Distance Adult Students’ Self-Management Strategies of Online Learning Discussion

Nur Shaminah binti Mustafa Kamalu
Teoh Sian Hoon

A Genre – Based Analysis of Academic Exercise Introductions in the BEd. Tesl Program, UiTM, Malaysia

Syarina Binti Mahmood
Richard Holmes

The Effect of Teacher Direct Written Corrective Feedback on Writing of Diploma in Hospitality and Management Students in SEGI University

Siti Ummaizah bt. Meor Musa
Lee Lai Fong
1. Distance Adult Students’ Self-Management Strategies of Online Learning Discussion  
   Nur Shaminah binti Mustafa Kamalu  
   Teoh Sian Hoon

2. A Genre – Based Analysis of Academic Exercise Introductions in the BEd. Tesl Program, UiTM, Malaysia  
   Syarina binti Mahmood  
   Richard Holmes

3. The Effect of Teacher Direct Written Corrective Feedback on Writing of Diploma in Hospitality and Management Students in SEGI University  
   Siti Ummaizah binti Meor Musa  
   Lee Lai Fong
Distance Adult Students’ Self-Management Strategies of Online Learning Discussion

Nur Shaminah binti Mustafa Kamalu
Teoh Sian Hoon
Universiti Teknologi MARA
Email address: teohsian@salam.uitm.edu.my

ABSTRACT

With distance learning getting more attention, the need for self-management strategies of learning becomes more prevalent since online learning is independent of time and place. This study was conducted to explore adult distance online students’ self-management strategies of learning and the importance of computer skill and their level of self-management strategies with regard to age and gender. A quantitative method survey research design was used to carry out the research which used questionnaire as the instrument for data collecting process. Participants involved were a group of first semester distance online learning students who were full time primary school teachers. They had registered for Technology Instruction course. Findings revealed that the level of self-management strategies of learning among these adult learners was moderate. In terms of the difference in self-management strategies of learning between gender and among different categories of age, the results revealed there were no significant differences. Relationship between each component of self-management and computer skill revealed that the highest correlation was between computer skill and evaluation.

Keywords: self-management strategies, online learning, computer skill
INTRODUCTION

Today, higher education has evolved with the advancement in technology. Technology has made education more accessible to any individual. The recent growth in online learning has resulted in a major shift in education and training from an instructor-centered to a learner-centered focus (Dillon & Greene, 2003). A few decades ago, students who wished to pursue higher education had to be present at their respective campus and specifically met face to face with their lecturers and other students. Byrne (2012) stated that organizations must provide as many opportunities to facilitate learners to “get” to the educational content as efficiently as possible. With technology, students who are not able to be present face-to-face can learn from a distance using the technology. This method has in a way causes a major impact on the management of learning. With this shift to Online Distance Learning (ODL) has come the suggestion that, in the absence of an ever-present instructor, students learning at a distance must take greater responsibility for the management of their own learning (Hartley & Bendixen, 2001; Moore & Kearsley, 2005). As a result, online students, specifically, are expected to “manage” the task of learning in an independent and self-directed manner (Besich, 2005).

Self-management strategies of learning are one of the crucial strategies for students in determining their academic progress and achievement. Distance learning students are not exceptional. Al-Oraini (2007) stressed that the mass of information as well as growing educational demands have created new sets of problems for students in managing their learning effectively. Palloff and Pratt (2003) stressed that students themselves have to discover learning strategies: planning, organising, monitoring, evaluation, task strategies and time management to meet the challenges of the online learning environment and at the same time, they must know how to manage their studies. This becomes more challenging if the students are juggling between study, career and family.

Besides, it is quite common that students drop-out of university not because they find the course too difficult to cope with, but because they become overwhelmed by the workload and are unable to manage study commitments with work and family life. Research focused on discovering the causes of success of students in online courses is critical since for many
institutions of higher learning, the attrition rate of distance students far exceeds those of on campus learners (Lowe, 1997).

Some students may have appropriate study skills which they apply during their diploma study which mostly comprises face-to-face learning and teaching. However, these skills may not be completely applicable in their current undergraduate study due to the distance learning mode in the form of online learning which requires students to be autonomous and apt at computer skill. According to Schrum and Hong (2002), computer skill is an important element of success for online learners. Apart from these, students have lost touch with studies for some time which also means lack of self-management strategies of learning. They also need to apply computer skill in their undergraduate study. As such, a large number of students face difficulty in their self-management skill; thus, affecting their grades. This is proven through their minimum participation in the online discussion forum which they are required to take part as well as through their test results. Thus, this study aims to investigate the related components of self-management skills. Generally, this study aims to explore adult distance online students’ self-management strategies of learning and the importance of computer skill and relationship with regard to age and gender. Specifically, the study focuses on the following objectives:

1. To examine the level of self-management strategies of learning among students.
2. To examine the significant differences in self-management strategies of learning between genders.
3. To examine the significant differences of self-management strategies of learning among students of different age groups.
4. To find the relationship between each component of self-management strategies of learning and computer skill.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Online Distance Learning (ODL henceforth) has become widespread in Malaysia in the past few years with the advancement of internet. According to Wong (2008), there are three institutions of higher learning using ODL in Malaysia: Tun Abdul Razak University, Open University Malaysia and
Wawasan Open University. Nonetheless, there are some other private and public institutions of higher learning which are in the process of transition towards ODL. To be successful in ODL, student have to be autonomous learners. Thus, they have to acquire certain skills to participate and contribute to their online assignments in order to maximize their academic learning. Thus, if students are already autonomous, they are more advantaged when getting involved in online learning. However, it is always a challenge for distance learning students to cope with learning skills (Al-Oraini, 2007). It is insufficient for higher education institutions or colleges to only inform students that online courses require them to take greater responsibility for their own learning. Some training courses or workshops for adults are needed for the development of self-management strategies of learning as stressed by Besich (2005). Self-management strategies of learning are vital so that students can absorb the new information they are required to know without finding the learning experience difficult (Byrne, 2012). Since it is distance education in the form of online learning, individuals are likely to be exposed to distractions like social networking websites: Facebook, Twitter, Myspace, blogs, online games and games installed in the computer. As a result, their time is wasted and their contribution to online forums is affected. Hence, having appropriate learning skill is essential to ensure learning is taking place. Research has shown that learning skills affect academic achievement (Zimmerman, 1998). Despite giving a lot of attention to this aspect of education management, many higher educational institutions are least concern about giving attention to the importance of students’ own management of learning. Nonetheless, this is a vital factor for the success of an institution too.

Self-management strategies of learning are commonly utilized by students to oversee and manage their learning (Wenden, 1991). According to Chamot et. al (1999), self-management involves seeking or arranging the conditions that help a learner to focus on what he or she knows to ensure that a learner performs to the best of his or her abilities. Self-management of learning is vital because the self does not only becomes an agent who acts upon his or her environment, but it is also a requirement for the individual to achieve academically (Brak, Lan & Paton, 2010). Wenden (1991) further pointed out that there are three main kinds of self-management strategies: planning, monitoring and evaluating. Learner autonomy has been associated with skills of planning, monitoring and decision making (Holec, 1981).
By equipping learners with these learning strategies, they could become effective managers of their own learning; thus, laying a sound foundation towards becoming autonomous lifelong learners.

