

**AN ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGE ERRORS IN FINAL EXAMINATION
PAPERS IN UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA**



**INSTITUT PENGURUSAN PENYELIDIKAN
UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA
40450 SHAH ALAM, SELANGOR
MALAYSIA**

BY:

**JUN NIRLAWATI BT MOHD SAHIDOL
KAMISAH BT ARIFFIN
RAHIMAH BT ABD WAHAB**

SEPTEMBER 2010

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to express our deep appreciation to Universiti Teknologi MARA for granting the financial support to make this research possible.

Our deepest appreciation goes to all respondents for their willingness to spend some of their valuable time to take part in this research.

Our sincere thanks are also due to our colleagues and students whose help has been invaluable towards the completion of this research.

And last but not least, our eternal gratitude goes to our families for their endless understanding, tolerance, support and encouragement.

Jun Nirlawati Bt Mohd Sahidol
Kamisah Bt Ariffin
Rahimah Bt Abd Wahab
UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA PAHANG
JENGKA CAMPUS
September 2010

TABLE OF CONTENTS

COVER PAGE	
RESEARCH OFFER LETTER	
SUBMISSION OF REPORT LETTER	
PROJECT MEMBER	
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	(i)
TABLE OF CONTENTS	(ii)
LIST OF TABLES	(ix)
LIST OF FIGURES	(xvi)
ABSTRACT	(xvii)
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	2
1.3 Research Questions	3
1.4 Objectives of the Study	4
1.5 Significant of the Study	4
1.6 Framework of Investigation	5
1.7 Scope of the Study	5
1.8 Limitation and Delimitation of the Study	5
1.9 Definition of Terms	6

ABSTRACT

Studies on language errors have been replete, ranging from the analysis on errors in students' written works to errors in public documents such as brochures, articles and advertisements. Studies on errors committed in examination papers have been scarce. Perhaps, this is due to the assumption that examination papers would have gone through a stringent series of editing and proofreading process before they can be approved. However, the occurrence of language related errors such as lexical and syntactical errors in some of the final examination papers in Universiti Teknologi MARA has shown that such assumption is wide off the mark. This has motivated the present study to be carried out as the researchers feel that this problem should be highlighted so that stringent measures can be taken in order to ensure that the papers are free from errors.

This study identified and analysed the language errors that occur in the final examination papers. Thus, the data for the study mainly consisted of final examination papers that were randomly selected from the January – April 2008 and July – October 2008 sessions. Altogether, a total of 916 papers were selected from 22 faculties. The data were complemented by the interview data collected from 6 lecturers who had had the experience and had been involved in preparing examination papers.

The data from the examination papers were analysed based on the framework set for the investigation; error analysis based on Standard English grammatical rules vs Malaysian English, interlanguage and mother tongue interference. The errors found were analysed and categorized into eight categories, namely, spelling, mechanics of writing, tenses, subject-verb agreement, sentence structure, missing words and others. The errors were then treated to simple frequency counts. The interview data, on the other hand, were reported qualitatively.

The analysis shows that language errors were found extensively in the papers examined. From the total of 916 papers, 465 were found to contain errors in the categories mentioned above. This suggests that care had not been taken in ensuring the quality of the papers in terms of language accuracy. It is, thus, fair to conclude that the papers had not gone through proper and rigorous editing and proofreading processes.

The findings of this study have raised some legitimate concerns for the quality improvement of the final examination papers in UiTM. Some recommendations are put forward that require concerted efforts from the test setters themselves and the university's examination unit in ensuring that the examination papers are free from language errors.