

Malaysian Second Language Learners' Linguistic Accuracy in Writing

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Abstract

Second language production, and proficiency are measured based on the Complexity, Accuracy, and Fluency dimensions. During their learning process, learners master the multicomponent dimensions also known as the CAF construct. Second language learners often master one component at a time and prior research on the present demography has been minimal. Hence, the present research looks at language accuracy among Malaysian English as a second language (ESL) learners' written language. The population chosen for this study is tertiary level students who have undergone formal English language classes in schools for 11 years. In the present setting, they are undergoing prerequisite English classes in the local university that they attend. Following six weeks of classes where learners revise the grammatical and writing aspects of the lesson, they then complete a writing task which is then analyzed for errors and language accuracy. Six major areas are identified as inaccuracy in learners' language production. 20 writing tasks are analyzed through error analysis, and this process reveals that learners' accuracies are apparent in their vocabulary, first language/mother tongue interference, sentence structure, subject-verb agreement, tenses and word form. Ten out of the total 20 documents contained severe accuracy errors that affect coherence, comprehension and maturity in the written product. Learners who struggle with accuracy often have unsuitable, long-winded and/or incorrect products be it in listening, speaking, reading, or in the present study's scenario, writing. Further research in the CAF construct is encouraged especially among the same demography to address the issue of poor language mastery and proficiency.

Keywords: Second Language Learners, English as a Second Language, Linguistic Accuracy.

Introduction

The research on the complexity, accuracy, and fluency constructs begins in the 1970s. Two researchers, Brown (1973 in Housen et al., 2012) and Hunt (1965 in Housen et al., 2012). Their research begin with investigations on an expedient and reliable gauge or index to measure complexity, accuracy and fluency in second language (L2) acquisition. The gauge or index must be objective quantitative and verifiable (Hakuta 1975; Larsen-Freeman, 1978, 2009; Nihalani, 1981; Housen et al., 2012). Other researchers such as Brumfit (1979, 1984 in Housen et al., 2012) and Hammerly (1990 in Housen et al., 2012) explored areas of second language fluency in speaking, accuracy in second language usage and proficiency in second language production. Peter Skehan (1996, 1998) worked on and produced a model of language proficiency from the CAF constructs as we know it today. henceforth, the working definitions of the CAF constructs were given and are still in use to this day. Complexity is defined as being able to apply a varied range of complex linguistic structures and vocabulary in the target language. Meanwhile, having linguistic accuracy is referred to as being able to articulate in error-free language. The final construct, fluency is described as being able to produce the target language similar to a native speaker (Housen et al., 2012).

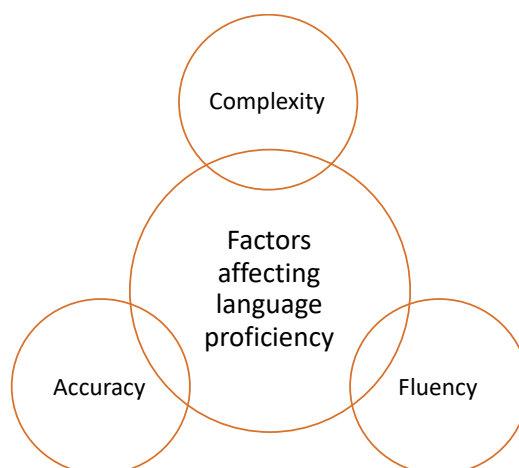


Figure 1. The complexity, accuracy, and fluency (CAF) constructs in language production

The present research aims to explore the English language accuracy amongst second language (L2) writers. In language learning, proficiency comprises of mastery in the four language skills, namely, reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. Writing and reading are referred to as receptive skills, while listening and speaking are productive skills. The difference between these two skills is that receptive skills does not require them to respond immediately. Most of the time, learners receive, process, and comprehend the information internally and they may take a longer time to respond, such as in essay writing where writers can plan and organize their thoughts. Comparatively, productive skills are those where learners are required to produce a response usually instantaneously such as in activities or events involving speaking or listening. Due to the limited window for response, learners usually find productive skills as the biggest challenge in language learning. Second language learners are not strangers to language barriers and challenges, and due to the pressure in communicating their thoughts and opinions, accuracy tends to suffer most (Hayakawa & Alan, 1990). The problem with being inaccurate is that language users with have a difficult time being understood.