Since there is limited research in the area of self-management strategies of learning, Koopmans (2002) claimed that research that focuses on self-management of learning are based on referenced related self-directed learning and self-regulated learning. Although Wenden (1991) stated that there are three strategies of self-management of learning, there could be more depending on the module outcome and students. For instance, if the module involves online learning, strategies in using computer skill will be required as one of the strategies of self-management of learning. Besides, if online module requires students to log in into a certain system, time management skill will be taken into consideration. Hence, it depends on the instructor or faculty to design the type of strategies depending on the objectives of the module and the students’ needs. It is doubted that self-management strategies are the only aspect that need to be taken into consideration during online learning. Factors like language proficiency and intelligence too play a significant role because with intelligence, a student will be able to provide critical and creative responses.

This study is significant to provide guidelines for the development of skills and knowledge to function as efficient ODL students. The structure of online discussion emphasizes on the synthesizing and application of information read during online discussion. The development of online discussion is determined by the skill of managing the information. When students are able to apply the right strategies for learning, they should be able to read, extract knowledge and write in the forum discussion. Further studies are needed to look into the details of the skill and how it can guide online students to manage the information.

**METHODOLOGY**

The study was designed based on quantitative approach of conducting a survey research. A questionnaire was constructed to obtain information on adult students’ self-management strategies of learning in a distance learning degree programme (ePJJ) in a public higher institution of learning in the Klang Valley.
The population of the study was all the 500 students who were first semester students studying e-PJJ course in a public higher institution in the Klang Valley. From the 500 students, 224 respondents were randomly selected to participate in the study. According to Gay (1996), the number of sample out of the total population is acceptable for statistical analysis. The respondents were teachers who were currently undergoing their first year of education degree course from various options. The highest academic qualification of the respondents was Diploma in Education. Their teaching experience ranged from a minimum of three years to 12 years. Although their teaching experience may differ, their role as an adult learner was the same.

In a semester, comprising four months, students were required to attend classes five times. The rest of the academic session was done online. The course was completely in online mode. The course consisted of weekly topic modules, whereby lectures and assignments were posted on the i-learn website and students were expected to regularly access and complete them. Students were expected to read the handbook, modules and complete the assignments. The lecturer in charge of each group of students had access to monitor the duration of time the students logged into i-learn and completed the required task for each week. Students could contact their instructor via email to clarify any information pertaining to their weekly topics.

The quantitative method was utilized to design a survey to get responses from students pertaining to their learning management skill for their course module. The questionnaire administered for the purpose of this study was adapted from Ranjit’s (2008) and Al-Oraini’s (2007) research. The questionnaire was vetted and validated by two experienced lecturers in the same university before it was distributed to respondents. The questionnaire consisted of 46-items; each at seven-point rating scale (Likert scale) related to aspects of self-management ranging from planning, organizing, monitoring and evaluating. Apart from that, eight items on computer skills were included since this research was based on online discussion forum. The response rates from students were slightly on the poor side. The day the questionnaire was distributed, an examination was conducted for this course. Besides that, since a large number of students were moving from one class to another for the next subject, there was problem locating the students.
Researchers such as Teijlingen and Hundley (2002) stressed that pilot study is a vital element in pre-testing the instrument(s) such as a questionnaire employed in a research. This is to ensure that a clear, correct and appropriate instrument is used for the data gathering purpose. Additionally, although there is no assurance that a pilot study would contribute to the success of the study, it helps in providing important insights for the researcher. To establish content validity of the questionnaire, a panel of two senior lecturers reviewed the draft of the questionnaire before the pilot study was administered. For the pilot study, the questionnaire was distributed to 30 distance online learning adult students in the faculty. The pilot test was conducted to determine the reliability of the questionnaire used in the study. A majority of the respondents pointed out that they understood the questionnaire as the questions were direct and clear. The cronbach’s coefficient alpha value was extracted. The result of the pilot test indicated that the questionnaire is reliable for the study and has acceptable level of internal consistency. This is supported by Chua (2006) who stated that an alpha value within the range of 0.65 to 0.95 is considered satisfactory. The reliability for the instrument was at .958; hence, it was considered satisfactory.

FINDINGS

The study was to determine the level of self-management strategies of learning among adult distance learning students, the differences between male and female respondents’ self-management strategies of learning, the differences in self-management strategies of learning among students of different age groups and the relationship between the six components of self-management (planning, organizing, monitoring, evaluation, task-strategies, and time management) strategies of learning with computer skill.

Findings for Research Objective 1: To Examine Students’ Level of Self-Management Strategies of Learning

The results displayed in Table 1 showed the levels of self-management strategies of learning of adult students of a distance online learning programme. The results revealed that 72.8% or 163 of the respondents perceived that self-management strategies of learning were moderate. Meanwhile, about 56 or 25% respondents perceived that self-management
strategy of learning was high. Only 2 or 9% respondents perceived that self-management strategies of learning were low.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Frequency (N=221)</th>
<th>Percentage(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low(Less than 2.99)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate (3.00-5.00)</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>72.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High (5.01-7.00)</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The result displayed in Table 2 was a further analysis which was conducted to investigate which component displayed the highest mean score. The table below shows computer skill displayed the highest mean score (M=4.83, SD=0.87). This was followed by planning (M=4.80, SD=0.96), task strategies (M=4.77, SD=0.74), evaluation (M=4.65, SD=0.83), organizing (M=4.56, SD=0.92), time management (M=4.47, SD=1.04), monitoring (M=4.26, SD=0.94).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task strategies</td>
<td>4.77</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer skill</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time management</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizing</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Findings for Research Objective 2: To Examine the Significant Differences in Self-Management Strategies of Learning between Genders

Table 3 shows the comparison of learning for female and male students. Based on the data displayed in Table 3, female students had a slightly higher mean (M=4.63) compared to male students (M=4.62).
Independent sample t-test (Table 4) was conducted to see whether this difference was significant or otherwise. The result shows that there was no significant difference in the two means (t=0.185, df=303, sig=0.853). This indicated that there was no significant difference in the self-management of learning between female and male students.

**Table 4: Further Analysis in Differences in Self-Management Strategies in Learning between Genders**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent sample t-test</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender comparison</td>
<td>.185</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Findings for Research Objective 3: To Examine Differences in Self-Management Strategies of Learning among Students of Different Age Groups**

The total mean scores of self-management strategies of learning among students of different age groups were compared. Table 5 shows that the age group 25-29 had a higher mean (M=4.73, SD=0.65) compared to age group 30-34 (M=4.55, SD=0.68), age 35-39 (M=4.69, SD=0.72) and 40 and above (M=4.41, SD=0.73).

**Table 5: Differences in Self-Management Strategies of Learning among Students of Different Age Groups**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total means score of different age groups</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>4.73</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 and above</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Further analysis was conducted to examine if there was any significant difference among the age groups. From the Anova test, the results show there was no significant difference in the self-management strategies of the four different age groups of students with $F=-1.1519$, $p>0.05$.

**Findings for Research Objective 4: To Examine the Relationship Between Computer Skill and Components in the Self-Management Strategies of Learning**

Another aspect investigated in the study was the relationship between computer skill and other components of self-management strategies of learning. Accordingly, bi-variate correlation analysis was performed to see the relationship between computer skill and the components in the self-management strategies of learning.

Pearson correlation test was run to see whether there was any significant relationship between computer skill and the components in the self-management skill. Table 6 shows there was a high positive significant relationship between computer skill and evaluation ($r=0.703$, $p=0.00$) and the lowest correlation was displayed between computer skill and planning ($r=0.421$, $p=0.00$). There was a moderate positive significant relationship between monitoring and computer skill ($r=0.438$, $p=0.00$), a moderate positive significant relationship between task strategies and computer skill ($r=0.639$, $p=0.00$), a moderate positive significant relationship between time management and computer skill ($r=0.428$, $p=0.00$), and a moderate positive significant relationship between organising and computer skill ($r=0.540$, $p=0.00$).

