

Definiteness And Indefiniteness: A Contrastive Analysis Of The Use Of Determiners Between The Malay Language And English

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Abstract

This paper aims to investigate the Malay language interference in the production of erroneous English structures among secondary ESL learners. The strong version of Contrastive Analysis claims that the differences between L1 and L2 structures results in negative transfer due to the transfer of old habits into new ones. However, this version of CA is only predictive in nature and is not always true. Errors made by learners give us better insights into the process of language learning. Thus, errors are now regarded as a very important tool for diagnostic purposes in language teaching. The procedure in carrying out this investigation follows Norrish's (1992) approach to conducting Error Analysis. This includes sample collection, identifying, describing errors, explaining and evaluating errors. The corpus of this research consists of 873 sentences, collected from 51 essay samples. There were 826 uses of determiners with 175 occurrences of errors. The subjects were Malaysian secondary school students who are learners of English as a second language. The results indicate that determiner is a possible problematic area for Malay learners of English. The different aspects of the incorrect use of English determiners that reflect the Malay grammar are related to specific places of location, instrument, countries as Adjectives, name of Subject, agreement to the Noun, and Cardinal numbers. The differences in the possessive forms in both languages also attributed to the errors.

Keywords: English as a second language, language interference, contrastive analysis, error analysis.