

ISSN INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
ISSN-2321-7065

IJELLH

International Journal of English Language, Literature in Humanities

Indexed, Peer Reviewed (Refereed), UGC Approved Journal



**A Two Day International Conference on
Emerging Trends in English Language Teaching
(ICETELT 2019)**



Organised by

The Department of English, School of Science and Humanities

Kongu Engineering College (Autonomous)

Perundurai

Volume 7, Issue 8, August 2019

www.ijellh.com

Dr. M. Ponmani

Assistant Professor of English

Thassim Beevi Abdul Kader College for Women

Kilakarai, Ramnad, Tamil Nadu, India

ponkrishnan25@gmail.com

Competence Learning Theory to Assess the Mastery over Subject-Verb Agreement in ESL Learners' Written English

Abstract

Grammatical errors are one of the major constraints encountered by second language learners in writing. Among the common type of grammatical errors, subject-verb agreement errors occur more frequently in learners' writing. Even at tertiary level, students majoring in English Literature commit glaring errors in subject-verb agreement. In spite of learning subject-verb agreement from primary level of education, the learners find it difficult to master the general and sub-rules of subject-verb agreement and the errors in SVA recur in their writing. In this regard, a study on learners' errors pertaining to SVA was conducted with tertiary level ESL learners of rural Arts and Science College in Pudukkottai District. The learners' SVA errors in their written script were analysed according to the process of error analysis stated by Pit Corder. This paper explores how the learners pass through the four distinct stages of competence learning theory namely unconscious incompetence, conscious incompetence, conscious competence and unconscious competence while learning Subject-verb agreement, so that SVA can become learners' second habit.

Key Words: Subject-Verb Agreement, Competence Learning Theory, Second Language

Writing.

Introduction

ESL Learners need to acquire basic grammatical knowledge in order to write fluently and comprehensively in English. Especially, at tertiary level the learners are expected to write sentences that have correct grammar to communicate their ideas cohesively. Dorn (2000) states that the sentences created by words and phrases are the essential blocks of meaning that allow to communicate thoughts. It represents that the learners have to write clearly to transmit their ideas effectively to the readers. The basic knowledge of grammatical rules can make the learners to be proficient in writing, as grammatical competence gives the form or structure of the language. Lack of grammatical competence causes errors in writing and it affects readability. According to Dorn (2000), most of the second language learners commit errors associated with verbs. In particular, errors in subject-verb agreement (SVA) are often evident in students' writing. Subject-verb agreement is very important to express ideas explicitly in writing. It has a basic simple rule that a singular subject needs a singular verb and a plural subject needs a plural verb. But most of the students write sentences that do not agree subject with verb. This is because acquiring a new skill takes long time and much longer if the students wish to master it well. During that period the learners need to know how much they have accomplished, and how much more time and effort is needed. If the learners are aware to assess their competence in SVA while learning them, then SVA come in handy. In this regard, this paper examines how the learners pass through the four distinct stages of competence learning theory namely unconscious incompetence, conscious incompetence, conscious competence and unconscious competence while learning Subject-verb agreement, so that SVA can become learners' second habit.

Need for the Study

In the globalized scenario, English language has become a necessary pre-requisite to use it efficiently in academic and occupational zones. Especially, at tertiary level, the learners of English major are expected to be proficient in English and are supposed to express their thoughts and subject content in error free sentence structures. But in the context of rural Arts & Science Colleges in Tamilnadu, most of the students are incompetent in using their target language. To be more specific of their educational background, students who study through the regional medium of instruction begin to learn English from III standard. They learn English as second language till their higher secondary level of education. In most of the schools, English is taught as a subject rather than a language and the outcome of language learning is tested only through writing. As the learners do not have confidence in constructing their own sentences in English, they memorize the content from their text book or teacher's notes and write their examinations. They are able to get through the examination with high, average or just pass score, but the ability to write grammatically correct sentences in English remains to be a question. When students of this language background choose to study English Literature, they find it difficult to construct grammatically correct sentences in their writing. It is presumed that English major students should possess the ability to connect the grammar and language patterns to the wider purpose of communication. Besides, they have requisite to employ the language proficiently in their academic career. When the learners are incapable to write or speak proficiently in English, they will not be able to transfer their language skills at their respective workplace. So they are required to master subject-verb agreement rules to speak and write an error free content. This in turn would help the students to develop their sense of grammar and improve English language proficiency.