Accuracy is perceived as a critical part of a language construct and, second language learners should not be expected to possess fluency and complexity in a language before mastering accuracy. Previous researches have found that L2 learners would face problems in expressing ideas using correct English (Evans & Green, 2007), inadequate and incorrect vocabulary in L2 (Kim, 2011), problems in translating ideas from mother tongue to the second language, and challenges in following the conventions and rules of English (Llosa et al., 2011).

In Malaysia, students attending public schools will be required to undergo English classes where they learn to master and revise their English language. Formal education begins as early as 6 years old where children enter kindergarten. Then, at seven years old, they begin their formal education in primary schools from Standard One to Standard Six. Next, students advance to secondary school, where they advance in their studies from Form One to Form Five. In total, formally students would have spent at least 11 years learning English in their respective educational institutions. Nevertheless, English as a Second Language (ESL) learners in Malaysia continue to struggle with the language whether in tertiary education or the workplace (Kashinathan & Aziz, 2021). Hence, the present research attempts to explore learners' accuracy in their written English based on the following objectives:

- To investigate the linguistic inaccuracies that the learners' produced, and:
- To investigate how the language inaccuracies affected learners' written language.

The following are the research questions that the study aims to answer:

1. What are the accuracy errors produced by learners in their written language writing?
2. To what extent is accuracy affected from learners' errors in their written language?

Literature Review

Language accuracy describes a language learner's language ability and whether there are deviations from a native speaker's language norms (Housen et al., 2012). Therefore, this research defines accuracy as the extent that the language users conform to the norms of the English language. Slangs, colloquial expressions or pidginization are considered accurate if they do not impede the correctness of the language.

Pishkar et al (2016) recommended that accuracy was best measured through error-analysis, accuracy of verb forms, or total of error-free units. Likewise, Kim, Nam and Lee (2016, p. 162) suggested similarly, which is accuracy is measured by the amount of 'error-free clauses against the total number of clauses.' In Kim et al.'s (2016, p. 162) study, errors such as 'misspellings, mispronunciations, inappropriate vocabulary use within the context, the use of mother tongue, incorrect use of adjectives and verbs, case markers with inappropriate meaning and form, and ending errors' were observed. Comparatively, considering the nature of spoken language where rephrasing, repetitions, and adjustments occur, researchers are cautioned to discount these utterances as a natural characteristic of the spoken language, as they are not necessarily errors.

Since accuracy or lack thereof was determined by the learners' conformity to the target language's norms, it could also be a determinant in indicating learners' knowledge of the target language. Accuracy had long been one of the central phenomena within the scope of corrective feedback, and it had roused the interest of many scholars (Bardovi-Harlig &

Bofman, 1989; Polio, 1997; Dagneaux et al., 1998; Shintani & Ellis, 2015; Darus & Ching, 2009). In the ESL context, exploring the accuracy construct could help learners reflect and evaluate their learning process. In turn, this could help them 'make more adequate decisions on their own language learning process and perform specific actions that might help them progress' (Garcia-Pastor, 2018, p. 81).

In a study by Garcia-Pastor (2018) on adolescent English as a foreign language (EFL) learners and their written accuracy, learners' errors in morphology (grammar), lexis and syntax were analysed based on Corder's (1981) framework of error-analysis. In contexts where English is the second language or foreign language, errors included interlingual and intralingual errors. The study revealed that among the three areas, the dominant errors are intralingual errors, and morphology (grammar) was the least accurate area (Garcia-Pastor, 2018). This finding was reinforced further by Bardovi-Harlig and Bofman (1989) where they depicted morphology as the weakest language system. Other studies portrayed similar results (Kenworthy, 2006; Darus & Ching, 2009; Ferris, 2012; Mediero & Robles, 2012; James, 2013). Between morphological, syntactic and lexical errors, ESL and EFL learners produced 'more morphological errors than syntactic and lexical errors at lower proficiency levels' (Garcia-Pastor, 2018, p. 89). Common morphological errors included subject-verb agreement, word choice and verb use (Darus & Ching, 2009), verbal tense and aspect (Ferris, 2012), and verb-related units (James, 2013).

