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THE USE OF THE INTEGRATED SENTENCE MODELLING APPROACH TO
WRITING: A CASE STUDY

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DEDICATION

Always:-

To my husband, Ow Chee Fook,
who recognized and understood
my desire to improve and
helped me to secure and survive it.

To my children, Adrian, Xin Dee, Shawn and Shen,
who turned frustration into encouragement,
anger into inspiration,
and gave me the peace of mind.

To my sister, Ho Tooi Nee,
who took over the role as a mother
and provide loving care for my children, and most important,
helped me to persevere through the difficult times.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to determine whether assistance in the form of sentence modelling practices provided to low proficiency students affected their writing. Research indicating the importance of grammar input in helping low proficiency students provided the rationale for this approach. The model involved sentence patterns with specific target structure such as adverbial phrases of time, sentence connectors and prepositional phrases of time.

Students in Semester 3 C class participated in the study in Institut Bahasa Melayu Malaysia, a teachers' training college. These students have undergone two semesters of grammar input and process writing. These subjects are purposefully selected because they have failed in both the PMR and SPM English paper.

In this study, students were provided opportunities to listen to sentence patterns, compose sentences and read them aloud. At the end of the facilitation, students were required to write an in-class guided composition through pictures and they were provided the opportunity to write using the patterns learned with the intention of improving grammatical accuracy and narrative content.

The highly structured, specific and integrated approach to composition instruction resulted in superior student writing. The results of the study also indicated that:

- i. low proficiency students cannot eliminate all surface level errors or sentence structure errors.

ii. a variety of language skills enabled the students to verbalise the sentence patterns and subsequently internalise the target structures.

Based on the findings of this study, some implications have been made for teaching composition writing in the ESL environment. The findings from this study can reassure ESL teachers that models can provide the powerful input needed by low proficiency students. In brief, ESL teachers can help low proficiency students expand their lexical and syntactic choices by modelling options for them and by suggesting ways they could use adverbial phrases and prepositional phrases more effectively.

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menentukan sama ada model contoh ayat-ayat yang disediakan kepada pelajar yang rendah penguasaan bahasa akan mempengaruhi penulisan mereka. Kajian lepas yang membayangkan bahawa input tatabahasa boleh membantu pelajar yang rendah penguasaan bahasa memberi rasional bagi kajian ini. Model-model ini meliputi struktur ayat, penghubung kata dan frasa menunjukkan masa.

Kajian ini dijalankan di Institut Bahasa Melayu Malaysia di kalangan pelajar Semester 3C. Kumpulan pelajar ini telah didedahkan dengan input tatabahasa dan penulisan secara proses selama dua semester. Pelajar ini sengaja dipilih kerana mereka telah gagal kertas Bahasa Inggeris dalam peperiksaan PMR dan SPM.

Dalam kajian ini pelajar telah berpeluang mendengar dan membaca ragam ayat serta membina ayat. Pada akhir proses fasilitasi ini, pelajar dikehendaki menulis karangan berpanduan gambar dalam kelas berdasarkan ragam ayat yang telah dipelajari dengan memperbaiki tatabahasa dan isi naratif.

Pendekatan integrasi bersama dengan struktur yang spesifik telah menghasilkan penulisan yang cemerlang. Hasil kajian ini juga menunjukkan:

- i. pelajar penguasaan rendah tidak mampu mengenalpasti kesalahan dalam struktur ayat atau kesalahan tatabahasa
- ii. kemahiran bahasa yang pelbagai telah membantu dalam memahami ragam ayat dan dengan secara tidak langsung dapat menguasai struktur sasaran.

Berdasarkan dapatan kajian ini, beberapa implikasi dapat dirumuskan dalam pengajaran penulisan ESL. Dapatan kajian ini memberi penekanan bahawa model yang sesuai boleh meningkatkan pencapaian pelajar penguasaan bahasa yang rendah. Secara ringkas, guru ESL boleh membantu pelajar yang rendah penguasaan bahasa dengan menyediakan pelbagai model lesikal.

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