

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

In the previous chapter, the errors which have been tagged were analysed and grouped according to the different types of deviation from the target language. From the description of errors, this chapter will now turn to the explanation and evaluation of the errors or 'error diagnosis', a term used by James (1998). The main concern at this level of error analysis, therefore, is tracing the errors to their causes. The first section and its sub-sections will discuss the factors which could be the possible causes to the production of errors in this learner corpus. Section 5.2 with its sub-sections will discuss the various implications from the outcome of the error diagnosis.

5.1 Factors Correlating with Learners' Difficulties with MWU

There are several factors to explain the cause of errors and some which have been presented in the literature are related to the role of mother tongue, teaching-induced factors and the input learners are exposed to (Cross and Papp, 2008). In James (1998), 'interlingual', 'intralingual', 'communication-strategy' and 'induced' are the four main categories used to diagnose the errors. It is pertinent at this juncture to provide a brief explanation on these terms: 'interlingual', 'intralingual', 'communication-strategy', and 'induced'.

Interlanguage errors are errors caused by the interference of the learner's mother tongue or first language. Intralingual/developmental errors are errors which reflect the learner's competence at a particular stage and illustrate some of the general characteristics of language acquisition. Communication-strategy can be a source of error when learners in ignorance of a target language (TL) form, try to fill the gap by

resorting to strategies such as literal translation. Errors which are ‘induced’ can be due to materials or teacher-talk.

The following discussion will focus on the ‘interlingual’ and ‘intralingual’ factors to examine the cause of tagged errors in this learner corpus. Because the collected data for this study is the end product of the writing process, this study will not be able to discuss the source of errors related to ‘communication-strategy’ and ‘induced errors’. In order to analyse the tagged errors according to ‘communication-strategy’ or ‘induced errors’ due to materials or teacher-talk, data collection would have to begin even before the writing process. Data collection would have to involve analyzing the pre-writing materials, as well as recording and analyzing the whole process of writing the essays.

Therefore, the discussion in the following sub-sections, 5.1.1 and 5.1.2, the tagged errors will be diagnosed according to James’ (1998) ‘interlingual’ and ‘intralingual’ factors. In sub-section, 5.1.3, the discussion will look at how occurrence of errors are also related to the lack of exposure to the target language, a source of error which was pointed by Cross and Papp (2008).

5.1.1 Interlingual errors

Dulay et al. (1982: 171) define interlingual errors as “L2 errors that reflect native language structure, regardless of the internal processes or external conditions that spawned them”. From the analysis of learners’ errors in the previous chapter, there are traces of the learners’ mother tongue influence in the <MD> errors and <CN> errors.

Table 5.1 below shows some examples of <MD> errors which occurred due to the influence of L1.

Table 5.1
Influence of L1 on L2 structures

L2 Structures	Tagged Errors	L1 Structures
<u>Suggested correction of the L2 error</u> 1. can also learn 2. will also improve 3. can also discuss 4. may also go 5. may also read	<u>Misformation of <MD> structures</u> also can learn also will improve also can discuss also may go also may read	也可以学 (<i>ye ker yi xue</i>) 也一定会进步 (<i>ye yi ting hui jin bu</i>) 也可以商谈 (<i>ye ker yi shang tan</i>) 也能去 (<i>ye neng qu</i>) 也能读 (<i>ye neng du</i>)

Referring to Table 5.1, the middle column (Tagged Errors), are examples of interlingual errors, the misformed <MD> structures. The column on the right (L1 structures) shows how the structures in Mandarin can influence the misformation of <MD> structures. As shown in examples #1 to #5, learners tend to misplace the adverb ‘also’ before the modal auxiliary; because in Mandarin, *ye* (also) is placed before the modals *ker yi, yi tinghui, neng* (can, will, may) and verbs *xue, jin bu, shang tan, qu, du* (learn, improve, discuss, go, read). In the TL or L2 structures, ‘also’ is usually placed between the modals (can, will, may) and verbs (learn, improve, discuss, go, read), as shown in the left column (L2 structures).

