UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

THE DEVELOPMENT OF NARRATIVE WRITING ABILITY AMONG ESL STUDENTS IN A SARAWAK SECONDARY SCHOOL

GEPAT ANAK GEDIP

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of

Master in Education (Teaching English as Second Language)

Faculty of Education

March 2012
ABSTRACT

Narrative writing is a difficult ESL classroom task in Malaysia, especially among Sarawakian students. Many language teachers, however, assume that students are well versed and creative in producing desired writing, because it is personal experience based. A good piece of narrative writing should portray the right point of view, the proper use of dialogue, tagging, organization pattern and text organization. All of these characteristics require the appropriate and relevant use of AOQ (adjectives of quality) and AOM (adverbs of manner) in producing an interesting and lively narrative writing. Due to the importance of these two word classes, they have become the focus of the analysis of students' narrative writing ability development. This study aims to investigate the development of 203 randomly selected ESL students' narrative writing ability. The writing exercise uses prescribed picture series as writing stimuli to find out the students' syntactic maturity in the use of AOQ and AOM, and complexity of sentences in their writing at three age levels (namely, Form One, Form Two and Form Four), using the T-unit index, namely, the total number of T-units and the mean T-unit lengths (1977). The respondents were required to write an essay within sixty minutes. To examine the students' development of narrative writing, the total number of T-units, the mean T-unit length and the use of AOM (adverb of manner) and AOQ (adjective of quality) were identified manually and analysed using SPSS. The results showed that there was a strong correlation between the total number of AOQ and the mean T-unit length used in the narrative writing at the three different age groups. This shows that as the use of AOQ increases in the narrative writing, the sentence becomes more complex. On the contrary, there was no statistical difference among the three different age groups with regards to the mean T-unit length and the use of AOM. At individual levels, there were indications that some students showed a gradual increase in the use of AOM. The study concluded that there was a positive development in the students' ability in narrative writing based on the T-unit index and the use of AOQ and AOM.
AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this thesis/dissertation was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA. It is original and is the result of my own work, unless otherwise indicated or acknowledged as referenced work. This thesis has not been submitted to any other academic institution or non-academic institution for any degree or qualification.

I hereby, acknowledge that I have been supplied with the Academic Rules and Regulations for Post Graduates, Universiti MARA, regulating the conduct of my study and research.

Name of Student : Gepat Anak Gedip
Student I.D. No. : 2007255582
Programme : Master of Education
(Teaching English As Second Language)
Faculty : Education
Thesis/Dissertation Title : The Development of Narrative Writing Ability Among ESL students in a Sarawak Secondary School

Signature of Student : ..........................................................
Date : 29 February, 2012
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my gratitude to everyone who contributed to my studies until its completion. First and foremost, I would like to praise God the Almighty for giving me the determination, encouragement and endurance in the course of completing my Master of Education (TESL) at Universiti Teknologi MARA Sarawak at Samarahan campus.

My heartfelt grateful acknowledgement and appreciation goes to Assoc. Professor Dr. Simon Philip Botley @ Faizal Hakim, my supervisor, for his continuous constructive ideas, guidance, encouragement and assistance in the preparation and completion of this research paper. You have made this project meaningful and significant in my academic life.

To all my lecturers of this course, thank you very much for the abundance knowledge you all have showered, it was a great exposure and insights for this project.

Not to forget, too, the principals of SMK Serian, Mr Matno Hj Minan, ex-principal and Rambli Hi Zainuddin, the present principal, all the teachers and students who had directly and indirectly assisted me in the collection of data useful and crucial for my study.

To my coursemates and friends wherever they may be, thank you for your unfailing support and encouragement. Many times I had almost given up but you kept pushing me, encouraging me to keep paddling no matter at what cost.