CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The present study explored and compared the social language learning strategies used in group work between two groups of learners with varying levels of proficiency in a literature - based Form Four ESL class. Hence, the researcher compared and studied a fairly proficient group of students with another low proficiency group of students. Three research questions were explored in this study. They were, what social language learning strategies students used, what were students' perceptions of the use of these strategies and what were the outcomes of using the social language learning strategies in group work.

In this chapter, the findings of this study will be discussed under three main categories. They are, social language learning strategies used by students in group work, students' perceptions of the use of the social language learning strategies in group work and outcomes of using the social language learning strategies in group work.

4.1   Social Language Learning Strategies Used by Students in Group Work

According to Oxford (1990), social language learning strategies includes asking questions, cooperating with others and empathising with others. The findings of this study indicates that students used two main social language learning strategies: asking questions and cooperating with others during group work in a

literature – based Form Four class. However, the findings did not indicate the strategy of empathising with others. These findings will be discussed in the following sections.

4.1.1 Asking Questions

Asking questions is vital in the process of teaching and learning literature. It enhances students' understanding of the literary text, activities or tasks. This study indicates that asking questions is a social language learning strategy used by students, thus confirming what is stated by Oxford (1990) in the review of literature.

Students who were fairly proficient said that they asked questions during group work in their literature-based classroom. As one student said, "Asking questions from friends about the story that some words or something that I don't understand is a way to learn" Another said, " . . . I ask my friends to explain for me that the words or sentences that I don't know". Moreover, students who were of low proficiency also used this strategy during group work. During the interview session one student said, "we ask each other in the group questions when we don't understand something or words that we don't understand" (translation). Another said that, "it helped them learn from each other and when you don't know something you can ask your friends like when we don't know something about the stories and when we not so clear about the text, we can ask other friend who know about it".

The dynamics involved in using this strategy may be illustrated through a number of excerpts of student talk during group work in literature lessons. For example, in a task requiring students to discuss the meaning of the title of a short

story, a group of fairly proficient students brainstormed aloud the probable meanings of the title.

> Julia: What is lotus?
> Janet: It's food.
> Junaidah: No I don't think so. Lotus is a flower.
> Janet: What does "eater" mean then?
> Jamie: Someone who eats a person.
> Julia: Why is the title "Lotus Eater"?
> Jane: He ate lotus and then he become a person who so happy and comfortable in his life.

Jamie's speculation was probably suggested by the word "eater" next to "lotus". This initial hypothesis was rejected by Junaidah who drew on previous knowledge of a lotus being a flower. Janet interrogated further before rejecting her earlier hypothesis. What this excerpt brings to light is that covert psycholinguistic processes which are normally unseen in the case of the individual reader working with the text becomes articulated when the reader works together with other readers. Group work, therefore facilitates the effective use of this learning strategy by drawing on the collective resources of a number of students who ask questions.

In the excerpt below, a group of low proficiency students were discussing the main events or plot of the short story "The Lotus Eater".

> Liza: Do you think Wilson have enough of money?
> Linda: Wilson had some money, He had some savings and I sold... and he sold *her* house in London.
> Laila: Not herlah,
> Linda: Then what ?
> Laila: He . . .
> Liza: With the money he booked an annuity for two years.
> Linda: Liza, what the meaning of annuity?
> Liza: Oh, the meaning is a form insurance to provide regular annual income.
> Laila: Oh thanks.

Linda used the wrong pronoun and asked her peers for the correct form, which Laila later provided. This indicates that group work allows students to ask for correction, which is a reason for the use of this strategy. In addition, Laila further asked for clarification for the meaning of annuity. Liza then explained the meaning of the word so that Laila could follow the discussion.

Therefore, the above excerpts indicate that students ask questions to seek for clarification, verification, explanation, and also to ask for correction from group members. By asking questions, therefore, students are able to interact and communicate with each other, thus further enhancing their understanding of the literary text. According to Tsui (1995), studies on language and learning have shown that children not only learn to talk but they also talk to learn. This is simply because "when students respond to fellow students' questions, raise queries and give comments, they are actively involved in the negotiation of comprehensible input, which is essential to language acquisition" (Tsui, 1995, p. 81).

