

The Interference of the Bahasa Melayu Sarawak in the English Language Written Production

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Abstract: Malaysia is a unique country that comprises a variety of races, ethnicities, native languages as well as dialects used in daily lives. However, due to the differences among the dialects used by different ethnicities and the target language, the interference of learners' first language is one of the major factors that affect the English Language acquisition process. In Sarawak, the rampant use of the Bahasa Melayu Sarawak dialect as a means of communication amongst the locals posed an interference on the pupils' English Language written skills especially. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to identify the interference of the Bahasa Melayu Sarawak in pupils' written production focusing on grammatical and lexical aspects. Six Year 5 pupils in an urban school were purposively selected for this study. A qualitative case study with the use of observation and document as the data collection tools were employed. The data that were collected from a checklist were analysed based on the linguistic taxonomy of errors while data collected from documents were analysed based on the Classroom Language Interaction checklist. The findings show that there is a significant interference of the Bahasa Melayu Sarawak based on the numerous errors made by the pupils grammatically and lexically. In conclusion, it is recommended that English teachers are made aware of these interferences so that appropriate measures and interventions could be taken to reduce the interference of the Bahasa Melayu Sarawak in the English Language written work.

Keywords: Writing, Interference, Grammar, English as a Second Language

1. Introduction

Malaysia is a unique country that comprises a diverse population with a range of races, ethnics and cultural beliefs. Sarawak, which is one of the states in Malaysia is comprised of almost 25 different ethnic groups with a variety of ethnic languages and dialects being used in their daily lives. Hence, due to its uniqueness, the likelihood the learners' mother tongue or their first language interferes in their English Language acquisition process is inexorable. This can be seen in Sarawak whereby in order to communicate and understand one another despite the differences in races and cultural identities, Bahasa Melayu Sarawak dialect has been opted as the medium of communication. This is agreed by Hassan [1] who also stated Bahasa Melayu Sarawak is significantly used by the local communities as a part of their daily lives. Not only that, but Salim [2] also stated that despite the variety of languages and dialects used in Sarawak to communicate with one another, Bahasa Melayu Sarawak remains the main language option for the locals to communicate with one another. It is thus agreeable that Bahasa Melayu Sarawak plays an important role in Sarawak as not only the means to enable locals to communicate and understand each other but also a form of unity through communication amongst the locals regardless of the cultural differences and language barriers. However, as it is commonly and frequently used by the locals to communicate with one another in Sarawak, it also creates a significant interference on pupils' level of proficiency in English Language which hinders pupils' abilities to develop their writing processes.

This is evident from pupils' achievement rates in UPSR or also known as, Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah, whereby only 73.6% of the candidates were able to score a pass in the English writing paper. However, there are no official documents that show the passing rates for candidates in Sarawak in the English writing paper which resulted in doubts on Sarawakian pupils' proficiency level in writing. According to Aziz [3], though learners can score averagely in the examination, the results are not substantial enough to reflect the measure of the pupils' proficiency level which might still be below the intended goal. In other words, although the results from the examination display an average achievement rate for writing, it could not accurately depict pupils' actual mastery level of their writing skills. Hence, this casts doubts on whether learners have indeed achieved the targeted goals on numerous initiatives, programmes as well as education policies that are introduced by the Ministry of Education to strengthen the use of the English Language to produce highly proficient learners in the language itself.

From previous studies conducted in various levels of schooling, several factors that affect pupils' writing skills have been identified. One of the major factors that affected pupils' accuracy and fluency in the writing process is the interference of the learners' first language or their mother tongue. This is in accord with Hui, Ariffin, and Ma'rof [4] who also stated that one of the factors that induce students' difficulties in acquiring the English Language was due to the interference that occurs during the translation process of their mother tongue to the English language. Besides that, Puspita, Sudarsono, and Susilawati [5] also clearly stated that based on the language transfer theory, the learners' mother tongue will inevitably affect the learners' language learning process either positively or negatively. In this case, learners' writing process became negatively affected as they were not able to produce written works that are understood by other learners because of the learners' first language interference. It is important to note that the differences between the first language and English Language in terms of their language structures in various aspects such as in grammar, learners were hindered from acquiring and producing written works in English Language effectively [6].