Interlingual errors are not only influenced by L1 structures but also translation from the L1. In fact, James (1998: 179) claims that “now it is common to hear the layperson explain errors originating in L1 transfer in terms of ‘translation’ from the

L1”. In a fairly recent study on the interlanguage of Chinese learners of English by Cross and Papp (2007), the non-native feature of the learners’ interlanguage which are influenced by direct translation include individual words, phrases, fixed sayings, and even whole structures. An example of a direct translation of a Chinese collocation is: ‘*When the people after their work, they will choose to open the television.*’ In Mandarin, ‘switch on the television’ is ‘*kai dian shi*’, literally ‘open the television’ (ibid.: 70).

In line with the findings by Cross and Papp (ibid.), the findings in this study also shows that the misselection of <CN> errors in this learner corpus, are also influenced by direct translation from Mandarin and used as a substitute for the TL. The examples of tagged errors in Table 5.2 are <CN> structures which have been directly translated from Mandarin.

Table 5.2
Influence of direct translation on L2 structures

L2 Structures	Tagged errors	L1 Structures
<u>Suggested correction of the L2 error</u>	<u>Misselection of <CN> structures</u>	
1. In short/ In a nutshell	Long story short	长话短说 (<i>chang hua duan shuo</i>)
2. As a result	If like this	如果这样 (<i>ru guo zhe yang</i>)
3. In other words	In the other way of saying	另一句话说 (<i>ling yi ju hua suo</i>)
4. For instance	Example like	比如(<i>bi ru</i>)
5. In my opinion	As my opinion	我认为(<i>wo ren wei</i>)
6. In comparison	By compare this	比较 (<i>bi jiao</i>)

Referring to Table 5.2, the middle column (Tagged Errors), are examples of interlingual errors, which are the misselected <CN> structures. The column on the

right (L1 structures) shows how the structures in Mandarin, which have been translated to the TL, can cause errors in the use of connectors (as shown in the middle column). As shown in example #1, ‘long story short’ is very likely to be a direct translation of ‘*chang hua duan shuo*’, which is a linking device of summary. Similarly, as exemplified in examples #2 to #6; ‘if like this’, ‘in the other way of saying’, ‘example like’, ‘as my opinion’ and ‘by compare this’, are <CN> errors in the TL caused by direct translation from the L1. Even though these words exist in the TL, these structures will never be used as a connector by a native learner. Therefore, the tagged <CN> errors are considered as interlingual errors because of the “non-native nature” of these structures, after being translated from the L1 structures – ‘*ru guo zhe yang*’, ‘*ling yi ju hua suo*’, ‘*bi ru*’, ‘*wo ren wei*’, and ‘*bi jiao*’. Based on the intended meaning in the learners’ essays, the L2 structures on the left column, are the connectors which are normally used in the English language.

Interlingual errors can be triggered by influence from the L1 structures and also direct translation from the mother tongue. They are a significant subset of all errors, though estimates and counts vary between 3 per cent and 25 per cent of all errors. The remaining 75 percent of the errors are what Richards (1974) aptly called ‘non-contrastive’ errors or intralingual and developmental errors (in James, 1998: 181). This is the next point of discussion.

5.1.2 Intralingual/Developmental errors

Intralingual and developmental errors reflect the learner’s competence at a particular stage and illustrate some of the general characteristics of language acquisition such as faulty generalization, incomplete application of rules, and failure

to learn conditions under which rules apply (Richards, 1974: 174). James (1998), on the other hand, views intralingual errors as target language causes whereby in ignorance of a TL form on any level and of any class, learners can set about learning the needed item, engaging their learning strategies or they can try to fill the gap by resorting to communication strategies – which can be the source of errors. Both Richards and James have their own list of types and causes of intralingual errors, even though one or two items may overlap. For the purpose of this study, only the items relevant to the analysis of the errors will be mentioned in the following discussion.

