too many students, and that the speaking activities in the English course are not relevant to real-life situations. On the other hand, according to Rujipornwasin, the English-medium students mostly did not perceive these situations as so much of a problem. In the light of the findings above, the researcher chose to study students' perceptions towards their affective-related problems in speaking English by looking at the factors related to self-confidence, speaking practice opportunities, teachers, peers, classroom condition, and speaking activities.

Past studies have also discussed students' problems in speaking English in terms of the language, such as vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar weaknesses. The

Bangladeshi students in Farooqui's (2007) article were found by their teachers to have limited vocabulary problem. A teacher in Huang, Cunningham, and Finn's (2010) study said that the ESOL learners' pronunciations of certain English words can cause misunderstanding, not due to inaccuracy but due to their strong accents. Ting, Mahanita, and Chang (2010) discovered that the Malaysian university students in their study commonly made five grammatical errors in their utterances during a simulated role-play, and the order of these errors based on the frequency of occurrences was 'preposition', 'question', 'word form', 'article', and 'verb form'. Grammatical, phonetic, and lexical mastery are parts of having linguistic knowledge (Ting, Mahanita, and Chang, 2010), and lacks of them would be considered as language-related problems in the current study. Fluency or the ability to speak spontaneously without too much hesitation or too many pauses that interfere with communication (Byrne, 1998) would also be looked at. In Rujipornwasin's (2004) research, the Thai-medium students reported to have more difficulties to speak spontaneously and fluently as compared to the English-medium students. She justified that the Thai-medium students' fluency and spontaneity were hindered by insufficient exposure to English due to the use of Thai language in the classroom. Rujipornwasin (2004: 71) added that "they study only one course of English per semester (3 hour sessions, twice a week)". Besides the affective factors, the language-related factors associated with spoken English were also investigated in the present study through the students' perceptions.

1.1.5 Strategies for Spoken English

In order to help improve students' proficiency in oral English, many methods have been practiced in various universities or institutions. Thailand for example, has adopted the Communicative Language Teaching (henceforth CLT) approach in EFL classrooms instead

of the former use of Grammar-Translation and Audiolingual methods (Khamkien, 2010). Oral tests can also be used as a tool to motivate students to improve their spoken English (Khamkien, 2010; Farooqui, 2007). Some teachers initiate small topics like asking about students' background and interests or play language games to encourage shy students to speak up (Farooqui, 2007). The Benson Idahosa University in Nigeria began to overcome their female students' inhibition to speak English through an affective strategy which was conducting talks on self-image enhancement (Inegbeboh, 2009). These are among the efforts that have been made by the teachers and learning institutions to improve the learners' spoken English. Oxford (1990) suggests six categories of strategies that language learners can practice to improve in the target language: memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies *(see 2.5.3 for details)*. These categories combine both learning and communication strategies. According to Tarone (1983), learning strategies aim to help students 'learn', while communication strategies aid them to 'communicate'. Oxford's (1990) strategy classification system was chosen as the framework of the present study because it suited the intentions of the researcher to investigate students' strategies to learn English as well as to communicate in English. However, since the scope of this study is spoken English, the problem with adapting this model was selecting the strategies that can improve the learning of spoken language rather than of general language.

Therefore, the researcher referred to another study that adapted Oxford's model of language learning strategies (henceforth LLSs) by selecting the strategies that can enhance oral proficiency. The said study was by Nakanoko (2004) who found that oral proficiency correlated positively with some cognitive strategies (Oxford, 1990) and most functional-use (Bialystok, 1981) or active-use (Green and Oxford, 1995) strategies *(see 2.5.6)*. Nakanoko adapted Oxford's (1990) SILL which is an instrument to examine students' strategies use,

by selecting 31 items, 17 of which were cognitive strategies and 14 of which reflected functional-use strategies, and examined each item's correlation to low, medium, and high oral proficiency level students. Nakanoko (2004: 20-22) defined cognitive LLSs as those which "relate to the mental operations that a language learner uses when he or she tries to process linguistic input to make it a new piece of knowledge in his or her interlanguage" and defined functional-use strategies with reference to (Bialystok, 1981) as "those which language learner utilizes in order to functionally use a target language (TL), that is, to practice TL in an authentic or naturalistic setting", including those "that are used to find opportunities to functionally use a TL". Since this study by Nakanoko found that oral proficiency can be enhanced by functional-use strategies and slightly improved by cognitive strategies, the present study focused on these two strategies to study UM students' strategies for spoken English. While Nakanoko (2004) adapted the SILL for English Speakers Learning a New Language (Version 5.1) because his ESL students were considered advanced *(Appendix G)*, the researcher adapted the SILL for Speakers of Other Languages Learning English (Version 7.0) because it was believed to suit the proficiency levels of UM students in general *(see Table 3.2 for the SILL adaptation)*.

Students who are learning English as a second language normally have problems in speaking English, from language-related like shortcomings in pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar, to affective-related like feeling shy and unconfident to speak up. Therefore, students can try to improve and at times to compensate their weaknesses in spoken English by using LLSs like cognitive strategies and functional-use strategies. The first part of this study investigated how students perceived their problems in speaking English in terms of linguistic and affective factors. The second part of the study examined their use of cognitive and functional-use strategies to improve their spoken English. Since the English-major students are generally regarded to have higher spoken English competency, the

researcher was interested to find out if they perceived themselves to have fewer problems in speaking English as opposed to the non-English-major students. The researcher also wanted to find out if they had been practicing LLSs for their spoken English more frequently than the non-English-major students.

1.2   Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was twofold. The first was to investigate UM students' perceptions towards their language-related and affective-related problems in speaking English. The second was to examine UM students' use of cognitive and functional-use strategies to improve their English-speaking skills. In addition, the UM students were divided into the English-major and non-English-major students, who would be compared in terms of their perceptions towards the problems and in terms of their strategies use. The findings of this study indicated if students who are assumed to have better spoken English proficiency and who receive longer hours of exposure to English language in the university which are the English-major students, perceived themselves to have fewer problems in speaking English and used LLSs for spoken English more frequently. The study provides insight to UM teachers and the University on students' perceived problems and students' LLSs use regarding spoken English. Thus, it can guide them to help the students improve in specific language and affective areas, and to select the cognitive and functional-use strategies that are frequently used by the supposedly more proficient group of speakers to be applied in the classroom.

Therefore, the objectives of this study are:

a. To investigate the English-major and non-English-major students' perceptions towards their language-related and affective-related problems in speaking English

b. To analyse the similarities and differences between the English-major and non-English-major students' perceptions towards their language-related and affective-related problems in speaking English

c. To examine the English-major and non-English-major students' cognitive and functional-use language learning strategies for spoken English

d. To analyse the similarities and differences between the English-major and non-English-major students' cognitive and functional-use language learning strategies for spoken English

1.3   Research Questions

The questions to be answered in this study were:

1. What are the self-perceived language-related and affective-related problems in speaking English among the English-major UM undergraduates?

2. What are the self-perceived language-related and affective-related problems in speaking English among the non-English-major UM undergraduates?

3. What are the similarities and differences between the English-major and non-English-major UM undergraduates in terms of their self-perceived language-related and affective-related problems in speaking English?

4. What are the cognitive and functional-use language learning strategies used by the English-major UM undergraduates to improve their spoken English?

5. What are the cognitive and functional-use language learning strategies used by the non-English-major UM undergraduates to improve their spoken English?

6. What are the similarities and differences between the English-major and non-English-major UM undergraduates in terms of their use of cognitive and functional-use language learning strategies to improve their spoken English?

1.4 Research Methodology

The study population was UM undergraduates who were divided into the English-major and non-English-major groups. 30 students from the Bachelor of Education (TESL) and 30 students from the Bachelor of Arts (except for English Studies and English Literature) were selected as the samples to represent the subgroups respectively. They were chosen through quota sampling *(see 3.1)*. The instruments used to collect data were a questionnaire to survey the 60 respondents, and an interview with 10 of them to obtain more details and to confirm findings. The questionnaire consisted of three sections: Students' Educational Details (Section One), Students' Perceptions towards Problems in Speaking English (Section Two), and Students' Strategies to Improve in Spoken English (Section Three). In order to administer the questionnaire to the TESL students, the researcher asked for permission from and made an arrangement with a particular lecturer, and then continued distributing questionnaires to other TESL students at the foyer of the Education Faculty. Meanwhile, the researcher surveyed the non-English-major Arts students by sourcing for them at the foyer of the Arts and Social Sciences Faculty, in the Third Residential College, and with help from a personal contact to distribute some questionnaires. The questionnaire data analyses were performed with a combination of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (henceforth SPSS) version 18.0 and manual

calculation. In details, the SPSS was used for frequency and percentage counts for Section One and for frequency counts for Section Two and Section Three, while manual calculation was used for score counts for Section Two and Section Three. In Section One, respondents were given an option to leave their contact numbers. Through these numbers, the researcher randomly contacted five respondents from each group and asked if they were willing to participate in a follow-up survey via paper-and-pencil interviewing (henceforth PAPI). The interview had six main questions revolving around students' language-related problems, affective-related problems, cognitive strategies, functional-use strategies, and the university English courses. Data from the interview were analysed manually by finding and grouping the key words.

The methodology in this study was mixed-method in terms of data collection and data analysis. It means that quantitative and qualitative methods were combined at these two stages (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner, 2007). This study was quantitative because it adopted a survey or a descriptive method as the researcher was interested in gathering the perceptions of a large population concerning an issue (Singh, Chan, and Sidhu, 2006). As mentioned above, questionnaires were administered to 30 English-major and 30 non-English-major students to obtain their perceptions towards language-related and affective-related problems in speaking English, and to examine their cognitive and functional-use strategies use in enhancing spoken English. Then 10 survey participants from each group were interviewed, as part of a qualitative method that aimed to bring up and explore ideas that were not addressed by the quantitative method (Singh, Chan, and Sidhu, 2006). The survey would enable making generalizations that could not be attained with qualitative data, and the interview would provide clarification and validation of the quantitative data (Sieber, 1973 in Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner, 2007).

1.5   Significance of the Study

This study will enhance understanding on UM students' problems in speaking English through their perceptions and on their strategies use in relation to spoken English. As a result, the necessary actions can be taken by the students, teachers, and University. The English-major students will be more aware of the language areas that they need to improve since they may have careers related to the English language. It is important for them to improve their spoken language accuracy if they are planning to be English Language teachers because they will be a model speaker for the students. The non-English-major students will understand any barriers they had against speaking English and can try to overcome them in order to speak more and in turn, improve their fluency. This is important because graduates will be more marketable in the career market if they possess high spoken English competency (Hadley, 1993 in Rujipornwasin, 2004). Khamkien (2010) believes that teachers are responsible to anticipate students' problems and to devise the strategies to improve these problems. Therefore, teachers can address the language-related and affective-related problems that students faced inside and outside the classroom. The University can improve the curriculum if the perceived problems leaned more towards their responsibilities. Meanwhile, the study's theoretical framework on LLSs was based on the findings by Nakanoko (2004) that some cognitive strategies and most functional-use strategies can enhance oral proficiency. Thus, the strategies included for the second part of this study can be taught to and used by the students as part of the efforts to improve their spoken English. The comparison between the groups was significant because the non-English-major students may increase their use of the strategies which were frequently employed by the English-major students who are assumed to be the more proficient English speakers.

1.6   Scope and Population

To summarize, the first scope of this study is students' perceptions towards their language-related and affective-related problems in speaking English, and the second scope is the cognitive and functional-use strategies that students used to improve their spoken English. The theoretical framework for examining students' language-related and affective-related problems in speaking English came from Brown (2000) and Rujipornwasin (2004), while Oxford (1990) and Nakanoko (2004) were referred to in order to investigate students' cognitive and functional-use strategies for spoken English. The population in this study was UM undergraduates who were divided into the English-major and non-English-major groups. While the sample for the first group consisted of 30 TESL students, the second group was represented by 30 students from various non-English-major programmes in the Arts and Social Sciences Faculty. Age, gender, ethnicity, and study semester were not considered as variables in this study.

1.7   Limitations

One of the limitations of the study is in terms of the sample and population. The non-English-major sample was taken from the Arts and Social Sciences Faculty where native languages were mostly used as the mediums of instructions in the classroom. Different results might emerge if the non-English-major sample was chosen from other faculties where English is used for teaching and learning, such as the Faculty of Economics and Administration or the Faculty of Engineering. Moreover, the Arts students who were selected as the sample for this study were from the batches of the years before 2012, when the curriculum had not yet mandated the instructors to conduct their lessons in English. The

non-English-major sample mostly had their core courses taught in native languages like Malay and Tamil since the teachers were given the freedom of language choice. Potentially different findings might be obtained from using the more recent batches of the non-English-major Arts programmes whose core courses are taught in English.

There are also limitations in the scope and instrumentation. For the first part of this study, students' language-related problems in speaking English were only examined through their perceptions, rather than their actual speech. Studying actual linguistic problems would require different instrumentation such as audio-recordings of speeches or conversations because the questionnaire utilized by the researcher can only investigate the students' perceptions. Therefore, students' problems in speaking English in this study were only self-perceived. For the second part of the study, the questionnaire on students' strategies for spoken English was only based on Nakanoko's (2004) adaptation of the SILL, rather than an adoption of Nakanoko's questionnaire itself. While Nakanoko adapted cognitive and functional-use strategies from the SILL version 5.1, the researcher adapted similar items from the SILL version 7.0 *(1.1.5)*. The strategies in the present study may not be as valid as Nakanoko's version in enhancing oral proficiency because they were not the exact strategies which had been tested and found to correlate positively or slightly correlate positively to oral proficiency. Nonetheless, they may be considered as the strategies for spoken English because they carry the definitions of cognitive and functional-use strategies such as defined by Nakanoko *(see 3.2.1)*.

This study also has limited data analysis method. The findings did not show a correlation between students' LLSs and oral proficiency because the researcher did not choose to conduct a Chi-square test between the variables due to limited knowledge on such methodology. Students' perceptions towards their problems in speaking English were studied separately as were their strategies for spoken English, and the researcher made

inferences based on previous studies. Past studies found that the English-medium students perceived themselves to have fewer problems in speaking English (Rujipornwasin, 2004), and the more successful language learners or the higher proficiency level students used LLSs more frequently (Alwahibee, 2000; Yang, 2010). The English-major students in the present study are considered the equivalents to the English-medium students, the more successful language learners, or the higher proficiency level students in these previous researches. Thus, such studies were referred to in coming up with the theories and to justify the findings.

1.8   Conclusion

This study is organized into six chapters. Chapter One contains an introduction, background of the study, purpose of the study, research questions, research methodology, significance of the study, scope and population, and limitations. Chapter Two reviews past researches related to the areas of this study which are problems in speaking English and LLSs. Chapter Three describes the sampling method, elaborates on the instruments and data collection procedures, and explains how data were analysed. Chapter Four presents the results of the study by showing relevant tables, while Chapter Five discusses the results by referring to past findings. Lastly, Chapter Six summarizes the whole study, discusses the implications of the findings, and provides recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the relevant theories and past findings related to this study from general to specific. It begins by describing about the receptive and productive skills involved in language learning, and then narrows down to the scope of the study which is spoken language. The researcher briefly touches on the importance of spoken English before talking about the first specific area of the study which is the problems in speaking English. Students' problems in speaking English are described in terms of language-related or linguistic aspects and feelings-related or affective factors with main references to Rujipornwasin (2004) and Brown (2000). The chapter moves on to the second area of the research which is the language learning and communication strategies by elaborating on Oxford's (1990) model and instrumentation. Finally, the researcher explores the more specific focus of the second part which is the strategies for spoken English by referring to Nakanoko's (2004) findings on the correlation between oral proficiency and cognitive and functional-use strategies.

2.1 Receptive Language Skills versus Productive Language Skills

Learning a language involves using receptive and productive skills. Receptive skills are the abilities to receive and understand the language, while productive skills are the abilities to produce the language (Byrne, 1998). Receiving and comprehending a language can happen through reading or listening in which students decode the written or spoken message; thus, reading and listening are receptive language skills. Producing a language is

encoding a message either in written or spoken form, and therefore, writing and speaking are productive skills. While reading and writing are the skills involved in written language, listening and speaking happen in spoken language (Byrne, 1998). Byrne mentioned that foreign language students need a broad receptive knowledge in the target language in order to produce it comfortably. However, Byrne thinks that merely exposing students to samples of spoken language in the coursebook is not adequate to teach speaking because the speaking models in the book usually resemble written language which is more organized and structured, less redundant, and lacking in natural language features like hesitations and pauses. Whereas, spoken language contains features like simpler structure and vocabulary, unpredictable organization, high level of redundancy, hesitations, pauses and 'fillers', and stress and intonation (Underwood, 1989). Foreign language students need to be taught to listen to models of the language in its natural use in order to understand it when they are spoken to because comprehension is crucial for effective communication; hence, teaching speaking requires the teaching of listening (Byrne, 1998). Besides listening, reading and writing can also contribute in developing students' spoken language. As illustrated by Byrne, reading can help to enrich learners' topics and vocabulary since ideas and words are presented more clearly in written form. Byrne added that during writing, especially collaborative writing, students need to communicate with each other and as a result, they get some practice in speaking. In short, productive and receptive skills can be integrated in the teaching of a foreign or second language. One of the reasons why this study chose to focus on spoken language was because the productive skill of speaking includes the learning of other language skills.

