

**AN ERROR ANALYSIS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY OF THE
FUTURE HR POOL: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF BUMIPUTERA STUDENTS
FROM CHINESE SCHOOLS AND BUMIPUTERA
STUDENTS FROM GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS
IN SABAH AND SARAWAK**

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

BY :

**MAY LIU SIAW MEI
ELIZABETH CAROLINE AUGUSTINE
ALICE SHANTHI A/P KASAWI**

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Penolong Naib Canselor (Penyelidikan)
Institut Pengurusan Penyelidikan
Universiti Teknologi MARA
40450 Shah Alam, Selangor
Malaysia

Prof / Prof Madya / Dr / Tuan / Puan

**LAPORAN AKHIR PENYELIDIKAN 'AN ERROR ANALYSIS OF THE
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GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS IN SABAH AND SARAWAK'**

Merujuk kepada perkara di atas, bersama-sama ini disertakan 4 (empat) naskah Laporan Akhir Penyelidikan bertajuk '*An error analysis of the English language proficiency of the future HR pool: A comparative study of Bumiputera students from Chinese schools and Bumiputera students from government schools in Sabah and Sarawak*' oleh kumpulan Penyelidik dari UiTM Sabah dan UiTM Sarawak.

Sekian, terima kasih.

Yang benar



MAY LIU SIAW MEI
Ketua
Projek Penyelidikan

Abstract

In a multicultural country like Malaysia, most learners of the English language not only have their mother tongue as their first language but also an additional second language in the backdrop of their language learning schemata. Historically, this situation used to exist more for students from the Chinese and Tamil-medium schools in Malaysia, where the majority of students were either Malaysian Chinese or Malaysian Indians respectively. In recent years, however, there has been a growing trend of Bumiputera students enrolling in Chinese-medium schools, which is indicative of an emerging group of Bumiputera students with a different combination of first and second languages (i.e. Bahasa Malaysia and Mandarin). Thus, first and/or second language interference undeniably exist and influence the production of the target language (English) during the interlanguage phase. In this study, the researchers were interested to identify the errors in English made by these Bumiputera students who have now reached the university level. Using an Error Analysis framework, this study compared these students with their conventional counterparts - Bumiputera students who went to national schools where the medium of instruction was the same as their mother tongue, Bahasa Malaysia. The sample was confined to two different states in Malaysia - Sabah and Sarawak. An understanding of the similarities and differences of the learners' production of the target language may explain intralingual or interlingual factors. The results show that the students had grasped certain aspects of the two tenses – Simple Present and Present Continuous – which were being tested, but had difficulty with certain rules governing the two tenses. The results of this study can be indicative of the English language proficiency of the future human resource pool of Malaysia, as the respondents were all undertaking various courses of study at the university level.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.0.1 Introduction to the Study

Being a multiracial country, one aspect of Malaysia which reflects this multiculturalism is the language of the people. There exist different languages of the different races in the country and most Malaysians are multilingual as a result. The education system of the country reflects this as well with vernacular schools being allowed to use the ethnic languages of Mandarin or Tamil as a medium of instruction. Since the early days of independence, the Razak Report of 1956 had paved the way for the schooling system as we know it now. Today there exist three main types of schools, i) the national school where Bahasa Malaysia is used as the main medium of instruction, ii) the national-type school (either Chinese or Tamil) where the medium of instruction is either Chinese or Tamil and iii) the independent school, where Mandarin is used as the main medium of instruction but the students sit for public examinations by the Examination Bureau of the Duzhong Working Committee (Chee, 2007).

Thus a student in Malaysia today has the option of which type of school to enrol in. The implication is the use of a different language as a medium of instruction in different schools. Besides the medium of instruction, a language which has been under focus for a long time has been English. English has always been of interest to most Malaysians, whether politician, parent, educator, employer, student or a member of the general public. The nation as a whole is also interested in the English language proficiency of the students once they finish 11 to 12 years of basic education. With a different amount of time devoted to the English language in these different schools as well as the different medium of instruction used in other non-language subjects, the question arises today as to whether these students have acquired the same level of proficiency in the English language.