Nevertheless, Shintani and Ellis (2015) cautioned that these errors were influenced by the learners' age, proficiency, task type and the language samples that were analysed, thus the findings might vary considerably. These errors were identified based on the following description: an error is essentially 'a linguistic form or combination of forms which, in the same context and under similar conditions of production...not be produced by the...native speaker' (Lennon, 1991, p. 182). In other words, language production that deviated from the norm of the native speakers was considered an error. In addition to this, Garcia-Pastor (2018, p. 86) also analysed the errors based on 'grammaticality', which was a recurring error among English as a second language (ESL)/English as a foreign language (EFL) learners.

In a study investigating accuracy errors in opinion-based essays, elements such as the length of the essay and the allotted time were not impactful on the learners' linguistic accuracy. Learners with limited accuracy produced a large number of errors consistently in both short and long entries. Meanwhile, learners with higher level accuracy were less consistent with their errors in both short and long essays. In terms of duration, there was no difference between tasks done in the class (timed) and at home (untimed). However, Shintani and Ellis (2015) warned that this factor was dependent on learners' age, proficiency, task type and the language samples that were analysed, and thus should be regarded with caution. Garcia-Pastor (2018, p. 96) concluded by indicating that future research should include a bigger sample size and more genre to draw 'more solid conclusions' and to explain in more detail the relationship between 'linguistic accuracy and task elements'

In conclusion, accuracy is considered a crucial area to explore as it could elucidate many areas within language learning. Knowledge such as the different interlanguage conditions faced by learners can be explored. Subsequently, investigations in this area could lead to valuable information in the area of language testing, error identifications, and analysis

(Garcia-Pastor, 2018). Additionally, it could also help researchers and educators to discover new knowledge pertaining to pedagogical techniques, specifically ‘instruction and error treatment in the classroom’ (Garcia-Pastor, 2018, p. 81). Undeniably, accuracy is beneficial in designing future materials, activities, and lessons that are better customized to learners’ needs.

Methodology

In this research, the data was analyzed via document analysis. This process consists of analyzing and identifying the documents for errors affecting language accuracy. The processes involved a meticulous, thorough reading of the documents to identify issues and errors regarding language accuracy.

Thus, 20 documents from learners’ works were analyzed for data. Over the course of five to six weeks, students underwent an English language course. This prerequisite course serves a revision on the English language aspects such as grammar and tenses, and sentence structure. It is important to note that prior to the present semester, students have already learned English formally in schools for 11 years, be it public or private schools. This is ensured by the fact that students must meet the academic requirement before enrolling in the university. Throughout the course in the semester, students revised on the commonly encountered grammar aspects in their assessments such as subject verb agreement, and the English tenses. In regard to how to write well academically, they were also taught sentence structure, specifically, simple and compound sentences. Students were expected to practice this knowledge and were able to illustrate and produce their acquired skills in their written language during their assessments.

Data collection involves analyzing the learners’ response of an academic essay with the following title: ‘Discuss the benefits of pursuing a higher education after obtaining a diploma.’ The errors relevant to language inaccuracies are identified and documented as discussed in the following heading.

Results and Discussions

From the analyzed documents, several noticeable findings were classified. The errors discussed henceforth will be the most glaring errors that impede accuracy and language

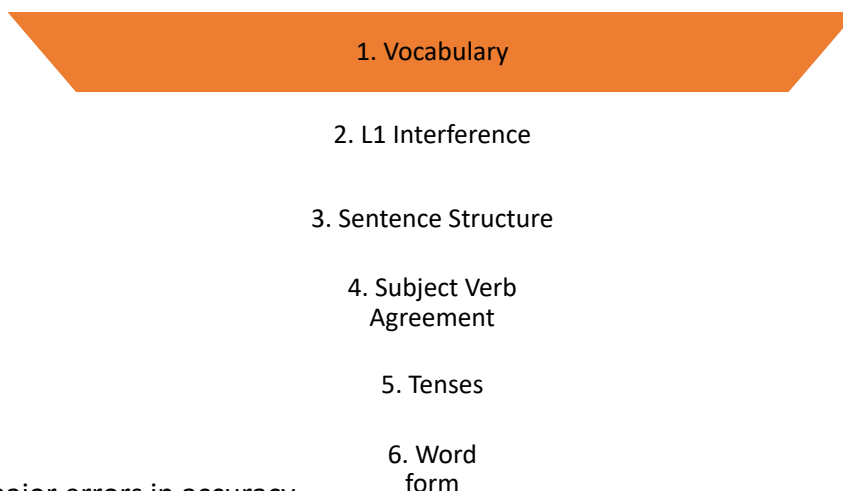


Figure 2. The major errors in accuracy

proficiency as a whole. In general, there are six areas where accuracy was poorly. From lowest to highest, learners produced errors in word form, tenses, subject verb agreement, sentence structure, mother tongue (or L1) interference, and vocabulary errors. Figure 2 presents the errors found during error analysis. It is important to note that the most critical errors occur in eight out of the 20 documents. This is not to say that the other 12 documents are error-free, however, the errors are sparsely and most importantly, do not impede accuracy and understanding greatly. The documents with more severe errors are listed as P1 until P10. All of the transcriptions have been transcribed verbatim, including all the spelling errors.

