

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**AN ERROR ANALYSIS OF THE WRITTEN
ENGLISH ESSAYS OF THE BIDAYUH
SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS**

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the errors in a corpus of 38 essays written by 38 participants. The participants are Form Four Bidayuh students who are studying at a secondary school in Bau. The samples, made up of 9 male and 29 female were selected from among the science students. They have experienced approximately the same number of years of education through primary and secondary education in Malaysia. All of the participants come from non-English speaking background and hardly communicate in English both inside and outside the school. The instrument used for this study was participants' written essays based on the pictures-in-series after their elicitation test conducted. All of the errors in the essays were identified and classified into various categorisations. The results of the study show that five most common errors committed by the participants were developmental including omission, addition, use of inappropriate words, verb numbers disagreement, misordering and quantifier noun disagreement. Besides that, the study also shows there are inter-lingual, ambiguous and other types of errors. The data were analysed according to Corder (1974) in Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005). These aspects of writing in English pose the most difficult problems to the participants. This study has shed light on the manner in which students internalise the rules of the target language, which is English. Such an insight into language learning problems is beneficial to teachers because it provides information on the suggested taxonomies employed to address problems faced by the Bidayuh secondary school students in learning English as a second language (L2) which can be used in preparation of effective teaching materials. The findings of the study reveal that some errors committed by L2 learners derived from their mother tongue interference. The implications of the study include the needs for teachers to provide feedbacks with regards to erroneous language items made by the learners to prevent fossilization.

Candidate's Declaration

I declare, that the works in this dissertation was carried 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 reference work. This topic has not been submitted by any other academic institution for any degree or qualification.

In the event that this dissertation be found to violate the conditions above, I voluntarily waive the right of conferment of my degree and agree be subjected to disciplinary rules and regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

This chapter highlights the main issues with a view to understand the syntactic errors made by native speakers of Bidayuh in the acquisition of English language as a second language. First, it deliberates the background of the study. Secondly, it states the problem statement. Thirdly, it seeks to answer the research questions and highlights the research significance. Finally, it illustrates a concise theoretical framework of the study, then, followed by the definition of the terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

Errors are the weakened side of learner's speech or writing. It is believed that errors are the deviated parts of conversation or composition from the norms of mature language performance (Dulay, Burt and Krashen, 1982). Errors made by language learners in their productions are so frequent that they have turned heads of numerous specialists and language teachers especially those who are at the front. More distinguishable are the errors observed in learners written productions that are more eye-catching maybe just because of non-transitory, let us say, permanent nature of writing.

Of late, it has been seriously questioned that "what are the sources of these errors?" In an attempt to address this question, a lot of voices (in disagreement) have been arisen; some consider just learner's native language as the only source of errors (Contrastive Analysis