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THE USE OF SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS IN ENGLISH AMONG UPPER SECONDARY MALAY STUDENTS

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In memory of my father, B.S. Maniam, who gave me the BEST of two worlds - Singapore, my beginning and Malaysia, my destiny.

Words are things, and a small drop of ink,
Falling like dew upon a thought,
produces that which makes thousands
perhaps millions, THINK.

Byron

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"The cistern contains; the fountain overflows."

– W. Blake.

A thesis is never created solely by the efforts of its author. Thanks are due to many wonderful people who taught me that no padlocks, bolts or bars can imprison the mind, if there is determination.

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Abstract

This study was an exploratory study. The focus of the study was the investigation of the difficulties faced by the upper secondary Malay students in learning and using subordinating conjunctions in the English Language.

This study involved fifty ethnic Malay informants from Sekolah Menengah Taman Dato' Harun, Km 12, Old Klang Road, Petaling Jaya. Four assignments and a questionnaire formed the test instruments. A total of twenty subordinating conjunctions were tested in the written assignments.

Data analysis was based on the Error Analysis Framework. A total of 2566 errors (42.07%) were accounted for in the usage of English subordinating conjunctions against the total occurrence of 6,100 times in this research. A breakdown of the errors in the usage of the seven categories of conjunctions is given below:-

(i)	Conditional Conjunctions	- 85.1 %
(ii)	Conjunctions of Manner	- 57.0 %
(iii)	Conjunctions of Purpose	- 45.7 %
(iv)	Concessive Conjunctions	- 41.1 %

(v) Conjunctions of Reason and Result - 33.4 %

(vi) Temporal Conjunctions - 32.7 %

(vii) Conjunctions of Place - 16.5 %

The majority of the errors made by the subjects indicated their lack of knowledge on the usage of these conjunctions. This study provided sufficient basis for the view that these errors were significantly, due to intralingual interference and not interlingual interference (i.e., the negative transfer of grammatical patterns from the mother tongue). Most of these intralingual errors reflected the students' ignorance of rule restrictions, overgeneralizations and their failure to understand the nature of the syntactic and semantic relationships signalled by the conjunctions within a given context, due to their inadequate vocabulary and general lack of proficiency in the English Language.

Based on these findings, the researcher has proposed some pedagogical suggestions and sample exercises to help facilitate the usage of subordinating conjunctions in the classroom. These suggestions and exercises are not exhaustive.

Abstrak

Penyelidikan ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji masalah-masalah yang dihadapi oleh pelajar-pelajar Melayu di peringkat sekolah menengah dalam pembelajaran dan penggunaan "subordinating conjunctions" (kata sendi) dalam Bahasa Inggeris.

Kajian ini merangkumi lima puluh pelajar Melayu dari Sekolah Menengah Taman Dato' Harun, Km 12, Jalan Kelang Lama, Petaling Jaya. Empat tugasan dan satu soalselidik membentukkan alat pengujian. Sebanyak dua puluh "subordinating conjunctions" telah diuji dalam konteks penggunaan.

Data yang diperolehi dianalisa dengan menggunakan kaedah Analisis Kesilapan (Error Analysis Methodology). Kesilapan sebanyak 2,566 (42.07 %) telah direkodkan dalam penggunaan 'subordinating conjunctions' Bahasa Inggeris. Didapati penyalahgunaan 'subordinating conjunctions' adalah seperti berikut:-

(i)	Conjunctional Conjunctions	- 85.1 %
(ii)	Conjunctions of Manner	- 57.0 %
(iii)	Conjunctions of Purpose	- 45.7 %
(iv)	Concessive Conjunctions	- 41.1 %
(v)	Conjunctions of Reason and Result	- 33.4 %

(vi) Temporal Conjunctions - 32.7 %

(vii) Conjunctions of Place - 16.5 %

Berdasarkan analisis data kajian ini, kesimpulan dapat dibuat bahawa kebanyakan informan membuat kesilapan kerana mereka tidak mengetahui fungsi semantik kata sendi Bahasa Inggeris dan pemerumusan (overgeneralisation) yang salah tentang kata sendi Bahasa Inggeris kerana informan-informan ini tidak mempunyai perbendaharaan kata yang cukup dan mereka tidak fasih dalam Bahasa Inggeris. Didapati tiada gangguan bahasa Ibunda (Bahasa Melayu) dalam penggunaan kata sendi Bahasa Inggeris.

Berdasarkan maklumat daripada kajian ini, penyelidik telah mencadangkan beberapa cadangan pedagogi dan contoh latihan-latihan pengukuhan yang dapat membantu tenaga pengajar meningkatkan penguasaan dan penggunaan kata sendi Bahasa Inggeris di kalangan pelajar-pelajar Melayu di peringkat sekolah menengah atas.

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Abbreviations

NL	-	Native Language
MT	-	Mother Tongue
TL	-	Target Language
L1	-	Language One/First Language
L2/SL	-	Language Two/Second Language
EL	-	English Language
ESL	-	English as a Second Language
SLA	-	Second Language Acquisition
CA	-	Contrastive Analysis
EA	-	Error Analysis
CAH	-	Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis
SLL	-	Second Language Learning
IL	-	Interlanguage
LA	-	Language Acquisition
FL	-	Foreign Language

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