The most errors found were in learners' inaccurate vocabulary. For instance, in [P1], the errors are slight and do not affected meaning greatly. Some errors are detrimental to the learners' use of language such as seen in [P1a]:

[P1] This is because when the students continue their study to the higher level... For instance when they continue in degree they need to learn third language.

[P1a] Making friends in study life is very important for the students to communicate with to ask some questions that they do not understand what they have learned in the class.

It is important to note that both of these examples are from the same participant. Nevertheless, as [P1] started writing more elaborate ideas, he/she began mixing up the vocabulary until it impeded understanding as seen in [P1a]. In this example, it takes effort to understand as the writer placed inaccurate vocabulary without considering its' grammatical and syntactical functions, such as verbs and tenses. Next, [P2] display the use of immature vocabulary, which means that the vocabulary used do not reflect their academic level. Considering he/she has spent more than a decade learning English, their vocabulary appears lacking. Similarly, in [P3], the use of 'advance learning system' to mean higher education is inaccurate and dissimilar to postgraduate education. The sentence in [P3] also comes across as immature due to the vocabulary and organization of the sentence.

[P2] Study in a certain course does not mean just to get a job. It can also apply to a daily life routine.

[P3] Higher education such as degree, master or PhD provide advance learning system which helps the students to enhance their skill.

[P7], [P7a], and [P7b] are examples from the same participant, [P7], who has one of the weakest language mastery from the rest of the participants. In [P7a], the sentence, '*a person with accounting diploma certifiqate may make an account statement for only small retail shop but impossible to make account statement for a big company because it is out of their knowledge*', has some of the most worst vocabulary errors that impede meaning and understanding. The participant's errors are similarly obvious in [P7] which indicates that this student has very poor mastery of the English language, unable to use the correct and effective vocabulary, unable to organize ideas into the correct sentence, and generally, unable to write well. the severity continues as seen in [P7b].

[P7] The first benefits for a higher education are more job scope open. This happen because there is a lot companies in particular Malaysia are setting their requirement for employers intake higher then before in term of education level.

[P7a] The reason companies happened to do this because they trying to find a employer that capable in doing their job perfectly. As example, a person with accounting diploma certifiqate may make an account statement for only small retail shop but impossible to make account statement for a big company because it is out of their knowledge.

[P7b] Pursuing higher level education may increase proffesionalism. Proffesional are the only term that employees trying to find in their employers because a professional are expert in their job and make less mistake than unproffesional employers.

The next error in accuracy is mother tongue or first language interference. This means that when learners are in doubt, they go back to the language structure of their mother tongue, which most commonly means directly translating the phrase into their mother tongue and back. As the learners are Malaysians and their mother tongue is Malay, they often directly translate into Malay back to English. The issue with direct translation is that non-L1 speakers, or people who do not speak the same mother tongue, will not be able to detect it. Direct translation would lead to strange phrases that are in English, but inaccurate. One example is in [P1b]'s use of the phrase *'more closer'*, and *'they will know each other.'* In [P2], *'...there will be more benefit things'* seems like accurate English, but it is not. In [P9], many ESL learners from Malay origins use this phrase (*'As most of the people may know'*) that it has become fossilized as part of their vocabulary. Nevertheless, it is still inaccurate as there are no cohesive devices or transitional markers as such. Lastly, another example of L1 interference in learners' writing is in [P8c] that results in immature sounding sentences since the vocabulary are inaccurate and immature.

[P1b] Making friends can also help them to become more closer by sharing experienced and they will know each other.

[P2] I believe that there will be more benefit things...

[P9] As most of the people may know...

[P8c] they can prepare theirself to apply the job they interest in and get to do better from the experience.