In addition, they are able to expand and enrich their vocabulary. As one student said, "I can exchange ideas from the other friends and know more English words". The data also indicates that through questioning students are required to put their ideas, speculations, thoughts and feelings into words thus encouraging them to engage and participate actively in the process of learning literature. Hence, this would be beneficial to the learners because they would be able to understand the literary text better.

The use of the strategy of asking questions as revealed in the qualitative data above was confirmed by the findings from the quantitative data. Table 1 shows that in relation to questions pertaining to text, two out of five fairly

proficient students always asked questions, whereas three out of five students' often did so. In relation to questions pertaining to the activity, three out of five students asked questions always, whereas two often did so. Five students said they always asked for clarification of the text. On the other hand for the activity, three out of five students often sought clarification, whereas two sometimes did so. All students said they always asked for explanations related to the text, and often asked for clarification related to the activity.

Besides that, all five students often asked their friends to correct their mistakes related to the text whereas four often asked and one always asked their friends to correct their mistakes related to the activity. All students said that they always asked their friends whether their answer or response was correct in relation to the text and activity.

Table 1: Use of the Strategy of Asking Questions by Fairly Proficient Students (N=5)

	Always (f)	Often (f)	Sometimes (f)	Never (f)
a) Ask your friend questions related to the				
i) text	2	3	-	-
ii) activity	3	2	-	-
b) Ask for clarification from your friends				
i) text	5	-	-	-
ii) activity	-	3	2	-
c) Ask your friends to repeat or explain what they have said about the				
i) text	5	-	-	-
ii) activity	-	5	-	-
d) Ask your friends to correct your mistakes in relation to the				
i) text	-	5	-	-
ii) activity	1	4	-	-
e) Ask your friends whether your answer or response is correct in relation to the				
i) text	5	-	-	-
ii) activity	5	-	-	-

Table 2 on the other hand shows that all low proficiency students always asked questions related to the text and activity. More specifically they always sought clarification related to the text and activity and they always asked their friends to repeat or explain what was said about both text and activity. The students also always asked their friends to correct their mistakes in relation to text and activity and always checked whether their answers or responses were correct.

Table 2: Use of the Strategy of Asking Questions by Low Proficiency Students (N=5)

	Always (f)	Often (f)	Sometimes (f)	Never (f)
a) Ask your friend questions related to the				
i) text	5	-	-	-
ii) activity	5	-	-	-
b) Ask for clarification from your friends				
i) text	5	-	-	-
ii) activity	5	-	-	-
c) Ask your friends to repeat or explain what they have said about the				
i) text	5	-	-	-
ii) activity	5	-	-	-
d) Ask your friends to correct your mistakes in relation to the				
i) text	5	-	-	-
ii) activity	5	-	-	-
e) Ask your friends whether your answer or response is correct in relation to the				
i) text	5	-	-	-
ii) activity	5	-	-	-

It seems that, both groups of students asked questions to clarify, verify or explain ideas, concepts or words. However, the data indicates that all low proficiency students "always" used this strategy as compared to the varying responses of the fairly proficient students. This is perhaps due to their low proficiency level of English. The students might not have been able to comprehend concepts or ideas

easily due to this reason. In contrast, fairly proficient students had better comprehension skills. Besides that, low proficiency students might have lacked confidence to express their ideas or opinions. Therefore, they ask their peers in order to reassure themselves. Lai (1994) notes, low proficiency students lack confidence as well as worry about the inadequacy of their ideas, thoughts and views in communication. Moreover, they may feel more "secure" when they ask their peers questions as confirmation by peers can increase their confidence in learning literature.