2.2   Speaking Skills

Speaking has been viewed as the most challenging language skill compared to reading, listening, and writing. For instance, in a survey on 'The Use of Spoken Language in KBSR and KBSM EFL Classes', 50% of the teachers mentioned that their students needed more practice in speaking out of the four language skills (Lim, 1994). Furthermore, speaking is bound to time constraint and reciprocity conditions that lie in listener-speaker interactions (Bygate, 1987 in Lim, 1994). Within the time constraint, speakers also need to encode a message as accurately and as fluently as possible to avoid communication breakdown. Speaking with accuracy means avoiding errors that affect the phonological, syntactic, semantic, or discourse features of a language and that may interfere with the listener's comprehension (Byrne, 1998). By speaking fluently, it means that the speaker gets their message across without too much hesitation or too many pauses that may cause the listener to get bored or impatient (Byrne, 1998). According to Lim (1994) with reference to Hammerly (1991: 2), "speech is primary to language" because 80% to 90% of communications involve audio-oral skills. Lim also referred to Weissberg (1988) who claimed that oral output is getting more recognition as one of the factors that promote second language acquisition success besides input. Ur (1996), as mentioned by Khamkien (2010), stated that speaking encompasses the knowledge of all the other language skills, and is therefore the most important language skill. One of the purposes of this study was to explore the challenges that students faced in speaking English such as the problems related to accuracy and fluency.

2.3   The Importance of Spoken English to ESL Learners

Most nations in which English is spoken as a second or foreign language recognize the importance of the language, especially for employment and educational purposes. A lack of competency in English can be a disadvantage when looking for a job, especially in the private sector (Zaaba et al., 2010). However, "as language is for communication, learning a language without experiencing the satisfaction of speaking it, puts a distance between the learner and the language and this can be a major barrier to developing general proficiency" (Lim, 1994: 2). Therefore, achieving oral proficiency in English is important to ESL learners. Furthermore, graduates with higher spoken English competency stand higher chances in employment (Hadley, 1993 in Rujipornwasin, 2004). Past findings showed that most ESL students are aware of the importance of spoken English. Rujipornwasin (2004: 66) found that most Engineering students from ABAC and Mahidol University agreed that spoken English is important to them in "pursuing a higher degree of education", "studying abroad", "surviving in foreign countries", "meeting and conversing with more foreigners", and "pursuing future career". Most of them also agreed on the significance of English speaking ability for affective-related aspects like gaining them more respect from others and increasing their self-confidence.

Nonetheless, spoken English may be perceived with a higher importance by students whose academic programmes make more contact with the English language. Rujipornwasin (2004) who conducted a comparative study found that the English-medium (ABAC) students perceived a higher importance towards the use of spoken English in school settings in comparison to the Thai-medium (Mahidol) students. The statement that '*Speaking English fulfils a school requirement*' was rated by ABAC students with a mean of 3.79 and was rated by Mahidol students with a mean of 3.05, while the statement that

'*Speaking competence allows me to pass the exam*' was rated by ABAC students with a mean of 4.12 and was rated by Mahidol students with a mean of 3.79. According to Rujipornwasin, the different mediums of instructions between the universities were the causes of the significant differences between their perceptions. By referring to these findings, the present study assumed that spoken English was perceived with a higher importance by the English-major students since English is used for their studies. On the other hand, the non-English-major representatives in this study were mostly taught in their native languages during the academic sessions before the year 2012 *(see 1.1.1)*. In addition, the English-major curriculum contains more English-related courses; hence, the importance of English is emphasized for them. Even though this study did not investigate students' perceptions towards the importance of spoken English, significant differences regarding the scope of this research could be related to the assumption that the English-major students perceived spoken English with a higher importance due to the reasons mentioned above.

2.4   ESL Learners' Problems in Speaking English

Students who are learning English as a second or foreign language may often find difficulties in speaking English and the problems may be language-related or affective-related. Language-related problems in this study refer to the lack of linguistic knowledge to perform well in the target language. Linguistic knowledge includes phonetic, lexical, and grammatical mastery (Ting, Mahanita, and Chang, 2010), and "how we use this knowledge in actual speech production and comprehension" is linguistic performance (Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams, 2007: 11). Affective-related problems refer to barriers in the form of students' feelings. As Brown (2000) defined it, the affective domain revolves around the emotions and may develop through various personality factors and through students'

feelings about themselves and about others that they interact with. Among the affective barriers to speaking English that have been mentioned in past studies are inhibition and low self-esteem. This study investigated how students perceived their weaknesses in spoken English in terms of linguistic aspects like pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar, and in terms of affective factors such as a lack of confidence, inhibition, and feelings related to the teacher and to other students.

2.4.1 Language-Related Problems in Speaking English

A number of past researches revealed that ESL/ESOL/EFL students have problem with pronunciations in English. Khamkien (2010) stated that most Thai students have problems with certain English sounds because they are absent in the Thai language. As Khamkien illustrated, in the tests, students usually mispronounce the initial sound of words like 'think', 'although', 'them', and 'the' due to the absence of the letter *h* in their first language. Furthermore, as added by Khamkien, the final sound of '*How much*' is usually pronounced as '*How mud*'. Even though pronunciation practices are done in the classroom, some students still make such mistakes because of a "negative L1 transfer" (Khamkien, 2010: 187). This is supported by Hinkel (2006) who mentioned that ESOL students' accents affect their pronunciation of certain words or letter combinations. Meanwhile, Hayati (2010: 121) attributed pronunciation problems among Iranian EFL students to the educational system in Iran in which "reading" and "translation" are given more emphasis in English language teaching. Hayati said that even for the English-major courses, the accuracy of pronunciation is not given a priority. In addition, Hayati attributed the problem to the non-native-speaking English teachers' lack of linguistic knowledge on the pronunciation of certain words, which can lead the students to also mispronounce the words.

Limited vocabulary is another problem faced by most students learning English as a second or foreign language. Farooqui (2007: 103) interviewed five teachers from five private universities in Bangladesh regarding their students' spoken English, and three of them mentioned that "the students usually have a small English vocabulary". By using a self-designed speaking ability test, Jongutsah (1987, in Rujipornwasin, 2004: 20) found that vocabulary limitations among the Thai upper secondary school students "were so severe as to make conversation virtually impossible". Rujipornwasin (2004) reported that most of the Thai-medium Engineering students in her study perceived that they did not have enough vocabulary to speak English effectively.

Besides pronunciation and vocabulary problems, ESL learners often make grammatical errors when speaking English. Ting, Mahanita, and Chang (2010) conducted an error analysis of 42 Malaysian university students' utterances in five simulated role plays, and found five most common grammatical errors in their oral productions. They reported that 'preposition' was the most frequent error made by these students, followed by 'question', 'word form', 'article', and 'verb form'. With reference to Dulay, Burt, and Krashen's (1982) surface structure descriptions, Ting, Mahanita, and Chang categorized the students' error types into 'misinformation', 'omission', 'addition', 'misordering', and 'severe errors'. They found that most preposition errors were due to misinformation and addition, while most question form errors were caused by omission and misordering. For word form, students usually made the error of using the wrong parts of speech; for articles, students normally "added articles unnecessarily or omitted them when they should be used"; and for verb form, students tended to make omission and addition errors (Ting, Mahanita, and Chang, 2010: 60).

One of the objectives of this study was to investigate UM undergraduates' perceptions towards their language-related problems in speaking English. To achieve this

goal, Rujipornwasin's (2004) 'Part Three: The Problems the Engineering Students Face in Improving Their Spoken English' questionnaire *(Appendix F)* was adapted. Ten items that revolve around linguistic or language-related problems were selected and classified into 'lexical', 'syntactic', 'phonetic', and 'fluency' categories by the researcher *(see Table 3.1)*. The categorization made the questionnaire items looked more organized and made it easier to distinguish whether the root causes of the problems were related to words, sentence structure, sound system, or fluency.

2.4.2   Affective-Related Problems in Speaking English

Some studies mentioned about students' feelings-related problems in speaking English, such as their inhibition or shyness to speak English. Brown (2000: 147) describes inhibition as a defensive mechanism to "protect a fragile ego", a weak self-esteem, or a low self-confidence. Teachers in the private universities in Bangladesh reported that most of their students are shy to speak English inside the classroom (Farooqui, 2007). According to Farooqui, one of the reasons given by the teachers is monolingualism in the country which has limited the opportunities for students to practice speaking English outside the classroom. As quoted by a teacher participant in Farooqui's study, a student complained that friends will laugh at them if they speak English, while practising with family members is not possible either. Furthermore, inhibition to speak English can stem from the educational system regarding the teacher's language choice. Farooqui's (2007: 103) participants traced the private university students' lack of courage to speak English back to their limited interaction in English in school, because many school teachers "take English classes using Bangla". Rujipornwasin's (2004) findings indicated that most Engineering students in Mahidol University were shy and lacked confidence to speak English, and she

attributed this problem to the use of Thai language as the medium of instructions in the university.

In the meantime, self-esteem or "evaluation which individuals make and customarily maintain with regard to themselves" (Coopersmith, 1967: 4-5, in Brown, 2000: 145) has been found to correlate positively with language success. Brown (2000) classifies self-esteem into three levels: general or global, situational or specific, and task-based. According to Heyde (1979, in Brown, 2000), at all three levels, positive self-esteem can enhance one's performance in oral production tasks. Therefore, a low self-esteem can be a barrier to achieving spoken English proficiency. Two teachers interviewed by Huang, Cunningham, and Finn (2010) reported that their ESOL students were the most unconfident when they had to speak English in front of the classroom during oral presentation in content classes, and one of the teachers attributed this problem to self-esteem which he believed is crucial for the youngsters.

Inhibition and a lack of confidence to speak English may also be cultural or gender-related. Han (2007) found that the Asian students who were studying in the United States at the graduate level were inhibited to speak English during classroom oral discussions due to their cultural background and language barrier. According to Han, the students admitted that they were not trained to speak up during lectures back in their countries. Han added that the students also reported to have problems comprehending the native-speaking lecturers' speech and the reading materials, and therefore, they lacked content knowledge and were inhibited from contributing to class discussions. Furthermore, Han stated that the students had confident issues regarding their spoken English, such as being afraid that they would not be understood by others and feeling uncomfortable speaking English because it is their second language. Meanwhile, Inegbeboh (2009) found that the female gender in Spoken English class in a Nigerian university was more inhibited to speak up than the male.

She believed that gender discrimination in the society has affected how the females view themselves. According to Inegbeboh, the females have been brought up to believe that they are meant to be seen but not heard, and so were shyer to speak up during the Spoken English class.

Another objective of this study was to examine UM students' perceptions towards their affective-related problems in speaking English. For this purpose, the researcher also adapted Rujipornwasin's (2004) 'Part Three: The Problems the Engineering Students Face in Improving Their Spoken English' questionnaire *(Appendix F)* by selecting 16 items related to students' feelings. The items were organized and categorized according to what the statements relate to: 'self-confidence', 'teachers', 'peers', 'classroom condition', 'speaking activities', or 'opportunities' *(see Table 3.1)*. The classification would help to better identify the root causes of students' affective barriers to speaking English in order for the teachers, University, and students to take the necessary actions.

2.4.3 Comparative Study on Students' Perceptions towards their Problems in Speaking English

The present study referred to a past study in comparing between the spoken English of two groups of students who differ in their amount of exposure to English in the university. Rujipornwasin (2004) compared between the English-medium and Thai-medium Engineering students in Thailand on their perceptions towards the problems that they faced in improving their spoken English. The English-medium students were represented by Assumption University (ABAC) students, while the Thai-medium sample was selected from Mahidol University. A survey was conducted among 43 ABAC students and 146 Mahidol students by using a questionnaire that was constructed by Rujipornwasin herself. In the Part Three of Rujipornwain's questionnaire, 27 Likert-type scale items were

used to examine the students' perceptions towards their problems in improving spoken English. Data were analysed by using SPSS version 10.0 and the results were summarized as follows:

> Based on the findings, ABAC students revealed that in general they faced problems in improving their spoken English to a small degree while Mahidol students faced more problems. It was found that the greatest problems in improving spoken English as perceived by Mahidol students fell in the problems in language focus (grammar and vocabularies), the lack of opportunity to practice speaking English and insufficient speaking activities inside and outside class. Conversely, ABAC students seemed to have few problems in improving their spoken English (Rujipornwasin, 2004: 79-80).

In discussion of findings, Rujipornwasin (2004) justified the students' perceived problems in speaking English. She attributed the Mahidol students' lack of fluency and spontaneity to their limited practice opportunities because they only have one English course per semester which is conducted twice a week for three hours each. Besides, as Rujipornwasin added, most teachers use Thai language inside and outside the classroom, and the Thai teachers of English tend to focus more on analysing the language structure. Rujipornwasin also pointed out the various factors related to Mahidol students' affective barriers to speaking English, such as a lack of confidence, peers, teachers, and the classroom condition. She referred to Nimmannit (1998) who found that most Asian students are embarrassed to speak English in class out of the fear of making mistakes and losing face. The Mahidol students are intimidated by their classmates who are more proficient in English, and are afraid of being mocked by other students if they attempt to speak English. According to Rujipornwasin, the students may also feel discouraged to speak English to teachers who seem to have an unpleasant personality and feel awkward to use English with teachers who are also Thais. On the other hand, the ABAC students do not have the teacher-related problems because their teaching and learning processes are conducted in English. Furthermore, Rujipornwasin said that a Mahidol class has around 50

to 60 students as opposed to an ABAC class that only has about 20 to 30 students, and the large class size reduces the Mahidol students' motivation to speak up.

Thus, the comparison between the English-medium and Thai-medium students in Rujipornwasin's (2004) study was used as a theoretical framework for the first part of the current study in comparing between the English-major and non-English major students' perceptions towards problems in speaking English.

2.5 Strategies to Improve ESL Learners' Spoken English

The second part of the study examined students' strategies for spoken English. As mentioned in Chapter One, few studies have explored this area in comparison to studies on writing strategies and on general language learning strategies.

2.5.1 Institutional and Teachers' Efforts

Some teachers and learning institutions realize the problems that their students face in relation to spoken English and thus, have been taking the steps to enhance students' speaking skills. Farooqui (2007) observed and interviewed five teachers from five different private universities in Bangladesh to find out about their perceptions towards students' problems in speaking English, and about the teachers and universities' solutions to improve the problems. As reported by the teacher participants in Farooqui's study, among the institutional efforts to improve students' spoken English include: making it compulsory for the students to speak English in the classroom; leaning the teaching of English more towards fluency rather than accuracy in order to encourage students to communicate; using oral tests as a motivator for students to practice speaking English; and providing opportunities for students to use English outside the classroom through language clubs that

arrange activities like debates and language games. Farooqui added that the teachers' attempts in the classroom were: making students talk about simple topics that relate to themselves or play language games in groups in order to overcome their inhibition to speak English; asking students who are good English speakers to facilitate their classmates who are weaker; and varying their teaching and learning materials like using English movies in order to encourage discussions and to make lessons interesting. Therefore, many strategies can be employed by teachers and learning institutions to help their students improve in spoken English. Another way that teachers and universities can assist students in improving speaking skills is by teaching and training them to use language learning and communication strategies.

2.5.2   Language Learning Strategies versus Communication Strategies

There are many ways in which LLSs are classified. In some models, they are merged with communication strategies but in other studies, differences are drawn between them. Tarone (1979, in Tarone, 1983: 419) defines LLSs as "an attempt to develop linguistic and sociolinguistic competence in the target language". On the other hand, communication strategies are used when a speaker tries to convey an intended meaning to the interlocutor despite having limited knowledge in the target language (Tarone, 1983; Dörnyei, 1995). Examples of communication strategies are avoidance strategies such as abandoning a message and avoiding a topic, and compensatory strategies such as using non-linguistic signals and code-switching (Dörnyei, 1995). Oxford's (1990) strategy classification system is a combination of language learning and communication strategies that have been practiced by successful language learners (Brown, 2000). One of the categories in this system is compensation strategies which resemble the compensatory strategies in Dörnyei's (1995) model of communication strategies. Meanwhile, O'Malley et

al. (1985) categorizes learning strategies into metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and socioaffective strategies. As quoted by Brown (2000: 124), O'Malley et al. define metacognitive strategies as the strategies used in the planning, monitoring, and evaluation of one's own learning, cognitive strategies as those that involve "direct manipulation of the learning material itself", and socioaffective strategies as the activities that involve social interaction with others. However, Brown claimed that socioaffective strategies and some strategies from the other categories in this model are indeed communication strategies.

