

**UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA**

**SYNTACTIC ERRORS IN ESL MADE BY FORM  
FOUR IBAN STUDENTS IN AN URBAN SECONDARY  
SCHOOL IN KUCHING**

**KISUN ANAK KUMBUN**

**Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of  
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## **Abstract**

Making errors in writing is inevitable as it is part of learning process. Although many have considered mother tongue interference as the main cause of errors made, the question is to what extent does it really influenced learners' writing? Based on this assumption, the purpose of this study is to examine some syntactic errors found in the students' essays as well as to investigate the sources of errors. The respondents are 25 Form Four Iban students studying at a secondary school in Kuching, Sarawak. They have experienced the same number of years of education through primary and secondary education in Malaysia. They all come from non-English speaking background and rarely communicate in English outside the school. They speak the Iban language which is their mother tongue most of the time. The instrument used to collect the data was the respondents' written essays. Authentic learners' essays were collected and analyzed based on the Surface Strategy Taxonomy and Comparative Taxonomy in order to identify the different types and sources of errors in the essays. The results of the study revealed that errors of misformation were the highest and the main source of these errors was mainly due to developmental rather than inter-lingual. The findings implied that mother-tongue interference is not the main contributor to language problems in English language learning. As such it is hoped that this finding will help provide information on common trouble-spots in language learning which can be used in the preparation of effective teaching strategies.

## Abstrak

Kesilapan penggunaan bahasa dalam penulisan tidak dapat dielakkan kerana ia merupakan sebahagian daripada proses pembelajaran. Walaupun kebanyakan kajian mendapati kesilapan tersebut berpunca daripada pemindahan bahasa ibunda, persoalannya, sejauh manakah kebenaran pendapat tersebut? Berpandukan pendapat ini, tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji kesilapan yang terdapat dalam karangan para pelajar dan mencari punca-punca kesilapan tersebut. Responden terdiri daripada 25 orang pelajar Iban Tingkatan 4 di salah sebuah sekolah menengah di Kuching Sarawak. Mereka mengalami tempoh pembelajaran yang sama di sekolah rendah dan menengah di Malaysia. Mereka dipilih kerana mereka bukannya daripada latar belakang yang tidak bertutur dalam bahasa Inggeris. Mereka berkomunikasi dalam bahasa Iban sepanjang masa dan jarang menggunakan bahasa Inggeris di luar waktu sekolah. Instrumen yang digunakan untuk mengumpul data adalah karangan yang ditulis oleh responden. Setiap karangan tersebut dianalisa menggunakan *Surface Strategy Taxonomy* dan *Comparative Taxonomy* untuk mengenalpasti jenis-jenis kesilapan dan punca kesilapan tersebut. Hasil kajian menunjukkan responden banyak melakukan kesilapan *misformation* dan puncanya bukan hasil pemindahan bahasa ibunda tetapi lebih berupa *developmental*. Ini bermakna pemindahan bahasa ibunda bukan penyebab utama dalam menguasai pembelajaran bahasa Inggeris. Oleh itu, adalah diharapkan kajian ini dapat membantu memberi maklumat berkaitan masalah dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Inggeris supaya boleh dijadikan panduan penyediaan bahan pengajaran dan pembelajaran yang efektif.

### Candidate's Declaration

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

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