4.1.2 Cooperating With Others

Cooperating with peers and proficient users of the language is a playing out of the Vygotskian concept of peer scaffolding. This is important because students would be able to scaffold learning by discussing existing knowledge of the literary text from prior reading or experience with their peers during group work. This study confirms that cooperating with others is an important social language learning strategy used by students as discussed in the review of literature.

The interview data shows that students who were fairly proficient cooperated with their peers or proficient users of the language. One student said, "I can cooperate with good learners and friends and we can know a word faster and no need to take the long time to find on the dictionary". Another student shared, "We cooperate with each other to finish the exercise, we discuss our ideas together and take turns to exchange ideas". It appears that students of low proficiency level also share this opinion. They said that they cooperated with other learners to complete a task. In one student's opinion, "we cooperate to solve a problem and work together as

a group to complete a task" (translation). Whereas another said, "we can work together and then when we work in a group, we discuss about many things in literature then we can know about what we don't know with other friends".

The following excerpts will highlight the dynamics involved in cooperating with others during literature lessons. The excerpt below shows a brainstorming session of a group of fairly proficient students who were discussing the main character Thomas Wilson in "The Lotus Eater"

Julia: Let's start with your opinion first.
Janet: I think that Thomas Wilson is an indolent man because he old the narrator that he did not want to do the same work and live on Capri for the rest of his life. That's the evidence. So, Junaidah, what's on your mind?
Junaidah: I think Thomas is a man who lacks motivation before he visited Capri.
Julia: Let's hear from Jamie.
Jamie: In my opinion, Thomas Wilson is an interesting man. Because he had make a decision that very few people make a decision that very few people make.
Julia: Jane, it's your turn now.
Jane: Thomas Wilson is a silly man because he's going to kill himself when he was 60.

The above discussion shows that all the students shared and gave their opinions in relation to the character. Each student had her own perception as to who Thomas Wilson was. In addition, the students also further illustrated their opinion in relation to the text, thus showing that they understood the text. Cooperation is evident here because each student contributed in order to complete the task. This is vital because it shows that all the students were mentally engaged in the process of learning literature. Therefore, cooperation encourages active participation among learners, hence promoting learner autonomy.

51

The next excerpt, highlights part of a discussion on the main events or plot of "The Necklace" by a group of low proficiency students.

Sally: When did she discover the necklace was missing?
Liza: When she removed her wraps before the glass to see herself in all her glory, but suddenly the necklace
Sally: What?
Laila: The necklace was not on her round neck.
Liza: Where did she initially search?
Linda: Sally, what is the meaning of initially?
Sally: The meaning of initially is like when you start
Sarah: They find in taxi first.
Sally: They search around her gown first

Peer scaffolding is evident here where peers helped to scaffold understanding as to when the necklace went missing and where they searched first. Sarah said they searched the taxi first whereas Sally said they searched her gown first. Here one peer gives her opinion and another scaffolds the idea based on her prior reading of the text and verifies the initial response of her peer. Johnson (1995) writes that cooperative learning requires social interaction and negotiation of meaning among group members. Therefore group members have something to contribute and learn from other members. In addition, students also cooperated with proficient users of the language to understand the task or activity better. For example, Linda asked for the meaning of "initially" and Sally clarified the meaning, This process of cooperative learning from peers is only feasible through group work as individual learning does not promote this mode of learning.

This study indicates that both fairly proficient and low proficiency students cooperate with their peers or more proficient students to complete a task. Both the excerpts indicate that learners discussed with each other, exchanged their opinions, ideas or views in order to perform a task, hence increasing their

understanding of the activity, task or literary text. In addition, classroom discussion or communication practice could also be a pre-requisite to "real world communication". Allwright (1984) says that, "communication practice in the classroom is pedagogically useful because it represents a necessary and productive stage in the transfer of classroom learning to the outside world" (p. 157). Besides that, through cooperation students would also be able to solve problems quickly, thus producing a better piece of work. As one student said, "we can quickly solve a problem and we can find the answer together". Another advantage is, students would also be able to share their knowledge through cooperation. As a student said,

> When other friends are not so clear about the text, we all tell them how the story then what the words she don't know like some passage she don't know, we explain to herlah. We tell them in the end she can understand what the passage aboutlah

The quantitative data also seems to suggest that fairly proficient and low proficiency students tend to cooperate with their peers or proficient users of the language to complete the task. Table 3 shows that, all five fairly proficient students always cooperated with their peers or proficient language users to perform a task.

