This study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods (mixed method approach) to examine the influence of mother tongue on students' performance in writing. A test in the form of a composition was administered to 50 randomly selected participants from Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Singapore and Somalia. From each country, a native language expert was also interviewed. The findings from this study revealed that the errors made by the participants had a pattern that is linked to their mother tongues. This book will be of interest to researchers, instructors and students who are interested in error analysis and contrastive analysis. It will also give an insight to interested parties on how to carry out this kind of research by extending this methodology to different participants from different countries.

Kulwindr Kaur Gurdial Singh
Anne Benedict Nair
Saroja Dhanapal

Language Errors In Written English
Among International Students

Kulwindr Kaur Gurdial Singh
The four authors of this book are Dr. Kulwindr Kaur, a Senior Lecturer, Ms. Anne Benedict Nair, a Lecturer and Mr. Mohamed Iskandar Rahmad Sukor, a Language Teacher, who are affiliated to the English Language Department, University of Malaya (UM). Dr. Saroja Dhanapal is a Senior Lecturer in Taylor’s University. A UM grant made this study possible.
Kulwindr Kaur Gurdial Singh
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CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENTS</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PREFACE</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER TWO – REVIEW OF LITERATURE</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER THREE – RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER FOUR – RESULTS AND DISCUSSION</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER FIVE - CONCLUSION</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX A</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PREFACE

This study was undertaken by the researchers who are the authors of this book for a period of two years. The participants for this study were foreign students who came to study in the University of Malaya. Before they were allowed to register themselves, they had to sit for a Placement Test in English language and the data for this study comes from these written compositions written by them. We would like to thank the coordinators of this programme who gave us permission to use the data for our study. We are also thankful to the University of Malaya for approving a grant for this study.

ABSTRACT

This study employed both qualitative and quantitave methods to examine the influence of mother tongue on students’ performance in writing. A test in the form of a composition was administered to the 50 randomly selected participants from five different countries namely, Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Singapore and Somalia. The findings from the quantitative analysis revealed that errors made by the participants had a pattern that is linked to their mother tongues. What emerged very clearly is that the errors made by the participants varied according to the unique structures of their respective native languages. Findings from the interviews which were conducted with language experts from the five countries supported the findings from the test and enabled the study to conclude that there are indeed significant relationships between the different types of errors made by the participants and their mother tongues.

Keywords: mother tongue, error analysis, interference, writing, descriptive statistics, L1-First Language, L2- Second Language

2
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

It is now generally believed that the making of errors is an inevitable part of language learning. The learner benefits from his errors by using them to get feedback from the environment and use the feedback to test and adjust his hypotheses about the target language. Therefore, the investigation of learners’ errors makes us able to obtain some information about the nature of his understanding of the target language (at a given point) in his learning career or journey and to determine what he still needs to learn. By illustrating and categorizing his errors in linguistic terms, we will be able to prepare a picture of the characteristics of the language which are causing him learning problems. Error Analysis which is based on theories of first and second language learning and possible similarities between them presents a check on the predictions of bilingual comparisons as well as a significant additional source of information for the selection of items to be integrated into the syllabus.

Political turmoils such as the 11 September, 2001 incident and the world economic downturn in the past decade have left a great impact on the direction of education in Malaysia. In the wake of these events, Malaysia is fast becoming an international education hub in the Asian region. Students around the world are looking to Malaysia as an alternative to native English speaking countries to meet their educational needs. This change has become a challenge for Malaysian academics as there is a crucial need to understand and cater to the diversified demands of the foreign students of different origins and mother tongues. This study will focus on the native language interference of foreign students coming to study in Malaysia in learning English as a foreign language. Dulay et al. (1982) define interference as the automatic transfer, due to habit, of the surface structure of the first language onto the surface
structure of the target language. Previous studies in the area such as Bhela (1999), Msanjila (2005) and Maniruzzaman (2005) will also be discussed.

**Research Objectives**

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To identify the types of errors frequently made in written English by the participants
2. To rank the types of errors made by the students from the five nationalities (Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Singapore, and Somalia)
3. To find out if there are significant differences among the five nationalities (Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Singapore, and Somalia) on the different types of errors made (spelling, grammar, punctuation, omission, insertion, vocabulary, run-ons and fragments)
4. To determine the relationships between the types of errors (spelling, grammar, punctuation, omission, insertion, vocabulary, run-ons and fragments) and their respective mother tongues
5. To investigate the reasons for these writing errors

**Research Questions**

The research questions for this study are as follows:

1. What are the types of errors frequently made in written English by the participants?
2. What is the ranking for the most common types of errors made by the students from the five nationalities (Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Singapore and Somalia)?
3. Are there significant differences among the five nationalities (Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Singapore, and Somalia) on the different types of errors made (spelling, grammar, punctuation, omission, insertion, vocabulary, run-ons and fragments)?
4. Are there significant relationships among the five nationalities (Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Singapore, and Somalia) in terms of the types of errors made (spelling, grammar, punctuation, omission, insertion, vocabulary, run-ons and fragments)?
5. What are the reasons for the errors in their writing?

**Significance of Study**

Determining whether mother tongue interference has any influence on the writing of the participants from Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Singapore, and Somalia will enhance
existing knowledge in the field of foreign language learning and enable teachers of English language to develop courses as well as adopt approaches which would address the issues identified in this study. Curriculum and course designers would be able to incorporate the findings of this study into the syllabus to ensure that focus is given to these particular errors to alleviate them in order to improve the language proficiency of future students from the five respective countries. The findings from this study in the long run will benefit learners from these five countries for if English language teachers teaching these foreign students give emphasis to ensure that these problematic areas are addressed in their teaching, their students will be able to benefit. By understanding the types of errors frequently made by students, teachers would be able to provide more informed and effective guidance.
CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Writing is an important and difficult skill and according to Tribble (1997, p.8), “Becoming a proficient writer is one of the major objectives of many students, especially for those who want to become members of international business, administrative or academic communities.” Educators around the world are constantly researching to identify the reasons behind this difficulty and it has been accepted that the interference from the mother tongue has been one of the main causes for the errors that are generally noted in the writing of students’ compositions. Beardsmore (1982) suggests that many of the difficulties a second language learner has with the phonology, vocabulary and grammar of L2 (second language) are due to the interference of habits from the first language or L1. Besides this, other reasons quoted are the methodologies employed for teaching writing skills, the learning strategies of students, the lack of opportunities and exercises for writing and the various rubrics of writing different kinds of compositions.

Interference from the mother tongues of second or foreign English language learners on their writing has long been an issue in the field of education. Dulay et al. (1982) define interference “as the automatic transfer, due to habit, of the surface structure of the first language onto the surface of the target language” while Lott (1983, p. 256, in Baljit Bhela, 1999, p. 22) defines interference as “errors in the learner’s use of the foreign language that can be traced back to the mother tongue.” Ellis (1997, p. 51), on the other hand, refers to interference as ‘transfer’, which he says is “the influence of the learner’s L1 over the acquisition of a L2.” Thus, it can be said that interference encompasses everything that is taken from the mother tongue and transposed on to the writing in the English language.
(second or foreign language) which does not take into consideration the contradictions in the structures of both languages.