Competence Learning Theory

In Psychology, the four stages of competence, or the "conscious competence" learning model, relates to the psychological states involved in the process of progressing from incompetence to competence in a skill. When the learners acquire a new skill, strategy or technique, the learners have to pass through four distinct stages.

Stage 1: Unconscious Incompetence

In the first stage of learning, the learners are not aware of their incompetence or weakness in SVA. The learners must be made to become conscious of their incompetence before learning of SVA, because awareness of their inability will help them to get to stage 2.

Stage 2: Conscious Incompetence

Once the learners become aware of their incompetency in SVA, they realize that they can learn SVA through practice. The learners commit to improve their competence in SVA from the teacher's instruction. The learners' commitment and practice will help them to get to stage 3.

Stage 3: Conscious Competence

After teacher's instruction, the learners can employ the SVA without the teacher's assistance; yet they are not mastered SVA completely. The learners have to consciously think about how to incorporate the SVA before they write or speak. This shows that only through continuous practice the learners will get to stage 4.

Stage 4: Unconscious Competence

The learners need to think about SVA before they incorporate them in their writing. The learners have practiced the SVA so often that it has become their second habit. Now SVA has become handy to the learners and they have mastered the usage of SVA.

When the learners pass through the stages from self-reflection to self-autonomous, they can acquire any new grammatical aspect and master them.

Subject-Verb Agreement

Second language researchers like Bhatia (1974) and Maziani (1984) as cited by Munir Shuib (1991) suggest that subject-verb agreement is one of the grammatical items that are introduced at the early stage of the learners' language learning process. However, they still have problems in acquiring the correct form of the structure. Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1983) state that in spite of the early introduction and superficially learnt simple rules of the subject-verb agreement, they still pose problems for ESL learners at all levels. Surina & Kamaruzaman (2009) suggest that in the topic of subject-verb agreement, the subject must agree with the verb. In simple present tense, singular subject is followed by singular verb and plural subject takes a plural verb; whereas in simple past tense, the main verbs 'was' and 'were' need reconsideration. Especially, the basic rules of subject-verb agreement are not applicable to the verbs that end with inflections. Hence the learners commit errors in subject-verb agreement. The learners are either confused with the rules or they are not exposed to the rules completely.

Literature Review

Tan (2005) stated that every learner of the English language has to acquire the basic grammatical knowledge of SVA in order to improve their level of proficiency in the target language. Law (2005) studied on the acquisition of subject-verb agreement with 10 ESL learners and found that subject-verb agreement was the most serious problem among his students. His study concluded that the influence of students' L1 had a great impact on their acquisition of subject-verb agreement.

Maros, Tan and Khazriyati (2007) conducted a study in six Malaysian schools with twenty students from each school, to find the difficulties in using the correct English grammar in their writings. His findings showed that subject-verb agreement (46.83%) is one

of the most frequent errors in students' writing. They stated that verbs in Malay do not need agree with the number or status of the subject; the omission of ~s in sentences may be due to L1 interference. Further, he added that learners confuse to choose the right form in the target language, when their mother tongue does not have subject-verb agreement. For example Malay learners write erroneous sentences like, "I lives in Kula Lumpur" or "I lives with my parents". Nor Hashimah Jalaluddin et al. (2008) conducted a research in three schools in Johor to discover the reasons for the inability of the students to be proficient in English language after 11 years of learning it. They concluded that the inability of the students to acquire subject-verb agreement was inevitable due to its absence in native language structure.

Darus and Subramaniam (2009) examined errors in 72 essays written by Form 4 Malay students and found that subject-verb agreement was one among the six most common errors made by the learners. In the same line, the communicative ability of twenty University Technology MARA (UiTM) Sarawak's graduates was studied by Sharifah Zakiah et al. (2009). They discovered that after many years of English as a second language input, the learners still seemed to require a great deal of practice in their basic grammatical structure like subject-verb agreement. They also recommended that subject-verb agreement rules should be taught explicitly to students, so that they are aware of the rules and will try to apply them in their writing. Kohlmyr (2001) found that the most common problems for Swedish learners of English is Subject-verb agreements of person and number. When the subject is a personal pronoun, the learners find it difficult to choose whether the subject requires the verb to take the 3rd person singular -s or not. Similarly, when the subject is a noun or a noun phrase the learners confuse among the countable nouns and collective nouns. Levin (2001) identified the subject-verb agreement errors in newspapers written by native speakers of English and revealed that when there is a long distance between the subject and the predicate, it is difficult to remember the number of the subject. In addition, agreement errors become

more frequent when personal pronouns occur in other clauses than their controllers (subjects). According to him, when a pronoun appears in another sentence than its controller, it is more likely to produce plural concord though the two items have appeared in the same clause. Siti Hamin and Mohamad Mustafa (2010) conducted a study on subject-verb agreement based on five types of errors proposed by Corder (1974, cited in Ellis, 1994) found that majority of their respondents produced errors in subject-verb agreement of person, number, indefinite expression of amount, notional agreement and proximity and finally coordinated subjects. This reinstates the fact that English language learners at tertiary level are finding it difficult in using appropriate subject-verb agreement.

