

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**THE EFFECT OF ERROR CORRECTION
ON ESL STUDENT WRITING**

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ABSTRACT


This study investigates the effect of written error correction, and the opinions and preferences regarding written error correction by Form 2 students in Bau, Sarawak. The instruments utilized in this study are questionnaires and students' writing scripts. A guided descriptive essay entitled: "My Family" was administered for the pre-test. The pre-test writing scripts were checked and graded based on explicit written error correction, also known as "direct" or "over" error corrections (Ferris, 2004). Four treatment sessions for one month duration were carried out before the post-test with the same title was administered again. The writing scores of both the pre-test and post-test were graded based on Chia's (2010) writing scoring rubrics. The scoring rubrics consist of four writing variables: content, organization and development, readability and grammar and mechanics. A paired sample t-test was performed to compare the students' performance in their pre-test and post-test. The findings of this study reveal that the students performed well after written error correction where the total mean score for pre-test is 5.71 and 8.17 (sig. 0.001) for the post-test. The writing variable which benefits most from written error correction is the fourth variable, grammar and mechanics. The pre-test mean for grammar and mechanics is 5.77 and the post-test mean is 8.82 (sig. 0.001). The three section questionnaire used in this study was adapted from Amrheria (2010) and Grami (2005). The data collected from the questionnaires were analysed descriptively. The findings depicted that the students' opinions were positive (between "agree" and "strongly agree") towards written error correction with a total of 90.1 percent (mean: 4.2). As for the students' preferences regarding written error correction, the majority of respondents "agree" and "strongly agree" with a total average of 92.2 percent (mean: 4.3) who claimed that they prefer written error correction. This study was conducted to fill a gap in the existing literature on investigating the effects of written error correction on ESL student writing among lower secondary school students. The implications of this study include the importance for teachers, researchers, students and ESL teaching field in general. This study is just a "journey of a thousand miles that begins with a single step" (Lao-tzu) and further research in the field of error corrections is greatly needed to improve students' command of English.

Candidate's Declaration

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

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

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This study attempts to investigate the effect of error corrections on writing among the lower secondary school students in English as a second language (ESL) context. It also attempts to investigate ESL students' opinions and preferences on their teachers' written error correction. Chapter 1 of this study discusses the related issues relevant to the study of teachers' written error corrections in students' writing, specifically identifying their opinions and preferences. This chapter presents eight sections. Section 1.1 describes the background of the study. Then, in Section 1.2, is the statement of problem followed by Section 1.3 that outlines the objectives of this study. Section 1.4 discusses the research questions which are specified to facilitate the development of the study. Section 1.5 states the significance of the study and the reasons why this study should be conducted. The limitations of the study are presented in Section 1.6. Meanwhile, Section 1.7 highlights the definitions of terms used in this study, and Section 1.8 is the summary section.

1.1 Research Background

English teachers perform written error corrections every day in every lesson because ESL students tend to make a lot of errors in the process of learning, especially in acquiring a new language (Tomkova, 2013). Tomkova added that, it seems writing is difficult and complex to master, especially for young learners of English. This difficulty has caused many students to remain passive and diffident in class and as a result they are lagging