Hence, LLSs categorizations often overlap with communication strategies but Tarone (1983) has distinguished between them. The difference, according to Tarone, is in the purpose of these strategies; while communication strategies aim to help learners 'communicate', LLSs aid them to 'learn'. Furthermore, "while learning strategies deal with the receptive domain of intake, memory, storage, and recall, communication strategies pertain to the employment of verbal and nonverbal mechanisms for the productive communication of information" (Brown, 2000: 127). Brown added that applying both learning and communication strategies for classroom use have been known as strategies-based instruction (henceforth SBI) (McDonough, 1999; Cohen, 1998), and Oxford's (1990) system is one of the SBI manuals for teachers. The present study chose to refer to Oxford's model to examine students' strategies use because it did not separate between language learning and communication strategies in its objectives. Besides, the framework would support the significance of this study to be a guideline for teachers and the University in improving students' strategies use.

2.5.3 Oxford's (1990) Strategy Classification System

Oxford (1990) classifies the language learning and communication strategies of successful language learners into direct and indirect strategies. Direct strategies deal with

the language material directly, while indirect strategies manage the language learning process indirectly. Under direct strategies, there are memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies. On the other hand, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies are indirect strategies. Goh and Kwah (1997: 42) summarized Oxford's categories of strategy with the following definitions:

   a. Memory strategies – "Sometimes called mnemonics, these involve mental processes used in arranging information in order, making associations, and reviewing"
   b. Cognitive strategies – "These involve processing the target language so that meaning becomes clear through processes such as reasoning and analyzing"
   c. Compensation strategies – "These enable learners to make up for gaps in their knowledge and skills, by, for example, guessing meanings and using gestures"
   d. Metacognitive strategies – "These enable learners to plan, coordinate, evaluate, and direct their own learning as well as to monitor errors"
   e. Affective strategies – "These help learners gain control over their emotions, attitudes, and motivation through anxiety reduction, self-encouragement, and self-reward"
   f. Social strategies – "These are ways of involving other people in enhancing learning through questions, cooperation and increased cultural awareness"

The details and examples of each category of direct and indirect strategies are summed up in Table 2.1 and Table 2.2.

Table 2.1: Oxford's (1990) Strategy Classification System – Direct Strategies

Category	Strategy	Example
Memory Strategies	Creating mental linkages	▪ Grouping ▪ Associating/elaborating ▪ Placing new words into a context
	Applying images and sounds	▪ Using imagery ▪ Semantic mapping ▪ Using keywords ▪ Representing sounds in memory
	Reviewing well	▪ Structured viewing
	Employing action	▪ Using physical response or sensation ▪ Using mechanical techniques

Table 2.1, continued

Category	Strategy	Example
Cognitive Strategies	Practicing	▪ Repeating ▪ Formally practicing with sounds and writing systems ▪ Recognizing and using formulas and patterns ▪ Recombining ▪ Practicing naturalistically
	Receiving and sending messages	▪ Getting the idea quickly ▪ Using resources for receiving and sending messages
	Analyzing and reasoning	▪ Reasoning deductively ▪ Analyzing expressions ▪ Analyzing contrastively (across languages) ▪ Translating ▪ Transferring
	Creating structure for input and output	▪ Taking notes ▪ Summarizing ▪ Highlighting
Compensation Strategies	Guessing intelligently	▪ Using linguistic clues ▪ Using other clues
	Overcoming limitations in speaking and writing	▪ Switching to the mother tongue ▪ Getting help ▪ Using mime or gesture ▪ Avoiding communication partially or totally ▪ Selecting the topic ▪ Adjusting or approximating the message ▪ Coining words ▪ Using a circumlocution or synonym

(Brown, 2000: 132)

Table 2.2: Oxford's (1990) Strategy Classification System – Indirect Strategies

Category	Strategy	Example
Metacognitive Strategies	Centering your learning	▪ Overview and linking with already known material ▪ Paying attention ▪ Delaying speech production to focus on listening
	Arranging and planning your learning	▪ Finding out about language learning ▪ Organizing ▪ Setting goals and objectives ▪ Identifying the purpose of a language task (purposeful listening/reading/speaking/writing) ▪ Planning for a language task ▪ Seeking practice opportunities
	Evaluating your learning	▪ Self-monitoring ▪ Self-evaluating

Table 2.2, continued

Category	Strategy	Example
Affective Strategies	Lowering your anxiety	▪ Using progressive relaxation, deep breathing, or mediation ▪ Using music ▪ Using laughter
	Encouraging yourself	▪ Making positive statements ▪ Taking risks wisely ▪ Rewarding yourself
	Taking your emotional temperature	▪ Listening to your body ▪ Using a checklist ▪ Writing a language learning diary ▪ Discussing your feelings with someone else
Social Strategies	Asking questions	▪ Asking clarification or verification ▪ Asking for correction
	Cooperating with others	▪ Cooperation with others ▪ Cooperating with proficient users of the new language
	Empathizing with others	▪ Developing cultural understanding ▪ Becoming aware of others' thoughts and feelings

(Brown, 2000: 133)

2.5.4   Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)

There are many methods to measure LLSs use among students. Alwahibee (2000) listed and described some of these methods in his literature review; they include classroom observation and list making, interview procedures, diaries and dialogue journals, verbal report, recollective studies, computer tracking, and strategy questionnaires. For the current study, the researcher opted for strategy questionnaire as an instrument because as quoted by Alwahibee (2000: 29), a "wide array of strategies can be measured". Oxford's SILL (1990) has been employed by many researchers in the studies of LLSs use among ESL/EFL learners with various language backgrounds. For instance, Alwahibee (2000) adapted the SILL as well as translated it into an Arabic version to examine LLSs use among Saudi ESL university students who were studying in the United States and their correlation to many different variables. Yang (2010) used English and Korean versions of the SILL to

investigate Korean EFL university students' use of LLSs and their relationship with language proficiency level and gender. Similarly, Goh and Kwah (1997) employed the SILL to study the link between Chinese ESL students' LLSs use and their proficiency level and gender. Fewell (2010) used a Japanese-translated version of the SILL to examine LLSs utilization among Japanese EFL college students from two disciplines and their correlation to English proficiency levels. As supported by Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995: 1), "reliability of the SILL is high across many cultural groups" and "validity of the SILL rests on its predictive and correlative link with language performance (course grades, standardized test scores, ratings of proficiency), as well as its confirmed relationship to sensory preferences". There are two versions of Oxford's (1990) SILL: Version 5.1 that is used for English native speakers who are studying a foreign language and Version 7.0 for non-native speakers who are learning English as a second or foreign language. The SILL Version 7.0 consists of 50 items which are divided into six parts: Part A comprises 9 statement items on memory strategies; Part B is made up of 14 items on cognitive strategies; Part C includes 6 items on compensation strategies; Part D has 9 items on metacognitive strategies; Part E consists of 6 items on affective strategies; and Part F has 6 items on social strategies. Respondents of the SILL are to answer these items based on a 5-point Likert scale of '5=Always or Almost Always True of Me, 4=Usually True of Me, 3=Somewhat True of Me, 2=Usually Not True of Me, and 1=Never or Almost Never True of Me', and a self-scoring sheet comes along with this paper-and-pencil inventory.

2.5.5 Language Learning Strategies and Language Proficiency Levels

There have been numerous studies linking between students' LLSs use and their general language proficiency levels. Yang (2010: iii) investigated the relationship between the use of Oxford's (1990) LLSs and self-assessed language proficiency levels among

Korean EFL university learners, and found that "Language proficiency levels had significant effects on the overall strategy use, the six categories of strategy, and individual strategy use items". According to Yang, high proficiency students used metacognitive strategies most while intermediate and low proficiency learners employed compensation strategies most, and all three levels of students preferred memory strategies least. Yang (2010: 117) justified that the likelihood of using metacognitive strategies may be influenced by the preference for cognitive strategies which are closely related to each other, and therefore, "learners who are better at planning, monitoring, and evaluating involved themselves in their language learning process". On the other hand, with reference to Oxford (1990), Yang pointed out that the less proficient language learners need to use compensation strategies more in order to compensate their lack of linguistic knowledge. A similar study was conducted by Fewell (2010) in a Japanese EFL university setting in which he chose the top 25% scorers and bottom 25% scorers of an English proficiency test from the English and Business majors, and compared the LLSs use between the top and bottom groups for each major. Fewell's (2010: 164) findings that were related to the English majors contrasted with most previous results because "In each separate category, the SILL score of the bottom group was higher than the top group", while his findings for the Business majors showed that the bottom group used more compensation and social strategies than the top group. However, these past studies examined learners' LLSs use and their correlation to general language proficiency while the present study chose to narrow the selection of LLSs to relate to students' oral proficiency.

2.5.6   Language Learning Strategies and Oral Proficiency

The researcher found that there were few studies on students' LLSs use in relation to oral proficiency. The first two purposes of Alwahibee's (2000: 4) study were "to identify

the learning strategies employed by Saudi students studying in the United States in order to develop their oral communication abilities" and "to explore the relationship between these learning strategies and oral proficiency". His first objective was achieved through Section C in the background questionnaire that was modified from Oxford (1989) in which students gave their own opinions, and findings indicated the following:

> Sixteen effective ways to increase oral communication were suggested by the subjects of this study. Four of these ways ranked higher than the others in terms of frequency. These were: communicating with native speakers 36.1%, listening to the radio 10.5%, watching TV 8.8%, and practice and rehearsal of English sentences and phrases 8.3%. The rest of the activities varied in terms of percentage from 7.1% to 0.05% (Alwahibee, 2000: 90).

For the second objective, Alwahibee's (2000) respondents were divided into students with low, middle, and high oral proficiency levels through the use of an oral test developed by Ilyin (1976) which is known as The Ilyin Oral Interview. After conducting a survey using 62 SILL items including their Arabic translations, Alwahibee found that the middle oral proficiency group employed cognitive, metacognitive, and affective strategies more often than the low and high oral proficiency groups. Alwahibee (2000: 66) added that generally, "the middle group mean scores were higher in almost every category of the strategies". The second part of the present study also had the purpose of identifying students' learning strategies to improve in spoken English, but instead of using an open-ended questionnaire like Alwahibee did, the researcher employed the SILL because it would be easier to analyse. However, since the SILL is meant for general language learning, the researcher had to select only the items that are related to spoken language.

One of the previous researches related to LLS have found the categories of strategy that can enhance oral proficiency. The said study was by Nakanoko (2004) who found that oral proficiency can be enhanced by some cognitive strategies and most functional-use strategies. He came to this finding in order to find out whether the nature of learner internal

input processing associated to oral proficiency was explicit only, implicit only, or mainly implicit but slightly explicit. Nakanoko described that while explicit learning is promoted by cognitive strategies which involve learning discrete grammatical items, implicit learning is promoted by functional-use strategies which revolve around using language in a real communication setting. Cognitive strategies were defined by Nakanoko as those involving language learner's mental operations in processing linguistic input to adapt to new knowledge, while functional-use strategies (Bialystok, 1981) were described as those used to authentically practice a target language and to seek opportunities to use the target language. Thus, Nakanoko selected 31 SILL items that had been identified as cognitive strategies and functional-use strategies, and conducted a factor analysis to further define the items. He identified cognitive strategies as a combination of two strategy categories which were 'structural interest' and 'transfer caution', and functional-use strategies as a combination of three strategy categories which were 'idiom use', 'naturalistic exposure', and 'English for fun'. In the meantime, he used a self-designed 20-item oral proficiency scale to place his subjects who were 120 ESL students from the University of Tennessee at Knoxville (UTK) whose first language was Chinese, Korean, or Japanese, into eight levels of oral proficiency. He then tested the relationship between the five strategy categories and the oral proficiency levels by using multiple R's, and found that there was a medium correlation between the three functional-use strategy categories and oral proficiency, while there was a small correlation between the two cognitive strategy categories and oral proficiency. Nakanoko concluded that students' input processing for oral proficiency was mainly implicit but was slightly attributed to explicit processing.

However, the current study only referred to Nakanoko's (2004) study for the finding which indicated that oral proficiency can be enhanced by most functional-use strategies and

some cognitive strategies because the result has helped the researcher to narrow down the LLSs selection to suit this study *(see 3.2.1)*.

2.6   Conclusion

Speaking skill is deemed to be the most challenging language skill, and being able to speak English well is important for ESL/EFL learners, especially for academic purposes and career pursuit. However, they are often faced with problems in achieving a desired level of oral proficiency. In this study, the problems faced by UM undergraduates in speaking English were studied through their perceptions, with reference to Rujipornwasin (2004). The problems were categorized into language-related and affective-related to better recognize the causes of students' perceived weaknesses in speaking English. By being aware of these problems, the students, teachers, and University can take the necessary actions to improve them. One of the ways for students to enhance their overall language proficiency is by employing LLSs, and Oxford (1990) classifies LLSs into six categories: memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies. But since this study focuses on spoken language, the researcher chose to refer to Nakanoko's (2004) finding that oral proficiency correlated positively with some cognitive strategies and most functional-use strategies. While the SILL (Oxford, 1990) is a tool to measure students' LLSs use, the researcher followed Nakanoko's adaptation of the SILL by selecting items that promote cognitive strategies and functional-use strategies. By comparing between the English-major and non-English-major students on their perceived problems in speaking English and on their strategies use for spoken English, this study would make inferences related to the groups' amount of exposure to English language in the classroom.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.0   Introduction

This chapter presents the methods used to answer the research questions. It describes the sample and population, instrumentation, data collection procedures, and data analysis procedures.

3.1   Sample and Population

Respondents were selected through quota sampling. "The basic idea of quota sampling is to set a target number of completed interviews with specific subgroups of the population of interest" (Battaglia, 2008: 669-670). The population in this study was UM students, and the subgroups were the English majors and the non-English majors. The researcher targeted for 60 sample units; 30 would be English-major students and the other 30 would be non-English-major students. The English-major sample used for this study consisted of 30 Bachelor of Education (TESL) students. They receive a total of 60 credit hours of English-medium instructions throughout the whole programme as their core courses are conducted in English. The sample of the second subgroup consisted of 30 students from various non-English-major Bachelor of Arts programmes, such as the Social Administration and Justice, International Relations and Strategic Studies, Southeast Asian Studies, East Asian Studies, Media Studies, Geography, History, and Indian Studies. They receive six total credit hours of English courses, while their core courses were conducted either in Malay only, in English and Malay, or in other native languages like Tamil and Mandarin. This information is valid up to the year 2011 *(see 1.1.1)*. Meanwhile, the

students' gender, age, ethnicity, and study semester were not considered as variables in this study.

3.2   Instrumentation

There were two instruments used in this study: a structured questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. Questionnaire was chosen because it is a cost-effective way to gather information from a large number of people regarding their perceptions or beliefs about an issue, and close-ended questions made it easy to analyse (Singh, Chan, and Sidhu, 2006). Interviews in this study were conducted to corroborate the findings of the structured questionnaire, and open-ended questions were used "to give the respondent a chance to mention items that may be less relevant to the population but are very important to the respondent" (Singh, Chan, and Sidhu, 2006: 145). Thus, mixed methods were used for data collection and the purpose of the mixing was to "provide a fuller picture and better understanding" (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner, 2007: 9).

3.2.1   Construction of the Questionnaire

The first draft of the questionnaire contained three sections: Section One (Students' Educational Details), Section Two (Students' Perceptions towards Their Problems in Speaking English), and Section Three (Students' Strategies to Improve Their Spoken English). Section One required the respondents to fill in their faculty and name of programme, and to circle the medium of instructions of their core courses, and gave them the options to leave their contact number and email address. Section Two comprised 26 Likert-type scale items adapted from Rujipornwasin's (2004) questionnaire; 10 were on language-related problems in speaking English and 16 were on affective-related problems

in speaking English. Section Three initially had 42 Likert-type scale items adapted from Oxford's (1990) SILL; 20 were on direct LLSs and 22 were on indirect LLSs. After the first draft was developed, it was translated into the Malay language. The purpose of this translation was to reduce ambiguity and misinterpretation of the questionnaire content by students who may have low proficiency in English (Rujipornwasin, 2004). Students could then choose whether to answer the questionnaire in the English or Malay version.

To ensure that the instructions and items were comprehensible, the questionnaire was piloted with six students; three were English majors and the other three were non-English majors. The English-major students were used to test the English version, while the non-English-major students were given the Malay version to test. Data obtained from the pilot study were analysed and the questionnaire was revised. Adjustments were made on Section Three in terms of the classification and selection of items after the researcher decided to focus on cognitive and functional-use strategies in measuring the strategies used by students to improve their spoken English. This decision was based on the finding by Nakanoko (2004) which indicated that oral proficiency can be enhanced by some cognitive strategies and most functional-use strategies. To summarize the study:

> Cognitive strategies were defined as a combination of two strategy categories: the *structural interest* strategies and the *transfer caution* strategies. Functional-use strategies were defined as a combination of three strategy categories: the *idiom use* strategies, the *naturalistic exposure* strategies, and the *English for fun* strategies. By computing the multiple correlation R's between oral proficiency (as measured by the validated oral proficiency) and each of these five strategy groups, the relationship between oral proficiency and the two groups of language learning strategies (i.e., cognitive strategies and functional-use strategies) was determined. It was found that cognitive language learning strategies had a *slightly* positive correlation to oral proficiency, whereas functional-use language learning strategies had a medium to nearly high positive correlation to oral proficiency (Nakanoko, 2004: 205).