Although researchers in general are in consensus in their understanding of what interference means, there is still an ongoing debate over the issues that emerge with the words ‘mistake’ and ‘error’. For example, Ellis (1997 in Baljit Bhela, 1999, p. 23) voices the need to distinguish between errors and mistakes and differentiates clearly between the two. He says, “that errors reflect gaps in the learner’s knowledge; they occur because the learner does not know what is correct. Mistakes reflect occasional lapses in performance; they occur because, in a particular instance the learner is unable to perform what he or she knows.” On the other hand, Norrish (1983, p. 7 in Anchalee Sattayatham and Pongrat Ratanapinyowong, 2008, p. 22) defines ‘an error’ as a systematic deviation that happens when a learner has not learnt something and consistently ‘get(s) it wrong’ For the purpose of this study which involves identifying errors in written compositions, there would be no distinction made between errors and mistakes as both are taken to indicate deviations from the standard English language usage. However, where it is possible, errors made due to interference from their mother tongue, and errors made due to sheer carelessness will be distinguished from one another.

Over the years, there have been many studies which have been carried out all over the world by educators who were concerned about the numerous errors detected in the writings of learners of English language as a second or foreign language. However, this study will investigate the relationships between the errors made and the learners’ mother tongues. (Baljit Bhela, 1999, p. 22) suggests that “Second language learners appear to accumulate structural entities of the target language but demonstrate difficulty in organising this knowledge into appropriate coherent structures. There appears to be a significant gap between the accumulation and the organisation of the knowledge” It has also been noted that, “When
writing or speaking the target language (L2), second language learners tend to rely on their native language (L1) structures to produce a response” (Baljit Bhela, 1999, p. 22). Researchers have found that errors in writing tend to be on a higher scale when there are distinct differences between the mother tongue and the English language. This has been noted by Dechert (1983) and Ellis (1997) who claimed that, “If the structures of the two languages are distinctly different, then one could expect a relatively high frequency of errors to occur in L2, thus indicating an interference of L1 on L2” (in Baljit Bhela, 1999, p. 22). Dechert (1983, in Baljit Bhela, 1999, p. 23) suggests that the further apart the two languages are structurally, the higher the instances of errors made in L2 which bear traces of L1 structures. Moreover, an understanding of cognitive, social, cultural, and linguistic factors can help us to better understand their performance in EFL writing.

Raimes (1983, p.6 in Anchalee Sattayatham and Pongrat Ratanapinyowong, 2008, p. 20). pointed out that the close relationship between writing and thinking makes writing a valuable part of any language course. She identified the different components for producing a clear, fluent and effective piece of writing; content, the writer’s process, audience, purpose, word choice, organisation, mechanics, grammar and syntax.

O’Donnell and Paiva (1993, pp. 2-4, in Anchalee Sattayatham and Pongrat Ratanapinyowong, 2008, p. 21) provided more details for paragraph writing which include a topic sentence, supporting sentences, details, logical order, logical connectors, a concluding sentence, unity and coherence. The ideas in the paragraph must be presented in a logical order by using transition words or connecting words which indicate the relationship between the ideas - chronological, causal, etc. (Norrish, 1983, pp. 21-42) suggests that the causes of language learners’ errors as arising from carelessness, interference from the learner’s first language, translation from the first language, contrastive analysis, general order of difficulty,
over-generalisation, incomplete application of rules, material-induced errors, and a part of language creativity.

Saadiyah Darus and Khor (2009) investigated four most common errors in 70 written English essays by Chinese students between the ages of 13 and 14 from two Form One classes in a public school in Perak. The topic of the essay was My Family. The results of their analysis showed that the four most common errors made by the Chinese students were mechanics of writing, tenses, prepositions, and subject-verb agreement.

Knowles et al. (2006) worked on corpus data but did a processing of the errors of the first 15 essays written by Malaysian undergraduates. From their sample, they found that Malaysian students generally make errors in the use of articles, tense, and subject-verb agreement when writing essays. In a similar study, Lim (1974) classified 13 error types under the following headings: tense, articles, agreement, infinitive and gerundive constructions, pronouns, possessive and attributive structures, word order, incomplete structures, negative constructions, lexical categories, mechanics of writing, miscellaneous unclassifiable errors and Malaysian words (typical).

The findings from the present study will add to this field with descriptions of errors made by learners who come from five different countries.
CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study aims to identify and analyse the types of errors in writing an opinion composition in the English language by international students seeking to qualify for entry into undergraduate programmes at a public university in Malaysia. Fifty students from five countries (Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Singapore and Somalia) were asked to write a composition in not less than 150 words in English on the advantages of studying in a foreign country and the errors they made were analysed using a three-stage process. The first stage of analysis involved identifying the types of errors made. The second stage involved categorizing the errors to identify emerging patterns, and to identify the similarities and differences made by the participants from the five countries. The third stage was to explain whether the errors made were the result of interference from their mother tongues. Interviews were also conducted with five experts from the same respective countries of the participants to obtain background information of the English language curriculum in their countries. This information is used to inform the investigation in to the causes of the errors made by the participants in the study.

Participants
The participants were fifty international students from five countries (Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Singapore and Somalia) who were waiting to pursue their undergraduate studies in a public university in Malaysia depending on the outcome of the placement test (the writing of the composition is part of the English Language Proficiency Placement Test). They have all been given conditional offers and would have to first obtain a pass in the English Language Proficiency Placement Test before they could proceed to the faculties of their interest. The fifty participants comprised ten students from each of the five countries. The sampling adopted for this study is a purposeful sample whereby ten students were chosen
from the five countries identified. However, the ten compositions from each country were chosen randomly from the 50 essays collectively produced by the fifty participants. A random sample invokes what is called probability sampling which means every member of the population has a non-zero probability of being selected for the sample (Wiersma and Jurs, 2000).

**The Task**

The task used for this study was not designed specifically for the purpose of this research. The essays were obtained with permission from the English Language Department. The section chosen was the composition component of the English language Proficiency test that was required to be written by the participants. The title of the composition was, “What, in your opinion, are the advantages of studying in a foreign country?” The participants were given 30 minutes to complete this task.

**Analysis**

The errors were analysed to determine if they were from native language interference in the area of syntax, semantics, grammar, lexis, and spelling. Although there may be other types of errors, such as those due to an unsuitable method of teaching, etc., this study will however only focus on native language errors. The data analysis procedure will be as follows:

1. The participants’ compositions will be categorised according to their five countries (Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Singapore and Somalia) of origin and coded (e.g. BS1 for Bangladeshi student 1, CS1 for Chinese student 1, and so forth).
2. The compositions will be graded by three lecturers to ensure validity and reliability of the error identification process.
3. The errors identified will be tabulated according to the identified categories. An example is shown in Table 1. Examples of errors by the Chinese participants
and possible reasons for the errors made are given in Table 1.

4. The selected experts will be interviewed to get feedback on the errors detected from the compositions (see Appendix A - Interview Questionnaire)

The types of errors frequently made in written English by the participants were grouped according to the following categories.