5.1.2.1 Over-generalization

‘Over-generalization’ is covered by Richards (1974) and James (1998) as a source of learner errors. According to the explanation given by Richards (*ibid*: 174), overgeneralization may be the result of the learner reducing his linguistic burden. This is one of the possible explanations for the wrong use of verb form after a modal auxiliary or a ‘to’-infinitive in the <MD> structures and <IN> structures. From the analysis of <MD> structures and <IN> structures in subsections 4.2.1 and 4.2.2, the examples have shown how the learners include the –s inflection, -ed past tense or –ing to the verb and produce erroneous structures such as ‘can continues’, ‘can caused’, ‘will giving’, ‘to helps’, and ‘to cooking’. Thus, without paying much attention to the verb form (‘continue’, ‘cause’, ‘give’, ‘help’ and ‘cook’), learners reduce their linguistic burden in this aspect because they do not process the accuracy of such language structures in their writing.

Over-generalization is also associated with redundancy reduction. It may occur, for instance, with items which are contrasted in the grammar of the language

but which do not carry significant and obvious contrast for the learner. This is the case with the erroneous structures such as ‘can makes’ because over-inclusion of the –s inflection has an insignificant effect to the distortion of meaning in the sentence: ‘A good education can makes our life easier.’ Similarly, over-generalization can also be reasoned as the cause of production of erroneous <IN> structures such as ‘to cooking’ and ‘to selling’. Deviation from the ‘to + base verb’ structure does not really distort the meaning in these sentences:

**1) For example, a chef also need to learn how to cooking.*

**2) They parent very sad to selling their baby but no choice.*

5.1.2.2 False concepts hypothesized

The cause of errors in this category is a type of developmental errors which derive from faulty comprehension of distinctions in the target language. There are three categories of tagged errors which fall into this type of developmental error. They are ‘misselection of parts-of-speech (POS) in the <IN> structures’, ‘misformation of modal + adjective structure’, and ‘misformation of ‘to’-infinitive + adjective structure’. A close analysis of the tagged errors reveals a faulty comprehension of distinction of parts-of-speech in the TL. For example, learners form erroneous structures such as ‘to success’ in this sentence – **‘We need to work hard in order to success.’* This shows the learners’ inability to distinguish between the word ‘succeed’ (a verb) and ‘success’ (a noun).

Similarly, this is also the cause for errors such as ‘will happy’ and ‘to close’ in these sentences: **1) Every day we play together, work together, your life will happy everyday. *2) Spend more time to close with them, teach them, and understand what*

they want. The faulty comprehension of POS is evident because learners probably assumed that ‘happy’ and ‘close’ falls into the same <MD> structure: ‘modal’ + ‘verb’, and <IN> structure: ‘to’ + ‘verb’. Learners are not aware that adjectives collocate with modals and the ‘to’ infinitive with the inclusion of ‘be’ in these structures: ‘will + be + happy’ and ‘to + be + close’. Another angle of explaining such error is that the learner could also be assuming that these two structures: ‘modal’ + ‘adjective’ and ‘to’ + ‘adjective’ are correct structures in the TL.

5.1.2.3 Incomplete rule application

The occurrence of deviant structures under this category represents the degree of development of the rules required to produce acceptable utterances. Richards (1974) explains that occurrences of errors due to incomplete rule application happen because the second language learner who is interested perhaps primarily in communication, can achieve quite efficient communication without the need for mastering more than the elementary rules. For example, in the misformation of passive <MD> and <IN> structures, learners either exclude the ‘be’ infinitive or past participle to produce erroneous structures such as ‘cannot be do’, ‘will filled’, ‘to be educate’, and ‘to reached’. Learner errors such as these can be justified as motivation to achieve communication which exceeds motivation to produce grammatically correct sentences (Richards, *ibid.*).

For Chinese learners, especially, they have a particular disadvantage when dealing with English passive constructions because the Chinese language does not have a syntactically-derived passive voice (Hinkel, 2002). The MWUs error analysis of passive modal structures and passive infinitive structures in subsections 4.2.1.2 and

4.2.2.3 reveal that these are problematic MWUs for the Chinese learners in this study too. For this reason, Hinkel (2004) suggests that practice with common passive phrases, sentences, or collocational expressions can be combined with other verb constructions in speaking or writing practice to help learners to consciously notice the MWUs which are collocational in nature.