*Table 6: Relationship Between Computer Skill and the Components in the Self-Management Strategies of Learning*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Computer skill</th>
<th>r-value</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.421</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.438</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.639</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.703</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time management</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.428</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organising</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.540</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Based on the statistical results, it was found that the highest percentage, 72.8% of students had an average level of self-management strategies in learning. This was followed by 25% of students who had a high level and 9% with a low level of self-management strategies in learning. The reason behind the large number of students having only average level of self-management strategies of learning could be due to their lack of commitment in reading the modules and then contributing to the online discussion. Since all the students are full-time teachers, many of them are married and some of them have children, they may find it a challenge to allocate sufficient time for studies. In comparison, traditional students who are full-time students are expected to have better self-management strategies for their learning since they are still not tied down by career and family commitments.

As stated in the literature, adult students will learn new knowledge, understanding, skills, values and attitudes most effectively when they are presented in the context of application related to real-life situations (Knowles et. al, 1998). Hence, relating to the findings, adults may find the topics they are required to read in the modules and their contribution based on their reading is not directly related to their real-life teaching profession. Furthermore, the findings also revealed that an average level of self-management strategies of learning may be due to the students limited English language proficiency since they are from non-English options.

The further analysis conducted on the level of self-management strategies in learning among the respondents displayed that computer skill showed the highest mean (M=4.83). This finding is in line with a study conducted by Al-Oraini (2007). He found that 80% online distance students who are working adults studying in a private university in the Klang Valley have basic ICT Skills for learning namely, they are able to use MS Word, Excel and Power-point. For the skill searching for information, more than 83% of students were able to apply skills required to get an overview of content in the online software, learnt how to use the Internet and used the skills given to actively participate in online discussions.

Sansone et. al (2011) highlighted that students who come to lessons with greater interest in computers may display greater knowledge and
interest regardless of added utility information, because the learning task is relevant to their interests and they make the connections on their own. Students who have higher computer self-efficacy enroll in an online course because they are curious about taking a course like this as opposed to students who have lower levels of self-efficacy who are taking online courses solely because of availability (Newlin and Wang, 2002).

Another reason for the high mean in computer skill could be due to these students’ nature of job as teachers where computer skill is required for various purposes like doing reports, keying in marks and preparing examination papers. This is supported by Rea, Hoger and Rooney (1999) who stated that teachers need to develop adaptive computer skills, including an ability to learn from colleagues, support personnel and students as well as a capacity to engage in self-directed and experiential learning.

Based on the findings for research objective 2, results showed that there is just a difference of 0.01 between female (M=4.63) and male (M=4.62) in the total self-management strategies of learning. A further analysis using independent sample t-test displayed that there is no significant difference in self-management strategies of learning between genders (t=0.185, sig=0.85). Yukselturk and Bulut (2007) in a similar study found out that gender variable were unrelated to learning performance.

In another perspective, studies have shown that female adult students are better than male adult students. Despite having to manage career and family responsibilities, women realize the importance of performing in their studies in order to get a secure and stable profession. Women today wish to be financially independent and this can be achieved by securing a good education. A study by Price (2006) found that online female students are confident independent learners who are academically engaged and may outperform their male counterparts online. In a similar study by Bidjerano (2005), female students outnumbered male students in their ability to use some of the self-regulated strategies, such as rehearsal, organization, metacognition, time management skill, elaboration and effort. Nonetheless, research has shown that males tend to overestimate their abilities more than females in various domains (Pajares & Valiante, 1999).
Findings for research objective 3 revealed that there is no significant difference between the four age groups and self-management strategies of learning. In other words, all the students have more or less a similar level of self-management of learning. A further analysis was done using ANOVA and the result displayed that there is no significant difference between the level of self-management strategies in learning among the age groups ($F=1.519$, sig=0.21). This finding may be in line with a study conducted by Lewis (1997) who stated that between the age group of twenties until late sixties, human thinking and learning declines.

Hence, at this different age, adults need to be given more time and motivation in order to achieve the equivalent learning outcomes like their younger counterparts. This is in line with a study conducted by Blecher et. al (2002) who claimed that since literature examining the relationship between age and academic persistence and willingness to learn although facing challenges was so inconsistent, one could conclude that age did not affect academic persistence. Similarly, a study conducted by Wiggam (2004) on a wide range of students from age 21-60 suggests that age does not contribute to an individual’s learning strategies. This could be due to the fact that most non-traditional students regardless of age are facing the same life situations which include family, work and study commitments.

For research objective 4, with regard to the correlation between computer skill and components of the self-management skill, it was found that the highest correlation was recorded between computer skill and evaluation ($r=0.703$, $p=0.00$). The items in the evaluation component based on the factor analysis are: “I find it worthwhile contributing in the forum discussion”, “I give myself a grade based on my contribution in the forum” and “I assess my progress in online forum discussion”.

For the item, “I find it worthwhile contributing in the forum discussion”, this could be because when students contribute knowledge and opinions in the forum discussion, they receive responses or comments from instructors or their course mates. Furthermore, they find it worthwhile because it is easy to retrieve and reflect on the information, for instance, the ability to download and upload PDF files or journals for the benefit of all members in the forum. Besides that, when using forum discussion, students can make it interesting by applying emoticons and various fonts.
The item, “I assess my progress in online forum discussion” requires students to judge their ability to use their computer skill to type their responses, evaluate by rereading and make adjustments to their own responses, evaluate on the flow of the discussion thread and provide responses to a contribution. If students do not possess this evaluation skill, it hinders them from participating by contributing, reading and providing responses. The subcomponent for evaluation, “I give myself a grade based on my contribution in the forum” is in line with Chamot et. al (1999) who stated that when a student grades himself, it helps him to identify his strengths and weaknesses in order for the student to further improve.

Nevertheless, the rest of the components: planning and computer skill ($r=0.421$, $p=0.00$), monitoring and computer skill ($r=0.438$, $p=0.00$), task strategies and computer skill ($r=0.639$, $p=0.00$), time management and computer skill ($r=0.428$, $p=0.00$) as well as organising and computer skill ($r=0.540$, $p=0.00$) which displayed moderate relationship with computer skill still need to be given attention too because these components do play a significant role in determining the overall success of self-management strategies of learning.

REFERENCES


ABSTRACT

This paper utilized a content document analysis method to investigate the use of rhetorical moves in the introductions in academic exercises written by BEd TESL students in Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia. It described how genre analysis was used to analyze the academic exercise introductions of a corpus composed of 30 texts written in English by Malaysian writers. The analysis revealed that the rhetorical patterns and some moves proposed by Swales in his Open a Research Option model were found in introductions even though they were not in order of sequence. The objectives of this analysis were to verify whether the rhetorical patterns of organization and the moves found in introductions coincided with those proposed by Swales (1993) in his study of research article introductions. Besides analyzing the CARS model by Swales (1993), this study also identified the alternative model of Open a Research Option (OARO) in the introductions. The findings showed that Malaysian writers did not like to comment on others’ work. To conclude the introduction section of their writing, Malaysian writers preferred referring to the consequences of their research. In general, the rhetorical moves and steps employed in academic exercise introduction sections were more reflective of OARO than CARS.

