

# The Influence of Mother Tongue in Malay Language Essay-Writing among Tamil Students

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## Abstract

This study sheds light on the influence of mother tongue in the Malay Language essay-writing among students from Tamil-type Primary School (SJKT). The purpose of this research is to examine the extent to which Tamil Language as the mother tongue influences the Tamil school students in their Malay Language essay-writing. This study also discusses the errors that appear in the essay-writing due to the influence of Mother tongue. The study findings are shown in tables based on the descriptive elaboration. Researcher selected 70 Year 5 students as the samples. All the samples were selected from four Tamil-type schools from Kuala Lumpur area. This study leans on Lado's Contrastive Analysis Theory. The theory explains the differences between the first language and the second language that have created some issues, and the confusion arising among students as they learn and master the second language. The study data were compiled through the samples' essay-writing and were analysed to identify the influence of Mother tongue (Tamil Language) in Malay Language essays, especially in terms of the sentence construction. The study findings point to the fact that there is a very obvious influence of Mother tongue, or Tamil Language in the Malay Language essay-writing, and it is found that students have made some direct translation from Tamil Language to Malay Language in their essay-writing. The study outcome has raised an awareness among educators, especially Malay Language teachers in SJKT to make improvement to the teaching method in PdPc to address the issue of Tamil Language influence among students. In the effort to elevate the status of Malay Language as the national and official language, all SJKT students have to master Malay Language and use it in learning, especially in writing and speaking using the right grammar- all towards preserving the originality of the Malay Language.

**Keywords:** Influence of Mother Tongue, Tamil Language, First Language, Second Language

## Introduction

Malay Language has been declared the national and official language based on the Constitution of Malaysia 152(1). Other than Malay Language being used in all official affairs, it also serves as the medium of instruction in the education system. Although the Mother tongue is the medium of instruction in all schools; Malay Language continues to be taught as the second language in Tamil- and Chinese-type schools. To realise the vision of the Malaysian

constitution, all students from various racial backgrounds have to master and use the Malay Language without any errors. However, Tamil school students face various issues in the learning of Malay Language as the second language, as the Mother tongue as the first language has become an obstacle for them to master. The grammatical systems of both languages are different. According to Lado (1957), the difference that exists between the first language (Mother tongue) and the second language has caused some confusion to students in the learning and mastery of a second, or foreign, language. This occurs among the Tamil students, where the intervention of the Mother tongue which is Tamil, stands as the root cause underlying the problem of learning and mastering Malay Language. The incorrect use of the Malay Language in terms of the sentence structure and grammar in the essay-writing has led to the Tamil school students lagging behind in the use of the Malay Language in their learning.

### **Problem Statement**

The influence of Mother tongue in Tamil language is the main issue faced by Tamil school students in the learning and mastery of Malay Language as the second language (Hei, 2016). In the effort to learn and master Malay Language as the second language, surely there are various challenges that have to be faced by Tamil school students. In the process of learning a language as the second language, a speaker cannot avoid from making mistakes. This is because there is a linguistic difference in the language system between the first language which is the Mother tongue and the second language learned. This causes the disruption of the Mother tongue (Juriah, 1994). The disruption of the Mother tongue has become the main reason for the errors emerging in the second language learning (Aini, 2007) dan Lado (1957), as stated by (Farid, 1983). Accordingly, the Mother tongue or the Tamil language influences the learning of Malay Language as the second language (Ooi Chew 2017).

Thus, Tamil-type school students face some difficulties in producing quality essays and most of the essays produced were below par and considered to be at low level. The influence of Mother tongue is evident in the essay-writing, in terms of the sentence construction and the use of several grammatical aspects, where Tamil-type school students frequently made direct translation from Tamil Language to Malay Language when writing Malay Language sentences (Mahendran, 2016). Students think of ideas in Tamil Language then translated into the Malay Language in their essay-writing. This is proof of students' weakness in writing grammatical sentences, so the quality of an essay is also affected. Thus, this study discusses the influence of Mother tongue which is Tamil Language in the Malay Language essay-writing by Tamil-type school students.

### **Study Objective**

This study specifically aims to identify and discuss the influence of Mother tongue (Tamil language) in the Malay Language essay-writing of Tamil school students.

### **Study Literature**

In essence, the learning of the second language or the foreign language is not a walk in the park. This is due to the fact that the linguistic difference characterising the mother tongue, or the first language and the second language or the foreign language, confuses a speaker in learning and mastering the language (Lado, 1957). The errors made by students in the learning of the second or foreign language alone, are justifiable by the disruption of the Mother tongue

or the first language. This is also mentioned in the study findings from researchers such as Ali Derakhsan and Karimi (2015), Erdogen (2005), Raminah (1983), Farid and Ajid (1981) and Kadir Karim (1981) whereby it is stated that the influence of the disruption of the first language has become the norm in the second language or foreign language errors.