5.1.2.4 Overlooking co-occurrence restrictions

The production of “blended errors” of modals and phrasal modals, as discussed in subsection 4.2.1.1, fall into this category. Overlooking the possibilities of co-occurrence of modals (e.g. ‘will’ and ‘could’) and phrasal modals (‘be going to’ and ‘be able to’) will cause errors such as ‘*will going to make*’ and ‘*could able*’. This is an important aspect which has been neglected in the grammar lessons. Learners should be taught grammar rules as well as grammatical collocations to expose learners to co-occurrence of grammatical structures.

5.1.2.5 Holistic strategies

“The term ‘holistic’ refers to the learners’ assumption that if you can say X in the L2, then you must be able to say Y. Lacking the required form, it must be all right to use another near-equivalent L2 item which they have learnt” (James, 1998: 187). This is one of the communication strategies which could be a cause of developmental errors. Learners who are ignorant of the TL form, on any level and of any class, can resort to this strategy to fill the gap in the TL language. In an attempt to use the near-equivalent L2 structure, learners produce structures which are non-standard, probably comprehensible by non-native speakers, but not acceptable as a formal structure in the

TL. This could be a source of error in these categories: ‘whole collocation inappropriate’ and ‘misselection of adjectives’ in the <JN> structures.

For instance, these sentences – ³*1) *Learning of english become a fixed subject for him if he wish to go there.* and *2) *If both the parents did not have a stable profit, the family members are going to...*, exemplify how learners try to find a near-synonym for the collocation ‘compulsory subject’ and ‘stable income’. Learners tried to substitute ‘compulsory’ with ‘fixed’ and ‘income’ with ‘profit’, assuming that the substitutions carry the same meaning as the TL. When learners are not able to find a particular phrase for an intended context, they will resort to an approximation. As a result, collocational errors occur when this strategy is being employed by learners.

This strategy is also employed by learners when they are undecided as to which word class of the lexical item is an ‘adjective’. As a result, these collocational errors occurred in the learners’ writings: *3) *...English also used in a business between difference country that have...* *4) *...when you need a peace place...* *5) *...will have a brightly future.* In the failed attempt to use the word as an adjective, learners substituted it with a word of a different word class. For example, 3) ‘different’ is substituted with ‘difference’ (noun), 4) ‘peaceful’ is substituted with ‘peace’ (noun), and 5) ‘bright’ is substituted with ‘brightly’ (adverb).

Lacking the knowledge of the required form, learners turn to this holistic strategy to form a near-equivalent L2 structure, hoping that it carries the same meaning and readers will be able to understand the intended meaning. The meaning

³ These five examples here are taken from the learners’ essays. Refer to Appendix 7 for the concordance lines.

may still be comprehensible to certain readers but the structures are definitely tagged as erroneous structures as they are not acceptable as standard English.

5.1.3 Lack of exposure to the target language

This is an important factor which affects these three categories of MWU errors – ‘misformation of compound adjectives’, ‘distortion in the <CN> structures’, and ‘misformation of <CN> structures’. This has not been discussed in Richards (1971) or James (1998). In fact, this has not been discussed as a source of learner error in the process of error explanation and evaluation in the traditional EA research.

In a recent research on collocations by Cross and Papp (2008), they find that errors are also influenced by the lack of exposure to the target language. This factor affects especially MWUs errors. According to them, limited exposure to authentic language norms and lack of feedback are likely to be a factor in preventing learners from making accurate judgements about the combinatorial possibilities of collocations. For example, learners misform compound adjectives (as discussed in subsection 4.2.3) because they are not aware that ‘well’ is the right collocation with ‘educated’ to form the compound adjective ‘well-educated’. Other examples of such errors are ‘high educated person’ and ‘high-paid job’. Unlike grammatical collocations where a certain structure can be identified, the possible combinations in lexical collocations are beyond identified numbers. Therefore, since there is no ‘formula’ to remember the possible lexical combinations, the possible solution to this is – exposure to the TL.

Besides inaccurate combinations in collocations, inaccuracies may also occur within a fixed MWU when learners lack exposure of the TL. Such errors have been labeled as distorted <CN> structures and misformed <CN> structures. As discussed in subsection 4.2.4, the various distortions in the structures are due to omission, overinclusion and misuse of articles or prepositions or inflections. Examples of misformed <CN> structures are: 'further more', 'none the less' and 'now a days'.