As there are very limited studies that were conducted on Bahasa Melayu Sarawak dialect and its interference in the pupils' writing process, information on how the interference of the dialect could further erode pupils' writing skills are insufficient. Hence, this study is essential to investigate to what extent Bahasa Melayu Sarawak poses a significant interference as well as identifying errors in pupils' written works due to the interference of the dialect. Aside from that, as most of the past studies were conducted on foreign language in other countries and specific ethnic language as well as the learners' mother tongue in the local context, the findings of those studies which were mostly based on adult learners might not be applicable to the context of this study. Hence, it is important that the study on Bahasa Melayu Sarawak dialect is conducted to provide detailed insights and understanding on how the dialect interferes with the pupils' writing skills as well as also to explore the uniqueness of the dialect that might not be known by many people.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to identify the interference of Bahasa Melayu Sarawak in pupils' written production in English Language. The research objective is to identify the interference of Bahasa Melayu Sarawak in pupils' written production in English Language based on two aspects which are grammatical and lexical aspects. In order to ensure that this study provides the answer to the proposed research objective, the site of this research was a primary school in Sarawak. Besides that, the respondents for this study were also purposively selected to adhere to the requirements of this study. One of the main criteria that must be adhered to during the selection process is that the respondents must be able to converse in Bahasa Melayu Sarawak as well as have also mastered the basic language skills which are

listening and speaking, reading and writing in English Language. This study only focuses on writing skills. The errors that are identified are based on the errors made in pupils' written works due to the interference of Bahasa Melayu Sarawak.

2. Methodology

In order to investigate and provide a valid answer to the research question in this study, a qualitative design in the form of a case study is employed. One of the rationales of selecting a qualitative design for this study is due to its features which allow the researcher to gain more information about a certain problem or issue in which limited knowledge is obtained from the literature regarding the phenomenon of the study [7]. As the context of this study was not extensively studied upon, the design which is based on a systematic scientific inquiry in which it seeks to build a holistic and narrative description in order to elaborate a particular social or cultural phenomenon based on the researcher's stand and point of views is more suitable as compared to collecting empirical data in which the values might not be able to reflect the issue of the study.

Under qualitative design, as mentioned previously, a case study is employed as the methodology of this study. The rationale of selecting a case study to explore and investigate the context of this study is due to its features which allows the researcher to carry out an in-depth study on the chosen subject matter as well as employing a holistic approach whereby multiple sources and methods can be incorporated in investigating the subject matter based on a natural setting [8]. Therefore, a case study would allow the researcher to focus solely on investigating the interference of Bahasa Melayu Sarawak and thus, provides a window of opportunity to discover new things that might be overlooked in other research methods. Aside from that, as the case study is based on a natural setting, this enables the researcher to collect authentic data in a real-life classroom setting. This thus guarantees the validity and reliability of the data which can be then used to justify the findings obtained in the study. Last but not least, as case study permits the use of multiple sources and methods to approach the issue, this allows the researcher to not only gather meaningful insights about the issue but also able to ensure that the data obtained are supported and justified through various sources and methods applied in the investigation.

In this study, purposive sampling was conducted to select participants in this study. In order to ensure that the data obtained are relevant to the research objective to provide valid and reliable findings, respondents are selected based on certain criteria that have been predetermined for this study. Thus, the respondents were chosen from one of the urban schools in Miri, Sarawak which is Sekolah Kebangsaan Miri. Although it is an urban school with 500 pupils ranging from Year 1 to Year 6, the school shows an average achievement in English Language with a great disparity between the good and weak classes in terms of their grades in English Language. This creates a questionable issue as to why pupils especially the weaker ones are still facing difficulties in mastering the language despite the wide access of teaching materials as well as frequent exposure to the language.