The work by Mohd Norazmie Mohd Yusof and Saidatul Nomis Haji Mahadi (2019), highlighted the influence of the Malay Language in Bruneian Dusun. The aim of this study is to identify the influence of the Malay Language in the Dusun language in Brunei. The study findings showed that there are many aspects of the Dusun Language are influenced by the Malay Language in terms of the spelling system, pronunciation and affixes. Lexical in the Dusun dictionary is also influenced by the Malay Language. According to Su (2009) in her study, she discovered that students learning Thai as foreign language made mistakes in forming the Thai sentence structures correctly as the influence of the Malay Language as the first language had brought upon some confusion to the students when learning and mastering Thai language. Meanwhile, the work by Su (2018) concerns the influence of the Mother tongue which is Thai language on the Malay Language sentence structure construction as foreign language by students of Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand. The study outcome shows that the influence of the Mother tongue or Thai, is really obvious in the Malay Language sentence structures. This is because the Thai students have conducted direct translation and exchange from Thai to the Malay Language.

Additionally, the study by Mahendran Maniam and Karteges Ponniah (2014) with respect to the influence of the Mother tongue (Tamil Language) in the process of learning Malay Language, found that there are several influences of Mother tongue among SJKT students, especially in terms of the syntax and vocabulary. Researcher found that the sentence construction in the Malay Language by the Tamil-type school students is influenced by the Tamil Language sentence structure as they did direct translation from Tamil to Malay Language. There is also the influence of Tamil in the use of capital letters and consonant doubling in the writing of Malay Language. The findings of the study by Mahendran Maniam and Karteges Ponniah were consistent with those of Suthanthiradewi J.N.J Money 2004, concerning the language errors in the essays of Tamil students learning Malay Language at the secondary school, where it is discovered that most of the sentence structures produced by the samples are the literal translation from Tamil Language sentence structures. Thus, it clearly shows that the Tamil Language as the Mother tongue influences the Tamil-type school students in the learning and writing of the Malay Language.

Not only the Tamil-type school students, students from Chinese schools are also influenced by their Mother tongue in the learning of Malay Language. The work by Ooi Chwee Hwa and Vijayaletchumy in (2017) looked into the factors causing the influence of the first language in learning Malay Language among Chinese students, and they concluded that four factors namely practice, environment, interest and attitude are the obstacles faced by Chinese school students when learning the Malay Language as the second language.

#### *Comparison with Previous Studies*

This study finds that the influence of Mother Tongue which is Tamil Language in the Malay Language essay-writing can be identified in several main forms, which is in the form of words, sentences through direct translation, the use of spoken language in writing, and the grammar

aspects. Data analysis has shown that the direct translation of words and sentences from Tamil Language to Malay Language often occurs among the students of Tamil schools, leading to errors made in the sentence structure and also to inaccurate lexical usage. The finding also suggests that the grammatical differences between Tamil and Malay Language contribute to the students' difficulty in mastering the latter well.

The previous works established by Krishnasamy (2015) and Rajendran (2018) show that students from the non-native background often face difficulties in mastering the grammar of Malay Language due to the difference in the linguistic structure between their mother tongue and the second language they learn. For instance, in the work by Krishnasamy (2015), it is found that Tamil students often make mistakes in the use of prepositions and conjunctions, as the sentence structure in Tamil language does not rely on these elements, similar to the Malay Language. This resonates with the studies by Mohd Norazmie Mohd Yusof and Saidatul Nomis Haji Mahadi (2019) stating that there are a lot of aspects of Dusun Language that have been influenced by the Malay Language in terms of the spelling system, pronunciation and affixes. The study by Norizan Che Su (2009) proves that the influence of Malay Language as the first language causes confusion to the students in learning and mastering Thai Language. Meanwhile, the work by Rajendran (2018) stresses on the fact that the direct translation from Tamil Language causes some glaring syntax errors, especially in the formation of passive sentences and the use of transitive verbs.

This study is also consistent with the studies by Dechert (1983), Ellis (1997), Bhela (1999), and Alsaigh dan Kennison (2017), which asserted that when there is a significant difference in the structures of the first and second languages, the influence from the first language will be imposed on the learning of the second language, leading to linguistic errors among the students. Thus, the findings from the research are somewhat in tandem with the findings from the past literature which stated that the mother tongue (Tamil Language) as the first language disrupts and causes confusion in the learning and mastery of Malay Language as the second language.