1. Spelling
2. Grammar
3. Punctuation
4. Omission
5. Insertion
6. Vocabulary
7. Run-ons and Fragments
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ERROR</th>
<th>SAMPLE</th>
<th>EXAMPLE</th>
<th>POSSIBLE REASONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>CS1</td>
<td>*Study in a foreign country</td>
<td>• They like to type SMS without subject and therefore they also carry this bad habit into their formal writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subjects</td>
<td>CS2</td>
<td>*Except that, go abroad means Independent</td>
<td>• When they talk, they do not mention the subject and this spoken form is brought into their formal writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omission</td>
<td>CS1</td>
<td>*The world have... lot...people</td>
<td>• Problem of learning second foreign language, influence of mother tongue e.g.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Errors</td>
<td>CS2</td>
<td>*I think it... not only a chance</td>
<td>take care...me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*...live and study... native language</td>
<td>* zhao gu wo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*When you... at home...</td>
<td>* take care me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>* ...go abroad means... independent.</td>
<td>translate directly without preposition as above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*After all parents couldn’t always take care... me.</td>
<td>• They also miss the articles - a, an, the and often the auxiliaries too such as is, are, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CS3</td>
<td>*I think it is... great way for our study.</td>
<td>• E.g. I think it... not only <em>Zhe buzhi</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*...we also can learn lot of ... about this country.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*...when they... with foreign friends.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*...advantage why we... studying in another country is that ... might change our character</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS4</td>
<td>*And there is... highly quality...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS9</td>
<td>*I study in a foreign country ...want to know more about Malaysia, about ...world, about new thought and improve myself...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS10</td>
<td>*But I think it is the best way for me to study ...the foreign country</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The frequency of the errors will be calculated as percentages and then converted into means. The second stage of analysis will involve the usage of the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) software to perform several descriptive statistical analyses (mean ranking). Empirical tests (Spearman correlation and Kruskall-Wallis test) were used to compare the means of the types of errors among the participants based on their nationalities/country of origin.

In addition, interviews with experts in the native languages in this study were conducted to obtain first hand understanding from them based on their explanation of the errors.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the data collected from the participants indicated that similar errors were made by the participants irrespective of the country of origin. The errors were tabulated according to the most frequently made to the least frequently made. The following section will be a discussion of the errors made by the participants. This part of the discussion will be answering all the research questions whereby the errors frequently made will be highlighted and at the same time the differences and similarities of the errors made by the participants from the different countries will be analysed and explained in relation to their mother tongue interferences.

Research Question 1

What are the types of errors frequently made in written English by the participants?

The types of errors frequently made in written English by the participants are as follows:

1. Spelling Errors

In layman’s terms, spelling indicates the writing of a word or words with the necessary letters using standard, prescriptive English. For the purpose of this study, any deviation from this standard English will be considered a spelling error. According to Bell (2007), learning to spell in English is difficult and her reasons are two-fold; there are different spellings for identical English sounds (for example the EE-sound can be spelt as *peep, leap, people, here, weird* etc.) and the fact that in English there are different pronunciations for identical letters (for example *read /riːd/ and /rɛd/, lead /lɛd/ and /laiːd/). She goes on to say, “A little more than half of all English spelling difficulties are caused by four problems: unsystematic **consonant doubling** like 'shoddy - body' and unpredictable spellings for the EE-sound, the long O -sound and the two OO-sounds. Other serious spelling problems are caused by unpredictable spellings for the sounds *ur / or / ir, au / aw, s, sh* and the **unstressed half-vowel** in endings (like –er / -or / -ar or –en / -on / -an).” The analysis of spelling errors
detected in this study will be done using Bell’s principles as a base but at the same time, the analysis will be linked to the spelling systems of the participants’ mother tongues. Spelling in English is difficult because there are different spellings for identical English sounds. For example the sound /k/ can be spelt with the letters ‘c’ or ‘k’ such as ‘cat’ or ‘kennel’.

Table 2 gives the examples of the spelling errors found in the study by all the participants from the five countries.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>No. of Participants</th>
<th>Spelling Errors</th>
<th>Total No. of Errors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Althoug, studing,foreignt,experiance,throughly, veiw, Realy, amizing, tought, Enviroment, Studing, carrere, chane (for chance), healps, repreasntative, searve, batter, there for their, business, Achive,matreal, diffrent, contry,finisd, Complet, foreign, Can not, togather, Dormatory</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Sepreated, everythin, Hapiness, Viwes, Curtral, Independent, Concusion, noly, Foreigns, Foreigne, Becouse, expersice, concullion</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Decied, least for last, hoby, relasing, Chaging, ...to face to many..., difficults..., slove, believe (for belief), resion, scence (for scenes), attack (for attract), 21th student (should be 21st century student)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>development, Nederland, mor, becouse, batter, contry’s, froyein, do’nt, countinou, Everythings,...will be on of the person, my self, happines,</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>cultre, ourselfe, religious, amongs, oppinion, lifes for lives, Environmen, country’s for countries, theres,contries, deciplies,didnt, chines, Indans, independents, responibles, life’s for lives, Last but not lease, theres will be, forthly, Parent’s, independant</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Country, hav’t, ok, imgrate, foreig, importan, allright, helpy, studanty, kolej, countrey, welcom, altier, Euducation, essinial realationship, foreig, museume, revlent, luck, countray, Malaysia, studend, opinon, Aaisa, studny, advatages, disadvantageous, smilely, Studyn, experiment, Goverments, forein, deferent, Behaviour, descion, Student’s, stuition, n’t, vacciculey, compales, ticenology, hardwere, diffrent, concullion, insted, ides, Formost, Asian, to (should be too), stronge,</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3  Subject-Verb Agreement Errors of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>No. of Participants</th>
<th>Errors</th>
<th>Total No. of Errors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>In every steps of his personal ... He or she have to know... When a student come... When a student finish... ... a lot of thing... ... meet a lot of foreign teacher... These really charms me.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Study in a foreign country <strong>have</strong>... The world <strong>have</strong>... Every culture <strong>have</strong> something attractives... ...we can <strong>has</strong> a nice... ...anyone <strong>have</strong> to speak English...</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>...for students future <strong>career</strong>. Everyone <strong>want</strong>... ...in their life. Everybody <strong>have</strong> to ... All of <strong>faculty</strong>... ...lots of <strong>friend</strong> ...from the <strong>others country</strong></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Score</td>
<td>Statement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>There is much more the advantages of studying in this foreign country is to know about other culture...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>In my opinion the advantages of studying in this foreign country is to know about other culture...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>In my view, there's a lot of advantages of studying...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Being open-minded makes us a better person...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td></td>
<td>in their activities or leisure... we have to force ourselves...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

...from the other religion too.
...so many student...
...from the other country too.
...than the other country.
12. **Subject-Verb Agreement Errors of Participants**

In the English language, the subject in a sentence must agree with the verb. In other words if the subject is singular, then the verb must be singular and if the subject is plural, then the verb must be plural also for example, He is..., They are...

Table 3 shows the Subject-Verb agreement errors of the participants. Examples of the errors are given in the table itself.