Therefore, to ensure that the selected respondents would be able to provide relevant findings with the research questions posed in the study, several criteria have been determined during the selection process. One of the most important criteria is that the selected pupils must be of Bumiputera background that uses Bahasa Melayu Sarawak in their daily communication as well as having the basic skills in reading and writing in the English Language. The criteria mentioned above are deemed essential in selecting the target respondents as it would likely affect the direction as well as the findings of the study. Hence, after a rigorous selection

process, six pupils from 5 Bakawali have been selected to be the respondents of this study. In order to cut down on time constraint as well as the possibility of redundancy of data during the data collection process, the small number of respondents would thus, allow the researcher to carry out an in-depth study in order to ensure a rich and quality data would be produced from these respondents.

The instruments that were used to collect data in this study are document analysis as well as observation. In document analysis, pupils' written works were collected and analysed based on a checklist that was derived from the linguistic taxonomy of error. Pupils' errors in their written works were recorded and categorised based on the categories of errors based on the surface structure taxonomy of errors. The errors made were then compared and identified with the interference of Bahasa Melayu Sarawak to investigate how the use of Bahasa Melayu Sarawak affects pupils' written works. Meanwhile, in observation, data were collected through observing pupils' inside and outside the classroom with the use of a Classroom Language Interaction Checklist. The scores obtained by the respondents in every observation session were then analysed with the use of Language Acquisition Grid which enabled the researcher to generate findings of the respondents' frequency on the use of Bahasa Melayu Sarawak. This would then be discussed further on how the frequency of pupils' use of Bahasa Melayu Sarawak inside and outside the classroom affected their writing skills as well.

In order to ensure the selected instruments in the process of collecting data produce reliable and valid findings in the study, this study employed the use of triangulation of data collection method which allowed the researcher to use various strategies or approaches in the approaches or means used to determine the accuracy or credibility of the findings [7]. Therefore, in this study, document analysis and observation were implemented in collecting data for this study in which the findings obtained from these methods were then compared with findings obtained from previous studies as well as selected theories in the study. This is to ensure that the findings obtained in the study were reliable and justified based on valid sources. The checklists used in both document analysis as well as observation were also reviewed and validated by three experts. One of the experts is a senior English Language teacher while the other two experts are lecturers from Universiti Kebangsaan Miri and Teacher Training Institute (IPG) Kampus Keningau. This is in accord with Creswell [7] who stated that in order to ensure the validity and reliability of the instruments implemented in the study, an external audit could also be conducted whereby the researcher could hire or obtain the service of an individual outside the study to review necessary aspects in the selected instruments. Therefore, the checklists were reviewed and validated in terms of the appropriateness and clarity of the language used to construct the items as well as the credibility of the instruments.

3. Findings and Discussion

24 written compositions were collected from the participants and were examined. The errors made by the participants in the short compositions were identified and analysed with the use of taxonomy of errors. The findings indicated that there was indeed interference of Bahasa Melayu Sarawak in terms of grammatical and lexical aspects. In terms of grammatical aspect, most of the errors were identified in the form of the use of the definite article "the" and an indefinite article "a", the use of Past Tense and Future Continuous Tense, the use of preposition of time and place, plural and singular forms as well as the placement of personal pronouns in sentences. Meanwhile, in terms of lexical aspects, errors were identified based on the participants' choice of words in their written works. Thus, these errors were analysed and categorised into a few categories to show how Bahasa Melayu Sarawak interferes with the pupils' written production.

A. Grammatical aspect

I) The use of definite and indefinite articles

One of the errors that were frequently found in the participants' compositions is the omission of the use of articles in their written works in particular the use of a definite article, 'the'. This is due to the non-existence of the use of the definite and indefinite article in Bahasa Melayu Sarawak. As the dialect does not use definite and indefinite articles to specify the subject or object, the participants were found to have confusion on when to use the articles in a sentence. The errors in Table 1 are the examples of the incorrect usage of the article, 'the' in which, the omission of the article is illustrated in Table 1:

Table 1: The use of definite and indefinite articles

Erroneous form	Correct form
1) The venue is at school library. BM Sarawak: Tempatnya kat pusat sumber.	The venue is at <u>the</u> school library.
2) We like the Anak Kampung Restaurant. BM Sarawak: Kamek suka Restoran Anak Kampung ya.	We like Anak Kampung Restaurant.
3) A doctor said that Ali has dengue. BM Sarawak. Doktor padah ya Ali ada denggi.	<u>The</u> doctor said that Ali has dengue.

