

**THE COMMUNICATIVE ABILITY OF UiTM SARAWAK GRADUATING
STUDENTS: FOCUSING ON GRAMMATICAL ACCURACY**



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1. Letter of Report Submission

Date : 14 January 2015

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Assistant Vice Chancellor
Research Management Institute
Universiti Teknologi MARA
40450 Shah Alam

Dear Professor,

SUBMISSION OF FINAL REPORT

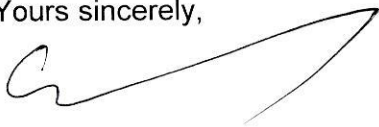
With reference to the above matter, we have the pleasure of submitting our final report entitled:

THE COMMUNICATIVE ABILITY OF UiTM SARAWAK GRADUATING STUDENTS: FOCUSSING ON GRAMMATICAL ACCURACY

Herewith please find three (3) copies of the final report for your action.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,



ASSOC. PROF. DR SIMON PHILIP BOTLEY @ FAISAL HAKIM
Head of Research Project

Members:

SHARIFAH ZAKIAH WAN HASSAN
MAHDALELA RAHIM

5. Report

5.1 Proposed Executive Summary

This study will explore Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Sarawak graduating students' oral proficiency, focusing on grammatical accuracy. Oral proficiency in English has always been the benchmark of language proficiency, and in the context of UiTM's language teaching curriculum, efforts to enhance students' oral proficiency are implemented through various language proficiency-based and English Language courses.

A small corpus of group discussions from final semester Bachelor degree students in UiTM Sarawak will be analysed to identify and classify grammatical errors and other performance factors in students' oral communication. The mini-corpus that will arise from this research will comprise at least 10 oral discussion transcripts, or as many transcripts as there are groups, depending on student numbers. As far as possible, the groups will be selected from a wide range of different faculties and disciplines represented at the UiTM Sarawak Samarahan campus.

The students will be asked to undergo two stages of the discussion. In the first stage, the students make individual presentations based on the selected stimulus, and in the second stage they are asked to discuss in groups the stimulus presented. All group discussions will be recorded and orthographically transcribed and digitised verbatim to provide the mini-corpus used in this study. The digitised transcripts will be subjected to a detailed error analysis using the UCL Error Editor tagging scheme (Dagneaux et al, 1998).

This study occupies an important niche area, as it examines the oral performances of an important group of speakers, namely final semester students of UiTM Sarawak's Bachelor degree programs. Upon completion of their course of study, the majority of these students will most likely find themselves competing for a place in the local job market. Presumably, they will be the ones to put their oral communication skills to the test in their initial quest for employment, and later in their working life.

5.2 Enhanced Executive Summary

NONE

5.3 Introduction

Oral proficiency in English has always been the benchmark of language proficiency, and the Malaysian Ministry of Education has over the years made repeated calls to teachers to improve the standard of English among students especially with regard to oral proficiency. There have been calls to make English a compulsory pass subject in the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) examination and also at the public universities in the country. In the context of UiTM's language teaching curriculum, efforts to enhance students' oral proficiency are translated through various language proficiency-based and ESP courses. The primary objective of this research is to determine the level of oral proficiency of final semester first degree students in UiTM Samarahan.

5.3.1 Statement of the Problem

It is crucial for UiTM and its extensive branch campus network to brace itself for the new challenges facing the global academic and professional community which necessitate mastery of English as the world's academic and commercial 'lingua franca'. This reflects the increasing importance assigned to the development of social and communicative 'soft' skills in the UiTM system.

In this respect, UiTM has laid down the necessary groundwork to ensure that it produces future graduates who are not only competent in their subject matter, but also highly-skilled communicators, possessing a high level of oral proficiency, and being able to function conversationally in any context.

A majority of current students in UiTM completed both their primary and secondary education in the national language, Bahasa Melayu (Malay). They have also gained formal exposure to English for ten or more years prior to their tertiary education. In their time at UiTM, these students have also been exposed to an English language curriculum that emphasises communicative skills as well as grammatical accuracy. This ought to result in the majority of them possessing some high degree of proficiency in English.

However, despite their years of exposure to English, many students are still not reasonably proficient users of English, much less highly-proficient. Even though