Table 3: Use of the Strategy Cooperating with Others by Fairly Proficient Students (N=5)

	Always (f)	Often (f)	Sometimes (f)	Never (f)
a) Co-operate with your friends to complete or perform a task	5	-	-	-
b) Co-operate with friends who are more proficient to complete a task	5	-	-	-

Moreover, Table 4 also indicates that five out of five low proficiency students cooperated with their peers or proficient users of the language to complete a task.

Table 4: Use of the Strategy Cooperating with Others by
Low Proficiency Students (N=5)

	Always (f)	Often (f)	Sometimes (f)	Never (f)
a) Co-operate with your friends to complete or perform a task	5	-	-	-
b) Co-operate with friends who are more proficient to complete a task	5	-	-	-

It seems that peer support can be a powerful source of motivation for learners to complete a task, motivate their peers to try, as well as encourage and support their ideas or opinions. It also appears that group spirit, teamwork and collaborative learning is common between students despite varying proficiency levels.

4.1.3. Empathising With Others

While the literature suggests that empathy with others as a strategy used, the data from the present study did not suggest evidence of this. Responses to item number 5j, 5k, 5l from the questionnaire (see Appendix 9) indicates that all five fairly proficient students responded that they never learnt to be more aware of their friends' thoughts and feelings about the text and activity. They also could not articulate if they had learnt to empathise with the cultural perspectives in the text. Similarly, all low proficiency students also responded that they never learnt to be more aware of their friends' thoughts and feelings about the text and activity. They too never learnt to empathise with the cultural dimensions in text.

Perhaps, students were not able to actively and consciously use this strategy because of the limited time. This study was carried out within two months over alternative weeks of literature periods. They might have needed a longer period of time to "exercise" the skill of empathy because it is not easy to put yourself in someone else's shoes in order to better understand that person's perceptions within a short period of time. For example, these Malaysian students may have needed time to empathise with Wilson, a British character, in the short story " The Lotus Eater" which has an Italian setting.

Besides that, this literature component is new and students may need a longer span of time to understand the cultural aspects of the text and relate to it. The texts selected for this study are European, therefore students may need some time to get "adjusted" to this culture as most of the students are Malays and Chinese. In addition perhaps, the tasks or activities designed did not give the students the opportunity to use this strategy because they did not give emphasis to the cultural aspects of the text. The activities designed focused mainly on the key elements such as the plot, characters and themes of the story.

4.2   Students Perceptions of the Use of Social Language Learning Strategies in Group Work

Students indicated that peer teaching and learning was enhanced through the use of the social language learning strategies in group work. In addition, students felt that they were able to exchange ideas and opinions while using this strategy. These two perceptions will be discussed in the following sections.

4.2.1 Peer Teaching and Learning

Peer teaching and learning is an important element in the process of learning literature, thus enabling students to further understand the literary text. The interview data shows that, both the groups of students felt that the use of social language strategies encouraged peer teaching and learning in the literature classroom. Students felt that through strategies such as asking questions and cooperating with others, they could teach and learn from their peers. A fairly proficient student said, "I feel great because not only me, all of us can learn something interesting and amazing from our friends". Another student said, "If I make mistake my friends will help to correct it and I will know more from my mistakes". Moreover, the low proficiency students also perceived that peer teaching and learning was enhanced through the use of social language learning strategies. As one said,

> When we have a group work, we can ask more . . . we can learn more. Then, we read alone sometimes we don't understand, we can't ask anybody. When we are work in a group, we can ask other members how.

Another student further illustrated,

> . . . we study alone, we so boring, tension about . . . we don't know something, we can't ask other friends. Like when we work in a group, we can ask them how to do this, how to settle this and learn and then our friends can help.