Research Questions

- 1) How far the learners are aware of their incompetence in employing subject-verb agreement in their writing?
- 2) What kind of subject-verb agreement errors are committed by the students?
- 3) To what extent the learners become unconscious competent user of subject-verb agreement?
- 4)

Methodology

Participants

The study was conducted with 58 second year B.A English Literature students of Sri Bharathi Arts & Science College for Women, Pudukkottai. A paper on Grammar and Usage is prescribed in their fourth semester. In the semester examination, their grammatical proficiency is tested for 60 out of 75 marks in grammar as discrete items and discourse writing. Concord is one of the grammatical items focused in that paper. The pass percentage in the semester examination is very low ranging from 15 to 20 out of 60 students in a class

every year. As most of the students hail from rural background and regional medium of instruction till their higher secondary education, their proficiency in writing was below average and required improvement. In addition, Sri Bharathi Arts & Science College for Women has an administrative body addressing the needs of improving the proficiency in English and was proactive in providing the necessary support to conduct this experimental study with their students. Further, it is essential for B.A English Literature students to employ the language proficiently in their academic and social career. So, the study was carried out with fourth semester B.A English Literature students as a regular course of the study.

Tools Used in the Study

(i) Pre-study questionnaire

Pre-study questionnaire was used as a basic research instrument to know whether the students' are aware of their incompetence in employing the appropriate SVA. In addition, it is used to obtain the learners' demographic and academic details.

(ii) Pre-task

The ability to produce well-formed sentences is essential for second language writers. In this regard, pre-writing task was assigned to the students' to know the type of subject-verb agreement errors committed while writing a paragraph.

(iii) Worksheets

Gap-fill exercises in concord were administered to the students. They were asked to write the appropriate concord in the blanks and the questions in the worksheets were set in a graded structure to cater to the comprehending level of the students. The number of worksheets was decided on the basis of students' performance in each worksheet. Three worksheets were given for concord. The worksheets were administered to assess their comprehension in concord and make them aware of their type of errors in concord.

(iv) Post-task

The success of second language learning lies in the process of how the learners become unconscious competent user of language. In this regard, post writing task was assigned to assess how far the students were able to make use of appropriate concord while writing sentences in English.

(v) Post-study questionnaire

Post-study questionnaire was also administered to know whether the study had facilitated the students to achieve the requisite proficiency in writing skill. The knowledge of grammar would help the learners to write with accuracy and clear exposition. In this respect, post-study questionnaire sought to find out how far the students were able to use the concord in their writing after the course.

Implementation

In this study, a schedule of 7 classes with 1 hour duration spread over a period of one week was conducted to improve the writing proficiency of the learners. In the initial class the students were asked to write 150 words on the topic 'A Memorable Day in My Life' in order to examine how far the learners are unconscious incompetent to employ the appropriate subject-verb in writing. The subject-verb agreement errors in the students' writing were analyzed and classified into five categories,

The subject-verb agreement of person

The subject-verb agreement of number

The subject-verb agreement of indefinite subject

The subject-verb agreement of coordinated subject

The subject-verb agreement of notional agreement and proximity

(Corder, 1974)

The frequency and percentage of errors in each category were calculated. It is evident from the students' writing that the students were unaware of subject-verb agreement. So, the general and sub-rules of subject-verb agreement were explicitly taught to the students with illustrations. As the learners need not unlearn the subject-verb agreement grammatical form, they immediately internalized the rules. Then, worksheets were administered to test the learners' ability to use appropriate SVA in the given context through gap-fill exercises. The corrected worksheets were distributed to the students and explicit written corrective feedback was given to make the students' consciously aware of their errors. The facilitator also gave the general oral feedback on the common types of subject-verb agreement errors committed by the learners' in the worksheets and clarified the doubts raised by some learners. Though the learners' SVA errors were considerably high in the initial worksheet, the number of SVA errors reduced drastically in the subsequent worksheets. Eventually, the learners were assigned to write on a topic, "Tour" in about 150 words to examine the learners' ability to incorporate the learnt grammar knowledge (SVA) in continuous writing. The frequency of errors in each category was calculated and compared with pre-task in terms of percentage. In addition, T-test was calculated to find the extent to which the learners have become unconscious competent user of subject-verb agreement.