### **Study Methodology**

Researcher has adopted the qualitative method in this study. A total of 70 Year 5 students was selected as sample. Respondents were from 4 Tamil-type schools in Pudu Zone, Kuala Lumpur. The study subjects were chosen using the purposive sampling method. Researcher used Lado's Contrastive Analysis Theory (1957) in this current work. The theory has explained the existing difference between the first language and the second language, causing problems and confusion to students when it comes to learning and mastering the second language. Thus, researcher also needs to ascertain if the difference that exists disrupts the Mother tongue which is Tamil Language in the learning of the Malay Language as the second language in the Tamil-type schools. Researcher adopted the content analysis, interview and observation methods. Instruments like essay-writing practices and interview audio recording were used to obtain the study data. The essay-writing practices were analysed to identify the influence of Tamil Language in Malay Language essays, as far as sentence construction is concerned. Data analysis was conducted based on the qualitative method. The data gathered were analysed in percentage and findings. The focus on this study rests on the influence of the Mother tongue (Tamil Language) in Malay Language essays of the Tamil-type school

students also the errors found in the Malay Language essay-writing due to the influence of the Mother tongue, or specifically Tamil Language.

### Study Findings and Discussion

Researcher will elaborate in detail the influence of Mother tongue which is Tamil Language, in the Malay Language essay-writing of the Tamil students. The influence of Mother tongue found in the Year 5 students' essays has been discussed in terms of the use of the sentences and several other grammatical aspects often used by the students when writing their Malay Language essays. The data analysed are able to be shown in the form of tables together with elaborations, and suitable examples extracted from the texts from the samples' essays.

#### *The Influence of Mother Tongue in the form of Words*

Words are integral to sentence construction. Words are the lexical or the vocabulary of a language. The word arrangement according to the correct grammatical aspect will clarify the meaning better. Data analysis shows that there is the case of direct translation of words from Tamil Language to Malay Language. This can be seen in the Malay Language sentence construction in the samples' essay-writing. Overall, a total of 24 words has been identified in the Malay essay writing based on the direct translation from the Tamil Language. There are several instances established from the data findings:

Table 1

*The word translation from Tamil Language to Malay Language*

| sample    | Malay Language sentence /word constructed by the sample                                          | Correct Malay Language sentence |
|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| sample 06 | Memakai besar baju                                                                               | Memakai baju yang besar         |
| BT-BM     | Besar (periyaa) –saiz yang besar + baju (sattai) = periyaa sattai (besar baju)                   |                                 |
| sample 08 | Dia orang bermain                                                                                | Mereka bermain                  |
| BT-BM     | Dia orang (avargal)- mereka + bermain (vilaiy:dinar) = avargal vilaiya:dinar (Dia orang bermain) |                                 |
| sample 26 | Pergi ke kawan rumah                                                                             | Pergi ke rumah kawan            |
| BT-BM     | kawan (nanban) + rumah (vi:du) = nanbanin vi:du (kawan rumah)                                    |                                 |
| sample 54 | Itu tempat                                                                                       | Tempat itu                      |
| BT-BM     | Itu (antha) – merujuk arah + tempat (idam) = antha idam (itu tempat)                             |                                 |
| sample 63 | Menjaga badan kesihatan                                                                          | Menjaga kesihatan               |
| BT-BM     | badan (udal) + kesihatan (nalam) = udal nalam (badan kesihatan)                                  |                                 |
| sample 67 | Membina pasir istana                                                                             | Membina istana pasir            |
| BT-BM     | pasir (manal) + istana (ma:ligai) –mahligai = manal ma:ligai (pasir istana)                      |                                 |

There are several examples showing direct translation from the Tamil Language to Malay Language.

sample 20 – Navin bercakap dekat ayah. (appavidam) - Navin bercakap dengan ayah.

sample 14 – Dia ibu pergi ke kedai. (avanin amma) - Ibunya pergi ke kedai.

sample 51 – Banyak orang kecil (niRaiya siRuvarkaL) - Ramai kanak-kanak

sample 59 – Tempat yang bayang. (nizal) – teduh - Tempat yang teduh.

#### *The Influence of Mother Tongue in the form of Sentences (Direct Translation)*

The influence of mother tongue is also obvious in the Malay Language sentence production among Tamil school students. The influence exists among the samples as they make direct translation from the Tamil Language to the Malay Language when they write their essays.

Normally, the Tamil school students think of a sentence in Tamil Language, then the sentence is directly translated word by word in the Malay Language. This clearly shows that there are sentence structure errors due to the fact that both Tamil and Malay Languages have different structures. Table 2, explains several examples showing the influence of mother tongue in the Malay Language sentence construction through the direct translation made by the samples.