5.1.4 Summary of discussion

To sum up the above discussion on the source of MWU errors, both L1 and L2 have significant influences on the learners' interlanguage (IL). Generally, the research findings show that the MWU errors in this learner corpus have been categorized as intralingual/developmental error. This finding is in line with the investigations conducted by Dulay et al. (1982), who find that the majority of errors made by second language learners are not interlingual, but intralingual/developmental. Nevertheless, the role of mother tongue and the influence of L1 on learners' language cannot be denied as they are present throughout the process of IL formation. This important finding from this study has great implications on the teaching and learning of MWUs.

5.2 Pedagogical Implications in the Teaching and Learning of MWUs

From the discussion on the various sources of MWU errors, the investigation has revealed that most of the MWU errors are developmental errors, which will occur throughout the process of L2 learning. This finding has a great impact on the methodological and pedagogical aspects of teaching and learning. The implications in the teaching and learning of MWUs will be discussed based on these points: 1) raising

awareness of the importance of MWUs, 2) exposure to MWUs through teaching materials, and 3) selection of MWUs. Each of the mentioned points will be discussed below.

5.2.1 Raising awareness of the importance of MWUs

The starting point is for teachers to realize the importance of teaching MWUs to learners. Teachers with authority can bring about change by highlighting the importance of teaching grammatical and lexical collocations in the national syllabus, English Language Curriculum Specifications, school textbooks, and other teaching materials. Currently, learners lack this exposure because in the syllabus, as well as the textbook, the importance of MWUs is not highlighted. Referring to the Curriculum Specification for Form 5, on page 21, the use of ‘nouns functioning as adjectives’ in the <JN> collocation is mentioned, with three given examples. The ‘modal’ and ‘infinitive’ structures are mentioned on page 24, and connectors on page 25. There are also instructions and a word list given on pages 32-34, informing the teachers that these are the words which should be taught in context, as well as the different parts of speech of the words (refer to Appendix 9a, 9b, 9c, 9d). However, there is no mention of the teaching of collocations, whether it is grammatical collocations or lexical collocations.

The textbook is a very important teaching material because it has been written based on the syllabus and curriculum specifications given by the Ministry of Education in Malaysia. Form 5 students in secondary schools nationwide, will be learning the same English Language content based on the textbook. Therefore, MWUs should be highlighted in textbooks to bring about an awareness of the

importance of learning MWUs to students. Based on some of the selected examples, the focus is more on learning the language functions. Appendix 10a explains to learners how to use ‘may’, ‘might’, ‘may not’ and ‘might not’. Appendix 10b is an exercise which helps learners to practice using the modals which have been explained previously. Similarly, in Appendix 11, the teaching point for the modal ‘will’ is ‘to talk about the future’. Learners have four tasks to complete using ‘will’ and also ‘going to’. Appendix 12 explains to learners what connectors are, the different types of connectors, and a follow-up exercise.

The selected examples from the English Language textbook reveal that grammatical and lexical collocations have been left out as a teaching point. However, teachers are agents of change in classrooms and they can extend the limitations in the syllabus and teach MWUs to learners because it is an essential element of effective communication which involves organizing the informational content of what is said in particular ways (Lewis, 1993). Lewis (*ibid.*: 146) continues to justify the importance of learning MWUs by saying – “If we wish to develop communicative power, there are word order patterns of which students can usefully and effectively be made aware.” In fact, being aware of grammatical patterns and lexical collocations not only helps in fluency, but also accuracy. For example, if learners are aware that the verb which comes after a modal or ‘to’-infinitive must be in the base form, they can avoid errors such as ‘can helping’, ‘will knows’, ‘to helps’ and ‘to cooking’. Teachers can explicitly teach learners and emphasize on the patterns in such grammatical collocations. How this can be done will be discussed in subsection 5.2.2.