Keywords: academic exercise introduction, CARS model, OARO model.
INTRODUCTION

English is an international language, used widely in research and scholarship which means that and more non-native speakers are writing and speaking in English. Consequently, non-native writers must comply with conventional styles of English rhetoric if they are to be accepted and to succeed in publishing and in their field of study (Swales, 1981; Duszak, 1994).

For second language academic writers, it is a problem to produce effective and acceptable academic writing. Therefore, it is important to ensure that students improve their writing skills. In this study, the introductions in academic exercises were investigated to see how Malaysian writers put them in writing. The reason for selecting the introduction section of the academic exercise was because it is important for writers to see how the initial part of the writing can capture the attention of readers. Introductions are imperative to attract, gain and keep the attention of readers. They need to be written clearly and precisely. Specifically, introductions must be presented in an attractive and distinctive manner in order to draw the interest of a busy readership.

Many studies have employed the genre approach to study the introduction section of academic texts writing effectiveness. It has been studied because as Swales (1990) puts it, it is the most difficult part for writers. They are faced with numerous options and decisions in this section: the amount of background knowledge, the authoritative versus sincere tone, the appeal to readers and directness of the approach they should incorporate into their writing (Swales, 1990; Zeng, 2009). Almost all academic writers admit that starting a piece is more difficult than its continuation.

The opening paragraphs present the writer with an unnerving wealth of options. Decisions have to be made about the amount and type of background knowledge to be included and about an authoritative versus a sincere stance.


Therefore, academic writing is a concern for many academic writers, especially non-native writers. It is a difficult task that involves many procedures in completing a research and the ability to write skillfully.
Generally, many students try to avoid this process as they lack sufficient writing skills. However, academic writing cannot be avoided since it is a part of academia. It is vital for students to acquire skills successfully in order to complete their studies. According to Li (2011), an effective way to help students cope with challenges in academic writing might be to make the knowledge of writing explicit to students through genre analysis which can help students produce professional writing.

This study is mainly about analyzing the texts of university students so that it can offer genre-based methods to educators concerning tertiary level writing, specifically the introduction to academic papers. It argues that genre-based teaching approach can teach students to write in terms of move structures or conventional sections of academic papers (Swales, 1990) to inculcate the awareness among students of the stylistic features of introductions with the strategies to reproduce these features in their own writing.

Therefore, it is important for ESL students to acquire genre-based instruction by emphasizing or “sensitizing” them to the idea of genre.

Genre analysis is an insightful and thick description of academic and professional texts that has become a powerful and useful tool to arrive at significant correlations between form and function and which can be utilised for a number of applied linguistic purposes. Apart from this, genre analysis is an important tool for analyzing the way in which certain disciplines are written. (Bhatia, 1993, p. 13)

In India, a study by Swami (2008) regarding sensitizing ESL learners to genre found that exposure to genres and generic features can help learners to be clear about organizational structures, develop learners’ clarity about communicative purpose, develop a holistic view of a text and improve self-confidence and attitudes towards language learning. It also helps students to be aware of reader expectations of a text and become conscious users of language.

According to Linli (2005), Chinese students and teachers have a problem in academic writing. They are good in grammar but lack writing
skill which contributes to the inconsistency and fluency in English composition. In Chinese universities, the focus is more on English courses for general purposes and the few ESP courses make learners tend to imitate the format of published articles in preparing their academic writing. This situation is quite similar in Malaysia as tertiary students are taught the moves of academic papers but they do not know the reasons behind them and are not aware of the possibility of flexibility in the move structures. Consequently, Malaysian learners may acquire some knowledge of the structure of academic texts but lack understanding about why academic papers should be presented in the way they are.

Hence, it is important to teach Malaysian students at tertiary level to write an introduction for an academic paper or thesis in terms of moves or move structure (Swales, 1990) and their underlying motivation. They should be informed about the reason for the presence of the moves and the logic behind the move sequences which are motivated by their communicative purposes (Xu, 2005). Many students do not understand how to organize and write the introduction for an academic exercise. They lack awareness and understanding of the importance of using proper rhetorical structures towards writing effectiveness.

There have been many studies of the Swales model in the abstract and the introduction sections of texts by non-native writers. However, there is lack of study concerning the Open a Research Option model as an alternate model to the CARS model. Most studies to date have employed Swales’ (1990) CARS model for analysis but few attempts have been made to utilise the OARO model. It would seem that many researchers are not aware of the OARO model. Nonnative writers may lack of knowledge of Swales’ moves but they may in fact use OARO model more in their academic writing due to the kinder, gentler and more relaxed research world in which there is less competition for research “space” (Swales, 1990, p. 244).

Thus, this study examined the rhetorical moves used in the introduction of unpublished academic exercises written by undergraduate students of Teaching English as a Second Language at Universiti Teknologi MARA. The analysis was based on Swales’ (1990) Create A Research Space (CARS) model and the alternative structure (2004) of Open a Research Option (OARO) model. The research was to specify the rhetorical preferences
that characterize the styles of Malaysian students. This study sought to understand the way in which generic structures are organized in the introduction section of academic exercises written by Malaysian students. This is to verify the rhetorical structures found in Swales’ (1990) “Create a Research Space” (CARS) model and 2004 “Open a Research Option” (OARO) which can provide to the standardization of rhetorical structure or pattern in academic exercise writing by indicating the particular moves. The study can be employed to enhance English academic writing approaches for second language writers, i.e. to provide a better understanding of Malaysian academic discourse so students can employ better analytical tools in their academic writing. For this purpose, the following questions were addressed:

1. What rhetorical patterns for academic exercise introductions are preferred by BEd. TESL students in Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia?
2. How many moves are used in introductions to academic exercises using CARS model?
3. How many moves are used in introductions to academic exercises using OARO model?
4. What are the moves and steps employed in the introduction section of academic exercise written by BEd. TESL students in Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Malaysia?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Swales (1994) defines genre as a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. For Swales, the schematic structure of the discourse is shaped by the genre, influence and constraint options with regard to content and style of writing. He believes that some genres are structured in such a way that they influence the choice of style on the part of the users and possess patterns of rhetorical organization in terms of content, style, structure and intended audience that are prototypical and used by others. As such, these prototypes guide writers to write in a predictable way and it is very useful to those who lack English rhetorical skills. Genre enables second language writers and students to write professionally and recognise the features of the genres used in the scientific community.
Thus, genre is an influential factor that can assist writers to write in a certain way in a discipline. This is the reason why students are more likely to use the structure of a particular genre as their internal guide within a particular professional or academic context.

Genre as proposed by Swales has started to become important in linguistics and is very influential and significant in academic writing. However, learners should be able to employ more specific genres to understand and write texts. Since genre is identified through its communicative purposes and its specific discourse community, it is necessary to discuss communicative events, communicative purposes and discourse community in order to comprehend genres. Swales (1990) defines a communicative event as an activity which involves language. The communicative event is an event that engage with the language to code and decode the message from one person to another person. From the above, Swales (1990) sums up that a communicative event consists of the discourse itself and its participants – the producer and receiver, the role of the discourse and the environment where the discourse is produced and received including its historical and cultural association.

Bhatia (1993) states that in genre analysis, it is important to look at the communicative purpose each genre serves or has to fulfill as the communicative purpose plays a crucial role in genre identification. These communicative purposes are represented by a structural description in terms of moves (Bhatia, 1993). Therefore, to match each genre to the communicative purposes, a structural description in terms of the moves may be presented.