II) The use of Preposition of Time and Place

Besides that, participants were also found to make errors in terms of the use of prepositions of time and place. This can be observed in the errors made by the pupils when it comes to the use of prepositions of time and place in sentences. This can be seen in which these two prepositions were wrongly used to indicate the time of a certain occurrence as well as to describe the position of an object or a subject. One of the main reasons that contribute to the following errors is due to the absence of specific prepositions in the Bahasa Melayu Sarawak dialect to indicate the specific time and position of a subject or an object in the sentences. The following examples present the errors in the use of prepositions of time and place which were incorrectly used due to direct translation from the Bahasa Melayu Sarawak.

Table 2: The use of Preposition of Time and Place

Erroneous form	Correct form
1) We can go at Sunday. BM Sarawak: Kamek orang boleh mudit hari Ahad.	We can go <u>on</u> Sunday.
2) In Anak Kampung Restaurant has serve many famous local dishes. BM Sarawak: Dalam Restoran Anak Kampung ya, sidak ada banyak makanan popular.	Anak Kampung Restaurant serves many famous local dishes.
3) I writing to tell you about three places to visit to Sabah. BM Sarawak: Kamek nulis nak ngagak ngan kitak pasal tiga tempat kitak boleh lawat kat Sabah	I am writing to tell you about the three places to visit <u>in</u> Sabah.

III) The use of Past Tense and Future Continuous Tense

Furthermore, as the Bahasa Melayu Sarawak does not have any specific tenses that refer to a specific time frame as in the English Language, the participants were found to have

little knowledge on how to use the tenses correctly in their writing. This can be seen from the errors that were conducted by participants which are the use of Past Tense and Future Continuous Tense. Participants were confused on whether to use Past Tense or Future Continuous Tense in order to explain the occurrence of a certain event or to describe the given situations. Some of the participants displayed errors due to confusion on how to use the tenses correctly in the sentences which thus, show a combination of both tenses in a sentence. The following examples show the errors made by the participants on the use of Future Continuous Tense and Past Tense due to the interference of the dialect.

Table 3: The use of Past Tense and Future Continuous Tense

Erroneous form	Correct form
1) I hope you enjoy visiting Sabah soon. BM Sarawak: Kamek harap kitak seronok raon Sabah kelak.	I hope you <u>will enjoy your visit to</u> Sabah soon.
2) I will writing again. BM Sarawak: Kamek nanti tulis gik.	I will <u>write</u> again.
3) If you win the first prize, you will got a trophy and hamper. BM Sarawak: Kelak kalau kita menang hadiah pertama, kitak akan dapat trofi ngan hamper kelak.	If you win the first prize, you will <u>get</u> a trophy and hamper.

IV) The use of personal pronouns

Besides that, one of the most common errors made by the participants was on the use of personal pronouns in a sentence. As the Bahasa Melayu Sarawak only consists of only certain personal pronouns to indicate the subject such as ‘kamek’ which refers to I, ‘kamek orang’ as we, ‘kitak’ as you and ‘sidak’ as they, the participants were confused on not only which types of pronouns but also the type of personal pronouns should be used to indicate the number and gender of the subjects. Errors in terms of the use of pronouns could also be seen when participants omitted the use of personal pronouns due to direct translation from Bahasa Melayu Sarawak. As the dialect is frequently used in informal conversations in daily routines, the influence of the dialect can be identified clearly in the participants’ written works. This can be seen in Table 4:

Table 4: The use of personal pronouns

Erroneous form	Correct form
1) I want to bring to Anak Kampung Restaurant. BM Sarawak: Kamek mo ngembak ke Restoran Anak Kampung.	I want to bring <u>you</u> to Anak Kampung Restaurant.
2) They have live music performance. BM Sarawak: Sidak ada persembahan nyanyian “live”.	<u>There is a</u> live music performance.
3) Ali and her mother go to clinic. BM Sarawak: Ali ngan mak sidaknya pergi klinik	Ali and <u>his</u> mother go to the clinic.