Similarly, if learners learn linking devices such as ‘in conclusion’, ‘in other words’, and ‘on the other hand’ as units of multi-word connectors, distortions in the

structures can be avoided. As for ‘adjective + noun’ collocations, the combinations of words are less restricted as there are many possibilities of <JN> collocations. Therefore, collocations should be taught explicitly as part of vocabulary learning to expose learners to the frequent word combinations used by native speakers. Learners should be taught that ‘stable income’ and ‘good education’ are more common <JN> combinations compared to ‘stable profit’ and ‘well education’. Dong (2009: 48), in his research on lexical collocations among Korean learners, emphasized that “it is necessary that learners realize that there are word combinations which are frequently used by native speakers and that individual words in the combinations are not replaceable by any other words which may have similar meanings and that these combinations have to be learned.” In the following point of discussion, we shall look at how collocations can be taught and learned.

5.2.2 Exposure to MWUs through teaching materials

There are many ways a teacher can expose his/her students to MWUs. Based on my teaching experience, error identification is a good exercise to bring about this awareness. For example, instead of asking the learners to change the given verbs to future tense for all the four tasks (refer to Appendix 11), one of the tasks could be an error identification exercise. It is possible to modify Task 4 into an exercise whereby learners are asked to spot the errors in the email message (refer to Appendix 13 for the suggested exercise). By identifying the errors, learners are also expected to correct the errors. Through this exercise, learners will be exposed to the erroneous structures as well as the correct ‘modal + base verb’ structure. This exercise can also be used for other MWUs such as the ‘to’-infinitive structures.

‘Consciousness-raising’ is an important element in creating awareness with regard to collocations and this has been widely acknowledged and suggested by many previous researchers (Howarth, 1996; Hill et al., 2000; Lewis, 2000; Woodland, 2000). Consciousness-raising activities are pertinent in helping learners to actively notice the form and function of MWUs in context, which they can store in their memory and to be used accurately in their writing. In addition, learners will also be aware of how their L1 can be an influence when acquiring the TL and cause interference by producing interlingual errors such as ‘long story short’ and ‘also can learn’, which are direct translations from Mandarin.

Lu (2002) suggests using corpora and concordance to expose learners to the ‘real’ use of language. This would be something very new to the Malaysian students but they would definitely benefit from the data-driven learning approach. Teachers should use the corpora which are readily available online to show word collocations in real language. Instead of learning individual words which are meaninglessly out of context, learners should be taught to identify how words collocate with each other. For example, the word ‘eager’ in the LOB corpus shows that ‘eager + noun’ and ‘eager + to + verb’ should be taught as MWUs as the frequency of use of such structures is high.

1 hear him say, "Yes, yes!", in his eager acceptance of them.
2 delicate question', so she wrote in eager anticipation, 'will be
3 liked her, and sympathised with her eager desire to be up and do
4 pen the briefcase. It was locked. Eager fingers felt bulky cont
5 efcase opened. Cecil thrust an eager hand inside, his fingers
6 ctor opened up a new world to the eager little boy. For the fi
7 guessed, even before she saw the eager look on his face, that
8 ed. Jane watched progress with eager, loving eyes, was there
9 eo's key and Simon pushed it open. Eager though he was to get on
10 uits of victory, they were not so eager to advance the needs of
11 the man is putting his coat ON - eager to get AWAY from work.
13 a band they are in good form and eager to improve on their
14 ve a contribution to make and are eager to learn and be socia
15 er an industry was on its toes and eager to provide good service

16 secured she was willing, and even eager to see her go. The c
 17 the bazaar committee members were eager to store a lot of old j
 18 ames we know and who found pupils eager to study Islamic myst
 19 at they had always been ambitious, eager to try their wings in a
 20 platform. He climbed the stairs, eager to unload the guilt-sym
 21 cheroots for Silvio. He was half-eager to walk into the great
 22 s his appearance. It was boyishly eager, yet at the same time

Another good example is the word 'fond' from the suggested word list and referring to the LOB Corpus using the Web Concordance, it is evident that 'fond' is almost always used as a multi-word unit – 'fond + of + 'noun/pronoun'. The concordance lines for the word 'fond' shows that out of the 26 entries, 24 concordance lines show that the word 'fond' is always followed by the preposition 'of' and a noun (sweets) or pronoun (him/her).