A number of linguists are keen to study genre analysis of written academic discourse and to investigate the rhetorical structures of genres. Empirical studies by Swales of the introduction sections of research articles (RAs) have used structural move analysis to explore the generic patterns in genres such as academic RAs. The structure of the text consists of moves and each move contains one or more steps.

Obviously, the structural approach of genre analysis is based on the idea that the texts should be varied and distinguished by particular purposes i.e. academic writing, business or other professional writing activities. Genre
analysis is not only for approaches to text analysis but also can examine the intention of the writers. This also helps non-native writers to enhance their ability to write proficiently in academic writing and other professional purposes.

In analyzing English as a Second Language (ESL) writing, contrastive rhetoric (“CR”) is applied to the investigation of academic writing across languages and cultures. This is important to study the differences in the cultures of the second language writers. Kaplan has incepted the theory and research approach in the pedagogical study of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and ESL. Contrastive rhetoric is the study of the differences that occur between the discourses of different languages and cultures as reflected in foreign students’ writing (Xing, Wang & Spencer, 2008). As cited in Xing, Wang and Spencer (2008), Kaplan (1966) claims all written languages contain a variety of organizational modes and native speakers recognize which modes to use and the consequences of their “choices”. Their data were used as a theory to support contrastive rhetoric that the second language or foreign language writers have a cultural barrier in their academic writing. The findings show that the significance of the differences between the English style of writing of the UK writers and the Chinese style of the Chinese writers. For example, many UK writers preferred using more discourse markers and paragraphs but lack metaphors. With regard to the above, it can be seen that the cultures have their own writing style which produce different patterns of rhetorical organization in their academic writing. Another study of contrastive rhetoric by Molino and Alessandra (2010) on English and Italian linguistics research articles indicates differences in the use of personal and impersonal authorial references across discourse functions. For example, Italians used less frequent impersonal authorial references compared to English.

Loi (2010) studied the rhetorical organization of English and Chinese research article introductions in the field of education psychology using Swales’ (1990, 2004) framework of move analysis. The findings indicated that the moves and steps used in the English and Chinese research articles differed in the introductions. Loi (2010) proposed an analytic-synthetic approach to be applied in teaching English academic writing. This approach can help students to write appropriate English academic writing.
The studies of contrastive text linguistics and genre analysis in second language settings provide information about the differences in the academic writing of native and non-native writers and help instructors in teaching writing. Moreover, they help them to understand the readers’ expectation in different languages and discourse communities to guide second language students to write better in order to meet the expectations of English academic writing. Other benefits of contrastive rhetoric are that second language educators or learners understand why the native writers write in a particular way. It benefits both educators and learners to be alert to the differences of the cultures and languages which allow the educators to provide better advice to the learners and communicate with them in more effective ways. It also helps learners to accept the negative comments on their writing by academics of other language due to the cultural and language differences. The most significant value of contrastive rhetoric is to help educators and learners understand and tolerate each other with regard to cultural differences reflected in their style of writing.

It is a characteristic of genre-centred approaches to the analysis of discourse that they allow for the observation of linguistic patterns for a specific purpose. Introductions are considered a specific genre used in a specific circumstance which allows writers and readers to form a discourse community. “Introductions are known to be troublesome, and nearly all academic writers admit to having more difficulty with getting started on a piece of academic writing than they have with its continuation” (Swales, 1990, p. 14). Introductions play an important part in academic writing by giving the first impression by which writers display their background knowledge. The opening of the academic writing must be convincing and compelling to readers. Therefore, many researchers have shown interest in the introductory portions of texts, for example Zappen (1983) and Toulmin (1972) as cited in Swales (1990). They suggested that the context of intellectual discipline needs to be addressed and the goals, current capacities, problems and criteria of evaluation should be addressed by the researcher in order to meet the standard of academic writing.

In the discourse analysis context, genre is defined by Swales as that which “comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community and thereby
constitute the rationale for the genre” (Swales, 1990, p. 58). Speaking of this, it can be seen that genre is a communicative, goal-centered, well-structured and academic oriented concept. For English teachers, genre helps them to deal with the kinds of texts that learners will have to write to meet the needs of communicative effectiveness (Hyland, 2004).

**Swales’ Model of Rhetorical Moves in Research Articles**

**CARS**

Swales (1990) introduced a new ecological metaphor for the dynamics of introductions. He characterised the CARS model and reduced the moves from four to three, with *Describing Previous Research (as presented in 1981)* folded into the opening move. The reason for doing this was because he realised that references to previous work were more widely distributed than he had earlier envisioned (Swales, 2011). One of the other developments was the extension of Move 3 (*Occupying the Niche*) to include a further concluding step, in which the author or authors find it necessary to explain the structure of the remaining parts of their paper. Swales posited three-move schemas that characterize this sub-genre (Figure 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Move 1 Establishing a territory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1 Claiming centrality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and/or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2 Making topic generalisation(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and/or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3 Reviewing items of previous research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Declining rhetorical effort</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Move 2 Establishing a niche</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1A Counter-claiming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or Step 1B Indicating a gap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or Step 1C Question-raising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or Step 1D Continuing a tradition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weakening knowledge claims</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Move 3 Occupying the niche</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1A Outlining purposes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or Step 1B Announcing present research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2 Announcing principal findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3 Indicating research article structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing explicitness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure: 1 The Create a Research Space (CARS) Model (Swales, 1990, p.141)*
Here are some common examples to indicate the centrality claims (Move 1 Step 1) in academic writing by using the linguistic signals presented below. The examples given are cited in Swales’ (1990).

The possibility...has generated interest in...
The time development...is a classic problem in fluid mechanics.
The well-known...phenomena...have been favorite topics for analysis both in...
The effect of...has been studied extensively in recent years.
Knowledge of...has a great importance for...
The relationship between...has been studied by many authors.

Other than linguistic signals of centrality claims, some of the centrality claims refer to the knowledge or practice, or statements about phenomena of the topic. Move 1 Step 2 Making topic generalization could be noticed in the following sentences:

The etiology and pathology of...is well known.
There is now much evidence to support the hypothesis that...
The...properties of...are still not completely understood.
A standard procedure for assessing has been...
Education core courses are often criticized for...

According to Swales (1990), the above steps generally refer to the state of the art of knowledge, of technique and of current requirements for further progress. It also refers to phenomena such as:

...is a common finding in patients with...
An elaborate system of...is found in the...
English is rich in related words exhibiting ‘stress shifts’.

The third step in establishing a territory is the review of previous studies (Move 1 Step 3 Reviewing items of previous research). The authors need to relate their current studies to previous studies to uphold their stance towards their findings.

After claiming and establishing the research territory, the authors attempt to establish a niche for their research (Move 2 Establishing a
niche) by indicating that the previous research has flaws or limitations or is incomplete. In order to establish a niche, they need to follow one of the following options in Move 2, i.e. to make a strong justification and argument about previous work (Step 1A Counter-claiming), claim that the work was insufficient and weak (Step 1B Indicating a gap), question previous research (Step 1C Question-raising), or claim that a new explanation is needed (Step 1D Continuing a tradition). Generally, Move 2 can be distinguished by terms such as, however, nevertheless, limited, therefore, yet, unfortunately, but, no, little, none, few, fail, lack, overlook, not, rarely, ill, inconclusive, complex, misleading, elusive, scarce, questionable, etc.