Table 2

*The Influence of Mother Tongue in Sentences*

| sample                    | BM sentence constructed by the sample                                                                                             | Correct Malay Language sentence                        |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| 04                        | <i>Sana banyak pokok ada</i>                                                                                                      | <i>Terdapat banyak pokok di sana.</i>                  |
| Tamil sentence<br>BT - BM | <b>அங்கு நிறைய மரங்கள் உள்ளன.</b><br><i>Angku + niRaiya + maranggaL+ uLLna.</i><br>( <i>Sana + banyak + pokok + ada</i> )         |                                                        |
| 08                        | <i>Bapa tak mari cakap adik</i>                                                                                                   | <i>Adik memberitahu bahawa bapa tidak akan datang.</i> |
| Tamil sentence<br>BT - BM | <b>அப்பா வரமாட்டார் என்றான் தம்பி.</b><br><i>Appa + varama:ttar + enRan + thambi</i><br>( <i>Bapa + tak mari + cakap + adik</i> ) |                                                        |
| 19                        | <i>Sana besar ombak ada</i>                                                                                                       | <i>Terdapat ombak yang besar.</i>                      |
| Tamil sentence<br>BT - BM | <b>அங்கு பெரிய அலை காணப்பட்டது.</b><br><i>angku + periya + azai + ka:nappattahu</i><br>( <i>Sana + besar + ombak + ada</i> )      |                                                        |
| 26                        | <i>Ali hari ini tak datang</i>                                                                                                    | <i>Ali tidak hadir hari ini.</i>                       |
| Tamil sentence<br>BT - BM | <b>அலி இன்று வரவில்லை</b><br><i>ali + inRu + varavillai</i><br>( <i>Ali + hari ini + tak datang</i> )                             |                                                        |
| 47                        | <i>Saya gembira banyak</i>                                                                                                        | <i>Saya sangat gembira.</i>                            |
| Tamil sentence<br>BT - BM | <b>நான் மிகவும் மகிழ்ந்தேன்.</b><br><i>na:n + migavum + makizthe:n</i><br>( <i>saya + sangat + gembira</i> )                      |                                                        |
| 50                        | <i>Banyak orang pun bermain</i>                                                                                                   | <i>Ramai orang bermain.</i>                            |
| Tamil sentence<br>BT - BM | <b>நிறைய பேர் விளையாடினர்.</b><br><i>niRaiya + per + viLaiya:dinar.</i><br>( <i>Banyak + orang pun + bermain</i> )                |                                                        |
| 54                        | <i>Sana lima puluh orang ada</i>                                                                                                  | <i>Terdapat lima puluh orang di sana.</i>              |
| Tamil sentence<br>BT - BM | <b>அங்கு ஐம்பது பேர் இருந்தனர்.</b><br><i>Angku + aimbathu + per + irunthanar</i><br>( <i>Sana + lima puluh + orang + ada</i> )   |                                                        |

The Malay Language sentences produced by all the samples above as shown in Table 2, clearly demonstrate that there is direct translation from Tamil Language to Malay Language. The sentences are constructed by the samples by translating word by word from Tamil Language to Malay Language to form a complete sentence. In the opinions of the samples, they think

that they have successfully made sentences in the Malay Language with the aid of the Tamil Language. However, the sentences constructed are erroneous in terms of the structure and grammar. Thus, the sentences are categorised as ungrammatical sentences. Although the sentences in Tamil Language given by the researcher through the translation method are correct in terms of the structure and grammar, due to the influence of the mother tongue, the sentences in Malay Language have become ungrammatical and contain multiple errors, in terms of the grammar and meaning.

If we look at it in detail, the Malay Language sentence written by sample 04 is wrong in terms of the sentence structure. However, the sentence in the Tamil Language carries the right sentence structure and meaning. Researcher has fragmented the Malay Language sentence written by the sample (*Sana + banyak + pokok + ada*) and compared it with the sentence in Tamil Language, translated as (*angku + niRaiya + maranggaL+ uLLna*), so there is the process of word-by-word direct translation from Tamil Language to Malay Language. A similar case has been observed in other examples as shown in Table 2. There is clear evidence that the Tamil-type school students have performed direct translation word by word as they construct sentences in the Malay Language.

Several sentences in Malay Language constructed by the samples with indications of direct translation from the Tamil Language to the Malay Language.