V) Plural form

Last but not least, errors were also present in the use of plural and singular nouns in pupils’ written works. Through the findings, it was found that the participants have made the

most errors in the use of plural and singular forms to indicate the number of items. This is mainly contributed by the interference of Bahasa Melayu Sarawak dialect in which there is no form of plural and singular nouns used in the dialect itself. Hence, this caused the participants to be confused in terms of which forms of nouns should be used to indicate the number of items in the depicted situations. The errors are illustrated in Table 5:

Table 5: The use of plural forms

Erroneous form	Correct form
1) The prices are only RM15.00 per person. BM Sarawak: Harga tok RM15.00 sorang.	The <u>price is</u> only RM15.00 per person.
2) You can visit threes places in Sabah. BM Sarawak: Kitak boleh lawat tiga igek tempat kat Sabah tek.	You can visit <u>three</u> places in Sabah.
3) It is a diving places. BM Sarawak: Tok tempat menyelam.	It is a diving <u>place</u> .

B. Lexical aspect

I. Choice of words

In terms of lexical aspect, most of the errors made were due to the participants' limited vocabulary repertoire which forced them to incorporate and translate the words from the Bahasa Melayu Sarawak to the English Language. This causes the participants' inability to convey the intended messages clearly in their written works. The examples of the errors made in their written works are in Table 6:

Table 6: Choice of words

Erroneous form	Correct form
1) A lot of people say it is fun for diving people. BM Sarawak: Rame orang padah ya seronok bagi dorang menyelam.	A lot of people said that it is fun for <u>divers</u> .
2) If they didn't clean the place, the mosquitoes will get anywhere. BM Sarawak: Sekiranya sidak sik mo bersih tempatnya, nyamuk agak kelak.	If they didn't clean the place, the mosquitoes will <u>appear everywhere</u> .
3) The home's takecare say thank you to the scouts. BM Sarawak: Penjaga rumah padah terima kasih ngan pengakap sidak ya.	The home's <u>caretaker</u> said thank you to the scouts.

Besides that, the findings from eight observation sessions carried out in a month also showed that the use of the Bahasa Melayu Sarawak was most apparent in several activities in the classroom during the teaching and learning sessions. The six participants were found to generate simple sentences which were directly translated from the Bahasa Melayu Sarawak during the teaching and learning sessions. This can be seen when the participants applied the use of certain words and phrases that were directly translated from Bahasa Melayu Sarawak when it comes to describing a picture or situation. Besides that, the participants were also unable to complete simple unfinished sentences with the use of correct English Language. This is apparent when the teacher requested them to create and write a simple ending to a story that was shared and discussed in the classroom. The participants eventually resorted to using the

wrong choice of words during their presentation which were directly translated from the dialect itself. Not only that but in terms of oral production whereby the participants were required to ask and answer questions about the given writing topic as well as explaining the tasks to their peers, the participants were seen to resort to the use of Bahasa Melayu Sarawak dialect fully in the conversations.

Although the teacher tried her best to keep the use of Bahasa Melayu Sarawak at a minimal level during the teaching and learning sessions, it was evident that the participants were more comfortable in using the Bahasa Melayu Sarawak dialect to initiate as well as to maintain a conversation with their peers regardless for social or academic interaction. Hence, the constant and frequent use of the dialect during interactions inside and outside the classroom eventually contributes to the interference of the Bahasa Melayu Sarawak in the participants' proficiency level in writing as they were unable to find the words to explain or deliver the intended message accurately and fluently in the target language. Last but not least, from the observation sessions, it was also found that the participants encountered difficulties when they were asked to write short paragraphs in the English Language. Though the participants were given stimuli in the form of pictures and skeletal words to guide the writing process, the participants were found to have difficulties in understanding the meaning of the words as well as applying the words to describe the given pictures in their writing process. Eventually, the participants either asked their teacher about the accuracy of their sentence structures or wrote short paragraphs with incorrect sentences contributed by direct translations. This causes errors due to the interference of the Bahasa Melayu Sarawak dialect in the written production.