Data Analysis

Frequency of Errors

Table 1 Frequency of SVA Errors in Students' Writing

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Subject-Verb	58	0	263	77.2

Agreement Errors				
---------------------	--	--	--	--

It is observed from the learners' writing that 58 learners have committed 386 errors in subject-verb agreement. The mean value is $M=77.2$. This indicates the learners are not aware of their incompetence in subject-verb agreement errors. This goes in line with Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman's (1983) statement that SVA is one of the grammatical items identified to be troublesome for ESL learners.

Types of Errors in Subject-Verb Agreement

The second research question aimed at identifying the types of SVA errors committed by learners in their writing. After evaluating the pre-task, a total of 386 SVA errors were identified in the learners' scripts and the errors were categorized into 5 types.

Table 2 Types of SVA Errors in Pre Task

S.No	Types of Subject-Verb Errors	Frequency	Percentage
1	Subject-verb agreement of person	263	68.14%
2	Subject-verb agreement of number	52	13.47%
3	Subject-verb agreement of indefinite subject	0	0%
4	Subject-verb agreement of coordinated subject	9	2.33%
5	Subject-verb agreement of notional agreement and proximity	62	16.06%
Total		386	100%

The results in Table 2 depict the types of SVA errors committed by the learners. The result indicates that students commit errors in four categories of SVA i.e., subject-verb agreement of person, number, coordinated subject and notional agreement and proximity; while no error was recorded in the category of subject-verb agreement of indefinite subject. Table 2 highlights the fact that SVA errors pertaining to person is substantially higher than the other categories. Some examples of SVA errors from the learners writing are stated for reference in Table 3.

Table 3 Sample for the Types of Subject-Verb Agreement Errors in Learners' Writing

S.No	Learners' Erroneous Sentences	Types of Subject-Verb Agreement Errors
1	We has enjoyed the day. Have	Error in Subject-verb agreement of person. It requires the learners to use correct verbs that agree with pronouns which are used as subjects in their sentences.
2	Most of the students was crying in sorrow. were	Error in Subject-verb agreement of number. It requires the learners to apply correct verbs according to the number of subjects used in their sentences.
3	Brothers and sisters has gifted me. Have	Error in subject-verb agreement of coordinated subject. It requires the learners to use correct verbs when a subject includes two or more noun phrases coordinated by 'and'.
4	My friends on those days was more affectionate to me. were	Error in subject-verb agreement of notional agreement and proximity. It requires the correct use of collective nouns

		and plural expressions that agree with verbs and also with noun or pronouns that closely precedes verbs.
--	--	--

In this study, even though the learners have learnt SVA as one of the grammatical components from their primary level, they were unaware of its rules and usage. So, SVA rules were stated apparently to the students with suitable examples. Then, worksheets were administered to examine whether the learners were able to apply appropriate subject-verb agreement in the given gap-fill exercises. So it is inferred that the learners have internalized the rules in the due course. To be more specific, as SVA was introduced to the students for the first time, there was no necessity of ‘unlearning’ to occur in this topic.

Table 4 Types of Subject-Verb Agreement Errors in Worksheets

Total No. of Worksheets	SVA1	SVA2	SVA3	SVA4	SVA5	Total Errors	% of Errors
Worksheet 1	97	93	104	66	58	418	
%	23.20%	22.25%	24.88%	15.79%	13.88%		100%
Worksheet 2	39	45	123	-	-	207	
%	18.84%	21.74%	59.42%	-	-		100%
Worksheet 3	1	1	46	4	10	62	
%	1.61%	1.61%	74.19%	6.45%	16.14%		100%

SVA1 - Subject-verb agreement of person

SVA2 - Subject-verb agreement of number

SVA3 - Subject-verb agreement of indefinite subject

SVA4 - Subject-verb agreement of coordinated Subject

SVA5 - Subject-verb agreement of notional agreement and proximity

It is evident from Table 4 that though the learners' errors were substantially higher in the first worksheet, the numbers of errors reduced considerably in the third worksheet. Among the three worksheets, SVA errors in person, number, coordinated and notional agreement and proximity have reduced drastically, except the errors in agreement of indefinite subject.