The last move in the CARS model is Move 3 (Occupying the niche) where the authors of the research claim that they will refer to the problem indicated in Move 2 by indicating the purpose of their research (Step 1A Outlining purposes) and explain the main objectives of the present research (Step 1B Announcing present research). Apart from the above, the summary of the principal findings of the research is a compulsory step (Step 2 Announcing principal findings) and lastly, the presentation of structure or content of the rest of the research (Step 3 Indicating research article structure). Examples of Move 3 are listed below:

This paper reports on the results obtained...
The aim of the present paper is to give...
The main purpose of the experiment reported here was to...
This study was designed to evaluate...
The present work extends the use the last model...

However, some of the introductions may not follow the sequence as outlined in the CARS model. This was shown by Swales (1990) who states that Move 1 Step 3 (Reviewing items of previous research) followed by Move 2 (Establishing a niche) may be repeated many times. The longer the introductions, the more likely it is that they will occur.

OARO

According to Swales’ (2004), the Open a Research Option model (OARO) model is an alternative to the CARS model. It is as seen in Figure 2.
Attracting the Readership

Move 1 Establishing Credibility (one or more of the following four)
   a. Sharing background knowledge
   b. Justifying need for research per se
   c. Presenting interesting thoughts
   d. Introducing general goal

Move 2 Offering a Line of Inquiry
   a. Discussing current problems
   b. Expressing interest in an emerging topic

Move 3 Introducing the Topic

Figure 2: The OARO (Open A Research Option) model (Swales, 2004)

Swales (2004) states that this alternative model is a product of a kinder, gentler, more relaxed research world in which there is less competition for research space.

These two models can be summarized as seen in Table 1 (Swales, 2004, p.245).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OARO (Open A Research Option)</th>
<th>CARS (Create A Research Space)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nonantagonistic stance</td>
<td>More antagonistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly softer fields</td>
<td>Mostly harder fields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small discourse communities</td>
<td>Large discourse communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly non-Anglophone cultures</td>
<td>Mostly Anglophone cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsectioned/unconventional</td>
<td>Conventional (IMRD)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This rhetorical structure helps educators to find a way to place their teaching approaches to develop students’ sensitivity or awareness of diverse genres and to facilitate and guide students’ writing tasks in different genres. This can assist students to write introductions by being sensitive to the move structure of introductions. They can be motivated by exploiting linguistic resources creatively to achieve their personal goals in writing.
Selected previous studies on the structure of introductions have indicated Swales’ moves. Shehzad (2005) reported an analysis of RA introductions in the field of Computer Science, using Swales’ (1990) model. Fifty-six texts from Computer Science field published from January to December 2002 were randomly selected. Three moves were identified and the results show that the introductions to research articles in Computer Science ignored two steps in Move 3 by listing research questions or hypotheses and stating the value of the present research. Afful (2009) examined 60 examination essays written by second year English students in a Ghana university from the 2001/2002 academic year. The findings indicated that 79 percent of the introductions employed Move 2, 50 percent utilised Move 1 and 77 percent employed Move 3. The author concluded that the sample used a three-move rhetorical structure.

Meanwhile, Samraj (2008) investigated the discourse structure of introductions to masters’ theses across three different fields: biology, philosophy and linguistics. The population was from a large public university in the United States and 24 theses samples with eight theses selected from each discipline were investigated. The samples were scrutinized by using the CARS model which was developed by Swales (1990, 2004). The findings showed three moves in the introduction section of Biology and Linguistics and two moves in Philosophy. Jogthong (2001) examined the rhetorical structure of 40 research articles in four disciplines: medical services, nursing research, education and educational evaluation written in Thai and indicated that they showed a comparatively high similarity to the CARS model’s rhetorical structure. Zeng (2009) analysed the introductions of RAs from the field of sports science and medicine, using Swales’ (1990) model and identified that the introductions used the rhetorical pattern of Swales’CARS model.

Rezaee (2009) conducted a comparative move analysis of RA introductions of RAs between Iranian ISI and Non-ISI- indexed medical research articles in English. The corpus was selected from the international website of ISI and general list of IAN MEDEX – Indexing Articles published in Iran Biomedical Journals. The sample of the study constituted 64 articles comprising the two groups above and each consisting of 32 articles. The findings generally revealed that moves and their sub-moves in the introduction sections of medical RAs of ISI and non-ISI Iranian journals
were exploited with quite similar frequencies. The author concluded that Iranian non-ISI medical journals were as valid as their ISI counterparts. Mahzari and Maftoon (2007) examined Swales’ (1990) rhetorical structure in 200 medical research articles introductions: 100 American English and 100 Persian. The findings indicated that English and Persian medical RAs had similarity in their move frequency but were completely different in the realisation of these three moves in these two languages. They suggested that genre awareness should be included in the course design to expose students to the features in the academic text to be acceptable by the members of the discourse community.

In conclusion, previous studies have examined the discourse structure of RAs in different disciplines. Most of them used Swales’ (1990) model as a framework for their academic writing. As for this study, it specifically was an attempt to provide insights concerning students introduction writing in their academic exercise based on the results of genre analysis.

**METHODOLOGY**

Thirty academic exercise introductions between 2002 and 2012 (random sampling) taken from the TESL programme at Universiti Teknologi MARA were selected. This study employed a quantitative document analysis (QDA) of the three moves in the CARS model or the OARO model whichever was determined to be more appropriate. This identification was done by the researcher who was trained by the supervisor for a month in the identification of Swales’ CARS (1990) and OARO (2004) models by analysing four academic exercise introductions of TESL students from the National University of Malaysia.

The researcher identified and marked the moves in each academic exercise introduction. In order to gather reliable and valid data of the identification of both variables that were Swales’ CARS (1993) or OARO (2004) models, the supervisor was asked to assist in identifying the moves and move sequences. Finally, the frequency of occurrence for each move was counted and categorised for each introduction.
Each text was examined to determine whether the CARS or OARO model was more appropriate. The document or content analysis was analyzed according to the Move-step sequences of the appropriate model. Individual sentences were classified into an appropriate step of the CARS and OARO models to determine whether they employ these move structures or other rhetorical structures. The sentences in the texts could be identified with more than one step. However, some of the sentences were vague and too complicated to be coded into the models in this study. 20% of the sentences were not analysed and presented in the findings section. The findings were discussed based on the Swales’ CARS and OARO move identification in the introduction sections and rhetorical structure moves by Malaysian writers. This study also identified the most preferred moves.

RESULTS

The Rhetorical Structure of Academic Exercise Introductions

The results in Table 2 indicated that Open a Research Option (OARO) model was the most frequent and obligatory rhetorical pattern in academic exercise introductions by Malaysian writers. As indicated in Table 2, the rhetorical structure of the majority (70%) of the academic exercise introductions in this corpus conformed to the structure indicated in OARO model while a smaller number (30%) used the CARS model.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rhetorical structure</th>
<th>No. of texts</th>
<th>% of occurrence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CARS</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OARO</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Academic Exercise Introductions: CARS model

Out of 30 academic exercise introductions, only nine employed the CARS model. All of these nine (100%) had Move 1 Step 1 and seven (78%) had Move 1 Step 2 and Step 3. Only four (44%) had Move 2 Step 1A, one (11%) had Move 2 Step 1B, 2(22%) had Move 2 1C and one (11%) had Move 2 1D. Of the total of nine, four (44%) had Move 3 Step 1A.