3. **Grammar Errors**

These errors include errors in the use of articles, wrong word order, wrong use of modals, wrong use of the comparison adjectives, errors in the use nouns-pronouns, inappropriate use of verbs-to-be, errors in the use of tenses, wrong placement of conjunctions, singular/plural errors, preposition errors, inversion, use of colloquialisms and contractions.

Table 4 below shows the examples of the grammar errors of the participants from the five countries. The explanation of the errors is given in the table itself.
## Table 4  Grammar Errors of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>No. of Participants</th>
<th>Errors</th>
<th>Total No. of Errors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Bangladesh    | 10                  | Article errors - A for an, – *a important time, *a international language, *go to the abroad, *a international student  
Wrong word order: *Meet with different countries people; *...he meets with other country’s students  
Modality: without education nobody can developed  
our memory will developed  
Noun Pronoun Error: ...we can make ourself..  
Comparison Error - ...more fluent in English day by day ever before.  
I was very much nervous when I left my own country but now I am so much happy...  
Tense Error  
*...to stay outside from home and starting a new life.  
*My vocabulary is enriching...  
*Thank to God who give me the opportunity  
Inappropriate use of verb to be | 15                  |
*Here’s I can enjoy modern IT Lab...

**Wrong use of Modality**
I couldn’t imagine that I can study...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| China   | 10    | *Grammar errors:* *Study in a foreign country;*  
*So I like make friend;* *Study in a foreign country*; **Except for Besides** – *Except that, go abroad means independent;* *...can study many knowledges...*; **Wrong placement of conjunction**  
*...women can and wear t-shirts shorts skirts...*  
*But I think these are not the problems.*  
**Singular/plural error** – *improve my vocabularies...*  
*...at every time and in every places.*  
*...to study in a foreign country require...*  
*...but no a child...*  
**Preposition error:** *to achieve high grades on study...*  
**Tense errors:** *To live here teach me ; First, I think study in...; ...I believe that study in a foreign country...*  
*...which is benefit for my future...;* *Use this language ...*  
**Inversion:** People from different countries, maybe I can study more languages with them  
**Wrong use of preposition:** I should learn more before in home; Those are the reasons to study... | 34 |
**Singular/Plural errors:** ...drink the different juice.

**Wrong use of modals:** I should eat different food...; Life should be more relaxing

**Wrong verb-to-be**
In current years, there has a tendency...

**Subject/Pronoun error**
...I believe...for us to improve...

**Wrong use of article**
...if I study in Malaysia which has a excellent English environment...

...when I step into the society.

**Wrong use of conjunction**
So, my English level has improved...
Because I have to face...
But I think it is the best way for me to study the foreign country
But I also want to leave...

**singular/plural:** ...different countries have different ; ...I can find other person...
culture; Different country have different plant; I think Malaysia’s plant...; ...I can learn a lot of thing.

**Wrong use of conjunction**
| Indonesia | 10 | **Inaccurate use of idiom**  
*do Rome’s do* | **Wrong use of Prepositions:**  
*For example at Malaysia, the government...; I have heard for someone.*  
*...survive with a new people from different country...*  
*Have to survive with all condition...*  
*We’ll never found some food like...*  
*Some people feel so proud of themself. ; We have to used English when we meet...; Even over the world*  
**Grammar errors:**  
*I like in here...; I will getting the ...; I can get the new friends from other country...; ...likes the transportation...*  
**Article Errors:**  
*...and as the matter of fact...*  
**Wrong use of conjunction:**  
*because I want to reach my dreams.*  
**Noun Pronoun Error**  
*...I can strengthen our relationship...*  
**Tense Error:**  
*a foreign country was my vision...*  
*...Study together...*  
*...will united student in diversity.*  
*...finish study in Senior High school,...* | 27 |
<p>| Singapore | 10 | <strong>Grammar Errors</strong>: <em>...will make friends with other people which come from other countries...</em>; As the students getting far from their parents...; As we all know, study in a foreign country...<em>...make us can exchange our opinion or suggestion...</em>; <em>...and share a rooms...</em>; <em>...no one will do the breakfast...</em>; All that we have to do by itself; And it makes me comfort and interest to study...; But it also mean; *...prefer to further their study in other country; *Experiences is the most important...; <em>...choose the best for ourself...</em>; Further our study in various country... | 38 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Redundancy Errors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*...go more further...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Experience makes us to be more better ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Theres a lot of advantages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wrong Prefix: *Unresponsible,

Relative Pronoun Error
*...make a lot of friends which came from a different countries

Wrong use of modals
*...studying in a foreign country could increase our level of education

Pronoun error
*Being open-minded makes us a better person by knowing the new issues, problems that they face.

Plural error
*Nevertheless, there are a lots of advantages of studying in a foreign country.

Preposition error
*From my humble opinion...

Tense error
*...by staying far from my parents it teach me...
*...to do all the house chores including tidy up my room,...
*...it teach me to become more patient...
*They concern about me...
*...these will make me more matured...
*...time management is important in our life.
*We might having problems...
*Their language are different from our language.
*We need time to learn their language.
*Therefore, study in a foreign country...