**Sample 19 :** *Semua mereka gembira.* ▼ *Semua mereka (anaivarum) + gembira makizthanar)* *Ayat yang betul* ▼ *Mereka semua gembira.*

**Sample 51 :** *Di sana kecil ketam ada* ▼ *Di sana (angku) + kecil (siRiya) + ketam (naNdu)*  
*+ ada (irunthana)* *Ayat yang betul* ▼ *Di sana terdapat ketam yang kecil.*

#### *The Spoken Language Used in Writing*

The influence of mother tongue in essay-writing also takes place through the use of the spoken language by the Tamil-type school students in their writing. Most samples do not realise that the colloquial language can only be used for communication purposes and not appropriate in writing. Essentially, the Tamil-type school students find it difficult to distinguish the informal and the standard language. The problem exists because they frequently use the spoken language in the form of writing. These are some of the sentences written by the samples using the spoken language (colloquial language).

**Sample 04 :** *saya **mari** pantai untuk mandi.*  
*(Saya pergi ke pantai untuk mandi)*

**Sample 07 :** ***Dia orang cakap** pantai cantik.*  
*(Mereka mengatakan pantai itu cantik)*

**Sample 08 :** *Saya **tak tau** renang.*  
*(Saya tidak tahu berenang)*

**Sample 26 :** *Adik **cakap** dia demam*  
*(Adik memberitahu bahawa dia demam)*

Based on the samples' sentences above, clearly the words such as *mari*, *dia orang cakap*, *tak tau* and *cakap* are the spoken language used by the samples in their sentences. The blend between the spoken language in the sentence-writing not only produces incorrect sentence structures, but also produces vague and confusing meanings. This is because the samples are not skilful enough in differentiating the spoken language from the standard language, and they have inadvertently committed such errors when making sentences. Speeches that are accented with Tamil Language influence the Tamil-type school students in the Malay Language sentence writing. Thus, the Tamil school students cannot avoid from making mistakes, mixing the spoken and the standard language in the essay-writing.

#### *The Influence of Mother Tongue in the Grammatical Aspects of Malay Language*

The influence of mother tongue in the Malay Language essay-writing is also evident in the grammatical areas. This is explained by the fact that several grammatical aspects in the Malay Language are different in usage and sometimes are non-existent in the grammar of the Tamil Language. As such, there exists the influence of mother tongue among the Tamil-type school students as they are constructing the Malay Language sentences especially in the grammar aspects. Referring to the data analysis of several grammatical aspects in the Malay Language sentence construction, the influence of mother tongue among the Tamil school students was able to be detected. The influence encompasses the use of vowels and consonants in words, capital letters, prepositions, conjunctions and doubling element.

#### *The Influence of Mother Tongue in the Vowels and Consonants of Malay Language*

As has been acknowledged, there are no vowel and consonant elements in Tamil Language. This is a cause of confusion for the Tamil-type school students when it comes to building sentences in Malay Language. Most of the samples in this study have problems in using vowels and consonants correctly when they write sentences in Malay Language. The proverbial 'culprit' here is the influence of the mother tongue as there are no vowels and consonants in Tamil Language. The grammatical aspects in terms of the vowels and consonants in Malay Language are explained with regard to their replacement, addition and omission.

Table 3

*The influence of mother tongue in words involving vowels*

| Vowel replacement |                                | Vowel addition |                     | Vowel omission |                            |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|---------------------|----------------|----------------------------|
| <i>e - a</i>      | <i>selesai - selasai</i>       | <i>i</i>       | <i>sini - siini</i> | <i>u</i>       | <i>suatu - s_atu</i>       |
| <i>e - u</i>      | <i>seterusnya - seturusnya</i> |                |                     | <i>i</i>       | <i>tepi - tep_</i>         |
| <i>u - o</i>      | <i>rumah - romah</i>           |                |                     | <i>e</i>       | <i>keluarga - k_luarga</i> |
| <i>a - e</i>      | <i>kerja - karja</i>           |                |                     | <i>a</i>       | <i>kerana - keran_</i>     |
| <i>a - u</i>      | <i>teruja - teruju</i>         |                |                     |                |                            |
| <i>i - a</i>      | <i>adik - adak</i>             |                |                     |                |                            |
| <i>i - e</i>      | <i>duit - duet</i>             |                |                     |                |                            |
| <i>a - o</i>      | <i>sedang - sedong</i>         |                |                     |                |                            |
| <i>o - e</i>      | <i>seronok - serenok</i>       |                |                     |                |                            |