1 1730, he went dancing. Genuinely fond as he was of music, he
 2 to say, downright bad, taste. Fond as he was of very young
 3 which my birds seem passionately fond. At last the
 4 of humour, I like to think I'm as fond of a good laugh as
 5 It's not as if you were all that fond of Alice." He was
 6 t palm worms fried in oils and is fond of baked snakes. In Bra
 7 llen face on the left. If you are fond of being in the fashion
 8 and shrewd, secretive to a fault, fond of company and very fond
 9 nterests> She is 'passionately fond of cooking.' Having lived
 10 d known for years that Edward was fond of her and that everyone
 11 ider it absolute proof that I was fond of her. But I'm just
 12 he asked. "It isn't pity. I'm fond of him. I was glad when
 13 You'd say, then, McEvoy wasn't too fond of his brother-in-law? I
 14 's a good brand. My husband's very fond of it." He looked at
 15 a fault, fond of company and very fond of liquor. He made every
 16 m a good deal, and since Mamie was fond of parties, she too, was
 17 e indolent belles of the day were fond of receiving {en
 18 ica and oppose Kennedy, one can be fond of Russia while loathing
 19 , knew Mary well, and knew she was fond of sweets; and in the
 20 incoln. My sister-in-law grew very fond of the city, and never
 21 he wrote to John Ray, "I am not so fond of this Hypothesis, as
 22 it. Believe me, Kay, I'm just as fond of you as ever I was -
 23 you as ever I was - yes, just as fond of you, my darling."
 24 n my feet, but I'll still be only fond of you. But you would
 25 Like yesterday! I'm extremely fond of you. The fact that you
 26 little other than human. (However fond one might have been of Dr

The Internet can also be used as a source of teaching material to expose learners to the authentic use of MWUs in the English language. The world wide web (www) is a potential source because of the limitless collections of language data

which can be used to identify the general patterns of language use (Hoffman, 2007). *Wacky*, (the acronym stands for *Web-as-Corpus kool ynitiative*) is one such Internet corpora which was developed by Serge Sharoff from the University of Leeds in the United Kingdom.

Teachers can search for current and general patterns of language use with the search interface which is available from <http://corpus.leeds.ac.uk/internet.html>. For example, if teachers key in the word ‘annoy’, the output from the Internet corpora search shows that ‘to + annoy + person/people’ is the most common MWU structure (refer to the concordance lines below).

in ways of sadistic joy My talent only goes as far as to **annoy** I'm on my way This is my main offender This is what I've then proceeded to pull up with a semi truck and pace it, to **annoy** ME. Funnily enough I was behind the semi he was pacing, and , and I did n't catch most of it, but mostly it was, " To **annoy** Nina " (his wife, who does n't like it at all). I have " at June 2, 2005 01:01 PM ...actually I said that hoping to **annoy** Sal into calling me a little Hitler, or at least a little as per the standard. The loss of 12-hour clocks will **annoy** a few people for a time, but there is nothing quite like change or running out of oil. Saying this is going to **annoy** a lot of people, but this document is intended to describe the foreground process from executing, which will seriously **annoy** a user who has left a ray tracer running overnight only to pet-torturing twins. And evil girl twin seems determined to **annoy** all my friends, scare off my not-quite-boyfriend and kids how to handle money, rather it taught them how to **annoy** all their friends. Do n't be fooled by this one. { Hoax } meddle in the affairs of sysadmins, for they are easy to **annoy** and have the root password. to forum Â· ÃÂ » Â· Â· contains something like: for (var x=0; x alert('Annoy **annoy** annoy '); // Make the user mad. } (Note: This example is novel (now published). " The 37th Hour " can sometimes **annoy** but fortunately holds enough of a strong teaser on the

With the Internet corpora, teachers are able to expose learners to MWUs, which learners can use productively in their writing. Furthermore, “the language use on the www itself may be a source of influence for ongoing language change” (Hundt, et al., 2007: 2).