The frequency of errors in the post discourse task with reference to each category was calculated and compared with pre task in terms of percentage.

Table 5 Learners' SVA Errors in Pre & Post Tasks

S.No	Types of Subject-Verb Agreement Errors	Pre Task		Post Task	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	Subject-verb agreement of person	263	68.14%	8	12.12%
2	Subject-verb agreement of number	52	13.47%	56	84.85%
3	Subject-verb agreement of indefinite subject	0	0	0	0
4	Subject-verb agreement of coordinated subject	9	2.33%	0	0
5	Subject-verb agreement of notional agreement and proximity	62	16.06%	2	3.03%
Total		386	100%	66	100%

It is perceived from Table 5 that the learners did not commit errors in subject-verb agreement of indefinite subject in both the tasks. Further, errors in subject-verb agreement of coordinated subject, notional agreement and proximity and person have reduced considerably in a short span of time. On the other hand, errors in subject-verb agreement of number persisted in the learners' writing. It can be concluded from the study that students' find it difficult to use appropriate subject-verb agreement of number in their writing, as the students mess up with the complicate inflections and sub-rules of SVA.

Results and Discussions

The analyzed data on SVA errors show that the second semester students majoring in English Literature were unconscious incompetence in using subject-verb agreement in their writing. It is evident from the occurrence of error percentage in their writing. They committed a total of 386 SVA errors in the pre-task writing. Out of 386 errors, 68.14% of errors occurred in person, 16.06% of errors in notional agreement and proximity, 13.47% of errors in number and 2.33% of errors in coordinated subject. The highest percentage of person errors in students' writing indicates that the students were incompetent to associate the structural relations between lexical units. The learners are unaware that singular subject takes a singular verb and the plural subject takes a plural verb. This result goes in line with Saadiyah and Kaladevi's (2009) study that second language learners have problems with the correct use of singular and plural forms. The next set of errors that crops up are the errors in notional agreement and proximity. Errors in notional agreement and proximity revealed that learners' were not able to differentiate the local noun and head noun in a sentence. When the subject and the verb are separated by an interfering noun, the learners could not maintain in memory the number of the subject that specifies the number of the verb in a sentence. Solomon and Pearlmutter (2004) have suggested that if the subject is far from the verb, the

interfering noun would disrupt the learners' with reference to the number of the head noun and this disruption could increase the probability of agreement errors in writing.

Consequently, followed by errors in notional agreement and proximity, the learners committed errors in number. In subject-verb agreement of number, verb changes its form depending on whether the subject is singular or plural. The learners' errors in number show that, the learners could not identify the number distinctions and employ the verb that affects the number agreement relationship. Further, the learners committed negligible errors in coordinated subject. After teaching subject-verb agreement using direct approach, the learners showed a substantial improvement in employing appropriate agreement form in the given worksheets. Errors in person, number, coordinated subject and notional agreement and proximity have reduced considerably from worksheet 1 to worksheet 3. But errors in indefinite subject sustained from first worksheet to third worksheet. Expressions of time, money, distance and single quantity usually take a singular verb. On the other hand, indefinite quantifiers, fractions and percentages that modify collective noun take a plural verb. In the study, either the learners have miscomprehended the rule or the incomplete application of rules has made the learners to commit errors in indefinite subject.

It is also evident that learners were unconscious competent to employ the subject-verb agreement of person, number, coordinated subject and notional agreement and proximity in discrete items than in discourse writing. On the contrary, the learners find it difficult to use the subject-verb agreement of indefinite subject in discrete items than in discourse writing. It is also observed, that the learners did not commit errors in indefinite subject in the pre-task and post-task writing. The learners committed negligible errors in person (12.12%) and notional agreement and proximity (3.03%) in the post-task. It ensures the fact, that the learners were not able to identify the number distinctions and the number agreement relationship. They fail to notice that subject has to be in a certain person and number and the

predication has to be in a certain tense and mood. They also find it difficult to apply appropriate subject-verb agreement with the questions that start with modal auxiliary verbs like do, does, did etc. It implies that the complicate inflections and exceptional rules in subject-verb agreement are the source for learners' errors in SVA.

In addition, 81% of students have answered in the questionnaire that they have planned to become a teacher after completing B.A English Literature course. So this necessitates that B.A English Literature student to employ the language proficiently in their academic career. So, it is requisite factor to master subject-verb agreement in order to speak and write error free sentences.