**Infinitive error**
*We need to educated ourselves...

**Wrong modal**
*...there might be some advantages when we study in a foreign country.

**Comparative error**
*. ..make us more strong...

**Plural error**
*...choose the right person to be friend with.
*Bad friends would influence us and studies,...
*No one gives advices...
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>No. of Participants</th>
<th>Student Number and Errors</th>
<th>Total No. of Errors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Plural error - *...another countries like Malaysia.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tense error - *Many people around the world are preferring to study in abroad countries; *Finally, I believed that ...; ...without helping of his parents...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wrong preposition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*You have more friends with the same language to you...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No suffix - *I would like to learn about their tradition foods.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not parallel structure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*Food shows more about the people behaviour and culture.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Infinitive error - *Also the student will learn responsibility and how to controls his life...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5  Punctuation Errors of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>No. of Participants</th>
<th>Student Number and Errors</th>
<th>Total No. of Errors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>BS1: Firstly:-</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>BS4: No apostrophe: *...in everyone life,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Apostrophe wrongly used:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*It give’s a ...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>BS6: No comma – *without education nobody can developed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wrong use of capital letter *... because of In foreign country...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*...how to Survive his life...that’s why he can understand</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wrong use of capital letter *... But In our country</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>BS8: No punctuation marks -*When I was selected for BSc in engineering (Electric) course my happiness knew not bounds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Score</td>
<td>Issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>CS2: Wrong use of apostrophe; That's will help me in the future.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CS4: Wrong use of apostrophe; the teacher's teach...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CS9: In malaysia...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>IS6: to reach these...</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>even study hardly.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>* student begins all his 8 sentences with lowercase letter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>IS7: a foreign country...asia, english, In malaysia...</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>With the motto 1 MALAYSIA the governments...</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>...such as; friendship, uniting in diversity, cultures.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>IS8: ...I don't Get many problems...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>... my brother's, they all...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>IS10: In Malaysia better than Education In Indonesia because University</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>SS9: ... by staying far from my parents it teach me...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The greatest advantage of studying in a foreign country for me is, I learnt how to love my friends.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>SMS1: Punctuation error</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>and I would like to continue university in my level of education until I finish.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>and u have a good experience when u go back in your country.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SMS4: *... its very good chance for the student... no its not...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4 Punctuation Errors
To write clearly, we must use the rules of punctuation marks accurately. Punctuation marks are marks such as full stops, commas, question marks etc. that we need to use in order to write in a clear style. The above table shows that the foreign students in this study have no idea on which punctuation mark to use and when to use them. For example, the Bangladeshi students use the transition marker *Firstly* with a colon and a dash when they should just use a comma after it. They are also confused on how to use the apostrophe accurately as shown in the examples in the table above. A Bangladeshi lecturer who was interviewed informed us that the students who go overseas are weak students because the good ones are able to get a place in the local public universities where the entry point is a requirement to achieve 70% for English language at secondary school. Likewise, the Chinese students too have problems in using capital letters because their Mandarin language has no capital letters and no full stops. They do not use capital letters to start each new sentence. Some Indonesian students too use capital letters whenever and wherever they like. The explanations of the errors have been explained in the table above. Generally, the students who make punctuation errors are those who are weak in English and do not know when and how to use them accurately.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>No. of Participants</th>
<th>Student Number and Errors</th>
<th>Total No. of Errors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>10</td>
<td><strong>BS1:</strong> We will ...able, we can...familiar, completing his graduation... in a foreign, although...some demerits, every student...at least <strong>BS4:</strong> for the students...that he can gather</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>10</td>
<td><strong>CS1:</strong> The world have...lot ...people <strong>CS2:</strong> I think it ...not only a chance ...live and study ... native language When you...at home... ...go abroad means ...independent. After all parents couldn’t always take care...me. <strong>CS3:</strong> I think it is ...great way for our study. ...we also can learn ...lot of ...about this country. ...when they ...with... foreign friends. ...advantage why we...studying in another country is that ...might change our character. <strong>CS4:</strong> And there is... highly quality... <strong>CS9:</strong> I study in a foreign country ...want to know more about malaysia, about world, about new thought and improve myself... <strong>CS10:</strong> But I think it is the best way for me to study ...the foreign country</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>10</td>
<td><strong>IS2:</strong> Eventhough my English ...not fluently... <strong>IS3:</strong> ...even at ...lower cost... better quality of education.....can only be found in ...particular country. ...nowadays when... globalisation era takes place... <strong>IS4:</strong> Study in ...foreign country...</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **IS5:** Studying in ...foreign country  
...is one of ...example before Indonesia...  
...directly from the place where the culture...from  
...shown in ...Nederland art  
**IS6:** struggle their life  
about world  
Malaysia is ...nice country  
**IS7:** ...to continue my undergraduate.  
All of faculty...  
And in University...  
...to study in a foreign will develop...  
...almost of the community...  
**IS10:** ...I want to see education system...  
Education System In Malaysia better than Education In Indonesia because University...  
...better than University Gajah Mada... |   |
| Singapore | 10 | SS1: students are more interested in further... their studies... I prefer... study in a... soon they will... categorise as a new family...  
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | SS6: Every... of us know... Then, not only... we realize... to face any obstacles and challenges ahead... us.  
| | | SS8: I have to manage time properly... as to achieve my goals... have to be sad to being far... from our family.  
| | | SS9  
| | | They... concern about me...  
| | | SS10  
| | | Learning... new language is fun and new experience.  
| Somalia | 10 |  
| | | SMS1  
| | | It’s ok to... foreign another country...  
| | | | 10 | 1 |
## Table 7  
**Insertion Errors of Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>No. of Participants</th>
<th>Student Number and Errors</th>
<th>Total No. of Errors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>BS1:...has both of some merits and demerits</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| China     | 10                  | CS1:...can help each other in everywhere. 
CS2: ...I can make with many friends... 
CS5: ...I will study hard as for myself.                                                      | 3                   |
| Indonesia | 10                  | IS2:Because it’s near from my country... 
...so I want studying in here... 
I wish when I study in here. 
IS5:...the students is not only... 
They like to go to overseas for studying... 
IS6: first time to go abroad 
IS7: ...Malaysia is a very good in education... 
IS8: ...in this a foreign country. 
IS9: ...teach me about the life...                                                             | 9                   |
| Singapore | 10                  | SS2:...a foreign country is an one experience that will come only at once. 
If we are offered to study outside from our country,... 
...come from a different countries ...by thinking a positive 
...among of our friends ...to release a tension...                                                | 22                  |
I do have an experience...

SS7: We have the chances of making business...
We also being exposed by...

We also have the chances to...
...with a good moral values.
...no regrets of being studying...

SS8: I will become a brave person to ask for a directions...
...experience by befriending with other races...

Lastly, I have to list our my own budget so that I will not over spend it

So, we as a foreign students...;...new experiences and a good effects

SS9: They concern about me like my parent did.
In a conclusion..

SS10: We need to time to adapt ...

<p>| Somalia  | 10   | SMS4: ...advantages of learning in abroad, | 1 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>No. of Participants</th>
<th>Student Number and Errors</th>
<th>Total No. of Errors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>CS3: We can have a nice surround to improve our English &lt;br&gt;CS4: And there is highly quality of teach in University...&lt;br&gt;CS6: natures for points, cultural for culture, All the new cultural attracted me...&lt;br&gt;CS8: As a member of foreigner students..&lt;br&gt;...I can learn more kinds of knowledge...&lt;br&gt;CS9: ...they will help you until trouble leave&lt;br&gt;In malaysia most of people is Islamic&lt;br&gt;The life environment...&lt;br&gt;CS10: Second, in our nationality&lt;br&gt;Wrong auxiliary&lt;br&gt;...I didn’t say I don’t like...</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>IS6: cultural intelligence &lt;br&gt;IS7: As a melayu country almost of the...&lt;br&gt;IS8: ...to get much learn... ; ...our time for learn will be minus.&lt;br&gt;IS9: ...try the different act, in order... ; Beside that...&lt;br&gt;Ultimately, I like biodiversify...&lt;br&gt;...I always beside my mum and dad.&lt;br&gt;...be a success person...&lt;br&gt;IS10: ...I want to see education system...</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Score</td>
<td>Student Response</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Singapore| 10    | **SS6:** Therefore, it is no doubt...
...communicate easily with its locals.
Being in a foreign country means being out from our comfort zone...
...also experience in settling our own lives...
...studying in a foreign country could increase our level of education and learn to be independent...
**SS7:** ...we also can wider our networking...
...by knowing our strength...
**IS8:** ...erode my shyness...
It will make me know how to save money.
**IS9:** Beside that,...
...mingle around with foreigner students...
**IS10:** ...to adapt with the environments there.
We also need to communicate more often with their locals.
We might also facing problems with friends.
...teaches us to be more responsibility towards ourselves.
...make us more strong and make our life fun full...