The following excerpts illustrate the above views offered by the students. Peer teaching and learning among a group of fairly proficient students who were discussing the plot of "The Necklace" in the excerpt below is evident.

Julia: Did Mathilde go to the ball?
Janet: No, she didn't because she did not have a new dress.

> Junaidah: That not true . . . she went to the ball. She ask her friend
> Madame Frostier for some jewellery and her husband
> gave her 500 francs to buy a gown.
> Jamie: No, not 500 francs, but 400 francs.

Peer teaching and learning is evident here as Junaidah corrected the initial response of Janet who gave the wrong response. Janet then learnt from her peer that Mathilde went to the ball. Jamie also learnt that Mathilde's husband gave her 400 francs instead of 500 francs from her peer. Therefore, peer teaching and learning enables learners to readjust their existing knowledge to include new information or knowledge from their peers. In addition, by teaching their peer learners are able to check and confirm their knowledge or understanding of the text.

A further example involving low proficiency students affirms this. The excerpt below was a discussion on the theme of poverty and words associated to it.

> Laila: How do you spell garret (wrongly spelled)?
> Sally: Why you want to know?
> Laila: To answer the questions.
> Sally: Garret (spells it out).
> Laila: What meaning of "garret"
> Sally: Small place to stay...
> Sally: Garret equal poverty.

Laila learnt from Sally on how to spell the word "garret". She further asked for the meaning of the word and got some clarification from her peer and came up to the conclusion that "garret" is associated with poverty. Peer teaching and learning enables students to correct and verify new ideas or spelling related to the literary texts. Peer teaching and learning encourages students to elicit explanations from their peers, restate what their peers have said, offer suggestions, voice their opinions and explain unclear content or ideas (Johnson, 1995). Moreover, it encourages students to take a more active role in their own literature learning process, hence encouraging learners

to become independent learners. As Brown (1994) said, "There is no doubt that group work requires some yielding of control to the students" (p. 175). In addition, Johnson (1995) argued that, "peer-tutoring methods require the class to function as an aggregate of groups who rehearse teacher-taught materials and act as both teacher and learners . . ." (p. 114).

However, the data also indicates that peer teaching and learning was more common among low proficiency students. The field notes illustrate this viewpoint,

> Low proficiency students seem to constantly ask their peers questions related to the activity, literary text in terms of meaning of words, spelling, clarifying ideas about the themes or characters but the fairly proficient students only ask questions or explain ideas or concepts once in a while in terms of new ideas or opinions.

This is perhaps because low proficiency students are weak therefore they need to clarify or verify ideas or opinions in order to understand, comprehend and feel more secure, thus checking if they are on the right track or not. As one student said, "when I learn from my friend I know if my answer is right or wrong so I feel safe". In contrast, fairly proficient students may be able to comprehend ideas better and have more confidence in their opinions or views. As one student said, "I don't always ask my friend because I know the answer myself", whereas another said, "I ask when I really don't understand myself only, if not I don't ask my friends".

4.2.2 Exchanging Ideas and Opinions

The use of the social language learning strategies through group work encourages the exchange of ideas or opinions. The interview data shows that both

groups of learners felt that the use of social language learning strategies in group work allows them to exchange their ideas, views and opinions. As one proficient student illustrated, "we exchange our own ideas and we discuss what's wrong with the ideas, we take down the important facts together and work on that". Another said, "we can exchange ideas and opinions and know more words". The low proficiency students also shared the same viewpoint. One explained, "Like when we read one short story, and then we discuss and then we can change ideas with others". Another added, "One people can give two or three opinion then we combine all them we get more opinion. Then we can learn more . . .". These students clearly perceived learning as cooperative acts involving collaboration with others.

The following excerpt was a discussion of the main character by a group of fairly proficient students. The discussion shows the exchange of opinions or ideas among students.