In his study, Nakanoko (2004) adapted the SILL for English Speakers Learning a New Language (Version 5.1) to measure LLSs use because his respondents' English literacy was high and did not match the SILL for Speakers of Other Languages Learning

English (Version 7.0) even though they were ESL learners. In adapting the SILL for strategies that represent cognitive and functional-use strategies for his study, Nakanoko claimed that problems occurred because some strategies that seemingly are cognitive strategies are placed in another category like compensation strategy, while functional-use strategies are scattered over various categories without having their own section. According to Nakanoko, this was because the classification of strategies in the SILL is based on a factor analysis rather than theoretical deduction (Oxford and Burry-Stock, 1995) and therefore shows the item interpretations of the learners studied by the SILL author. Hence, Nakanoko interpreted, selected, and categorized the SILL items to serve the purpose of his own study, and eventually had 17 paraphrased items for the cognitive strategy category and 14 paraphrased items for the functional-use strategy category. He selected most of the cognitive strategies from Part B (the cognitive strategy section) in the SILL Version 5.1, but also chose one item from Part C (the compensation strategy section) because it refers to 'guessing from context' which he considered a cognitive strategy. For functional-use strategies, Nakanoko selected the items from the cognitive strategy section (Part B), the metacognitive strategy section (Part D), and the social strategy section (Part F). Nakanoko's version of the SILL *(Appendix G)* resulted in a Cronbach's alpha of .87, which according to him was "high enough to lend credibility to results" (2004: 78).

However, the present study made use of the SILL Version 7.0 because it was believed to suit UM students' levels of proficiency that may vary from low to high. The researcher did not face much problem finding the strategies in Version 7.0 that have similar meanings to those adapted by Nakanoko from Version 5.1. In addition, the definitions of cognitive and functional-use strategies were kept in mind during the selection of the SILL items for each category. The cognitive strategies were defined as those that involve language learner's mental operations in processing new linguistic input into their

interlanguage (Nakanoko, 2004). Therefore, 14 items were taken from the cognitive strategy section (Part B) in the SILL, and one was chosen from the compensation strategy section (Part C). The particular item from Part C, '*To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses*' was placed in this category because "guessing from context is usually understood as a cognitive strategy rather than a compensation strategy" (Nakanoko, 2004: 73). In total, there were 15 cognitive strategy items in the instrument of this study *(see Table 3.2).*

Since the SILL does not have a specific functional-use strategy section, the researcher referred to the definition of this strategy in order to select the relevant items. Functional-use strategies were defined as "those which language learners utilize to functionally use a target language (TL), that is, to practice a TL in a real communicative setting" and "the strategies utilized to find opportunities to functionally use a TL" (Nakanoko, 2004: 4). In order to choose the items for this category, the researcher went through the SILL Version 7.0, interpreted the meaning of each item, and looked for: (1) the strategies employed in practicing English in a real communication; or (2) the strategies used in looking for opportunities to practice speaking English in real life. Based on the researcher's interpretation of meaning, the strategies were: (1) '*When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures*'; '*I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English*'; '*If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing*'; '*I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better*'; '*I pay attention when someone is speaking English*'; '*If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or to say it again*'; '*I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk*'; '*I practice English with other students*'; '*I ask for help from English speakers*'; '*I ask questions in English*'; and (2) '*I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English*'; '*I look for people I can talk to in English*'; '*I try to relax whenever*

I feel afraid of using English'; '*I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake*'; '*I try to learn about the culture of English speakers*'. These 15 items were selected from various categories in the SILL; three were from Part C (compensation strategy), four were from Part D (metacognitive strategy), two were from Part E (affective strategy), and six were from Part F (social strategy) *(see Table 3.2)*.

Next, all the new 30 items included in Section Three were translated into the Malay language. No changes were made to Section One and Section Two. A second pilot study was conducted on six other students to test the comprehensibility of the second questionnaire draft. Three English-major students were given the English questionnaire to test, and the Malay version of the questionnaire was piloted with three non-English-major students. Data were again analysed and the questionnaire was re-examined. The internal consistency reliability of the questionnaire was computed by means of the SPSS using Cronbach's Coefficient of Alpha. The Cronbach's Alpha for Section Two was .887 and for Section Three was .869. Therefore, both sections were reliable because "it was greater than the acceptable level of .70" (Gilham, 2000 in Rujipornwasin, 2004: 25). Thus, the questionnaire was ready to be administered. The students who took part in both pilot tests were excluded from the actual study.

3.2.2   Content of the Questionnaire

Section One in the questionnaire was on students' educational details comprising their faculty, programme, and medium of instructions of core courses. Only these factors were included because this study only compared between students' academic majors (English and non-English) as the variables. There were also optional items on students' contact number and email address, in which they could choose whether or not to insert them. Students' contact number or email address could be the researcher's sources to

contact the respondents for an interview. Therefore, there were three compulsory items and two optional items in this section.

Section Two was on students' perceptions towards their problems in speaking English. It was adapted from Rujipornwasin's (2004) Part Three questionnaire items *(Appendix F)*. Rujipornwasin assured that the self-designed questionnaire had been validated by the experts and her thesis advisors, and had been tested on its reliability with the value of .9199. 26 items from the questionnaire were selected; some were modified lexically without changing their meaning, except for Rujipornwasin's Item 22 in which 'the teacher' had been changed to 'peers' to be adapted as Item 17 for this study *(see Table 3.1)*, and thus, its meaning changed. The items were also rearranged and categorized into language-related and affective-related problems to aid discussion of findings. The language-related items were further identified as 'lexical', 'syntactic', 'phonetic', and 'fluency' problems, while the affective-related items were further divided into problems related to 'self-confidence', 'teacher', 'peers', 'classroom condition', 'speaking activities', and 'opportunity'. This classification helped to better identify the root causes of students' linguistic and affective barriers to speaking English.

Besides such adjustments, the Likert scale indicators had been changed from '5=The most, 4=Much, 3=Average, 2=Little, 1=The least' as in Rujipornwasin's (2004) questionnaire to '5=Strongly agree, 4=Agree, 3=Not sure, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly disagree' for the current study. This is the typical Likert scale indicator for evaluating the most favourable to the least favourable attitudes (McIver and Carmines, 1981: 23), and the researcher believed that it would be more familiar to the students. Besides, phrases like 'the most', 'the least', 'much', 'little' and the like are relative and difficult to define because their definition to individuals may differ from one to another. In short, Section Two comprised 26 items adapted from Rujipornwasin's (2004) questionnaire; they had been

divided into language-related and affective-related problems, and were to be answered on a 5-point Likert scale. The summary of items included in this section and how they were adapted from Rujipornwasin's questionnaire is presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Construction and Content of Questionnaire (Section Two)

Problem		Section Two	Rujipornwasin (2004)
Language-Related	Lexical	Item 1: I don't have enough vocabulary to use English effectively	Item 1: I don't have enough vocabulary to use effectively
		Item 2: I don't know how to use English words appropriately	Item 2: I don't know how to use words appropriately
	Syntactical	Item 3: My knowledge of language structure in English is not sufficient	Item 3: My knowledge of language structure is not enough
		Item 4: I don't know how to use grammar rules in English appropriately	Item 4: I don't know how to use the grammar rules appropriately
		Item 5: I have problems with word order in English	Item 5: I have problems with word order
	Phonetic	Item 6: I cannot pronounce the sounds of vowels, consonants, or diphthongs in English clearly	Item 6: I cannot pronounce the sounds of vowels, consonants, or diphthongs clearly
		Item 7: I don't know how to stress English words correctly	Item 7: I don't know how to stress the word correctly
		Item 8: I think my intonation is not like English native speakers	Item 8: I think my intonation is not like English-speaking people
	Fluency	Item 9: I cannot speak English spontaneously	Item 9: I cannot speak English spontaneously
		Item 10: I cannot speak English fluently	Item 10: I cannot speak English fluently
Affective-Related	Self-confidence	Item 11: I feel embarrassed to speak English in class	Item 11: I feel embarrassed to speak up in class
		Item 12: I lack confidence in speaking English	Item 12: I lack confidence in speaking English
	Teacher	Item 13: Most of the teachers use a native language as the medium of instructions	Item 17: Most of the teachers use Thai as a medium of instruction
		Item 14: Most of the teachers use a native language outside the classroom	Item 18: Most of the teachers use Thai outside the classroom
		Item 15: I feel uneasy to ask questions in English to the teachers	Item 21: I feel unease to ask questions in English with the teachers

Table 3.1, continued

	Problem	Section Two	Rujipornwasin (2004)
Affective-Related	Teacher	Item 16: I never receive positive feedback from the teachers when I speak English	Item 20: I never receive the positive feedback from the teacher
	Peers	Item 17: I feel uneasy to practice speaking English with peers	Item 22: I feel unease to practice speaking English with the teachers
		Item 18: Good English-speaking students make me fear of speaking in class	Item 25: Good English-speaking students make me fear of speaking in class
		Item 19: Poor English-speaking students slow down the teaching and learning processes	Item 26: Poor English-speaking students slow down the teaching and learning process
		Item 20: Other students mock me if I try to speak English	Item 27: Other students mock me if I try to speak English
	Classroom Condition	Item 21: Having too many students in one class reduces my motivation to speak up	Item 13: Too many students in one class reduce my motivation to speak up in class
		Item 22: The classroom layout is not suitable for speaking activities	Item 14: The classroom layout is not suitable for speaking activities
	Speaking Activities	Item 23: Speaking activities in English classes are not relevant to real-life situations	Item 15: Speaking activities in the classroom are not relevant to real-life situations
		Item 24: There are not enough speaking activities in English courses	Item 16: Not enough speaking activities in the course
	Opportunity	Item 25: I don't have a chance to speak English in the classroom	Item 23: I don't have chance to speak English in the classroom
		Item 26: I have no chance to speak English outside the classroom	Item 24: I have no chance to speak English outside the classroom

Section Three in the questionnaire was on students' strategies for spoken English. The researcher divided this section into cognitive strategies and functional-use strategies, as a result of following Nakanoko's (2004) finding that oral proficiency correlates positively with most functional-use strategies and some cognitive strategies. Altogether, there were 30 items in Section Three, 15 of which were cognitive strategies and 15 others were functional-use strategies. These items were to be answered on a 5-point Likert scale of '5=Always or almost always true of me, 4=Usually true of me, 3=Somewhat true of me, 2=Usually not true of me, 1=Never or almost never true of me', following the scale in the

SILL Version 7.0 (Oxford, 1990). The breakdown of this part of the questionnaire is shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Construction and Content of Questionnaire (Section Three)

Sec. 3 SILL	Cognitive Strategies	Functional-Use Strategies
Part B (Cognitive Strategy)	1. I say or write new English words several times.	
	2. I try to talk like native English speakers.	
	3. I practice the sounds of English.	
	4. I use the English words I know in different ways.	
	5. I start conversations in English.	
	6. I watch English language TV shows or go to movies spoken in English.	
	7. I read for pleasure in English.	
	8. I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English.	
	9. I first skim an English passage (read it quickly) then go back and read carefully.	
	10. I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English.	
	11. I try to find patterns in English.	
	12. I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand.	
	13. I try not to translate word-for-word.	
	14. I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English.	
Part C (Compensation Strategy)	15. To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses.	16. When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures.
		17. I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English.
		18. If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.

Table 3.2, continued

Sec. 3 SILL	Cognitive Strategies	Functional-Use Strategies
Part D (Metacognitive Strategy)		19. I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English.
		20. I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better.
		21. I pay attention when someone is speaking English.
		22. I look for people I can talk to in English.
Part E (Affective Strategy)		23. I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English.
		24. I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake.
Part F (Social Strategy)		25. If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or to say it again.
		26. I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk.
		27. I practice English with other students.
		28. I ask for help from English speakers.
		29. I ask questions in English.
		30. I try to learn about the culture of English speakers.

(Oxford, 1990, in Yong, 2000: 85-87)

In conclusion, the questionnaire used to survey the population in this study consisted of three sections *(Appendix A)*; Section One was on respondents' educational details comprising five items (two optional and three compulsory), Section Two was on students' perceptions towards their problems in speaking English consisting of 26 items (10 language-related and 16 affective-related) adapted from Rujipornwasin (2004), and Section Three was on students' strategies for spoken English comprising 30 items (15 cognitive strategies and 15 functional-use strategies) adapted from the SILL Version for Speakers of Other Languages Learning English (Oxford, 1990) with reference to Nakanoko's (2004)

adaptation. The questionnaire was also available in a Malay-translated version *(Appendix B)*.

3.2.3 Construction and Content of the Interview

The interview was conducted to validate the findings of the survey. The use of interview for studies related to what is believed about human beings has been found to be highly valid (Briggs, 1986 in Roulston, deMarrais, and Lewis, 2003). Based on the sample grading rubric of an interview project in Roulston, deMarrais, and Lewis' (2003) article, the researcher made sure that the interview questions were short, clear, open-ended, and focused on the research questions. Thus, the questions were constructed around the themes of students' language-related problems, affective-related problems, cognitive strategies use, and functional-use strategies use with regard to spoken English in order to answer the research questions. The researcher also included a question about students' opinions on how the English lessons in the university have contributed to their development in spoken English, in order to gain insight into the effectiveness of the university English courses and how they can be improved. After the questions were generated, they were translated into the Malay language for the same reason that translation was made for the questionnaire *(see 3.2.1)*. During the interview, the researcher might include follow-up questions to "ensure complete coverage" (Singh, Chan, and Sidhu, 2006: 145) but the main questions and their themes are shown in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: Construction and Content of Interview

Interview Question	Theme
1. What is your weakest language aspect when speaking English?	▪ *Language-related problems*
2. What do you do to improve the particular language-related problem in speaking English?	▪ *Cognitive/ functional-use strategies*
3. How confident do you feel when speaking English?	▪ *Affective-related problems*

Table 3.3, continued

Interview Question	Theme
4. What do you do to increase your confidence in speaking English?	▪ *Cognitive/ functional-use strategies*
5. What other strategies do you use to improve your spoken English, and what improvement have you gained from them?	▪ *Cognitive/ functional-use strategies* ▪ *Language-related/ affective-related problems*
6. How have the English lessons you received in the university helped to improve your spoken English?	▪ *University English courses* ▪ *Language-related/ affective-related problems*

The interview questions were piloted on two representatives of each group to ensure the comprehensibility of the questions. They were selected from among the students who participated in the second pilot survey earlier. The non-English-major students had to have taken at least one of the six-credit-hour-total compulsory English courses, in order to be able to answer Question 6. For the purpose of testing the questions, the English-major students were interviewed in English, and the non-English-major students were interviewed in Malay. Prior to the pilot interview, each student was given a consent form which came in English and Malay versions. During the first few attempts, an audio-recorder was used but most interviewees seemed reluctant and uncomfortable when their responses were being taped. Then the researcher changed to a paper-and-pencil technique, and found that the interviewees were more relaxed and natural. Therefore, the researcher decided not to audio-record the students' interviews but would use a paper-and-pencil approach instead. This technique is also called PAPI or pencil-and-paper interviewing. According to Lavrakas (2008: 574), "PAPI still is used in instances where data are being gathered from a relatively small sample, with a noncomplex questionnaire". Therefore, PAPI was suitable for this study because only 10 people would be interviewed in the actual study and the questions were noncomplex. Apart from that, there was no problem with the interview questions in both the English and Malay versions.

3.3   Data Collection Procedures

3.3.1   Questionnaire

As decided through quota sampling *(see 3.1)*, 30 English-major students needed to be sourced, and the researcher had chosen the TESL students to represent this group. Through a personal contact who was a TESL student, the researcher managed to make an appointment with a TESL lecturer to distribute questionnaires to her students during a class. The researcher was given 10 minutes by the lecturer, and 29 questionnaires were administered in the classroom after excluding the international students. The researcher later randomly approached 10 more TESL students at the foyer of the Faculty of Education, administered the questionnaire, and waited for them to finish. This made for a total of 39 completed questionnaires which exceeded the target of 30 but the extra forms would be used as back-ups if missing items were found during data analysis. In which case, the nine extra questionnaires would be utilized to replace incomplete questionnaires which would be discarded, and any extra forms after data analysis would be abandoned.

Similarly, the quota for the non-English-major sample was 30 students. The researcher sourced for the non-English-major Arts students at the foyer of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, the Third Residential College where she lived, and with help from a roommate who is an Arts student herself. 15 students were randomly approached at the foyer in order to administer the questionnaire, and the researcher waited until they were finished. Later 10 students were located in their rooms in the residential college based on formerly known information and were left with the questionnaire which the researcher collected after half an hour. In the meantime, the roommate of the researcher helped to distribute the questionnaire to 10 of her closest friends and course mates. Since there were 35 completed forms altogether, the researcher would randomly select 30 questionnaires for

data analysis, while the five extras would be used to replace any incomplete questionnaires and discarded if not utilized.