| Somalia  | 10    | **SMS1:** Malaysian universities are mostly leave a good education...
**SMS5:** This issue will focus on several main advantages. ...which he or she cannot employ when in home country. Actually every student cannot make or give a lot of energy...
Also your parents may order you to do something and this may loss the time... |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>No. of Participants</th>
<th>Student Number and Errors</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>BS6: *How to manage everything, accommodation. BS7: *Though I am from Bangladesh.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>CS6: *Not only speak it, but also read and write it. *Because I should grow up. CS7: *Leave my family, to cooking by myself, do housework by myself, I can improve myself, learn lots of things. CS9: *When I come Malaysia. CS10: *The best wish for myself.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Indonesia    | 10                  | IS1: *Many advantages of studying in a foreign country? IS6: *even study hardly. because I want to reach my dreams. as same as my country. IS8: *...because, if I study language in my country. The last.  
*That will not be effective, because, I will always talk with my friend with our language (Indonesia language), with I study in a foreign contry, I will feel better, because, I can talk with english language, everytime, everyday, because. IS9: *So, I have to give my best. IS10: *Because I want to try study in a foreign country. It like Malaysia. So, It can add my knowledge and study from foreign country. Again and it can make me known environment known environment in foreign country. But, I only love my country. I hope that. | 9                   |
| Singapore    | 10                  | None                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                     |
| Somalia      | 10                  | SMS1: *It’s great to leave your country if your mature and hav’t... and i would like to go back in my country that I have a good education. and I would like to continue university in my level of education until I finish. and u have a good experience when u go back in your country.  
SMS2: *I want information some of my country advantages of studying in foreign first my country have more university and college university  
*So coming more student foreign really my country is good because my country help student foreign not like Malaysia my country give the student some courses free and give hostel free and also hellp student muslim when student coming my country all government coming in airport say welcom new student and say this is like your country I dont worry and wellcome | 19                  |
any think do those want ifan dows if dont have some student visa no problem government give visa free

I think my country good better than alther country because have study free so I like my country

**SMS3:** *Luck of education is luck of life as I see study in abroad is more advantages such as toughing more benefit like change area and discover their countray realtionship with friends.
*In your opinion are the advantages of studying in a foreign country first Malaysia has tourist and culture anything and revlent museum and realtionship more people like Arabian people, westem people, Aaisa people, African people.......*  
learning isn’t royal road so we must to go in our country in another country for study. Study like salt. without study no life in the conclusion I would like say stay in abroad has more advantages and disadvantages.
**SMS4:** * Can manage yourself also you will be better student and you will just focus on your study just asking yourself this questions is good enough to manage you focus, learn, were hard just on your study.
**SMS6:** *If I want to talk about foreign country for example if I compare my country and other country maybe its deferent because I know my country but I don’t know and other country. July 2006 I was and other country so that country it was
good country and I admire that country because that country it has something many thinks but my country it has no that
something but now I want to study something to Malaysia because Malaysia is the best country in the world it’s
education is a very high Malaysia is better than my country because my country it has no many university. it has a few
university but Malaysia it has many. Many university like Universit Malaya, UIA, university um and so on but my
country it has no like that university. so that is why I want to study foreign country.
**SMS8:** *I is very easy question to be answered and it is very important questions such as student’s who study in abroad.
However the answer will not be same according to the idea of different student’s who came various countries. First the
situation in my country Somalia is not like the other world, the civil war is going in there compales you to leave the
country and then to study in foreign country, Secondly, the vaceciety Africa is not like such an advanced country side of
ticnology like Malaysia, the electronic hardware like computers are not found in Somalia widly.
**SMS9:** *The formost target to study in foreign country has always been knowledge. And knowledge has excelled beyond. Still, innovation are going make faster more reliable. By the advantage of knowledge, our earth has reduced and has attained the form of a global village. the knowledge that you get foreign country, is more interesting. Even me, I very happy to study in foreign country and I will never forget about my study. Thanks*
Research Question 2

What is the ranking for the most common types of errors made by the students from the five nationalities (Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Singapore, and Somalia)?

Table 10 Mean Ranks among Nationalities in Terms of Different Types of Errors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Spelling</th>
<th>Grammar</th>
<th>Punctuation</th>
<th>Omission</th>
<th>Insertion</th>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
<th>Run-ons / Fragments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>25.90</td>
<td>20.45</td>
<td>28.20</td>
<td>20.95</td>
<td>19.45</td>
<td>18.25</td>
<td>21.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>29.30</td>
<td>31.75</td>
<td>25.60</td>
<td>31.75</td>
<td>24.60</td>
<td>32.95</td>
<td>23.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>16.00</td>
<td>31.40</td>
<td>30.30</td>
<td>35.95</td>
<td>31.65</td>
<td>28.35</td>
<td>28.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>20.75</td>
<td>31.15</td>
<td>19.00</td>
<td>22.45</td>
<td>31.45</td>
<td>25.65</td>
<td>17.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td><strong>35.55</strong></td>
<td>12.75</td>
<td>24.40</td>
<td>16.40</td>
<td>20.35</td>
<td>22.30</td>
<td><strong>37.80</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10 shows the results for the most common types of errors made by the participants from the five nationalities (Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Singapore, and Somalia).

From Table 10, it can be seen that the Somalian participants committed the most errors in spelling (35.55) and run-ons or fragments (37.80). The Chinese participants committed the most errors in grammar (31.75) and vocabulary (32.95). The Indonesian participants committed the most errors in punctuation (30.30), omission (35.95) and insertion (31.65). Meanwhile, the Bangladeshi and Singaporean participants did not commit most of the errors as they showed low means for all types of errors, which suggested low occurrences.

Research Question 3

Are there significant differences among the five nationalities (Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Singapore, and Somalia) on the different types of errors made (spelling, grammar, punctuation, omission, insertion, vocabulary, run-ons and fragments)?

To answer Research Question 3, a null hypothesis (H₀) was formulated as follows:

H₀ There are no significant differences among the five nationalities (Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Singapore, and Somalia) on all types of errors (spelling, grammar, punctuation, omission, insertion, vocabulary and run-ons or fragments).
### Table 11  Differences Among the Five Nationalities in terms of all Errors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bangladesh</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Indonesian</th>
<th>Singapore</th>
<th>Somali</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chi-Square</td>
<td>30.049</td>
<td>31.970</td>
<td>16.161</td>
<td>33.038</td>
<td>34.382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Df</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.013</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* a. Kruskal Wallis Test
  b. Grouping Variable: Errors

Table 11 shows the results of differences among the five nationalities in terms of all the types of errors made by using the Kruskal-Wallis test for independent samples. From the test, it was found that all the five nationalities have significant differences among each other (p < .05), thus rejecting the null hypothesis.

### Research Question 4

Are there significant relationships among the five nationalities (Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Singapore, and Somalia) in terms of the types of errors made (spelling, grammar, punctuation, omission, insertion, vocabulary, run-ons and fragments)?

H₀ There are no significant relationships among the five nationalities in all the types of errors made (spelling, grammar, punctuation, omission, insertion, vocabulary and run-ons or fragments).