Table 3: Move Structure of CARS Model (a) Nine Academic Exercise Introduction Sections (AEIS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CARS MODEL</th>
<th>MOVE 1</th>
<th>MOVE 2</th>
<th>MOVE 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AEISs Code #</td>
<td>S1</td>
<td>S2</td>
<td>S3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Move 1

With regard to the frequency of occurrence of moves, Move 1 (Establishing a territory) was the most frequently used move in Swales’ CARS model. The analysis revealed that 100% of nine introductions included Move 1 in order to establish a territory. It shows that the writers had an understanding of the importance of stating the objectives of the issues that they wanted to bring up. The writers intended to emphasize their intention and interest in the research. The percentage of the occurrence of Move 1 and its steps are summed up in the following table.
Table 4: Percentage of Occurrence of Move 1 and its Steps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Move 1: Establishing a Territory</th>
<th>No of texts</th>
<th>% of occurrence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Establishing a Territory</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Claiming centrality and/or</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Making topic generalisations</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Reviewing items of previous research</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 shows that all the nine introductions employed Move 1 Step 1 but two of them did not include Move 1 Step 2 and Move 1 Step 3. This suggests that the writers made their stance by emphasising the importance of their research to the readers. They established or supported their research, made a centrality claim, included topic generalisations and reviewed items of previous research. Examples of Move 1 and Steps 1, 2 and 3 are presented below:

**Move 1 Step 1**

(1.2) *The benefits of literature are widely known especially in contributing to human development and civilisation. As an element of civilisation, literature is believed to have great impact on human life especially in English.*

**Move 1 Step 2**

(1.8) *Of the many languages in this world... to get a better job and many more.*

**Move 1 step 3**

(1.27) *It is evident that poetry...in the literature component.*

**Move 2**

Table 5: Percentage of Occurrence of Move 2 and its Steps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Move 2: Establishing a niche Steps</th>
<th>No of texts</th>
<th>% of occurrence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Establishing a Niche</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1A) Counter-claiming</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or 1B) Indicating a gap</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or 1C) Question raising</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or 1D) Continuing a tradition</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Move 2 is to establish general context by focusing on some sort of insufficiency in the research literature or indicating that the study is complementary to previous research by continuing a tradition. This move is meant to sustain the view that new research and investigation must be carried out in order to furnish more information than the previous research or to present a development in methodology. The data in Table 5 indicates that only 44% of nine introduction sections employed Move 2 Step 1A (counter-claiming). Step 1B (indicating a gap) was employed by one introduction section from the total of nine texts. This finding shows that Step 1A was the favourite step, followed by Step 1C (question rising) while Steps 1B (indicating a gap) and 1D (continuing a tradition) were the least with only one occurrence. However, it seems that most of the introduction sections did not utilise Move 2. Therefore, it seems that in many cases, the writers did not criticise the previous research. They did not argue and challenge the previous research. Examples of Move 2 Steps 1A, 1B, 1C and 1D are presented below.

**Move 2 Step 1A**
(1.2) *As time passes, however the standard...began to decline.*

**Move 2 Step 1B**
(1.30) *However, the process...fully engage in with the poems...to English poems before.*

**Move 2 Step 1C**
(1.10) *Due to the impact of the declination of the standard of English in Malaysia, as well as the declination of reading rate among Malaysians, the government has been trying to find a solution to curb these problems.*

**Move 2 Step 1D**
(1.2) *The importance of English literature subject in Malaysia is detected in helping Malaysia to produce more good English readers among Malaysian. After the failure of class reader program (CRP) that was implemented to produce better English readers as well as to inculcate more readers in Malaysia, literature is believe to be a new or reborn measure that should be taken to suit the purpose.*
Move 3

The readers were convinced of the significance of the current research. As such, they indicated the goal, method and procedure of their research to the readers.

Table 6: Percentage of Occurrence of Move 3 and its Steps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Move 3: Occupying the niche – Steps</th>
<th>No of texts</th>
<th>% of occurrence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Occupying the niche</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1A) Outlining purposes</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or 1B) Announcing present research</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or 2) Announcing principle findings</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or 3) Indicating RA structure</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Move 3 was not typically indicated in the introduction sections (Table 6). However, it can be found in four texts, all of which employed step 1A (outlining purposes). The writers mentioned their intended research but they did not employ Step 1B, 2 or 3. This move was generally presented in the abstract of academic exercises instead of the introduction sections. In other words, it is possible that the writers did not sum up their research findings as they believed it was already understood by the readers once they read the examples of Move 3 used in employing Step 1A. Examples are presented as below:

Move 3 Step 1A
(1.2) For this reason, this small-scale research would like to draw insights as to how students perceive the subject literature. In this chapter, the researcher will present his statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the research questions, the limitation, the scope of the study and the significance of the study.

Move 3 Step 1A
(1.6) Consequently, this study is intended to identify...preposition of place in particular.

Move 3 Step 1A
(1.27) Therefore, this study would like to investigate...its implementation.
Move Analysis of Academic Exercise Introductions in Open a Research Option (OARO) Model

Twenty one academic exercise introduction sections were analysed according to the Open a Research Option model. As indicated in Table 7, many of the academic exercises could be analysed using the OARO model. However, the table indicates that 71 percent did not include Move 2b (Expressing interest in an emerging topic). This probably means that they did not prepare much information on the research so they tended to ignore this move or they disclosed this part in another chapter of their research.

Table 7: Move Structures of OARO Model in 21 Academic Exercises

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AEISs Code #</th>
<th>OARO</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results reported here are based on identifying the OARO moves in each text as seen in Table 7. It shows that 21 (100%) out of 21 texts that employed OARO utilised Move 0 (Optional Opening). The examples of Move 0 are presented as below:

(1.1) *When we look at small children playing, we will be able to see that the female has their own group while the male has their own. They can play the same game together but there are still differences that make both genders different. Male turn to be more dominant. However, when time goes by, thing changes specifically in the education field.*

(1.3) *Communicative approach...controlled by the teacher.*

(1.4) *English language is widely...20th century.*

Out of a total of 30 texts, 21 used the OARO model and all of them, 21 (100%) employed Move 1 Step a (Sharing background knowledge), nine (43%) used Move 1 Step b (Justifying need for research per se), 16 (76%) used Move 1 Step c (Presenting interesting thoughts) and 9 (43%) applied Move 1 Step d (Introducing general goal). It can be concluded that most of the writers employed Move 1 Step a (Sharing background knowledge) compared to the other steps in Move 1. It seemed that the writers did their research based on their knowledge in the field of research. Examples of Move 1 used in employing Steps a, b, c and d are presented below:

**Move 1a**

(1.25) *In fact, the Internet is ‘fast becoming the largest reference library in the world’ (Dede Teeler, 2000). Since there is a bigger pool of English based web-sites, being able to read and communicate in the language would mean that an individual will get access to more information on the Internet.*

**Move 1b**

(1.25) *This is supported by...hinder their educational process.*
Move 1c
(1.25) The benefits are listed below...

Move 1d
(1.12) Language is a system of sounds and words used by humans to express their thoughts and feelings. Human Language is very complex and because of its vital role in the society, the acquisition of language has been the most significant achievement in a person’s life. Of the many languages in this world, English has been widely accepted as the people need it to communicate internationally, to be able to qualify for higher level of education, to get a better job and many more.

In Move 2 (Offering a line of inquiry), fifteen (71%) introductions employed Step a (Discussing current problems) and six (29%) used Step b (Expressing interest in an emerging topic). It shows that fifteen texts applied OARO and used Move 2a more than Move 2b in their writing. In other words, the writers presented the statement of problems as the reason to do their current research. This is to justify their pursuing the research study in order to acquire more knowledge and findings based on the current situation. Examples of Move 2a and Move 2b are presented below:

Move 2a
(1.28) Experienced teachers might not be facing…educational study.