3.3.2   Interview

It had been decided that 10 students who had been surveyed would be interviewed. Five students were selected from each group and chosen among those who had included their contact numbers in Section One in the questionnaire. The non-English-major interviewee would have to have taken at least one compulsory English course, and this was ensured through the phone calls. The interviews with keen participants took place at various locations convenient to them and to the researcher, such as the residential college, the Arts and Social Sciences Faculty, and the Education Faculty. Each student was handed a copy of the consent form assuring their confidentiality *(Appendix D and Appendix E)* and given a choice to be interviewed either in English or Malay *(Appendix C for the Malay version)*. The six main questions constructed earlier *(see Table 3.3)* were asked, and the answers were jotted down with pencil and paper. Where necessary, the researcher probed by fielding more questions to get further details or explanation. Each interview lasted about 10 minutes.

3.4   Data Analysis

3.4.1   Questionnaire

Data collected from the survey was analysed by the means of SPSS 18.0 the computer software for Microsoft Windows, and a manual calculation. SPSS 18.0 was utilized to count the frequency and percentage for Section One, and the frequency for

Section Two and Section Three; a manual calculation was used to count the score for Section Two and Section Three.

Analysis of Section One would show the number and percentage of students in terms of their faculty, name of programme, and medium of instructions of core courses, for both the English-major and non-English-major groups.

For Section Two, firstly, SPSS 18.0 was used to get the number of students who rated on each Likert-scale indicator (5=Strongly agree, 4=Agree, 3=Not sure, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly disagree) for each item on students' problems in speaking English. Then for every item, each of the 5 Likert-scale points was manually multiplied by its frequency of ratings in order to get the score (i.e. Score for Likert-scale point = Likert-scale point X Frequency). For example, if there were 3 students who rated '2=Disagree' for Item 1, the calculation for the particular Likert-scale point of that item would be three times two, and the score would be six. Next, the total score for each item was analysed by totalling all the scores obtained from multiplying the Likert-scale point and the frequency (i.e. Total score for item = Sum of [Likert-scale point X Frequency]). After that, the items were arranged according to their total scores from the highest to the lowest. If two or more items had the same total score, the researcher would total the scores for the first two Likert-scale points (5=Strongly agree, 4=Agree) and if necessary the third point (3=Not sure), and the item with the higher total score for these Likert-scale points would be placed above the other. This is because the first two Likert-scale points indicated higher perceptions towards an item. Finally, the total scores for all items in each language-related and affective-related category for the English-major and non-English-major groups were manually totalled in order to find out which group had higher overall perceptions towards both types of problem in speaking English.

For Section Three, the same data analysis method employed for Section Two was used to show the frequency of and score for every Likert-scale indicator (5=Always or almost always true of me, 4=Usually true of me, 3=Somewhat true of me, 2=Usually not true of me, 1=Never or almost never true of me) for items on students' strategies in improving spoken English. The strategies were then arranged from most frequently used to least frequently used based on the total scores. Next, the scores for all items in each strategy category for each group of students were manually added up in order to see which group used more cognitive strategies and functional-use strategies. This scoring method was employed for Section Two and Section Three because it can show how many students rated on each scale indicator and at the same time, it can rank the items in a chronological order.

3.4.2 Interview

Data from the paper-and-pencil interviews were analysed manually and displayed according to each question. The notes taken down by the researcher during the interviews were looked through, and the key words that carried information on the question themes like students' perceived problems in speaking English, strategies to improve spoken English, and opinions on the university English courses, were analysed. The interview findings were discussed by comparing between the English-major and non-English-major students, matching with the questionnaire findings, and referring to past studies.

3.5   Conclusion

The population in this study was UM undergraduates. The sample was selected through quota sampling in which the researcher chose 60 students; 30 were English-major students represented by the Bachelor of Education (TESL) students, and 30 were non-

English-major students represented by the Bachelor of Arts students from non-English-major programmes only. The instruments used included a questionnaire survey and PAPI. The questionnaire contained a part on students' educational details which was constructed by the researcher, a part on students' perceptions towards their problems in speaking English which was adapted from Rujipornwasin (2004), and a part on students' strategies to improve their spoken English which was adapted from the SILL (Oxford, 1990). The interview had six main open-ended questions and was conducted among 10 respondents of the survey; five were English majors and five were non-English majors. Data collection took place around UM campus. Then data from the survey were analysed by using SPSS 18.0 for frequency and percentage counts, and a manual calculation for the multiplying and totalling of scores, while the interview data were analysed manually by looking at the key words for every question.

4.0   Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the survey and the interview. Section One in the questionnaire revealed students' educational details in terms of their faculty, study major, and medium of instructions. Then Section Two was analysed, presenting students' perceptions towards their language-related and affective-related problems in speaking English. Next, analysis of Section Three showed students' use of cognitive and functional-use strategies for spoken English. Lastly, results of the interviews were presented. Data obtained from the questionnaire survey and the interviews were used to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the self-perceived language-related and affective-related problems in speaking English among the English-major UM undergraduates?

2. What are the self-perceived language-related and affective-related problems in speaking English among the non-English-major UM undergraduates?

3. What are the similarities and differences between the English-major and non-English-major UM undergraduates in terms of their self-perceived language-related and affective-related problems in speaking English?

4. What are the cognitive and functional-use language learning strategies used by the English-major UM undergraduates to improve their spoken English?

5. What are the cognitive and functional-use language learning strategies used by the non-English-major UM undergraduates to improve their spoken English?

6. What are the similarities and differences between the English-major and non-English-major UM undergraduates in terms of their use of cognitive and functional-use language learning strategies to improve their spoken English?

4.1 Findings of the Questionnaire

4.1.1 Section One: Students' Educational Details

The respondents' details were gathered in terms of their faculty, programme or study major and the medium of instructions for the core courses in their programme. The frequency and percentage for these details were analysed using SPSS 18.0. Table 4.1 displays the educational details of the two groups compared in this study. Out of the 30 respondents from the non-English-major group, 53.3 percent (16 students) received classroom instructions for their core courses in Malay language, 30 percent (9 students) were taught in both English and Malay, and 13.3 percent (4 students) had their lessons in Tamil language. None of these respondents claimed to receive instructions for their core courses fully in English, as opposed to the English-major respondents who were all taught in English (100 percent; 30 students).

Table 4.1: Frequency and Percentage for Students' Educational Details

Educational Details	English-Major	Frequency/Percentage		Non-English-Major	Frequency/Percentage	
Faculty	Education	30	100%	Arts and Social Sciences	30	100%
Total		**30**	**100%**	**Total**	**30**	**100%**
Programme/ Study Major	TESL	30	100%	Social Administration and Justice	6	20%
				Southeast Asian Studies	6	20%
				Indian Studies	4	13.3%
				Media Studies	4	13.3%
				History	3	10%
				Geography and Environment	3	10%

Table 4.1, continued

Educational Details	English-Major	Frequency/ Percentage		Non-English-Major	Frequency/ Percentage	
Programme/ Study Major				International Relations and Strategic Studies	3	10%
				East Asian Studies	1	3.3%
Total		**30**	**100%**	**Total**	**30**	**100%**
Medium of Instructions for Core Courses in Programme	English	30	100%	Malay	16	53.3%
				English and Malay	9	30%
				Tamil	4	13.3%
				English, Malay, and Mandarin	1	3.3%
Total		**30**	**100%**	**Total**	**30**	**100%**

4.1.2 Section Two: Students' Perceptions towards Their Language-Related Problems in Speaking English

As mentioned in 3.4.1, the frequency for each Likert-scale indicator for each item was analysed using SPSS 18.0, while the score (Likert-scale point multiplied by frequency) was calculated manually. The first step was done to show the number of students who rated on each scale, and the second step was carried out to rank the problems from most concerning to least concerning based on the students' perceptions. Lastly, the scores for all items in this category were totalled in order to see which group of students generally had higher perceived language-related problems in speaking English. The same scoring method was applied to students' perceptions towards affective-related problems *(in 4.1.3)*.

Table 4.2 shows the chronological order of the English-major respondents' perceptions towards the linguistic problems that they faced in speaking English. The students ranked Item 1, '*I don't have enough vocabulary to use English effectively*', Item 8, '*I think my intonation is not like English native speakers*', and Item 3, '*My knowledge of language structure in English is not sufficient*' as their top-three weakest linguistic areas with a score of 84, 83, and 80 respectively. Meanwhile, their perceived least problematic

language area was Item 6, '*I cannot pronounce the sounds of vowels, consonants, or diphthongs in English clearly*' with a score of 56. Findings regarding the first and last items in the rank order for this category matched the results for the equivalent group in Rujipornwasin's (2004) study. The English-medium Thai Engineering students in her study ranked the item '*I don't have enough vocabulary to use effectively*' first with a mean score of 2.86 and the item '*I cannot pronounce the sounds of vowels, consonants, or diphthongs clearly*' last with a mean score of 2.21. In the meantime, the total for all scores equalled to 696. This total score would be compared to the total score for the non-English-major group for the same category in order to see which students perceived themselves with more linguistic problems in speaking English.

Table 4.2: Frequency and Score for English-Major Students' Perceptions towards Language-Related Problems

Items on Language-Related Problems	Likert-scale Point					Total	
	5	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**		
1. I don't have enough vocabulary to use English effectively.	3	5	8	11	3	30	
(Score = Likert-scale Point X Frequency)	*15*	*20*	*24*	*22*	*3*		*84*
8. I think my intonation is not like English native speakers.	3	6	9	5	7	30	
	15	*24*	*27*	*10*	*7*		*83*
3. My knowledge of language structure in English is not sufficient.		9	6	11	4	30	
		36	*18*	*22*	*4*		*80*
4. I don't know how to use grammar rules in English appropriately.	1	4	9	12	4	30	
	5	*16*	*27*	*24*	*4*		*76*
2. I don't know how to use English words appropriately.	1	3	4	15	7	30	
	5	*12*	*12*	*30*	*7*		*66*
5. I have problems with word order in English.		5	4	13	8	30	
		20	*12*	*26*	*8*		*66*
9. I cannot speak English spontaneously.	1	2	5	13	9	30	
	5	*8*	*15*	*26*	*9*		*63*
10. I cannot speak English fluently.		5	3	12	10	30	
		20	*9*	*24*	*10*		*63*

Table 4.2, continued

Items on Language-Related Problems	Likert-scale Point						Total
	5	4	3	2	1		
7. I don't know how to stress English words correctly.		3	4	12	11	30	
		12	*12*	*24*	*11*		*59*
6. I cannot pronounce the sounds of vowels, consonants, or diphthongs in English clearly.		3	4	9	14	30	
		12	*12*	*18*	*14*		*56*
TOTAL							*696*

Table 4.3 shows the ranking of perceptions towards language-related problems in speaking English by the non-English-major students. They scored the highest on Item 4, '*I don't know how to use grammar rules in English appropriately*', then on Item 10, '*I cannot speak English fluently*', and followed by Item 1, '*I don't have enough vocabulary to use English effectively*' with a score of 100, 95, and 92 respectively. The equivalent group studied by Rujipornwasin (2004), the Thai-medium Engineering students rated the highest on the item '*I cannot speak English fluently*' with a mean score of 3.97; therefore, the result in the present study slightly matched the finding since fluency was viewed by the non-English-major students as their second highest problem. On the other hand, the non-English-major respondents rated the lowest on Item 6, '*I cannot pronounce the sounds of vowels, consonants, or diphthongs in English clearly*' with a score of 79. This finding also matched Rujipornwasin's (2004) result because the same item was placed in the bottom ranking by the Thai-medium students with a mean score of 2.78. Overall for this category, the total score was 886; it would be compared to the total score for the English-major group.

Table 4.3: Frequency and Score for Non-English-Major Students' Perceptions towards
Language-Related Problems

Items on Language-Related Problems	Likert-scale Point					Total	
	5	4	3	2	1		
4. I don't know how to use grammar rules in English appropriately.	2	12	10	6		30	
(Score = Likert-scale Point X Frequency)	*10*	*48*	*30*	*12*			*100*
10. I cannot speak English fluently.	1	12	9	7	1	30	
	5	*48*	*27*	*14*	*1*		*95*
1. I don't have enough vocabulary to use English effectively.	2	10	6	12		30	
	10	*40*	*18*	*24*			*92*
8. I think my intonation is not like English native speakers.	1	8	14	5	2	30	
	5	*32*	*42*	*10*	*2*		*91*
3. My knowledge of language structure in English is not sufficient.	1	8	12	9		30	
	5	*32*	*36*	*18*			*91*
9. I cannot speak English spontaneously.	1	9	10	8	2	30	
	5	*36*	*30*	*16*	*2*		*89*
5. I have problems with word order in English.		8	10	11	1	30	
		32	*30*	*22*	*1*		*85*
2. I don't know how to use English words appropriately.	1	9	3	16	1	30	
	5	*36*	*9*	*32*	*1*		*83*
7. I don't know how to stress English words correctly.		6	10	13	1	30	
		24	*30*	*26*	*1*		*81*
6. I cannot pronounce the sounds of vowels, consonants, or diphthongs in English clearly.		7	7	14	2	30	
		28	*21*	*28*	*2*		*79*
TOTAL							*886*

According to Table 4.2 and Table 4.3, Item 1, '*I don't have enough vocabulary to use English effectively*' was among the top-three perceived most problematic language areas for both groups. This means that the non-English-major and English-major students thought that a lack of vocabulary was one of their main concerns when speaking English. This finding matched Farooqui's (2007) study in which the EFL university teachers claimed that most of their students faced limited vocabulary problem *(see 2.4.1)*. On the contrary, Item 6, '*I cannot pronounce the sounds of vowels, consonants, or diphthongs in*

English clearly' had the lowest total score in both groups' ranking. While pronunciation difficulties are among the highlighted problems among ESL and ESOL learners in past researches *(see 2.4.1)*, the finding in this study did not match because the respondents collectively perceived pronunciation as less of a problem. Meanwhile, the total score for the non-English-major group was higher (886) *(Table 4.3)* than the total score for the English-major group (696) *(Table 4.2)*, which indicated that the former perceived to have a higher level of language-related problems in speaking English than the latter. This result matched Rujipornwasin's (2004) overall finding in which the Thai-medium students reported to have more problems in speaking English as opposed to the English-medium students *(see 2.4.3)*.

4.1.3 Section Two: Students' Perceptions towards Their Affective-Related Problems in Speaking English

Table 4.4 shows the English-major students' ranking of perceptions towards their affective-related problems in speaking English. Item 21, '*Having too many students in one class reduces my motivation to speak up*' was rated the highest with a score of 86, and Item 25, '*I don't have a chance to speak English in the classroom*' followed with a score of 80. The fact that Item 25 came in second was a surprise since it was understood that the English-major students had plenty of opportunities to speak English inside the classroom because English is used as the medium of instructions. Therefore, it is important to look at the ratings of individual Likert-scale points. More than half of the students rated '2=Disagree' (16 students), but many was also unsure (9 students); as a result, the item came in second. The researcher thinks that the nine respondents who were uncertain were aware that they had many chances to speak English in the classroom, but were probably reluctant due to the main affective barrier, '*Having too many students in one class reduces*

my motivation to speak up'. At the other end, there were two items that shared the lowest scores which were Item 16, '*I never receive positive feedback from the teachers when I speak English*' and Item 26, '*I have no chance to speak English outside the classroom*' with a score of 51 each. This means that the students were less affected by these problems in speaking English. Meanwhile, the total score for all items was 1055.