The third category of inaccuracy found from the data is sentence structure error. [P10] has consistent error in writing sentences using the correct structure. A proper sentence consists of subject + verb + object. Nevertheless, students who are unable to identify syntactical elements, such as parts of speech, verbs, preposition and so on, will most often produce fragmented, run-off, and generally poor sentence structures. As seen in [P10] and [P10a], the sentences produced contained too many ideas in one sentence which result in complicated and confusing sentences. In [P10] for example, the student wrote about *'students pursuing higher education will get more job opportunities'*, *'to further their education, they will need more time to complete their studies'*, *'however, in job hunting later, they will fulfil employers' needs'*. Hence, having poor sentence structure will affect comprehension and coherence, and consequently, language accuracy. A sentence structure should use transitional markers and cohesive devices correctly to be effective. Use of these discourse markers also signal that the language learners are maturing in their language mastery because it means they think about organizing and structuring their ideas.

[P10] As many students continue their study to degree, master and the highest level which is PhD, many students will get more chance to get a good job especially when they study in the highest level of education, they will need more time to finish their studies but when they are looking for a job, many companies will accept the student based on the education.

[P10a] By having a good and stable salary, yeah we'll spend the money without need to worry as some of students also want to repay their parents so by having a proper salary, they will continue to study in a higher education.

The following accuracy error found in the documents are subject-verb agreement (SVA) errors. Similar to L1 interference, SVA errors are usually caused because the learners' mother tongue does not have such grammar feature in their language. Hence, SVA continues to be one of the areas that second language learners suffer at. In Malay, there are no singular or plural verbs for singular or plural subject. To illustrate:

<u>He</u> <u>is</u> homesick.	<i>He</i> is a singular subject <i>is</i> is a singular verb
<u>They</u> <u>are</u> homesick.	<i>They</i> is a plural subject <i>are</i> is a plural verb

Hence, an instance of SVA errors would mean that the subject and verb 'disagree' which means that the subject is a singular subject, but the verb used is for a plural subject. Usually language learners commit the SVA errors due to inattentiveness or simply are not aware of this grammar rule.

The next error found was tenses. There are 12 English tenses and oftentimes, second language learners find tenses overwhelming to master. In English, tenses are used to signal timeline, and verbs are the only part affected when determining the tenses. As an example in [P6a], *shows* should be *showed* (in past tense). In [P4a], the correct phrase should be: *...only 55% student that plan to continue...* (simple present tense).

[P4a] ...only 55% student that are planning to continue...

[P6a] A study was conducted in 2021 shows that there were the 35% of increasement in university institute from 2010 unti 2021.

The final type of accuracy error found was word form error. In English, a word can change meaning when it changes form. In particular, words can change meaning when added a letter '-d' as in 'secured' in [P3]. In [P2a], using the inaccurate word form can also lead to vocabulary and grammatical errors. This type of error is usually because the learner has a weak mastery of the vocabulary in the target language.

[P3] These days, it is very challenging to secured a job as there are millions of graduates.

[P2a] A higher salary can be offer the more higher the educational levels.

Table 1 illustrates the most outstanding language inaccuracies found during data analysis. In general, there were six areas where the learners performed poorly. This analysis is based on 20 document analysis after six weeks of refresher course for ESL learners. Despite having learned English formally for 11 years, students continue to lack in areas of vocabulary, grammar and they keep relying on their mother tongue when they are in doubt in the target

language. All of these behaviors contribute to language inaccuracies despite years of exposure.

Language accuracy is greatly affected since learners do not only commit one type of error when they write. Sometimes, among weaker learners, the errors can even intermingle such as in [P7a]. [P7a] contains spelling errors, vocabulary errors, word form errors, and grammar errors. When there are too many accuracy errors, error identification can be challenging, and nearly impossible isolate and address the learners' weaknesses.

[P7a] Statistics shown that 65% people with higher level certificate than diploma successfully obtain jobs after graduates rather than those whose not continued their studies after diploma. This scenario opens people's eyes about the importance of continuing studies after diploma. I believe that the benefits of approaching studies after diploma are...

The language inaccuracies undeniably affected coherence, comprehension, and the effectiveness of their writing. Having poor vocabulary for example, will lead the learner to rely on unnecessary, repetitive, and unsuitable lexicon to get their point across. Thus, it leads to poor and ineffective communication whether verbal or written. Additionally, writing allows learners time to plan and structure their response, therefore the amount of errors produced should not be too numerous and glaring.