5.2.3 Selecting MWUs for teaching

A very crucial question to be asked here is: ‘What to teach?’. It is important for teachers to know what MWU would be most useful for learners in the language

production. From the investigation of learners' errors in this study, it is evident that teaching modal structures and discourse connectors would be useful for learners in writing factual/argumentative essays. For each language structure, it is also important to teach the necessary, from the most productive structures to the least productive ones. The most basic structure should be taught first, before moving on to the more complicated ones. For example, the 'modal + base verb' and 'to + based verb' structures should be taught first, to be followed by the passive forms, co-occurrence of modal and phrasal modals, 'to + be + adjective' structures and other more complicated structures.

Similarly, appropriate sentence connectors which are used as linking devices in formal written language should be taught as MWUs. In this learner corpus, it is interesting to find that 'nowadays' is the most frequently used connector, which is not even mentioned as a connector in a study conducted by Granger and Tyson (1996). Gilquin et al. (2007) found that when learners have a limited repertoire of expressions at their disposal, they will tend to rely on a few items and use them over and over again.

From the error analysis of <CN> structures, the findings also show that when learners are not sure of the exact expressions, they will rely on what vaguely exists in their background knowledge, or fall back on their L1, to translate directly, sometimes as spoken structures. Therefore, it is crucial to teach learners to use the sentence connectors as a multi-word unit – 'In conclusion', 'In addition', and 'On the other hand'; and not create erroneous structures such as 'In a conclusion', 'As addition', and 'In other hands'.

In the classroom, the onus is on the teacher to select the MWUs for the lesson to be taught within one lesson. What is more important beyond the 40-minute lesson, as Woodlard (2000) suggested, is that teachers should encourage learners to find important collocations for themselves by developing strategies, not only in classrooms but also outside the classroom. This promotes autonomous learning and encourages students to be independent language learners.

5.3 Conclusion

This study on Malaysian English learners' errors finds that the learners do have problems with multi-word unit (MWU) errors and these structures are found to be problematic for the learners: modal structures, infinitive structures, 'adjective-noun' collocation and connector structures. From the analysis of these errors, they can be broadly grouped into: misformation, overgeneralization, misselection, distortion and inappropriate collocations. Categorising the errors help in understanding what are the most frequent MWU errors and why learners tend to make these errors.

Discussions from the findings reveal that most errors are developmental errors which are inevitable throughout the process of interlanguage formation and the influence of L1 cannot be denied at the same time. More importantly, this study finds that lack of exposure to the TL is also a crucial factor affecting the occurrences of MWU errors. This significant point, together with the other causes of interlingual and intralingual errors, has great implications in the teaching and learning of the English language.

First of all, it is of paramount importance to create awareness among teachers and students on the importance of learning grammatical collocations and lexical

collocations. Grammar lessons must move beyond rote learning of rules and vocabulary learning should not be just memorization of individual words. Instead, teachers should show how the grammatical structures are formed and how words collocate to form meaning through exposure to the most frequent MWUs used in the TL. This is the second significant pedagogical implication. The third implication is MWUs selection. It is probably difficult to decide which MWUs to teach in class because the time is limited and there are so many structures to be taught. Therefore, the most frequent and most productive MWUs used in a specific genre should be taught first. This helps teachers to organize their lessons by focusing on the salient features. Learners, on the receiving end, will not overuse, underuse or misuse certain language structures in their writing.

Research on learner corpora, collocations, and error tagging have been ongoing actively outside Malaysia, especially in Belgium, Germany, and Hong Kong – based on the various studies done by Granger, Nesselhauf and Flowerdew. In Malaysia, there are abundant small-scale studies on learner errors based on traditional EA methodology. However, at present, investigations of Malaysian English learners' errors based on computer-aided error analysis (CEA), are limited. This may be a small-scale study on Malaysian English learners' errors using a corpus-based methodology but intensive work has been done on the error-tagging. The error analysis using the *WordSmith Tools* has revealed significant findings and pedagogical implications in the teaching and learning of the English language in Malaysian classrooms.

Future research in this area is desperately needed to help Malaysian educators move forward in their pedagogy skills in order to create more effective and successful English lessons for the learners who aim to achieve native-like competency.