Julia:	Thomas is an extraordinary man. But then what happened to Thomas when he reached the age of 60?
Janet:	He had become a poor man and was running out of money. Ah, let's hear from Junaidah.
Junaidah:	Thomas is an unlucky man. His mind was damaged by the smoke after he tried to kill himself. He didn't fulfil his decision.
Jamie:	Thomas is like a wild animal I think.

The above discussion shows that students had various opinions about the main character and were not confined to one idea. One student felt that the main character was an extraordinary man whereas another felt that he was unlucky. During group work students were encouraged to contribute their personal opinions or knowledge of a particular issue, support those opinions, discuss differences of opinion within the group and eventually report back to the whole class. As a result, the exchange of

various ideas or opinions benefits all the students in the literature class when they presented their feedback to the class. The opportunity to exchange their ideas or opinions enables students to play an active role in the classroom during discussions, thus enhancing their critical thinking.

In the next excerpt, a group of low proficiency students were discussing the issue as to why Wilson wanted to stay in Capri with reference to the plot of the story.

Sally: Why he live at the Capri Island?
Liza: Because he felt that Capri Island is the most beautiful place in the world.
Laila: I think he fell in love with Capri Island.
Linda: I think he lonely in London so he want stay in Capri Island.
Sally: He fell in love with the place because it is beautiful and he was lonely in London because he had no family there.

The students exchanged various perceptions as to why Wilson wanted to stay in Capri but finally combined the ideas and drew a conclusion. According to Johnson (1995), when students are exposed to alternative or contradicting viewpoints from their peers, they are often encouraged to seek more information or to take on alternative perspectives. When this occurs, new or reorganised conclusions can be reached that often include the reasoning of others. Cazden (1988) calls this, "discourse as catalyst in which the cognitive conflict generated from student - student interaction can challenge students to reorganise, or rethink their prior understandings" (in Johnson, 1995, p. 122). This indirectly can result in cognitive restructuring and growth.

Student talk or interaction also fosters more informal language use and student-centred styles and strategies of learning literature, which is generally inhibited during teacher-directed instruction. Moreover, by exchanging ideas or views students

would also be able to gain new ideas, opinions or views, thus increasing their understanding of the literary text.

4.3   Outcomes of the Use of Social Language Learning Strategies in Group Work

The findings indicate that students were more motivated to learn literature, more confident in presenting their thoughts, ideas or opinions as well as able to produce a better piece of work when they used the social language learning strategies. The following discussion will elaborate and discuss the outcomes of social language learning strategies used in the literature lessons observed.

4.3.1   Motivation

Motivation is crucial for the effective learning of literature. This is because motivation sustains students' attention, interest and concentration towards learning literature. This in turn will improve the understanding of what they are learning (Blair, 1988).

Both groups of learners felt that they were more motivated to learn literature after using the social language learning strategies. One fairly proficient student said, "I feel more better to discuss in group and motivated to learn. Because I have friends to help me to learn together, it more fun". Another further explained, "On the other hand, they learn to be more motivated and being thoughtful besides having spirit of cooperation on themselves". The low proficiency students also felt

61

that motivation enhances literature learning. As a student said, "I motivate to learn because I can ask my friend and learn from her" whereas another said, "I enjoy learning literature because we work together to solve a problem, discuss and share our opinions by cooperating with each other" (translation).

The field notes also indicate that learners were more motivated to learn literature by using social language learning strategies:

> The good learners seem to be motivated to learn as they are excited about each other's questions and solve the problems together as quickly as possible and the low proficiency students are also motivated as they are able to ask their peers whether their response is right or wrong and share and learn together with the rest.

It seems that students were motivated to learn literature because they had the opportunity to ask questions to clarify, verify or correct their mistakes. If students are motivated, it will help them to sustain the effort of learning literature as reading literary texts requires a great deal of effort in trying to infer, interpret, explore and understand various issues and themes that emerge from the texts.