4. Discussions and Implications

Based on the document analysis of 6 pupils' written compositions as well as observations conducted in the classroom in 4 weeks, the findings show that there is indeed an interference of the Bahasa Melayu Sarawak in the pupils' written production in English Language. This can be justified from the grammatical and lexical errors that were made by the pupils in their documents due to an evident influence of the constant and frequent use of the Bahasa Melayu Sarawak in their classroom interactions. In terms of grammatical and lexical errors, the findings indicate that most of the errors that were made by the participants are on the wrong use of definite and indefinite articles, tenses, pronouns, plural and singular forms of nouns as well as prepositions of time and place. The findings were also similar to a study conducted by Hasan and Mohamad (2018) who also found that the students faced difficulties in producing complex sentences in their written production due to the interference of their mother tongue and grammatical errors arose in various aspects such as the use of determiners and others.

Based on the findings, most of the errors made by the participants were due to the influence of the use of the Bahasa Melayu Sarawak in their interactions inside as well as outside classroom. This is further supported by Derakshan and Karimi [9] who have stated that one of the factors that contributed to the interference of the first language with the target language was on the learners' background knowledge which thus affected the learners' proficiency level. In this case, as the selected participants comprised pupils with the average level of proficiency in the language, the participants possessed only basic knowledge of the language and thus, were dependent on their teacher when it comes to completing given tasks. However, due to minimal assistance from the teacher as well as limited knowledge of the language, this causes the learners to be prone to using their previous knowledge of the first language to assist them to complete their writing tasks. This is agreed by Denizer [10] who also stated that due to the limited inputs received by the learners on the target language, this forced the learners to apply their knowledge of their first language to accomplish the intended language goals in writing.

Besides that, the findings also show that the errors made by the participants were due to the frequent use of translation which indicates the influence of the Bahasa Melayu Sarawak dialect. This is supported by Pudin et al. [11] who also stated in their study in which learners' limited knowledge is the driving force to the learners to apply their existing knowledge of their first language in order to fill in their knowledge gaps. In this case, the participants which possess basic knowledge of the language were influenced by their previous knowledge of the Bahasa Melayu dialect which has been ingrained in their daily lives. The influence of the learning environment which does not place any restriction or specific amount of control on the use of the Bahasa Melayu Sarawak in the classroom, has also become one of the contributors to the frequent use of the dialect during classroom interaction. Hence, during the process of completing the given writing tasks, the participants were forced to apply their knowledge of the dialect in terms of grammar as well as the choice of words through translation to complete the tasks which thus, contributes to the numerous errors made in the tasks. This is also agreed by Lim and Mohamad [12] who also clearly stated that the use of translation methods in producing the language increases errors made in terms of syntax and grammatical structures which is similar to the findings of this study.

The findings also show that most of the errors made are due to the dissimilarities between the first and second language in terms of the grammatical rules and concepts applied in written production which are stated by Sabbah [13]. This is further supported by Nor Hani et al. [14] who also agreed that one of the noticeable differences between two languages in terms of their morphology and syntax is one of the main factors that caused difficulties to the learners to master the target language. Hence, due to the differences between the grammatical rules and concepts between the English Language and the Bahasa Melayu Sarawak dialect, this caused the learners to be easily confused as certain rules and concepts were either non-existent in the first language or inapplicable in the target language. This is agreed in studies conducted by Hui et al. [4] as well as [15] Hasan and Mohamad who also agreed that one of the factors that influenced the pupils' choice of words in their sentence construction in writing is due to the absence of certain grammar items in the first language. A study conducted by Bakar et al. [6] also revealed that one of the major factors that hinder the learners' effective acquisition of English Language is due to the differences in terms of grammatical structures between the first and second language. Therefore, in this case, as the Bahasa Melayu Sarawak dialect and the English Language are two languages that are totally different from one another in various aspects, the participants who were of average proficiency level in the target language compared to their first language were prone to be confused and thus, made multiple errors in their written production. One of the main causes of the errors made in terms of grammar is the absence of certain grammatical items in the Bahasa Melayu Sarawak such as the use of plural and singular forms to determine the number of subjects or objects as well as the specific use of the preposition of time and places, for instance, were either wrongly used or were omitted by the participants in their writing tasks. This signifies the impact of the interference of the Bahasa Melayu Sarawak dialect which undermines the participants' proficiency level in terms of written production.