Conclusion

Subject and verb are the two most important grammatical components in writing correct and complete sentences in English. Most of the tertiary level learners find it difficult to master the SVA rules and they often commit errors in employing appropriate SVA in their writing. The language use in writing demands correct grammar for the comprehension of message. So, it is necessary for the second language learners of English to internalize the SVA rules to write error free sentences. In this study, error in subject-verb agreement of person and number persisted in the writing of English major students. This shows that the learners have misinterpreted the SVA rules. When the SVA rules are explicitly taught and practiced to apply those rules in their writing, the students could incorporate appropriate SVA in their oral and written communication. It is the responsibility of language teachers to reinforce the SVA rules and administer tasks that make the learners familiar with the correct rules of subject-verb agreement.

References

- Bhatia, Aban Tavadia. (1974). An Error Analysis of Students' Compositions. *IRAL*, 12(4).
- Celce-Murcia, M. & Larsen-Freeman, D. (1983). *The Grammar Book: An ESL/EFL Teacher's Course*. Rowley: Newbury House Publishers, Inc.
- Corder, S. P. (1974). *Error Analysis*. In J. P. B. Allen and S. Pit Corder (eds.). *Techniques in Applied Linguistics*, London: Oxford University Press, pp. 122-154.
- Darus, Saadiyah & Kaladevi Subramaniam. (2009). Error Analysis of the Written English Essays of Secondary School Students in Malaysia: A Case Study. *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 8(3).
- Dorn, D. (2000). *Building Essays: A Reader Centered Writing Guide*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Ellis, R. (1994). *The Study of Second Language Acquisition*. Hongkong: Oxford University Press..
- Jarvis, S. (2000). Methodological Rigor in the Study of Transfer: Identifying L1 Influence in the Interlanguage Lexicon. *Language Learning*, 50(2), 245-309.
- Kohlmyr, Pia. (2001). *To Err is Human*. An Investigation of Grammatical Errors in Swedish 16- year-old Learners' Written Production in English. Goteborg, Goteborg University.
- Law, Mei Han, Crystal. (2005). *The Acquisition of English Subject-Verb Agreement by Cantonese Speakers*. Master Thesis, Hong Kong: The University of Hong Kong.
- Levin, Magnus. (2001). *Agreement with Collective Nouns in English*. Lund: Dept. of English, University: Stockholm, Almqvist & Wiksell International Distributor.
- Maros, M., Tan Kim Hua & Khazriyati Saluhiddin. (2007). Interference in Learning English: Grammatical Errors in English Essay Writing among Rural malay Secondary School Students in Malaysia. *Journal e-Bangi*, 2(2).

- Munir Shuib. (1991). *An analysis of Malaysian learners' English agreement errors*. Unpublished M.A. Dissertation, University of Essex.
- Nor Hashimah Jalaluddin, Norsimah Mat Awal & Kesumawati Abu Bakar. (2008). The Mastery of English Language among Lower Secondary School Students in Malaysia. *A linguistic Analysis European Journal of Social Sciences*, 7(2).
- Richards, J. C. (1971). A NonContrastive Approach to Error Analysis. *English Language Teaching Journal*. 25, 204-219.
- Saadiyah Darus & Kaladevi Subramaniam. (2009). Error Analysis in the Written English Essays of Secondary School Students in Malaysia: A Case Study. *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 8(3), 483-495.
- Sharifah Zakiah Wan Hassan, Hakim, S. F., Mahdalela, R., John, F. N., Sueb, I., Johnny, A. & Kamaruzaman, J. (2009). The Communicative ability of Universiti Teknologi Mara Sarawak's Graduates. *English Language Teaching*, 2(2). Accessed July 3, 2009 from <http://www.ccsenet.org/journal.html>
- Siti Hamin Stapa & Mohamad Mustafa Izhar. (2010). Analysis of Errors in Subject-Verb Agreement Among Malaysian ESL Learners. *3L The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies*, 16(1), 1-18.
- Solomon, E. S. & Pearlmutter, N. J. (2004). Semantic Integration and Syntactic Planning in Language Production. *Cognitive Psychology*, 49, 1-46.
- Surina, Nayan and Kamaruzaman, Jusof. (2009). A Study of Subject-Verb Agreement: From Novice Writers to Expert Writers. *International Education Studies*, Vol.2, No.3, 190-194.
- Tan, Aig Bee. (2005). The Use of Drill Exercises in Helping Students Reduce Subject-Verb Agreement Errors in Academic Writing: A Case Study. *IPBA*, 3(2).