Besides that, when students enjoy what they are learning and doing there is a greater possibility that what has been learnt will be more readily remembered. This is because motivation to learn literature can lower their anxiety level, thus making the acquisition of input more likely. Moreover, in a relaxed atmosphere real learning takes place. Cooperating with others also increases students' motivation to learn literature as they are able to complete a task together. Successful completion of the task builds confidence and they would be more eager to learn the subject matter (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 1989).

This perception is also borne out in the quantitative data. Responses for item number 7a, b (see Appendix 9) shows that, all fairly proficient students were

motivated and enjoyed learning literature. Moreover, all low proficiency students also generally felt that they were also motivated to learn literature and enjoyed learning literature after using the social language learning strategies over a period of time. It appears that motivation enhances the teaching and learning of literature and plays a role in the learners' performance in the literature classroom.

4.3.2   Confidence

Confidence, which is related to students' level of self-esteem is vital in the process of learning. Students with high level of confidence perform better academically. Lai (1994), also points out that students with a high level of confidence are more likely to express their opinions or explain their responses during discussions.

The qualitative data seems to indicate that the low proficiency students seem to be more confident in presenting their ideas, opinions, or views during group work after using the social language learning strategy. As one student said, "I feel more confident and not shy to speak in group because in group the friend will not laugh that I already make mistake". Another also said, "I would be more confident when I present the ideas or activities from our discussions and not to be so shy when I present . . . ". However, the fairly proficient learners did not indicate that, they became more confident after using this strategy perhaps because they are high achievers and they are fairly confident. As one student said, " I'm always confident in giving my ideas and I'm not shy because I read a lot and my English is okay".

Further, the data from the questionnaire in response to item 7d (see Appendix 9) also indicates that confidence was more evident among low proficiency

63

students. All low proficiency students were generally more confident to present their thoughts, feelings and ideas during group work as a result of this strategy used. In contrast there was no similar impact on fairly proficient students because such behaviour was generally characteristic of them. Perhaps weaker students were more confident because they were able to express their thoughts without feeling shy in groups without the presence of a teacher. Low proficiency students might be more "vocal" in small groups as there is a smaller audience observing and listening to them. They might also not be afraid of making mistakes because a teacher may not be constantly present to evaluate and correct them, hence increasing their confidence to learn literature.

4.3.3   Better Quality of Work

The use of the social language learning strategies during group work may yield better quality of work from the students. This is because students have the opportunity to discuss the task or activity in their groups rather than working on it individually. As the saying goes, " Two heads are better than one".

Both groups of learners felt that, they were able to produce better quality work through the use of social language learning strategies in group work. As one low proficiency student said, "we come up with more ideas and we can chosen the best idea for the answer when we work together". In addition, another fairly proficient student also explained, "It's indeed an effective way in learning literature. It's because we can come up with different ideas and ways of thinking wisely. Automatically we can produce a great piece of work".

In addition, both groups of students' work also indicate differences in quality when they were working alone and in groups (see Appendix 10). When students brainstormed on the task individually about the main character Thomas Wilson, their ideas were very "skimpy", limited and narrow. In contrast, when they were brainstorming in groups, their ideas were more in depth and organised. The "shape" of their ideas were more clear with evidence from the text. This shows that the use of this strategy not only produces better quality work but it also enables learners to make meaning out of the literary text thus facilitating better understanding of the text. Students were also able to comprehend the text and apply this understanding to suit the task or activity. This is perhaps, because they had the opportunity to discuss, exchange their ideas, ask and learn from their peers.

4.4   Conclusion

The study suggests that use of the social language learning strategies such as asking questions and cooperating with others is evident among both fairly proficient and low proficiency students. Students also perceived that these strategies encouraged peer teaching and learning thus providing opportunity for the exchange of ideas, opinions or views. The outcome of these strategies can enhance students' affective and cognitive development as it increases students' motivation and confidence in the literature classroom, hence enabling them to produce better work by way of learning outcomes. Besides that, it also appears that, the discussion in scholarship (Chapter 2) seems to be supported by the findings of this small study to a certain degree.