Types of errors

1. Vocabulary

[P1] This is because when the students continue their study to the higher level... For instance when they continue in degree they need to learn third language.

[P1] This can be proven by when they enter into a new life...

[P1a] Making friends in study life is very important for the students to communicate with to ask some questions that they do not understand what they have learned in the class.

[P1b] Making friends can also help them to become more closer by sharing experiences and they will know each other.

[P2b] The amount of knowledge that were more advanced that can be obtained throughout their whole studies.

[P2] Study in a certain course does not mean just to get a job. It can also apply to a daily life routine.

[P2] It is very recommended to pursue higher education...

[P3] Higher education is not compulsory in Malaysia by law, resulting to lower intake of students.

[P3] Higher education such as degree, master or PhD provide advanced learning system which helps the students to enhance their skill.

[P3] ... with the amount of knowledge obtained during studies life.

[P3] Nowadays, employees only accept for a minimum of degree certificate especially in a bank industry. For example, diploma graduates might be able to obtain the clerk position which it provides a low source of income. However degree, master or PhD holders are able to get a higher position with a promising income. Hence, higher education may lead to a better life for a long period of time.

[P4a] Most student in Malaysia continue study until diploma. However only 55% student that are planning to continue their study by pursuing a higher education.

[P4b] This is because some of the student did not aknowledge about the benefit of pursuing a higher education after getting a diploma in university.

[P4] ...the advantages that student can obtain from pursng a higher education is becoming more expert.

[P4a] However, in higher education student are expose to record their financial reporting in the computer that are use by all the accting firm nowdays.

[P4b] This help student to be one step forward and getting exposure of what student will have in worklife. All the subject that the higher education provide are mainly in a bigger scope then subject in diploma.

[P5] Those that decided not to pursue their study is usually because of their family background and financial due to a high cost of that need to be paid for the university.

[P5] This is because, workers have a better quality or criteria that suits their company needs, tend to produce a quality job.

[P6a] A study was conducted in 2021 shows that there were the 35% of increasement in university institute from 2010 unti 2021.

[P6] This is because students who have more high qualification will be needed to handle more complicated job.

* [P7a] Statistics shown that 65% people with higher level certifiqate than diploma succesfully obtain jobs after graduates rather than those whose not continued their studied after diploma.

[P7] The first benefits for a higher education are more job scope open. This happen because there is a lot companies in particular Malaysia are setting their requirement for employers intake higher then before in term of education level.

* [P7] The reason companies happened to do this because they trying to find a employer that capable in doing their job perfectly. As example, a person with accounting diploma certifiqate may make an account statement for only small retail shop but impossible to make account statement for a big company because it is out of their knowledge.

[P7] Pursuing higher level education may increase proffessionalism. Proffessional are the only term that employees trying to find in their employers because a professional are expert in their job and make less mistake than unproffessional employers.

** [P8a] Nowadays, diploma students are interesting search for a job than pursuing a higher education. This is due to the fact of their excitement from the part time job experienced. They felt excited holding and buying stuff using their own money.

[P8b] Pursuing a higher education can gain many new knowledge.

** [P8c] This is because majority of university help students with practical or internship. Therefore students get the experience they need before they get the actual job. Moreover, they can prepare theirself to apply the job they interest in and get to do better from the experience.

*** [P9] Many students are able to continue their studies from a day school academy to a slightly higher level of education preferably studied in a college such as foundation, diploma and a few other categories.

[P9a] For those who pursue even further to obtain a college diploma have a chance to continue to a higher, more complex level of education through various stages.

*** [P9] Sometimes, having that one and only certificate won't even provide yourself with a job application comprising a decent pay grade.

2. First language (L1) interference

[P1b] Making friends can also help them to become more closer by sharing experienced and they will know each other.

[P2] I believe that there will be more benefit things for an individual that pursue higher education than diploma...

[P2a] A higher salary can be offer the more higher the educational levels.

[P2] This is because of how more skillful an individual can be with a higher education than any other else.

[P2b] The amount of knowledge that were more advance that can be obtain throughout their whole studies.

[P3] Therefore, good work performance result in a better relationship between the employers and employees.

[P6b] It also can increase their leadership skill when they had to lead the group.

[P6] Pursuing higher education after diploma also can secure a good job.