Table 4.4: Frequency and Score for English-Major Students' Perceptions towards
　　　　　Affective-Related Problems

Items on Affective-Related Problems	Likert-scale Point						Total
	5	4	3	2	1		
21. Having too many students in one class reduces my motivation to speak up.	3	9	5	7	6	30	
(Score = Likert-scale Point X Frequency)	*15*	*36*	*15*	*14*	*6*		*86*
25. I don't have a chance to speak English in the classroom.	1	4	9	16		30	
	5	*16*	*27*	*32*			*80*
19. Poor English-speaking students slow down the teaching and learning process.	2	6	5	12	5	30	
	10	*24*	*15*	*24*	*5*		*78*
24. There are not enough speaking activities in English courses.	3	5	5	9	8	30	
	15	*20*	*15*	*18*	*8*		*76*
14. Most of the teachers use a native language outside the classroom.	2	3	8	11	6	30	
	10	*12*	*24*	*22*	*6*		*74*
12. I lack confidence in speaking English.	3	5	4	8	10	30	
	15	*20*	*12*	*16*	*10*		*73*
22. The classroom layout is not suitable for speaking activities.	2	2	7	12	7	30	
	10	*8*	*21*	*24*	*7*		*70*
18. Good English-speaking students make me fear of speaking in class.	2	4	2	15	7	30	
	10	*16*	*6*	*30*	*7*		*69*
11. I feel embarrassed to speak English in class.	3	3	3	10	11	30	
	15	*12*	*9*	*20*	*11*		*67*
23. Speaking activities in English classes are not relevant to real-life situations.	1	2	5	10	12	30	
	5	*8*	*15*	*20*	*12*		*60*
15. I feel uneasy to ask questions in English to the teachers.	2	2	2	10	14	30	
	10	*8*	*6*	*20*	*14*		*58*

Table 4.4, continued

Items on Affective-Related Problems	Likert-scale Point						Total
	5	4	3	2	1		
13. Most of the teachers use a native language as the medium of instructions.		3	3	10	14	30	
		12	*9*	*20*	*14*		*55*
20. Other students mock me if I try to speak English.		3	3	9	15	30	
		12	*9*	*18*	*15*		*54*
17. I feel uneasy to practice speaking English with peers.	1	1	2	12	14	30	
	5	*4*	*6*	*24*	*14*		*53*
16. I never receive positive feedback from the teachers when I speak English.	1	1	2	10	16	30	
	5	*4*	*6*	*20*	*16*		*51*
26. I have no chance to speak English outside the classroom.	1	1	2	10	16	30	
	5	*4*	*6*	*20*	*16*		*51*
TOTAL							*1055*

Table 4.5 shows the non-English-major students' perceptions towards their affective problems in speaking English. They rated the highest on Item 14, '*Most of the teachers use a native language outside the classroom*' with a score of 102, Item 13, '*Most of the teachers use a native language as the medium of instructions*' with a score of 101, and Item 15, '*I feel uneasy to ask questions in English to the teachers*' with a score of 99. These three items are related to the teachers; in other words, the non-English-major students perceived that their major affective barriers to speaking English were related to the teachers. As mentioned in 1.1.1, during the period of this study, the teachers had the freedom on their language choice for teaching instructions. This means that they decided to conduct their lessons in a native language rather than in English. In Rujipornwasin's findings (2004), the Thai-medium Engineering students also ranked the equivalent items among the top two; their highest perceived affective-related problem was '*Most of the teachers use Thai outside the classroom*' with a mean score of 3.75, and the second highest was '*Most of the teachers use Thai as a medium of instruction*' with a mean score of 3.71. Meanwhile, in Table 4.5,

Item 26, '*I have no chance to speak English outside the classroom*' was in the last ranking

with a score of 67. The total score for all items was 1341.

Table 4.5: Frequency and Score for Non-English-Major Students' Perceptions towards
          Affective-Related Problems

Items on Affective-Related Problems	Likert-scale Point						Total
	5	4	3	2	1		
14. Most of the teachers use a native language outside the classroom.	4	12	6	8		30	
(Score = Likert-scale Point X Frequency)	*20*	*48*	*18*	*16*			*102*
13. Most of the teachers use a native language as the medium of instructions.	7	9	4	8	2	30	
	35	*36*	*12*	*16*	*2*		*101*
15. I feel uneasy to ask questions in English to the teachers.	2	12	9	7		30	
	10	*48*	*27*	*14*			*99*
18. Good English-speaking students make me fear of speaking in class.	2	6	10	12		30	
	10	*24*	*30*	*24*			*88*
24. There are not enough speaking activities in English courses.	3	5	8	12	2	30	
	15	*20*	*24*	*24*	*2*		*85*
21. Having too many students in one class reduces my motivation to speak up.	3	7	4	13	3	30	
	15	*28*	*12*	*26*	*3*		*84*
19. Poor English-speaking students slow down the teaching and learning process.	2	5	9	12	2	30	
	10	*20*	*27*	*24*	*2*		*83*
17. I feel uneasy to practice speaking English with peers.	1	6	7	16		30	
	5	*24*	*21*	*32*			*82*
11. I feel embarrassed to speak English in class.		8	9	10	3	30	
		32	*27*	*20*	*3*		*82*
20. Other students mock me if I try to speak English.	1	7	8	10	4	30	
	5	*28*	*24*	*20*	*4*		*81*
16. I never receive positive feedback from the teachers when I speak English.	1	6	6	17		30	
	5	*24*	*18*	*34*			*81*
12. I lack confidence in speaking English.		9	6	12	3	30	
		36	*18*	*24*	*3*		*81*
25. I don't have a chance to speak English in the classroom.	2	3	9	12	4	30	
	10	*12*	*27*	*24*	*4*		*77*

Table 4.5, continued

Items on Affective-Related Problems	Likert-scale Point						Total
	5	4	3	2	1		
22. The classroom layout is not suitable for speaking activities.	1	3	10	14	2	30	
	5	*12*	*30*	*28*	*2*		*77*
23. Speaking activities in English classes are not relevant to real-life situations.	2	2	6	15	5	30	
	10	*8*	*18*	*30*	*5*		*71*
26. I have no chance to speak English outside the classroom.	1	2	6	15	6	30	
	5	*8*	*18*	*30*	*6*		*67*
TOTAL							*1341*

The non-English-major students perceived themselves to have affective-related problems in speaking English more than the English-major students did because the total score for the non-English majors was higher (1341) *(Table 4.5)* than that of the English majors (1055) *(Table 4.4)*. Similar to the results for language-related problems, the non-English-major and English-major groups also had the same item in their lowest ranking for affective-related problems. According to their perceptions, they had the least problem with finding opportunities to speak English outside the classroom (Item 26). The researcher believes that this is because UM students are aware that there are many people they can speak English to in the University due to its environment that is international and multi-racial.

4.1.4 Section Three: Students' Cognitive Strategies to Improve Their Spoken English

The same scoring method as Section Two was applied to Section Three *(see 4.1.2)* in order to rank the strategies from most frequently used to least frequently used, as well as to show the frequency of rating for each scale.

According to Table 4.6, the top-three most frequently used cognitive strategies by the English-major students were '*I watch English language TV shows or go to movies spoken in English*' (Item 6), '*I start conversations in English*' (Item 5), and '*I practice the sounds of English*' (Item 3) with a score of 126, 122, and 121 respectively. Similarly, the strategy '*I practice the sounds of English*' was also the third most frequently employed cognitive strategy by the high proficiency level Korean EFL learners in Yang's (2010) study. On the other hand, the least frequently used cognitive strategy by the English majors was '*I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English*' (Item 14) with a score of 100. As found by Yang (2010), this strategy was also less popular among the Korean EFL learners in general as it was ranked the second lowest for the cognitive strategy category. Besides, the second least favourite strategy among the English-major students, Item 12, '*I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand*', was the same as the least preferred cognitive strategy by the high proficiency level Korean EFL students in Yang's study (2010). In total, the scores for all items for this category equalled to 1687.

Table 4.6: Frequency and Score for English-Major Students' Cognitive Strategies Use

Cognitive Strategies	Likert-scale Point					Total	
	5	4	3	2	1		
6. I watch English language TV shows or go to movies spoken in English.	13	10	7			30	
(Score = Likert-scale Point X Frequency)	*65*	*40*	*21*				*126*
5. I start conversations in English.	11	12	5	2		30	
	55	*48*	*15*	*4*			*122*
3. I practice the sounds of English.	8	16	5	1		30	
	40	*64*	*15*	*2*			*121*
1. I say or write new English words several times.	7	16	6	1		30	
	35	*64*	*18*	*2*			*119*
13. I try not to translate word-for-word.	9	8	12	1		30	
	45	*32*	*36*	*2*			*115*
11. I try to find patterns in English.	6	12	12			30	
	30	*48*	*36*				*114*

Table 4.6, continued

Cognitive Strategies	Likert-scale Point					Total	
	5	4	3	2	1		
8. I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English.	7	14	4	5		30	
	35	*56*	*12*	*10*			*113*
15. To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses.	9	12	5	2		30	
	45	*48*	*15*	*4*			*112*
4. I use the English words I know in different ways.	3	17	8	2		30	
	15	*68*	*24*	*4*			*111*
2. I try to talk like native English speakers.	7	8	12	3		30	
	35	*32*	*36*	*6*			*109*
7. I read for pleasure in English.	5	13	6	6		30	
	25	*52*	*18*	*12*			*107*
10. I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English.	5	11	10	4		30	
	25	*44*	*30*	*8*			*107*
9. I first skim an English passage (read it quickly) then go back and read carefully.	2	15	11	2		30	
	10	*60*	*33*	*4*			*107*
12. I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand.	6	9	9	5	1	30	
	30	*36*	*27*	*10*	*1*		*104*
14. I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English.	5	10	7	6	2	30	
	25	*40*	*21*	*12*	*2*		*100*
TOTAL							*1687*

As seen in Table 4.7, the non-English-major students used these following cognitive strategies the most: Item 10, '*I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English*' (a score of 108), Item 3, '*I practice the sounds of English*' (a score of 108), and Item 1, '*I say or write new English words several times*' (a score of 106). Similarities were found with Yang's (2010) findings on the most frequently used cognitive strategies by the low proficiency level Korean EFL learners; their second most favourite cognitive strategy was the same as that of the non-English-major students in this study ('*I practice the sounds of English*'), and their most frequently employed cognitive strategy was the non-English-major students' third most preferred strategy ('*I say or write new English*

words several times'). On the other hand, the non-English-major students in this study used the strategy '*I try to find patterns in English*' (Item 11) the least, with a score of 87. Their second least favourite cognitive strategy (Item 14, '*I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English*') was the English-major students' least preferred cognitive strategy and was the lowest ranking cognitive strategy among the Korean EFL learners in Yang's (2010) study. The total score for all the items was 1472.

Table 4.7: Frequency and Score for Non-English-Major Students' Cognitive Strategies Use

Cognitive Strategies	Likert-scale Point						Total
	5	4	3	2	1		
10. I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English.	4	14	9	2	1	30	
(Score = Likert-scale Point X Frequency)	*20*	*56*	*27*	*4*	*1*		*108*
3. I practice the sounds of English.	3	15	9	3		30	
	15	*60*	*27*	*6*			*108*
1. I say or write new English words several times.	3	13	11	3		30	
	15	*52*	*33*	*6*			*106*
12. I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand.	1	15	11	3		30	
	5	*60*	*33*	*6*			*104*
7. I read for pleasure in English.	3	9	15	2	1	30	
	15	*36*	*45*	*4*	*1*		*101*
13. I try not to translate word-for-word.	2	12	12	2	2	30	
	10	*48*	*36*	*4*	*2*		*100*
5. I start conversations in English.	2	11	12	4	1	30	
	10	*44*	*36*	*8*	*1*		*99*
6. I watch English language TV shows or go to movies spoken in English.	3	9	12	6		30	
	15	*36*	*36*	*12*			*99*
2. I try to talk like native English speakers.	3	11	15	1		30	
	15	*33*	*45*	*2*			*95*
15. To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses.	2	8	15	3	2	30	
	10	*32*	*45*	*6*	*2*		*95*
9. I first skim an English passage (read it quickly) then go back and read carefully.		10	16	3	1	30	
		40	*48*	*6*	*1*		*95*
4. I use the English words I know in different ways.	3	8	11	7	1	30	
	15	*32*	*33*	*14*			*94*

Table 4.7, continued

Cognitive Strategies	Likert-scale Point					Total	
	5	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**		
8. I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English.	1	8	15	4	2	30	
	5	*32*	*45*	*8*	*2*		*92*
14. I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English.		11	9	8	2	30	
		44	*27*	*16*	*2*		*89*
11. I try to find patterns in English.		7	14	8	1	30	
		28	*42*	*16*	*1*		*87*
TOTAL							*1472*

A similarity was found between the English-major and non-English-major students when Item 3 ('*I practice the sounds of English*') was in the top-three ranking for both groups with a score of 108 for the non-English-major and a score of 121 for the English-major. Similarly, Yang (2010) found that '*I practice the sounds of English*' was the second most employed strategy (M = 3.54) by his respondents in general. Overall, the score for the English-major group was higher (1687) *(Table 4.6)* than the score for the non-English-major group (1472) *(Table 4.7)*, which indicated that the former used cognitive strategies more frequently than the latter. This result matched the finding in Goh and Kwah (1997) in which the Chinese ESL students from the high proficiency group used cognitive strategies (M = 3.48) more than the medium (M = 3.27) and the low (M = 3.10) proficiency groups. Goh and Kwah (1997: 49) also pointed out that "Some strategies that students reported using frequently were skimming, finding the meaning of a word by dividing it into parts that they could understand, practising the sounds of English, and finding patterns in the language". The current study also found that the strategy of 'practising sounds' was frequently employed by the respondents.

4.1.5 Section Three: Students' Functional-Use Strategies to Improve Their Spoken English

Based on Table 4.8, the functional-use strategy that was most frequently employed by the English-major students was '*I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English*' (Item 19) with a score of 127. This was followed by Item 25, '*If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or to say it again*' with a score of 119 and Item 27, '*I practice English with other students*' with a score of 116. Their least frequently employed strategy for this category was '*I pay attention when someone is speaking English*' (Item 21) with a score of 95. The scores for all items were 1686 in total.

Table 4.8: Frequency and Score for English-Major Students' Functional-Use Strategies Use

Functional-Use Strategies	Likert-scale Point					Total	
	5	4	3	2	1		
19. I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English.	5	13	10	2		30	
(Score = Likert-scale Point X Frequency)	25	52	30	20			127
25. If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or to say it again.	9	11	10			30	
	45	44	30				119
27. I practice English with other students.	8	15	2	5		30	
	40	60	6	10			116
29. I ask questions in English.	7	16	5	1	1	30	
	35	64	15	2			116
30. I try to learn about the culture of English speakers.	9	9	11	1		30	
	45	36	33	2			116
26. I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk.	7	14	6	3		30	
	35	56	18	6			115
22. I look for people I can talk to in English.	6	15	7	2		30	
	30	60	21	4			115
24. I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake.	6	16	5	2	1	30	
	30	64	15	4	1		114
28. I ask for help from English speakers.	6	15	6	3		30	
	30	60	18	6			114

Table 4.8, continued

Functional-Use Strategies	Likert-scale Point					Total	
	5	4	3	2	1		
16. When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures.	7	12	8	3		30	
	35	*48*	*24*	*6*			*113*
17. I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English.	5	13	8	4		30	
	25	*52*	*24*	*8*			*109*
18. If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.	6	10	11	3		30	
	30	*40*	*33*	*6*			*109*
20. I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better.	4	13	9	4		30	
	20	*52*	*27*	*8*			*107*
23. I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English.	5	11	6	6	2	30	
	25	*44*	*18*	*12*	*2*		*101*
21. I pay attention when someone is speaking English.	3	6	15	5	1	30	
	15	*24*	*45*	*10*	*1*		*95*
TOTAL							*1686*

As seen in Table 4.9, Item 26, '*I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk*' was the functional-use strategy that was most frequently used by the non-English-major students, with a score of 116. The second highest was Item 29, '*I ask questions in English*' with a score of 110, and the third highest was Item 25, '*If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or to say it again*' with a score of 109. This particular item was found to be the most frequently employed social strategy by the low proficiency level Korean EFL university students in Yang's (2010) study. In the lowest ranking for the non-English-major group was Item 27, '*I practice English with other students*' with a score of 95. All the items resulted in the total score of 1558.

Table 4.9: Frequency and Score for Non-English-Major Students' Functional-Use
Strategies Use

Functional-Use Strategies	Likert-scale Point					Total	
	5	4	3	2	1		
26. I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk.	4	19	6	1		30	
(Score = Likert-scale Point X Frequency)	*20*	*76*	*18*	*2*			*116*
29. I ask questions in English.	4	14	10	2		30	
	20	*56*	*30*	*4*			*110*
25. If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or to say it again.	2	18	7	3		30	
	10	*72*	*21*	*6*			*109*
18. If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.	3	16	8	2	1	30	
	15	*64*	*24*	*4*	*1*		*108*
28. I ask for help from English speakers.	3	15	10	1	1	30	
	15	*60*	*30*	*2*	*1*		*108*
20. I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better.	2	13	13	2		30	
	10	*52*	*39*	*4*	*1*		*106*
19. I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English.	4	11	12	2	1	30	
	20	*44*	*36*	*4*	*1*		*105*
22. I look for people I can talk to in English.	3	13	11	1	2	30	
	15	*52*	*33*	*2*	*2*		*104*
21. I pay attention when someone is speaking English.	5	8	13	3	1	30	
	25	*32*	*39*	*6*	*1*		*103*
24. I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake.	2	12	11	5		30	
	10	*48*	*33*	*10*			*101*
17. I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English.	3	9	13	5		30	
	15	*36*	*39*	*10*	*1*		*101*
23. I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English.	2	11	12	4	1	30	
	10	*44*	*36*	*8*	*1*		*99*
30. I try to learn about the culture of English speakers.	3	8	13	5	1	30	
	15	*32*	*39*	*10*	*1*		*97*
16. When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures.	2	8	15	4	1	30	
	10	*32*	*45*	*8*	*1*		*96*
27. I practice English with other students.		13	11	4	2	30	
		52	*33*	*8*	*2*		*95*
TOTAL							*1558*

Both the non-English-major and English-major students used the strategy '*If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or to say it again*' (Item 25) quite frequently as it was found to be in the top-three highest for both groups. In Yang's (2010) findings, this strategy was the fifth most frequently used strategy by Korean EFL learners in general, with a mean score of 3.37, and was the first for the social strategy category. However, Item 27, '*I practice English with other students*' had different standings between the two groups in this study as it was in the third ranking for the English-major students but was in the last ranking for the non-English-major students. Overall, the English-major students used functional-use strategies more frequently than the non-English-major students as proved by the total score of 1686 *(Table 4.8)* against 1558 *(Table 4.9)*.