### Table 12  Relationships among the Nationalities in Terms of All the Errors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bangladesh</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Indonesian</th>
<th>Singapore</th>
<th>Somali</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td></td>
<td>.474**</td>
<td></td>
<td>.329**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td></td>
<td>.258*</td>
<td></td>
<td>.538**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesian</td>
<td></td>
<td>.294*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somali</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)**

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)*

Table 12 shows the relationships among the five nationalities in terms of all the errors made by employing the Spearman Correlation Analysis. From Table 12, it can be seen
that there are several significant relationships among the five nationalities. To specify, significant relationships are identified between Chinese and Singaporean (.538**), Bangladeshi and Chinese (.474**), Bangladeshi and Singaporean (.329**), Indonesian and Singaporean (.294*) and Chinese and Indonesian (.258*), thus rejecting the null hypothesis. However, the remaining nationalities do not have any significant relationships, hence, accepting the null hypothesis.

Since there are several significant relationships identified throughout all the five nationalities in terms of all the errors, it is necessary to also identify the relationships by each error. Table 13 shows the relationships found among the five nationalities in terms of each error made.

**Table 13** Relationships among the Nationalities by Each Type of Error

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bangladeshi</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Indonesian</th>
<th>Singaporean</th>
<th>Somali</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladeshi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.643*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.670*</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Omission Error)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.760*</td>
<td>(Omission Error)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singaporean</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somali</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 13 shows the relationships among the nationalities by each type of error made. As can be seen from Table 13, two relationships are detected for omission errors between the Indonesian and Singaporean participants (.760*) as well as for the Bangladeshi and Somali participants (.643*). Another relationship was also identified between the Chinese and Indonesian participants in terms of the spelling error (.670*). The relationships found suggested that there is a tendency among the participants to commit similar types of errors at a certain degree. The analysis also shows that this tendency is only applicable for spelling and omission errors.
Research Question 5

What are the reasons for the errors in their writing?

We shall discuss this research question according to the types of errors committed.

Spelling

Spelling is the correct order of letters in a word. Spelling errors occur when they do not follow the correct order of the letters in a word and the reasons may be due to mother tongue interference, that is the influence of the first language which is acquired at home.

In Hanyu Pinyin (Chinese written pronunciation) there are no double consonants for words - there are no double consonants for the spelling of words such as “hobby”. Therefore, the Chinese participants spell it with only one “b” and therefore make an error by spelling it as *hoby.

In Chinese there is no st, nd and rd for e.g. 1st, 2nd, or 3rd as in English. Therefore, the students do not know how to use “st”, “nd” or “rd” correctly. In Chinese they use “er” to refer to number 2 but “nd” is not used. Therefore, they make errors such as * 21th student (21st century student).

Another reason for spelling errors is that students spell according to the pronunciation of the words. Students spell the words according to how they pronounce the words in spoken English. They talk like this, therefore, they write in the same manner. Chinese, Bangladeshi and Indonesian students spell according to how the word is pronounced, for example, *mor for “more” , *happyness for “happiness”, *everythin for “everything”. Furthermore, some of them are only exposed to speech, and not written materials. Therefore, they tend to write what they have heard before by predicting the spellings. Indonesian students write *developement, *Nederlend, *managment, *moslems, *planed, *trully, *hapier. Chinese students write * realxing, *Viwes, *Curtral, *Indepndent, *Concusion.

Other reasons for their spelling errors could be due to carelessness when they do not check or revise their writing. For example some of the careless Indonesian students write *becouse, *batter.
The Somali language does not have a few letters which the English language has. These are the letters P, V, and Z. Therefore, according to our interview with a Somali native language speaker, you can see lots of Somali students who are confused with these letters in terms of pronunciation or spelling. He said, “When we are writing something, we might spell as Somali language which is really wrong in English.”

Grammar

“Grammar is a description of the structure of a language and the way in which linguistic units such as words and phrases are combined to produce sentences in the language. It usually takes into account the meanings and functions these sentences have in the overall system of the language” (Richards et al., 1992, p. 161).

Errors in English grammar occur when speakers have not mastered the rules of the English language well and when the structures they produce deviate from the standard English language. The causes for the errors could be due to the following:

Mother Tongue Interference

Subject-Verb Agreement errors by Chinese participants:

*The world have...

*Every culture have something attractives...

In Chinese, ǒu refers to both have and has. They thus cannot differentiate between the two and use them wrongly. In English for singular subjects we use has, and for plural subjects we use the verb have.

*Have to survive with all condition...

*...for students future career

For Indonesian students, there is singular and plural confusion because in their first language, there is no such thing as addition of ‘s’ in the verbs.

Structures are not present in their mother tongue

*a foreign country was my vision...
*Study together...

*...will united student in diversity.

Indonesian students are normally confused with the use of adjuncts and past tenses, because they perceive ‘ing’ as sedang, and ‘ed’ as telah. Therefore, they will tend to use them throughout their writing as what they understand them to be.

**Punctuation Errors**

In the Chinese language, they have full stops which are replaced by a small circle. However, the other punctuation marks like the comma, question mark, exclamation mark, semi-colon, and colon are the same. However, the Chinese language has no capital letters and no apostrophes and therefore the students from China made errors in these areas. Students 2 and 4 from the sample have used the apostrophe wrongly as can be seen in the examples from their written work for *That’s* and *teacher’s* teach. For the proper noun for the country “Malaysia”, student 9 has used a lowercase letter for a proper noun *In malaysia...”

The Bangladeshi students do not know how to use punctuation marks correctly and often do not use commas. Bangladeshi students have not learnt the rules of English punctuation marks well. As can be seen in their writing, they do not know which punctuation mark to use after the transition marker. For example, a student wrote *Firstly:*- with a colon and a dash, when it should be a comma. They also have problems with the use of apostrophes. For example, in the phrase, “in everyone’s life” is correct but a student has written as “in *everyone life” without the apostrophe and later used it wrongly by writing “*It give’s a...” Another student did not use a comma after education to show a pause. He has also used the capital letter wrongly in the middle of the sentence “because of *In...” Also, student 8 did not use a comma to show a pause for the sentence, *For a better life, ... as was written “For a better life I want to study, ...”* Furthermore, he used it wrongly after study,...

The Benggali language of the Bangladeshi participants does not have apostrophes. For example, The girl’s book – Meye-ta-r boi. The –r- in Bengali shows possession. Also, there are no articles. They use genitive case for example: the girl – meyetar, the boy – seletar. *Tar* in Bengali is used to refer to the definite article “the.”
For Indonesian participants, Student 6 starts every sentence with a lowercase letter showing that he does not know that every sentence in English must start with a capital letter. Student 7 does not know that for proper nouns such as “Asia” and “Malaysia” should start with a capital letter. Also, this student does not know how to use a semi colon correctly because she has used it instead of a comma. Student 8 has used capital letters wrongly in the middle of a sentence, “I don’t *Get...Also, she does not understand how to use apostrophes correctly as shown in “ my *brother’s...they all”. The Indonesian language has no apostrophes to show possession and as such Indonesians have problems in using this punctuation mark. Student 10 has used capital letters in the middle of a sentence for Education and the preposition “in” for example she has written, “In Malaysia better than *Education *In Indonesia because ...” and this shows that she does not understand when to use capital letters accurately.

For the Singaporeans, Student 9 does not use commas in his long sentences because he does not know when to use them and therefore does not use them or does not know that such a punctuation mark exists. For example “...by staying far from my parents it teach me...”