* [P7a] Statistics shown that 65% people with higher level certifiqate than diploma succesfully obtain jobs after graduates rather than those whose not continued their studied after diploma.

** [P8a] Nowadays, diploma students are interesting search for a job than pursuing a higher education. This is due to the fact of their excitement from the part time job experienced. They felt excited holding and buying stuff using their own money.

[P8b] Pursuing a higher education can gain many new knowledge.

** [P8c] This is because majority of university help students with practical or internship. Therefore students get the experience they need before they get the actual job. Moreover, they can prepare theirself to apply the job they interest in and get to do better from the experience.

[P9] As most of the people may know, in order to work in a day job for a certain company...

3. Sentence Structure

[P1a] Making friends in study life is very important for the students to communicate with to ask some questions that they do not understand what they have learned in the class.

[P2] As example become the CEO of a company, best worker of the month or year and even may more better manage to solve Albert Einstein's hardest mathematics theory.

[P6a] A study was conducted in 2021 shows that there were the 35% of increasement in university institute from 2010 unti 2021.

[P9a] For those who pursue even further to obtain a college diploma have a chance to continue to a higher, more complex level of education through various stages.

[P9] Although some of them preferred to complete their study at the level of graduating high school.

[P10] So, there some benefits of pursuing a higher education after obtaining a diploma such as easier to get jobs based on their levels of education, higher salary and also student can get more friends during their study if they continue pursuing a higher education after obtaining a diploma.

[P10] As many students continue their study to degree, master and the highest level which is PhD, many students will get more chance to get a good job especially when they study in the highest level of education, they will need more time to finish their studies but when they are looking for a job, many companies will accept the student based on the education.

[P10] By having a good and stable salary, yeah we'll spend the money without need to worry as some of students also want to repay their parents so by having a proper salary, they will continue to study in a higher education.

4. Subject Verb Agreement

[P1] Education have started from preschool, primary school secondary school and fishery level and some of them will continue to the higher education level.

[P1] Many people believe that getting more knowledges is making friends and improving soft skills are the benefits of pursuing a higher education after obtaining a diploma.

[P1] Making friends can help them in any discussion because everyone have their own experties.

[P4a] Most student in Malaysia continue study until diploma. However only 55% student that are planning to continue their study by pursuing a higher education.

[P4b] This is because some of the student did not aknowledge about the benefit of pursuing a higher education after getting a diploma in university.

[P4c] Higher education could help student to have a better life in futter.

[P4] ...student also learn new skills...

[P4] Higher education provide a lot of program like leadership program...

[P5] ... to get a better quality workers.

[P6] Nowadays, there are many university or higher education institute in Malaysia.

5. Tenses

[P2] Many companies use English as their first language. By learning it, it did not just apply for the work.

[P4a] Most student in Malaysia continue study until diploma. However only 55% student that are planning to continue their study by pursuing a higher education.

[P4c] Higher education could help student to have a better life in futter.

[P5] There are only 75% of people that pursuing their study after finished their diploma.

[P5] It is a huge waste to those that did not pursuing higher education even after finish their diploma...

[P5] We can also gaining more knowledge...

[P6a] A study was conducted in 2021 shows that there were the 35% of increasement in university institute from 2010 unti 2021.

[P6b] It also can increase their leadership skill when they had to lead the group.

[P7a] Statistics shown that 65% people with higher level certifiqate than diploma succesfully obtain jobs after graduates rather than those whose not continued their studied after diploma.

6. Inaccurate word forms

[P2] This is because of the skills and knowledge that were obtain in a particular course.

[P2a] A higher salary can be offer the more higher the educational levels.

[P2] This advance knowledge can also be use to help people that need more guidance as example a junior that about to learn a life as a university student.

[P3] These days, it is very challenging to secured a job as there are millions of graduates.

Table 1. Inaccuracies found during data analysis

Conclusion

This research has revealed valuable knowledge concerning ESL learners' language accuracy. It is recommended that future research is conducted in the CAF constructs of second language learners to shed more light on the learners' language proficiency. Learners' reliance on their first language as well as poor vocabulary has revealed the necessity to address these issues in English classes. Considering these students are in the tertiary level and have undergone 11 years of formal English language classes, it is disturbing to see them still struggling with the most basic language foundations. While this scenario may be unique only to Malaysian ESL learners or others from similar demography, further research is encouraged and can help elucidate the issue better.

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