4.2   Findings of the Interview

The researcher asked six main questions that had been constructed earlier and asked some additional questions when it was necessary to get more details during the interviews. The six main questions were:

1. What is your weakest language aspect when speaking English?

2. What do you do to improve the particular language-related problem in speaking English?

3. How confident do you feel when speaking English?

4. What do you do to increase your confidence in speaking English?

5. What other strategies do you use to improve your spoken English, and what improvement have you gained from them?

6. How have the English lessons you received in the university helped to improve your spoken English?

The first question explored students' linguistic problems in speaking English by focusing on the individual's weakest language-related area. The second question investigated the actions that they have taken to overcome the particular problem. The third question looked at students' affective-related problem by focusing on their confidence level. The fourth question examined the strategies that they have used to improve their self-confidence in speaking English. The fifth question aimed to identify other strategies that students have employed and the aspects of spoken English that the strategies have helped to improve. The final question gathered students' perceptions on how the university English courses have helped to improve their spoken English. For these purposes, five English-major students and five non-English-major students who had been surveyed were interviewed. They were given pseudonyms to protect their identity; the English-major students would be known as Students E1, E2, E3, E4, and E5, while the non-English-major students would be known as Students NE1, NE2, NE3, NE4, and NE5 in this study.

4.2.1 Interview Question 1

Question: What is your weakest language aspect when speaking English?

Answer:

<u>English-Major Students</u>

Student E1 and Student E4 stated vocabulary as their main weakness when speaking English. Student E1 explained that he has problems finding certain words and explaining unfamiliar words during class presentation. Student E4 elaborated that she sometimes uses the wrong words that "sound like" the correct ones due to vocabulary confusion. These

responses stating vocabulary as the main problem in speaking English confirmed the finding in the survey in which vocabulary was perceived as the number one language-related problem among the English-major students *(see Table 4.2)*. Meanwhile, Student E2 believed that her main problem in speaking English is a lack of fluency. This was because she is used to speaking in her mother tongue and only started using English in the university. Student E3 on the other hand, said that she is concerned with her grammar the most and it causes her to hesitate when speaking English. Last but not least, Student E5's perceived main problem in speaking English is to understand the native speakers' accents during a "rapid speech".

Non-English-Major Students

Student NE1's perceived major concern in speaking English is her sentence structure in which she usually has trouble coming up with utterances that are syntactically accurate. While Student NE2 and Student NE5 thought that their biggest linguistic problem is limited vocabulary, Student NE3 and Student NE4 perceived a lack of grammatical knowledge as their main flaw. The answers given by these four students validated the survey findings on the non-English-major students' perceptions towards their linguistic problems in speaking English, in which vocabulary was in the third ranking and grammar was in the first ranking *(see Table 4.3)*. Student NE4 elaborated that in terms of grammar, she is mostly unsure with the usage of present perfect, past perfect, present continuous, and past continuous tenses.

4.2.2   Interview Question 2

Question: What do you do to improve the particular language-related problem in speaking English?

Answer:

<u>English-Major Students</u>

Student E1 overcomes his vocabulary problem during class presentation by "going round and round" to describe a word that he cannot come up with. This technique is similar to Item 18, '*If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing*' which refers to 'using circumlocution or synonym' (Oxford and Burry-Stock, 1995). Besides, Student E1 sometimes asks the audience for the particular word that he is uncertain of; this is a social strategy which was adapted into the functional-use strategy category in this study as Item 28, '*I ask for help from English speakers*' *(see Table 3.2).* Student E4 who also claimed to have limited vocabulary tries to improve this aspect by watching English television (henceforth TV) programs and reading English subtitles when watching Malay TV programs. This respondent's preference for watching English TV shows confirmed the finding that the English-major students' most frequently employed cognitive strategy was '*I watch English language TV shows or go to movies spoken in English*' (Item 6) (*see Table 4.6).* Student E2 who perceived to lack fluency, practices speaking English with her friends, especially roommates and best friends who are also from the TESL programme. This social strategy or as considered in this study, functional-use strategy (Item 27, '*I practice English with other students*') fell in the third ranking for the category as shown in Table 4.8; hence, the statement confirmed the survey finding. Meanwhile, Student E3 who is usually unsure of her grammar tries to monitor her speech, especially when choosing between present and past tenses. This student's practice is a metacognitive strategy that refers to 'self-monitoring' *(see Table 2.2)* though not included

in the instrument of this study. The other interviewee, Student E5 reported that she will normally say "Excuse me?" when having trouble understanding a native speaker's speech. This strategy is similar to Item 25 in the questionnaire, '*If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or to say it again*', which ranked in the second place for the functional-use strategy category *(see Table 4.8)*; thus, the finding of the survey was again validated.

Non-English-Major Students

Student NE1, who perceived to have the most problem in arranging sentences, claimed that she would rather avoid speaking English whenever she can. For instance, if a foreigner asked for directions, she would rather take him or her to the particular destination than give verbal directions. Avoidance, either partially or totally, is one of the compensation strategies in Oxford's (1990) classification system *(see Table 2.1)* though not included in the questionnaire of this study. According to Student NE2, she normally reads journal articles to enrich her word range. Having the same vocabulary problem as Student NE2, Student NE5 usually asks for the appropriate words from friends when lacking vocabulary. The strategy used by Student NE5 showed similarity to that of Student E1 who also asks for help from other English speakers *(see English-major students' answers)*. Meanwhile, Student NE4 tries to improve her grammar by watching English TV programs or movies; Student NE3 also resorts to watching English movies to improve her grammar in speaking. The strategy employed by Student NE4 and Student NE3 was similar to that of Student E4 who often watches English TV shows *(see English-major students' answers)*. Student NE4 added that playing the Play Station games can help to improve pronunciation and to enrich vocabulary because most of these games contain both spoken and written English captions. Another strategy not included in the instrument but mentioned in the interview was listening to English songs to improve grammar as used by Student NE3.

4.2.3 Interview Question 3

Question: How confident do you feel when speaking English?

Answer:

English-Major Students

Confidence issue was one of the affective barriers brought up in the questionnaire (Item 12, '*I lack confidence in speaking English*') but it was asked in this interview to provide depth on what confidence or lack of confidence in speaking English meant to the students. Students E1, E2, and E3 said that they are usually confident to speak English with friends who have the same proficiency level. However, Student E1 is uncomfortable to use English with certain friends with whom he shares a mother tongue because he is afraid of being seen as showing off. Student E2 admitted that she can feel intimidated by excellent English speakers, while Student E3 is often afraid of "being laughed at" if her English is "wrong". Student E3 also mentioned that she lacks confident when speaking English in formal events and in the classroom, and tends to stutter when responding to questions in English. On the contrary, Student E1 is quite confident during class presentation because he would "just speak". This is similar to Student E5 who claimed that her ego would not let the slightest lack of confidence prevent her from speaking English. Similar to Student E2, Student E4 also tends to stutter when her confidence is shaky, especially during conversations with people whose native language is other than Malay.

Non-English-Major Students

In the survey findings, the non-English-major students' score for Item 12, '*I lack confidence in speaking English*' was 81 *(see Table 4.5)*, which was higher than the score by the English-major students which was 73 *(see Table 4.4)*. This indicated that the non-English-major students perceived a higher level of confidence issue in speaking English. But results of the interview showed that both groups seemed to have equal levels of

confidence in speaking English. Students NE1, NE3, and NE5 are normally confident to speak English to friends with the same proficiency level but are shy with better English speakers, including the native speakers. However, for Student NE1, these people do not include her lecturers because she believed that the lecturers will never laugh if she makes mistakes. Besides, with the lecturers, she feels motivated to put in as much effort as possible in speaking English. As for speaking English to peers, she mentioned that the security comes from the belief that any mistakes will usually be dismissed as jokes among them. Student NE2 on the other hand, is often confident to speak English to anyone, be it friends, lecturers, or strangers. Lastly, Student NE4 claimed that she is comfortable speaking English to everybody "except for my own family because I feel awkward, somehow".

4.2.4   Interview Question 4

Question: What do you do to increase your confidence in speaking English?

Answer:

<u>English-Major Students</u>

Student E1 believed in taking risks and in focusing on the audience's comprehension to stay confident in speaking English. This student as well as Student E2 and Student E4, try to increase their confidence in speaking English by practicing with fellow course mates. Student E5 said that she will fake her confidence when she feels a little nervous to use English. In short, these students increase their confidence to speak English by employing some kind of affective or social strategies that are similar to Item 24, '*I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake*' and Item 27, '*I practice English with other students*' in the functional-use strategy category in the questionnaire *(see Table 3.2)*. On the contrary, Student E3 confessed that she often avoids

speaking English due to lack of confidence, although she is very aware that avoidance can impede her improvements. 'Avoidance strategies' are communication strategies (Dörnyei, 1995) rather than LLSs, but are also categorized as 'compensation strategies' in Oxford's (1990) classification system *(see Table 2.1).*

Non-English-Major Students

Student NE1 tries to increase her confidence to speak English by practicing with close friends because she is comfortable with them. Student NE2 claimed that she will usually speak up whenever she feels like it, even if she uses "broken English". This student added that she does not mind if friends or lecturers correct her English when she makes mistakes. Neither does Student NE3 who will even ask her friends or classmates for reassurance that she is using the right forms of English. Student NE4 stated that she does not have a confidence problem in speaking English because she is used to using English with classmates since the upper primary school, especially with those of other races. The affective and social strategies used by these respondents to increase their confidence in speaking English were comparable to that of the English-major respondents *(see English-major students' answers).* On the other hand, Student NE5 tries to be confident in speaking English by compensating with his first language, Malay, where necessary. This strategy is called code-mixing in which speakers switch to their mother tongue to overcome limitations in their second language (Ellis, 1997), and is classified as a compensation strategy by Oxford (1990) *(see Table 2.1).*

4.2.5 Interview Question 5

Question: What other strategies do you use to improve your spoken English, and what improvement have you gained from them?

Answer:

<u>English-Major Students</u>

Apart from the strategies mentioned in 4.2.2 and 4.2.4, the interviewees claimed to have been employing other strategies which they believed are useful for their spoken English. Students E1, E2, and E3 believed that reading can enhance vocabulary range; Student E2 likes to read short stories and articles from the internet, while Student E1 and Student E3 suggested reading academic books or journals but mentioned that they rarely do so. 'Reading for pleasure' such as used by Student E2, is a cognitive strategy that was included in the questionnaire as Item 7 *(see Table 3.2)*. Besides reading, Student E3 strongly believed that listening to English songs can enrich vocabulary as she will look up for the meaning of new words found in song lyrics. For example, through a song titled 'Perfect' by Pink, Student E3 learnt that 'obnoxious' means offensive. She also watches English movies to improve her vocabulary and grammar, and as a bonus result, learns some "in" words. According to this student, the language-related improvements that these strategies bring have increased her confidence to speak English. Student E4 and Student E5 also love to watch English movies and believed that this strategy helps to make their accent and pronunciation more native-like. Listening to English songs and watching English movies or TV programs have been mentioned by other students as responses to Interview Question 2 *(4.2.2)*; thus indicated that these strategies are quite popular among the students.

<u>Non-English-Major Students</u>

Student NE1 uses visualization to remember new words. For example, she related the word 'observation' to the lecturer from whom she first heard the word by remembering

the lecturer's face pronouncing it. This is a new finding as it is a memory strategy *(see Table 2.1)* and was not included in the questionnaire. She also remembers English lessons better through the correction that she receives. This example reflected the finding in Table 4.9 in which 'asking for correction' was the non-English-major students' most frequently employed functional-use strategy. Student NE2 watches cartoons to help her with the sentence structure in spoken English because as this student mentioned, the utterances in cartoons are "simpler and easy to remember". In Perry and Moses (2011), watching English language cartoons was also preferred by some Sudanese families living in the United States, both the children and their parents. As mentioned by a study participant named Akhlas, watching cartoons has helped her learn a lot of words; the words made her happy and were also "easy to understand" (Perry and Moses, 2011: 294). Student NE3 makes use of the dictionary and sometimes refers to her father when faced with problem regarding word meaning, while Student NE4 makes reading English novels a hobby and finds it helpful for her vocabulary. Finally, Student NE5 believed that listening to English songs while reading the lyrics help to improve many aspects in speaking, from pronunciation, sentence structure to grammar. Some of the strategies mentioned here were comparable to the English-major interviewees' strategies, such as listening to English songs, asking for help from others, looking up for the meaning of words, and reading for pleasure *(see English-major students' answers)*.

4.2.6 Interview Question 6

Question: How have the English lessons you received in the university helped to improve your spoken English?

Answer:

English-Major Students

It is important to note that the 'English lessons' meant in the question for the English-major students differed from that of the non-English-major students. While English lessons for the non-English-major group referred to the compulsory six-credit-hour-total university English courses, English lessons for the English-major group referred to all the 60-credit-hour-total English courses in their programme *(see 1.1.1)*. All the interviewees in the English-major group convincingly stated that the English courses have improved their spoken English. Student E1 said that class presentations have encouraged him to speak English more confidently. Student E2 believed that listening to lectures in English is helpful, while Student E3 thought that the necessity to speak English in the classroom is "actually good for my English" no matter how reluctant she may be. Student E4 mentioned that speaking English to "non-Malay classmates" and to the lecturers is a great practice. Similarly, Student E5 believed that talking to foreign students in the classroom can help to improve her spoken English.

Non-English-Major Students

At the point of this interview, some of the interviewees had completed their compulsory English courses but some had not. Nonetheless, the researcher made sure that they had taken at least one English course in order to be able to evaluate the lessons. This question was asked during the selection of interview participants *(see 3.3.2)*. Student NE1 believed that English courses helped to improve her spoken English because she had to use English at all times during the lessons. However, she thought that it would be more ideal if

the University made it compulsory for the non-English-major programmes to have an English course for every semester. Student NE2 also believed that English classes helped as they were the only times when she could practice speaking English. However, Student NE3 said that she and most of her friends thought that the English courses were not very helpful for the weaker English speakers but were only beneficial for the intermediate and advanced oral proficiency level students. Student NE4 also did not think that the courses helped to improve English speaking skills because the focus was more on writing and presentations. When asked why the presentations did not help to improve speaking skills as they ideally should, the student said that it was because the teacher only taught "what to include in the presentations and not how to speak". She also stressed that the teaching of grammar should be emphasized in the university because many rural students still speak in "broken English". Lastly, Student NE5 thought that the English lessons were moderately helpful for spoken English because they mainly helped to improve the knowledge but not necessarily the skills.

4.3   Conclusion

30 English-major students and 30 non-English-major students were surveyed using a questionnaire that gathered their educational details, perceptions towards problems in speaking English, and strategies to improve in spoken English.

When it came to language-related problems, the English-major students perceived a lack of vocabulary as their main concern, while the non-English-major students reported to have most problems with grammar. Both groups perceived pronunciation as the least problematic area. Affective-wise, the English-major students' number one perceived barrier to speaking English was having a large class size, and the non-English major students' top perceived barriers were mostly teacher-related. Both groups however, perceived the lack of

opportunity to speak English outside the classroom as the least important problem that they faced. Overall, based on the total scores for the categories, the English-major students' perceptions on having both types of problems were less serious than that of the non-English-major students.

Besides, the English-major students used more cognitive and functional-use strategies than the non-English-major students. The cognitive strategy reported by the English-major students to be their most frequently used was 'watching TV or movies', while the non-English-major students' most frequently employed cognitive strategy was 'looking for similar words across languages'. The English-major students' most frequently used functional-use strategy was 'finding as many ways as possible to use English', while the non-English-major students most frequently employed the functional-use strategy of 'asking for correction'.

Later on, 5 English-major and 5 non-English-major survey participants were interviewed for further details on their linguistic problems in speaking English, strategies to improve those weaknesses, confidence level in speaking English, and strategies to increase their confidence to speak English. There were many similarities between both groups' responses, such as their tendency to be more confident when speaking English to friends with the same proficiency level, and their preferences for the use of English movies, TV programs, and songs to improve spoken English. However, the two groups differed in their perceptions on how helpful the university English lessons have been. While all the English-major interviewees agreed that the courses helped to improve their spoken English, not all the non-English-major students agreed. The interviews have confirmed many findings of the questionnaire survey but have also provided other learning strategies that were not included in the questionnaire and have given insight into students' perceived problems in speaking English.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

5.0   Introduction

This chapter discusses the results obtained from the questionnaire survey and from the interviews. The findings were compared to or contrasted with relevant past studies.