For the Somali students, Student 1 does not know that to start a sentence in English he must use a capital letter. Student 4 does not use apostrophe for “its” when he needs to use to mean “it is” and should write it as “it’s.”

**Insertion Errors**

Insertion errors were found in abundance in the writing of the Chinese, Indonesian, and Bangladeshi participants.

The Chinese students wrote:

*...can help each other in everywhere.

*...I can make with many friends...

*...I will study hard as for myself.

In Chinese, “…in everywhere”, is directly translated from their mother tongue e.g. keyi bangmang zai renhe defang
*Can help in everywhere

Insertion errors are caused by influence of the Chinese language called ‘Putonghua’.

e.g. Wo keyi gen henduo ren zuo pengyou.

*I can make with many friends.

The Indonesian students who translated from their own mother tongue (the Indonesian language) came up with these errors:

*Because it’s near from my country... (kerana ia dekat dari Negara saya)

*...so I want studying in here...(kerana saya hendak belajar di sini)

*I wish when I study in here. (saya harap apabila saya belajar di sini)

*They like to go to overseas for studying...(mereka suka pergi ke luar Negara untuk belajar)

In the Indonesian language, they have a lot of prepositions to show locations (dari, di, ke) and therefore they insert them wrongly due to direct translation from their mother tongue when writing in the English language.

In English we do not need redundant prepositions and do not use them when the meaning is already clear for example, “I wish when I study here,...” but the students write “I wish when I study in here.” The Indonesian preposition “di” is thus very often translated into their English language writing. Due to direct translation from their mother tongue, we see insertion errors and these are mainly prepositions like in, to, and articles such as a and the.

Somali students likewise translate directly from Arabic and write:

*advantages of learning in abroad,

*In conclusion, studying abroad countries is very important to the students’ life...

The Somali students too have problems of inserting the preposition “in” when there is no need for it for example, “…advantages of learning *in abroad”.

48
For the Bangladeshi students, by translating from their mother tongue, the Bengali language, the students come up with extra words for information which can actually be conveyed with less words for example, “...has both of some merits and demerits” which can be written as “with some merits and demerits”.

Singaporeans are made up of three major races, namely the Chinese, Malays and Indians. Insertion errors are caused by the influence of the Chinese language called ‘Putonghua’.

e.g. Wo keyi gen henduo ren zuo pengyou.

I can make *with many friends.

...experience by befriending *with other races...

The Malays have a tendency of inserting prepositions as they always translate directly from their mother tongue – the Malay language for example: *… is an one experience that will come only at once.

*If we are offered to study outside *from our country,...

After studying the rules for articles, the students often use them when actually they are not needed. Here they apply an overgeneralization rule on articles. The examples from the excerpts show this very clearly for example, “…to release *a tension...”; ...with *a good moral values.

There is also a confusion on the use of pronouns such as our, and my for example, “Lastly, I have to list *our *my own budget so that I will not over spend it”.

Run-Ons and Fragments

A run-on happens when you join two simple sentences without a comma and without a connecting word. A fragment is an incomplete sentence i.e. leaving out the subject or verb.

The Somali students have lots of run-ons and fragments in their writing and when interviewed, a Somali postgraduate student said:

“First of all, most Somali students are confused in their writing because they always try to translate their own language to English, and this results in them making a
lot of errors in their writing and readers will not be able to understand what they mean. For example, the boy is crying, if I try to translate into Somali language, it becomes boy crying.” Also, writing is affected by the Arabic writing system which is their native language writing system.”

Vocabulary

The Chinese students made the following vocabulary errors in their writing:

*We can has a nice surround to improve our English

*And there is highly quality of teach in University...

*natures for points

*cultural for culture

*All the new cultural attracted me...

*In malaysia most of people is Islamic

Chinese students use the wrong choice of words because they lack the English vocabulary equivalents. For e.g. they mistake cultural for culture as they do not know how to differentiate between the two. In Chinese they use “wenhua” to refer to both terms. To refer to “life” and “living”, the Chinese have only one term _ shenghuo. Therefore, Chinese students make errors in the use of these two words. The Chinese students do not understand the difference in the usage of the terms, “Islam” and “Muslim” and therefore they make errors in the choice of words in their formal writing.

The Indonesian students make the following errors in vocabulary:

*As a *melayu (Malay) country almost of the...

*...to get much *learn...(education)

*our time for *learn (learning) will be minus (reduced)

*Beside (Besides) that...

*...be a *success (successful) person...
Indonesian students lack the correct vocabulary as they resort to translation from their mother tongue. They are also not well-versed in the different word forms in English due to not having had enough practice in class or in their conversation.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

This study involved the use of a mixed method of research involving quantitative and qualitative data. The errors made by the participants from the five countries (Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Singapore and Somalia) were analysed using both descriptive (Mean Ranking) and inferential statistics (Kruskal Wallis and Spearman Correlation). To understand the causes of the errors made, the researchers interviewed five language experts from the five countries.

From the analysis of the data, the most common types of errors according to nationalities were Indonesian participants committed most punctuation, omission and insertion errors. The Somali students committed the most errors in spelling, run-ons and fragments, while the Chinese participants committed the most grammar and vocabulary errors. Meanwhile, the Bangladeshi and Singaporean students were found to be slightly better as they did not commit most of the errors.

The findings showed that there are differences among the five nationalities in terms of all the types of errors made (spelling, grammar, punctuation, omission, insertion, vocabulary and run-ons and fragments). However, generally there are associations in terms of all the types of errors made when seen as a whole between the Chinese and Singaporean, Bangladeshi and Chinese, Bangladeshi and Singaporeans, Indonesian and Singaporeans, and Chinese and Indonesian participants. To be more specific, there are several associations between certain nationalities and each type of error they make. For example, the omission errors between the Indonesian and Singaporean participants as well as between the Bangladeshi and Somali participants. Another association was found in the spelling errors between the Chinese and the Indonesian participants.

From our interviews with the language experts, the errors can be seen to be largely due to an interference from their first language or mother tongue. However, there could be also other reasons such as carelessness, not having enough exposure to written English materials, inappropriate teaching methods, influence of spoken form in their writing, and overgeneralisation of the rules.
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## APPENDIX A

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LANGUAGE EXPERTS

1. It has been noted that a large number of students make grammar errors constantly. Listed below are the errors arranged according to frequency of occurrences:

Could you possibly give us some reasons as to why students constantly make these kinds of errors?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Errors</th>
<th>Samples</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Possible Reasons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Omission</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
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<td>Spelling</td>
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<td>Insertion</td>
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<td>Punctuation</td>
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<td>Vocabulary</td>
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<td>Run-ons and</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fragments</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
2. In your opinion does learning English vary greatly with that of learning your language?

3. What are the major differences between English and your language – in terms of vocabulary, sentence structure and grammar (subject-verb agreement, noun-pronoun agreement, singular-plural, existence of modals)

4. Do you have tenses your language? If so, describe their characteristics.

5. From your knowledge, does essay writing require some form of organization such as Introduction, Thesis Statement, Topic Sentences, Supporting Details and Conclusion.

6. Do you have punctuation marks in your language?
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