Table 4

*The influence of mother tongue in words involving consonants*

| Vowel replacement |                                      | Vowel addition |                                       | Vowel omission |                                  |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|----------------------------------|
| <i>t - d</i>      | <i>pantai - pandai</i>               | <i>g</i>       | <i>mengambil -<br/>menggambil</i>     | <i>n</i>       | <i>untuk - u_tuk</i>             |
| <i>m - p</i>      | <i>memasang - mepasang</i>           | <i>t</i>       | <i>letak - lettak</i>                 | <i>b</i>       | <i>membina - mem_ina</i>         |
| <i>n - m</i>      | <i>makanan - makanam</i>             | <i>y</i>       | <i>menaiki - menyayiki</i>            | <i>h</i>       | <i>sudah - suda_</i>             |
| <i>h - r</i>      | <i>bergeloh - bergelohor</i>         | <i>k</i>       | <i>nakal - nakkal</i>                 | <i>g</i>       | <i>menggosok -<br/>meng_osok</i> |
| <i>k - h</i>      | <i>nasi lemak - nasi lemah</i>       | <i>h</i>       | <i>pantai - panthai</i>               | <i>k</i>       | <i>untuk - untu_</i>             |
| <i>b - d</i>      | <i>membina - memdina</i>             | <i>n</i>       | <i>pertengahan -<br/>pertengahann</i> | <i>r</i>       | <i>bermain - bemain</i>          |
| <i>g - y</i>      | <i>mengambil - menyambil</i>         | <i>b</i>       | <i>esok - besok</i>                   | <i>l</i>       | <i>sambil - sambi_</i>           |
| <i>h - k</i>      | <i>jatuh - jatuk</i>                 | <i>p</i>       | <i>memakai - mempakai</i>             |                |                                  |
| <i>y - s</i>      | <i>menyediakan -<br/>mensediakan</i> | <i>l</i>       | <i>teruja - terulaja</i>              |                |                                  |
| <i>m - n</i>      | <i>menyiram - menyiran</i>           | <i>r</i>       | <i>berehat - berrehat</i>             |                |                                  |
| <i>p - b</i>      | <i>mengumpul - mengumbul</i>         |                |                                       |                |                                  |

There are some other words written by the samples where the consonants are replaced. For instance,

*k* replaced by *c* - kopi written as **c**opi      *b* replaced by *d* - bapa written as **d**apa  
*t* replaced by *n* - dapat written as **d**apan      *t* replaced by *k* - jerit written as **j**erik

As a whole, data shows that there are 25 vowel replacements, one vowel addition and 12 vowel omissions in the samples' essays. In terms of the consonants, there are 35 replacement consonants, 21 consonant additions and 48 consonant omissions.

#### *The Use of Capital Letters and Small Letters*

The mastery of capital letters and small letters has also become problematic for the Tamil school students. This is due to the fact that there are no elements of capital and small letters in Tamil Language. Their familiarity of not having to use capital letters and small letters in the writing of Tamil Language has made them very prone to making mistakes in both these grammatical aspects. As they do not use capital and small letters in that language, some of the samples have followed this norm and neglected the use of capital and small letters that are so important in the Malay Language writings. The confusion that exists around the capital and small letters between both languages, has made the samples less skilful in using them in their Malay Language essays. The table below explains the errors in the use of capital letters and small letters by the samples in their essays. The sole reason for such errors is the influence of the Tamil Language. The students do not give a priority to both these grammatical aspects when writing essays in Malay Language, as both the aspects are not available in their mother tongue which is the Tamil Language .

Table 5

*Errors in Using Capital and Small Letters*

| Beginning of sentence<br>(the use of small letters) | Middle sentence<br>(the use of capital letters) | Proper Noun<br>(the use of small letters) |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <i>hari ahad yang lalu...</i>                       | <i>...pergi Berkelah di pantai.</i>             | <i>Cikgu mitra</i>                        |
| <i>mereka bermain...</i>                            | <i>Abang dan Adik..</i>                         | <i>Datuk muthu</i>                        |
| <i>adik saya...</i>                                 | <i>Selepas itu, Bapa saya...</i>                | <i>Puan mizula</i>                        |
| <i>abang dan adik...</i>                            | <i>Saya dan Adik...</i>                         | <i>ramu</i>                               |
| <i>perkelahan...</i>                                | <i>...membina Istana pasir.</i>                 | <i>rakesh</i>                             |
| <i>perjalanan mengambil...</i>                      | <i>Kakak membantu Ibu...</i>                    | <i>pantai port dickson</i>                |
| <i>datuk dan nenek...</i>                           | <i>Ravi Jumpa..</i>                             | <i>amir</i>                               |
| <i>keluarga Kavitha...</i>                          | <i>...sakit Perut.</i>                          | <i>arvin</i>                              |
| <i>pada pukul...</i>                                | <i>...Menukar baju di tandas.</i>               | <i>karthik</i>                            |