5.1   Educational Details of Respondents

The differences between the English-major and non-English-major group's mediums of instructions and total credit hours of English courses may contribute to some differences between their survey results. As seen in Table 4.1, the English-major group receives teaching and learning instructions in English, and as mentioned in 1.1.1, gets a total of 60 credit hours of English courses due to their study major. On the contrary, the non-English-major students only receive a total of six credit hours of English courses which are offered by the Faculty of Languages and Linguistics. The mediums of instructions for the core courses in the non-English-major programmes vary according to the programmes but none of them is fully English. 10 students reported that some of their core courses were taught in English but some others were taught in Malay and/or Mandarin. These students were from the International Relations and Strategic Studies, Southeast Asian Studies, and East Asian Studies programmes. According to a student from Southeast Asian Studies, some core courses were taught in English because they had lecturers from other Asian countries like the Philippines and Thailand. Core courses in programmes like Social Administration and Justice, Media Studies, History, and Geography were mostly taught in Malay, while Tamil was used for the Indian Studies. The differences in the amount of

exposure to English between the English-major and non-English-major students may be one of the factors that affected the differences between their perceptions towards the problems in speaking English.

5.2 Respondents' Perceptions towards Problems in Speaking English

5.2.1 Perceptions towards Language-Related Problems in Speaking English

Results in this study showed that the non-English-major students perceived themselves with more linguistic problems in speaking English as opposed to the English-major students. The non-English-major students perceived to have problems with grammar the most, and then with fluency *(see Table 4.3)*. The survey finding on perceived weakness in grammar was supported by a non-English-major interviewee, Student NE4's suggestion that the University should continue teaching grammar to the students *(see 4.2.6)*. Therefore, students' high rating on grammatical problem in speaking English may reflect the need for more drilling exercises in the university English courses. According to Thornbury (2005: 63-64), drilling or "imitating and repeating words, phrases, and even whole utterances" can help students notice grammatical patterns that are otherwise not registered, remember new grammatical items, and fine tune their articulation of familiar items. Thornbury (2005: 64) added that memorizing short, functional chunks and "gaining control over their fluent articulation" can increase students' fluency.

In this study, fluency was the non-English-major students' second-highest perceived language-related problem in speaking English. Rujipornwasin (2004) found the same result among the Thai-medium Engineering students. She attributed this problem to the students' limited exposure to English because they only have an English course every semester which is a three-hour session class conducted twice a week, while Thai language is used by

the teachers at other times, inside and outside the classroom. As Rujipornwasin (2004: 71) put it, since "students rarely have the chance to practice speaking", "it is hard for them to improve their speaking ability, so they cannot speak English fluently and spontaneously". Byrne (1998) mentioned that the number of hours allocated to language teaching and furthermore, to oral activities, is one of the factors in developing students' speaking skills. Thus, the researcher assumed the same causes for the non-English-major students' perception towards their lack of fluency; they might perceive their spoken English to be non-fluent because they get little chance to use English with the teachers and classmates in the university.

On the other hand, the English-major students perceived themselves with fewer language-related problems in speaking English. However, their main linguistic concern was having limited vocabulary *(see Table 4.2)*. This perception may be supported by findings of the interview in which Student E1 and Student E4 stated vocabulary as their main weakness in speaking English *(see 4.2.1)*. In 4.2.5, three English-major students reported that they try to improve this shortcoming by reading more. The advantage of this strategy is supported by Byrne (1998) who suggests teachers to incorporate text-reading in the teaching of speaking to enrich students' vocabulary. This method can therefore be adopted by the teachers and lecturers in the University to increase students' word range in order to speak English better.

5.2.2 Perceptions towards Affective-Related Problems in Speaking English

Similar to the results on linguistic problems in speaking English, the non-English-major students perceived themselves with more affective-related problems as opposed to the English-major students. The problems perceived to be the most concerning were the teachers' tendency to use a native language outside the classroom and as the medium of

instructions *(see Table 4.5)*. These findings were coherent with the findings in Rujipornwasin's (2004) study in which the Thai-medium Engineering students rated highly on the statements that most teachers use Thai outside the classroom (M = 3.75) and as the medium of instructions (M = 3.71).

On the contrary, the English-major students ranked Item 13, '*Most of the teachers use a native language as the medium of instructions*' in the bottom-four *(see Table 4.4)*. The researcher believed that it was less of a problem for the English-major students because their lessons are conducted in English. Such result and justification was supported by Rujipornwasin (2004) who found that the English-medium Engineering students perceived to have fewer problems related to the teachers because English is used in ABAC since it is an international university. However, the problem reported by the English-major students to bother them most was Item 21, '*Having too many students in one class reduces my motivation to speak up*' *(see Table 4.4)*. The researcher supported this finding through an observation of the TESL class during data collection; there were around 60 students in the classroom including foreign students. According to Byrne (1998), one of the obstacles to an effective speaking practice is a large number of students in one class which usually exceeds 30.

5.3 Respondents' Strategies to Improve Spoken English

5.3.1 Use of Cognitive Strategies

According to the survey, the English-major students used more cognitive strategies than the non-English-major students *(see 4.1.4)*. This result was consistent with past comparisons on the LLSs use among students with different proficiency levels. In Goh and Kwah's (1997) study of Chinese ESL learners' LLSs use, cognitive strategies were used

most by the high proficiency group, followed by the intermediate and low proficiency groups. Study of LLSs use among Korean EFL learners showed that cognitive strategies were employed mostly by the intermediate proficiency students, and were least used by the beginning proficiency students (Yang, 2010). Therefore, the finding indicating that the English-major students used cognitive strategies more frequently than the non-English-major students, was coherent with past results in which the higher proficiency learners employed cognitive strategies more than the less proficient learners. According to Alwahibee (2000) and Yang (2010), students who tend to use metacognitive strategies more, tend to use cognitive strategies more because these two strategies usually go hand in hand; students with higher language proficiency used metacognitive strategies more because they have passed the stage of having to memorize language forms and can move on to planning their language learning (Alwahibee, 2000).

However, there was a similarity between both groups of respondents in terms of their top-three most frequently employed cognitive strategies. They reported a high use of Item 3, '*I practice the sounds of English*' *(see Table 4.6 and 4.7)*. This finding supported the result by Yang (2010) in which the Korean EFL university learners also showed a high use of this strategy, and it was their overall second most frequently employed strategy with a mean score of 3.54. Past studies have mentioned on the effectiveness of sound drill practices in improving non-native English learners' pronunciation. For example, Terrell (1972) guides teachers on using sound drills to improve Cantonese speakers' pronunciation of English sounds. Practicing sounds may also be in the form of reading aloud (henceforth RA) and RA has been found to be helpful for pronunciation. Gabrielatos (1996: 1) asserts that "RA can be used to raise awareness of, and provide practice in … certain phonological aspects of English". Therefore, the strategy of practicing sounds in English as employed by

most respondents in this study can be applied by teachers into the classroom setting because it has been found to be advantageous.

Some differences between the use of cognitive strategies by the English-major and non-English-major students may be associated with the differences between their English proficiency levels. The English-major students used Item 6, '*I watch English language TV shows or go to movies spoken in English*' more frequently (a score of 126) than the non-English-major students (a score of 99). This may be due to the English-major students' better comprehension of the rapid speech in the English language TV programs and movies. On the other hand, the non-English-major students may have poorer comprehension of the spoken English and therefore, may have to constantly read the subtitles in a language that they understand better. This, in turn, may be tiring and de-motivating to them; thus, they watch the English movies or TV shows less. Item 5, '*I start conversations in English*' was also more frequently employed by the English-major students (a score of 122) than the non-English-major students (a score of 99). This may be attributed to the English-major students' higher confidence in speaking English, as a result of having higher oral proficiency. They may also have a higher motivation to practice speaking English due to the importance of English for their studies and future careers; therefore, they are more encouraged to initiate conversations in order to practice more. On the contrary, the non-English-major students may not be confident enough with their spoken English competency or feel a lesser need to use English for academic purposes; thus, they are less likely to start conversations in English.

5.3.2 Use of Functional-Use Strategies

The top-three most frequently used functional-use strategies between the English-major and non-English-major students also had a similarity. Item 25, '*If I do not*

understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or to say it again' was in the second ranking for the English-major group *(see Table 4.8)* and was in the third ranking for the non-English-major group *(see Table 4.9)*. The frequent use of this strategy showed that both groups of students put some efforts in trying to comprehend their interlocutors because comprehension is vital for successful communication *(see 2.1)*.

The other two functional-use strategies in the top-three ranking for the English-major students reflected their high initiative to use English. Item 19, *'I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English'* which is a strategy used in seeking opportunities to speak English, was their most employed functional-use strategy, while Item 27, *'I practice English with other students'* which is a strategy to functionally use English, was their third most employed strategy for the category *(see Table 4.8)*. The preferences for these strategies indicated that the English-major students are very motivated to increase their use of English. It may have come from the realization that they need to have a sufficient proficiency in spoken English due its importance for their academic and career development *(see 1.1.3)*.

Meanwhile, the non-English-major students seemed more insecure of their spoken English, as reflected by their most frequently employed functional-use strategy. They used the strategy *'I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk'* (Item 26) the most *(see Table 4.9)*. This finding can be traced back to the results of Section Two in which the non-English-major students perceived to have more language-related problems *(see 5.2.1)*. Therefore, they may feel a stronger need to ask for corrections when they speak English. On the other hand, they employed Item 27, *'I practice English with other students'* the least, reflecting their lack of practice in speaking English and hence the problem to improve their fluency. Their second most preferred strategy, *'I ask questions in English'* (Item 29), however, showed their efforts to use English. Future studies can investigate if this group of

students prefer speaking English in interrogative form rather than declarative form and if there are significant reasons for the preference.

5.4   Conclusion

This chapter discussed the findings in Chapter Four. The researcher believed that the non-English-major students' perception that they lacked fluency was attributed to their shorter hours of exposure to English inside the classroom since a lack of practice can impede fluency. This was further confirmed by the finding that the teachers' use of native languages in the classroom was among the non-English-major students' highest-ranking affective-related problems. Up to the point when this research was done, the medium of instructions in the non-English-major programmes was determined by the teachers before they are mandated to use English beginning the year 2012; therefore, this finding was a teacher-problem. The English-major students on the other hand, in findings from both the questionnaire and the interview, perceived vocabulary to be their main linguistic problem. Although most of them perceived to have few affective barriers to speaking English, their motivation to speak English was reduced by the large number of students in the classroom. For the second part of the study, findings were consistent with past researches when the English-major students who were considered the more successful language learners employed cognitive strategies more frequently. In terms of the use of functional-use strategies, the English-major students' most preferred strategy (Item 19, '*I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English*') showed their high motivation to speak English, but the non-English-major students' most frequently employed strategy (Item 26, '*I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk*') reflected on their high level of perceived language-related problems in speaking English.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

6.0   Introduction

This chapter summarizes the study, covering the objectives, significance, methodology, and main findings. It also discusses the implications of the findings on teaching and learning, involving students, teachers, the curriculum, and the University. Some recommendations for further research are also provided.

6.1   Summary of the Study

This study aimed to investigate the English-major and non-English major students' perceptions towards their language-related and affective-related problems in speaking English, to examine their use of cognitive and functional-use strategies to improve their spoken English, and to compare between the findings for the English-major and non-English-major students. Findings on students' perceived problems can be a guide for the teachers and University to take actions towards the improvement in these areas. Awareness of students' use or lack of use of strategies can guide the teachers on the strategies that can be taught or trained in the classroom. There were 60 UM students who participated in this study; 30 were TESL students who represented the English-major group and 30 were Arts students from various non-English departments who represented the non-English-major group. The instruments used were questionnaire comprising three sections to survey the population and interviews with five students from each subgroup to confirm the findings and to add examples that were not in the questionnaire.

For the first part of the study, it was found that the non-English-major students generally perceived themselves with more linguistic and affective-related problems in speaking English as compared to the English-major students. The main perceived problems among the non-English-major students were 'grammar' for the language-related category and 'the teacher's use of native language when communicating with them outside the classroom' for the affective-related category. Following closely for the affective-related category was 'the teacher's use of native language as the medium of instructions'. During the period of this research, the mandatory use of English for teaching instructions had not been implemented. Thus, the non-English-major students' perceived affective barriers to speaking English in this study were mostly teacher-induced. On the other hand, the English-major students perceived to have most problems with 'vocabulary range' and 'a large number of students in the classroom' for the language-related and affective-related categories respectively.

However, there were similarities between the findings for the English-major and non-English-major students for the first part. Both groups perceived vocabulary as their top-three main linguistic problems in speaking English, but perceived pronunciation to be the least of their problem. As shown in Chapter Four, the English-major students placed Item 1, '*I don't have enough vocabulary to use English effectively*' in the first rank with a score of 84, and the non-English-major students placed this item in the third rank with a score of 92. On the other hand, Item 6, '*I cannot pronounce the sounds of vowels, consonants, or diphthongs in English clearly*' was placed in the last rank by both groups, with a score of 56 for the English majors and with a score of 79 for the non-English majors. Besides, they both perceived Item 26, '*I have no chance to speak English outside the classroom*' to be the least of a problem among the affective-related problems in speaking

English; the English-major students' score for this item was 51 while the non-English-major students' score was 67.

For the second part of the study, the English-major students generally used more cognitive and functional-use strategies than the non-English-major students. The strategies most frequently employed by the English-major students were '*I watch English language TV shows or go to movies spoken in English*' for the cognitive strategy category and '*I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English*' for the functional-use strategy category. The non-English-major students' most frequently used strategies were '*I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English*' and '*I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk*' for the cognitive strategy and functional-use strategy categories respectively. Similarities were found between the findings for both groups when they ranked the cognitive strategy '*I practice the sounds of English*' and the functional-use strategy '*If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or to say it again*' among their top-three most frequently employed strategies for the respective categories.

6.2   Implications of Findings on Teaching and Learning

6.2.1   Students

The non-English-major students can follow the English-major students' more frequent use of cognitive and functional-use strategies, considering their fewer perceived language-related and affective-related problems in speaking English. Using more cognitive strategies can improve the non-English-major students' perceived worst linguistic area which was grammar, while employing more functional-use strategies can improve their perceived second weakest language aspect which was fluency. For example, they can

increase their use of the cognitive strategy most preferred by the English-major students, which was 'watching TV shows or movies spoken in English'. They can also increase their use of the English-major students' most frequently employed functional-use strategy, which was 'finding as many ways as possible to use English'. The researcher strongly feels that they need to use the strategy of 'practicing with others' more often, not only because it was the English-major students' third most preferred functional-use strategy but because the non-English-major students employed it least while it is one of the most helpful strategies for oral fluency.

6.2.2 Teachers

Teachers can train and encourage students to use cognitive and functional-use strategies to improve their spoken English. Besides, a technique that teachers can incorporate more into the teaching of oral English is text-reading because it helps to enrich students' vocabulary (Byrne, 1998) *(see 2.1)*. In order to improve students' grammatical knowledge and to increase their fluency over chunk-type items, teachers can use drilling exercises more (Thornbury, 2005) *(see 5.2.1)*. Additionally, teachers can cease using the native language and increase using English to communicate with students inside and outside the classroom. This step will give more opportunities for the students, especially the non-English-major, to practice using English and in turn, improve their speaking skills. Since the year 2012, teachers of the non-English-major programmes in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences have been obligated to teach using English. Therefore, it is the teacher's responsibility not only to oblige to the curriculum but to expose students to more of the English language inside the classroom.

6.2.3 The Curriculum and the University

The number of hours allocated to the teaching of English for the non-English-major programmes should be increased. A few students' suggestions can be taken into account; Student NE1 recommended that a compulsory English course is implemented into their curriculum for every study semester and Student NE4 believed that grammar should be taught in the English courses *(see 4.2.6)*. As a follow-up to the newly-implemented rule that the non-English-related core courses are to be taught in English, the University can make sure that the teachers oblige to this requirement as it is one of the steps to increase the non-English-major students' amount of exposure to English. Meanwhile, the number of students in a class can be reduced since most English-major respondents claimed that their motivation to speak up was reduced because there were too many students in the classroom *(see Table 4.4)*. Furthermore, a large class size comprising 30 students or more may impede the effectiveness of speaking practices (Byrne, 1998).

6.3   Recommendations for Future Studies

6.3.1   Sample and Population

Future researches can substitute the Arts students with the Science students as the non-English-major sample. Besides, similar studies can be conducted among postgraduate students, as in comparing between the English-major and non-English-major postgraduate students on their perceptions towards problems in speaking English and on their strategies to improve spoken English. Due to the mandated change in the medium of instructions for the non-English-major programmes in the Arts and Social Sciences Faculty *(see 6.2.2)*, the non-English-major population can be studied by sampling the students who enter the programmes after the year 2012. Using the latest batch of students who supposedly receives

teaching and learning instructions in English may bring different results from sampling the English-major students who were mostly taught in their native languages like in the current study. Furthermore, the studies can be extended into comparison between the native language-medium and English-medium Arts students on their perceptions towards their problems in speaking English.

6.3.2   Scope

Instead of examining students' perceptions towards their problems in speaking English, future studies can identify learners' actual problems when speaking English. In order to accomplish this objective, the instrument used to collect data will also need to be changed *(see 6.3.3).*

6.3.3   Instrumentation

The questionnaire used in this study only examined students' problems in speaking English through their perceptions. In order to investigate students' actual problems in speaking English, observation can be conducted during students' actual speech and an audio-recorder can be used to record the data.

6.4   Conclusion

This study has been summarized, and the implications of the findings on teaching and learning have been discussed. Finally, recommendations have been included for future related studies.