ERRORS IN SIMPLE TENSES: A COMPARISON OF LANGUAGE PERFORMANCE BETWEEN SCHOOL AND UiTM KELANTAN STUDENTS

PREPARED BY:

SURYANI AWANG
WAN AIDA WAN HASSAN
WAN NAZIHAH WAN MOHAMED

APRIL 2006

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

i

ABSTRACT

This study aims to compare the amount and types of errors in simple tenses and verb structure among primary school students (Year 4 and 6), secondary school students (Form 3 and 5) and UiTM Kelantan students (first and third semester students). It also aims to identify any differences in the respondents' performance after 6-month lapse. To do this, the respondents' were asked to write two essays with 6-month lapse, based on the same writing stimulus. The results indicate that there is a decrease in the amount of errors by 48.49% among the primary school students. Year 4 students made 84.5% of errors while 36.26% of errors occurred among Year 6 students. An increase amounting to 4.47% is recorded among the respondents from the Alpha groups in the secondary school but there is a reduction of 13.76% among the weaker groups, i.e the Beta groups. The amount of errors seemed to be increasing steadily among UiTM students. Looking at the differences of performance of the same respondents, the Alpha groups showed an increase in the amount of errors. However, there is a reduction among Beta group students. In addition, an increase of errors is recorded among the first semester students but an opposite results were obtained among both groups of third semester students. The results also indicate that there are similarities in the most common types of errors among all respondents in this study.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The process of language learning is an effort to successfully acquire the new habits of the target language. Learning a language would then produce many errors that are considered an integral part of the language-learning process. Without these errors, little true language acquisition would take place. It is through learning from errors that made language learning actually takes place.

The treatment of language errors has probably been in existence ever since language teaching began. According to Corder (1981), when a second language learner develops his language system, he makes errors. Some of these errors are 'lapses' or 'slips of the tongue' which are due to physical or psychological reasons and they are non-systematic. On the other hand, some errors occur regularly and show the misunderstanding of the second language system.

In the past, errors were regarded as undesirable and unnecessary but now, errors are viewed as a natural and important part of learning. This is because errors can yield information about a student's progress in learning a language. This positive attitude towards errors is especially important in the wake of the Communicative Approach to language learning and teaching.