*The Use of Reduplication*

Similar to the capital letters and small letters, the use of reduplication is also non-existent in Tamil Language. Based on Lado's Contrastive Analysis Theory, the linguistic difference between the mother tongue and the second language causes students to have some difficulties in learning and mastering both the languages. Accordingly, the students from the Tamil schools as the study samples also experience some difficulties and confusion particularly in the use of reduplication in the Malay Language. This is because of the difference in the use of reduplication between both languages. The reduplication of a word in the Tamil Language is only written with the addition of the particle 'ஈடு' (kaL) in a word. This particle refers to the number, which is more than one or in a large quantity. There is no element of reduplication in Tamil Language as in full reduplication, half reduplication and so on. The contrast has brought about the confusion and difficulty to the Tamil-type school students to master reduplication in the Malay Language. With this, the samples are not able to use the reduplication correctly when writing their essays. This is proven by the sentences built by the samples as follows:

| Sample | Malay Language sentence constructed by sample             | Correct Malay Language sentence                      |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| 17     | <i>Ibu menyediakan <b>banyak makanan-makanan.</b></i>     | <i>Ibu telah menyediakan pelbagai jenis makanan.</i> |
| 27     | <i><b>Ramai orang-orang</b> di pantai.</i>                | <i>Ramai orang di pantai</i>                         |
| 35     | <i>Adik bina <b>istana pasir-istana pasir</b> cantik.</i> | <i>Adik membina istana pasir yang cantik</i>         |

Based on the sentence forms above, researcher finds that the samples have reduplicated the words to explain 'a large quantity'. For example, *pelbagai jenis makanan* is written as *banyak makanan-makanan*. The intention of the samples is to explain the quantity and the type of food. That said, due to the confusion in the reduplication aspect, the samples have not been able to write *pelbagai jenis makanan* but instead, they reduplicate the word *makanan*. Other than that, the weakness in the usage and mastery of number words is evidence of samples' confusion in selecting the right number words in line with the meaning intended. Sample 27, used the number words *ramai* followed by *orang-orang*. The word *ramai* should be suitable to explain a great number of people and the samples should not double it to *orang – orang*.

*The Use of Prepositions*

Grammatically speaking, in terms of the meaning and use of prepositions, the Malay and Tamil Language have some differences. For instance, in the Malay Language the preposition is used in front of the noun or noun phrase, to explain the noun or noun phrase more clearly, Nik Safiah Karim, et al. (2015). The preposition is present separately as a word in Malay Language sentences. However, the prepositions in Tamil Language come together with the noun or the noun phrase. This difference explains why the Tamil-type school students are confused when using prepositions, especially when constructing sentences in Malay Language. Due to the confusion over the positioning of prepositions in Tamil Language, it is easy for the Tamil-type school students to make mistakes when using prepositions in their essays.

Table 6

*Errors in Using Prepositions*

| Sample | Malay Language constructed by sample        | Correct Malay Language sentences              |
|--------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| 04     | Encik Azmi pergi <b>di</b> Putrajaya.       | Encik Azmi pergi <b>ke</b> Putrajaya.         |
| 12     | Kita pergi <b>di</b> kereta.                | Kita pergi <b>dengan</b> kereta.              |
| 26     | Ramu sekeluarga makan <b>ke</b> restoran.   | Ramu sekeluarga makan <b>di</b> restoran.     |
| 30     | Abu pergi ke sekolah <b>yang</b> motosikal. | Abu pergi ke sekolah <b>dengan</b> motosikal. |

All the four sentences above show the wrong use of prepositions. The samples have chosen some prepositions that are unsuitable to the contexts. Sample 04 and sample 26 are confused about the preposition 'di' and 'ke'. The preposition 'di' indicates the place; while 'ke' refers to direction, place or time, S.Saravanan (2015). Thus, the sentence of sample 04 (the preposition **di** needs to be replaced by **ke**) and the sentence made by sample 26 (preposition **ke** is replaced by **di**). Meanwhile, the sentences written by sample 12 and sample 30 respectively misuse the prepositions **di** and **yang**. The preposition '**dengan**' should have been used to explain the meanings of both sentences. This is because the preposition '**dengan**' is used to indicate togetherness, stating the condition or the way how something is done. In the meantime, some other samples do not use prepositions in their Malay Language sentence construction. For example, the following sentences are written without prepositions.

Table 7

*Sentences without Prepositions*

| Sample | Sentence without preposition  | Sentence with preposition                |
|--------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| 25     | Kami bertolak rumah.          | Kami bertolak <b>dari</b> rumah          |
| 30     | Saya menukar pakaian tandas.  | Saya menukar pakaian <b>di</b> tandas    |
| 43     | Pukul 10.00 pagi saya sampai. | Saya sampai <b>pada</b> pukul 10.00 pagi |
| 50     | Kami menuju kapal.            | Saya menuju <b>ke</b> kapal              |

The grammatical elements are a significant aspect in a complete sentence construction, in terms of the sentence structure and meaning accuracy. Thus, sentences constructed without appropriate prepositions surely contain some grammatical weaknesses and the meanings are also unclear. The samples will understand the meaning of the sentences formed, despite them having some grammatical weaknesses.