It is undeniable that many factors affecting a learner's second language acquisition process. However, it is important for educators as well as policymakers need to note that the interference of the first language is also one of the main contributing factors that also affected the learners' process of acquiring and mastering the second language. In this case, learners in Sarawak who regard the English Language as their third language also faced the same challenges which include the interference of their first language or mother tongue. From the findings obtained in this study, it is crystal clear that young learners in particular, are facing

challenges to master English Language and one of the major factors is due to the interference of the dialect used in their daily interaction inside and outside the classroom. Hence, it is time for respective parties to consider the impact of interference of not only the mother tongue used by the learners but also the dialects as well as the common medium of instruction used in their daily interaction inside and outside the classroom could interfere with the acquisition process.

This is in accord with Subandowo[16]who stated that lack of control by teachers in the classroom in order to minimise the learners' use of mother tongue was found to have facilitated the first language interference in the language learning process. This is similar to the findings obtained in this study which showed that teachers need to play an important role in the class to ensure that the use of the dialect does not take over the second language learning process as a whole. As most of the pupils are of similar backgrounds with minimal use of English Language at home, school or classrooms, in particular, should serve as the best setting for English Language learning process to happen and should not be hampered with rampant use of the Bahasa Melayu Sarawak. Besides that, school administrators as well as policymakers should be aware of the interference of the Bahasa Melayu Sarawak dialect amongst the Sarawakian pupils and thus, draw up suitable interventions that could not only maintain the identity of the pupils through the language but also to strengthen their English Language proficiency level at the same time. By doing so, this would not only enable the pupils in Sarawak to preserve their identity as Sarawakians but also allow them to be both proficient and fluent in the English Language without forgetting their roots.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the results of this study have indicated that the interference of the Bahasa Melayu Sarawak dialect affects pupils' language production, particularly in English Language written production. This can be derived from the errors that were made by pupils on both grammatical and lexical aspects. The wrong usage as well as the omission of specific grammar items such as definite and indefinite articles, plural and singular, tenses, pronouns as well as prepositions due to translation from the dialect showed the significant impact of how the interference of Bahasa Melayu Sarawak affects the pupils' sentence construction in paragraphs. Besides that, the constant use of Bahasa Melayu Sarawak dialect in classroom interactions amongst the pupils without any limits has also facilitated the interference of the dialect and thus, created a bigger obstacle for the pupils to produce English Language effectively through spoken as well as written production. Hence, it is of utmost importance to recognise that the interference of the Bahasa Melayu Sarawak dialect in English Language written production is one of the main factors that hampered the learners' process of acquiring and production the language in written forms well.

Therefore, it is hoped that this study could serve as a basis for future research of first language interference in English Language production, particularly in writing. It is also hoped that it will be able to provide clearer insights as to the problems faced by Sarawakian young learners in the language learning process. Thus, this would enable local teachers as well policymakers to design and implement suitable interventions that would not only maintain the dialect but also strengthen English Language amongst the pupils. It is recommended that for future research, researchers would also be able to look into the interference of Bahasa Melayu Sarawak dialect in spoken production in English Language as well as teachers' perspectives on the extent of the interference of the Bahasa Melayu Sarawak dialect hinders the language learning process in the classroom.

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