Sometimes, samples use unnecessary prepositions in the sentence construction. This is because, the selection of the right prepositions has yet to be mastered by the samples.

Table 8

*The Addition of Unnecessary Prepositions in Sentences*

| Sample | Wrong sentences                                                    | Correct sentences                                     |
|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| 38     | <i>Abu dan keluarga makan sambil mendengar <b>untuk</b> radio.</i> | <i>Abu dan keluarga makan sambil mendengar radio.</i> |
| 47     | <i>Saya dan adik membina <b>di</b> istana pasir.</i>               | <i>Saya dan adik membina istana pasir.</i>            |
| 63     | <i>Raju pandai <b>di</b> menanam pokok.</i>                        | <i>Raju pandai menanam pokok.</i>                     |
| 72     | <i>Dia dan keluarga mendengar <b>kepada</b> lagu.</i>              | <i>Dia dan keluarga mendengar lagu.</i>               |

**New Perspectives Strengthening the Contrastive Analysis Theory**

The Contrastive Analysis Theory founded by Lado (1957) stated that the difference between the mother tongue and the second language is the root cause for the errors committed in the second language acquisition. Based on the finding, several improvements were done on this theory to explain further about the language error phenomenon among students from the Tamil-type schools.

This study proposes that other than the linguistic difference, the influences of the sociolinguistics and cognitive factors such as the use of spoken language in the home and school environments have also impacted the writing adversely. As seen in the studies by Krishnasamy (2015) and Rajendran (2018), the difference that exists in the linguistic aspect between the mother tongue and the second language learned has led to the difficulty in mastering the second language. This finding is consistent with the finding of the researcher in this study. However, indirectly, the sociolinguistics and cognitive influences are also the causes as to why language errors are made, especially those involving the second language. Thus, the contrastive analysis approach needs to be broadened to also weigh upon the context of language use in students' daily lives, and not confined to the language structure alone.

The literature by Mohd Norazmie Mohd Yusof and Saidatul Nomis Haji Mahadi (2019), Rajendran (2018), Norizan binti Che Su (2018), Mahendran Maniam and Karteges Ponniah (2014) emphasised that the errors in the second language merely occur because of the direct translation and transfer from the mother tongue to the second language. Even so, the researcher found that there is a need for the Interlingual and Intralingual analyses. This is due to the fact that the direct translation in this study not only occurs following the differences between Tamil Language and Malay Language, but also due to the lack of awareness and understanding on the students' part about the standard form of the Malay Language use. Thus, the contrastive analysis needs to delve into not only the comparison between the two languages, but also the intralingual errors that occur due to non-formal learning, and the lack of exposure to the norms of the standard Malay Language.

### Conclusion

The study findings and discussion clearly show that the influence of mother tongue, or Tamil Language has dominated the Tamil school students in the Malay Language sentence writing. The influence of mother tongue in the Malay Language essay writing is justified by the direct translation they have made from Tamil Language to Malay Language. There are times when the samples translate word by word. What is more, the Tamil-type school students think of ideas in the Tamil Language and transfer the ideas in the form of writing in the Malay Language. Thus, there are sentence structure errors that have been made by the samples. Other than that, the difference between the grammatical aspects in Tamil Language and the Malay Language is also the factor that determines students making errors in the Malay Language essay-writing. The difference in the linguistic elements in both languages befuddles the Tamil-type school students and this renders it very difficult for them to learn, master and use the Malay Language unflinchingly, especially where writing is concerned. This is because, if the first language structure which is the Mother tongue differs from the second language, then students will make many language errors caused by the disruption of the first language in learning the second language Dechert 1983; Ellis 1997; Bhela 1999; Alsaigh dan Kennison, 2017.

Most of the Tamil Language grammatical aspects do not exist in Malay Language such as the use of capital letters, proper nouns, common nouns, reduplications, prepositions and so on. Thus, the differences in the sentence structure and the grammatical aspects, also the normality and influence of Tamil Language enable the Tamil-type school students to be easily exposed to making errors in Malay Language essay-writing. Other than that, the error analysis discussed has also laid bare to the Tamil-type school students the sentence structures and grammatical aspects in both languages, namely Tamil Language and Malay Language. This helps students understand more clearly and more easily about the linguistic issues in both languages. This study outcome also raises an awareness to educators, especially the Malay teachers in SJKT to improve the teaching method in PdPc to address the influence of the Tamil Language in Malay Language essay-writing among the students.

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