Move 2b
(1.25) Apart from this…four skills listed.

Move 2b
(1.9) It is understanding of the importance of English language that has led to some drastic move by the Ministry of Education through the implementation of English in Science and Mathematics subjects. Beginning 2003, the government implemented the PPSMI which is ‘Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran Sains dan Matematik dalam Bahasa Inggeris’ to only Standard One, Form 1 and Lower Six students. The implementation will be in full stages expected in 2008 Ministry of Education, 2003.
Out of 21 texts employing OARO, it was found all of them (100%) applied Move 3 (Introducing the topic) in the introduction section. The samples of the move are as below:

(1.14)  *This proves that the intention of...independence day.*

(1.16)  *In relation to the Government’s goal,...Vision 2020.*

(1.17)  *The success of this implementation is very much depending on how the lessons are carried out. In other words, teachers play a very big role to make sure that all of the above can be achieved successfully. Without good teachers, the objectives of implementing literature as part of the syllabus are a waste of time. Therefore this research is focusing on the teacher trainees’ readiness in teaching literature in schools; to ensure that they are really much ready to enter the real world and give their best to our future generations.*

With regard to the frequency of occurrence of moves in OARO, the most frequently used move was Move 0 (attracting the readership) and Move 3 (Introducing the topic). Table 8 displays the frequency of each of the three moves in the introduction section of 21 texts.

### Table 8: Frequency of Occurrence of OARO Moves in Introduction of Texts in 21 Academic Exercises

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open a Research Option Moves</th>
<th>No of texts</th>
<th>% of occurrence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 – Attracting the readers</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 – establishing creditability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a – sharing background knowledge</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b – justifying need for research per se</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c – presenting interesting thoughts</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d – introducing general goal</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – offering a line of inquiry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a – discussing current problems</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b – expressing interest in an emerging topic</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 – Introducing the topic</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8 shows that all of the introductions employed Move 1a (Sharing background knowledge). However, only nine introductions (43%) used Move 1b (Justifying need for research per se) and 1d (Introducing general goal) compared to seventy-six percent (16) which applied Move 1c (Presenting interesting thoughts). Therefore, it can be noted that all the four moves were used in different degrees by the writers. There are a few issues that can be discussed in order to relate to the above findings. Most of these writers followed the writing style of Polish scholars who were studied by Frederickson and Swales (1994) in a study of the rhetorical structure of introductions to research articles. They attracted the readers by disclosing the history and overview of their current studies. This was to get the readers’ attention to read further to know how this research addressed the history and previous research.

All of the introduction sections included 1a (Sharing background knowledge) where all of the writers shared their thoughts by adopting their reading materials and adapting them in their writing in introduction sections. They used their reading knowledge and presented it to the readers in this section and again presented it in their chapter two (literature review). Therefore, they employed a few verbs such as “accordingly”, “based from” and “found that” in sharing their background knowledge in their work showing that they used the previous research as their additional information and presented it to the readers. However, only a few writers justified the need for research per se (43%) and introduced the general goal of their current research. The writing tended to focus on their background knowledge rather than justifying the need and introducing the general goal of their current research to readers.

Seventy–one percent included Move 2a (Discussing current problems) compared to 29 percent that used Move 2b (Expressing interest in an emerging topic). It was found that the writers only chose one move in Move 2 (Offering a Line of Inquiry). They did not employ both moves in the introductions to furnish more information about the current research and its relation to the current problems. The reason why Move 2b was less frequently employed was because the writers preferred to present their interest in an emerging topic in Chapter 2 (Literature Review Chapter) of the academic exercise. They followed the tradition which is that the academic exercise needs to be completed in five chapters and the introduction in the
literature review is to integrate their interests in the area of study. Therefore, they omitted Move 2b in the introduction section to be included in Chapter 2. However, it can be seen that all the 21 texts that used OARO included Move 3 (Introducing the Topic). They provided to readers an overview with the summary of their current research at the end of the introduction section. It was to attract the readers to read the next sub chapter in Chapter 1 (Introduction Chapter).

**Choice of Model**

As shown in Table 9, the most frequent rhetorical structure in introduction section was Open a Research Option Model (70% of the cases) compared to CARs Model (30% of the cases). According to Swales (2004), as noted already, this alternative model captures a kinder, gentler and more relaxed research world in which there is less competition for research space. Most of the Malaysian academic writers choose this model probably because they were not familiar with the topic or area of research so they were unable to provide details to the readers. Due to this limitation, they probably put more concentration in other chapters of their academic exercises rather than in the introduction section.

Therefore, it can be noticed that Malaysian academic writings have many sections in their academic exercises with an explicit detail of their research in order to draw reader’ attention by dividing them into different sections. The greatest problem is that the writers had limited knowledge and background of the research; they were not able to argue and provide their views and opinions on certain issues and problems to the readers. Table 9 shows the overall findings of the rhetorical structure of academic exercise introduction section.

**Table 9: Frequency of Occurrence of Rhetorical Moves and Publication Years in Introduction Section of Academic Exercises**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of Publications</th>
<th>No of text</th>
<th>% of occurrence (publication years)</th>
<th>CARS (No. of Texts)</th>
<th>% of occurrence (No. of Texts)</th>
<th>OARO (No. of Texts)</th>
<th>% of occurrence (No. of Texts)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It can be seen that the academic exercises submitted in 2002, 2004, 2006, 2007, 2010, 2011 and 2012 employed the CARS model in their introduction section. The use of OARO model was seen in academic exercises from 2002 to 2011 except for 2004. All the introduction sections for year 2008 and 2009 used OARO and none of them applied CARS model.

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

This study shows that more introduction sections of UiTM TESL undergraduate academic exercises have similar features to those described in Swales’ 2004 OARO model than those features described in his 1990 CARS model. The former therefore appeared to provide a more relevant model than the latter.

Out of 30 introductions, only nine (30%) can be described using the CARS model. In Move 1, Malaysian academic writers often used a centrality claim as the beginning in writing academic exercises. The result is different from that found by Shehzad (2005) in his study of Computer Science research article introductions in which more than 80 percent of the sample used the CARS model.

It would seem that it is the preferred writing strategy of Malaysian writers who use the CARS model to begin with a centrality claim. Probably, Malaysian writers like to probe the readers by giving assertive and acceptable claims about their topic of studies. In terms of the next Step 2 within Move 1 (making topic generalisations), Malaysian authors used this step to make
sure that the readers are aware that this study is mainly based on the purpose of serving an academic circle and that it can contribute information to enhance their understanding of the intended study outcomes. This purpose is served when they included Step 3 (reviewing items of previous research) in order to convince the readers that the issues they are going to bring up are related to those discussed in the previous research. Therefore, these writers tended to employ Move 1 in their academic exercise introduction section by including all three steps: Centrality claims, Making topic generalisations, and Reviewing items of previous research.

However, Move 2 (Establishing a niche), was not generally favoured by Malaysian academic writers as it was found that only four included Step 1A, two included Step 1C and one text used both steps, 1B and 1D. According to Habibi (2008), when a niche is established, the researcher adopts a challenging or even dubious stand towards the established territory, previous research and its findings. The researcher attempts to highlight the shortcomings, gaps and unanswered questions regarding the established territory and consequently to emphasise the necessity for further and more profound investigations. Due perhaps to a lack of specific or referential details in the study, there was no realisation of this move. The writers were unable or unwilling to draw the attention of their readers to find flaws or unclear points in previous research to establish their niche. In Malaysian academic writing, it can be seen that the introduction section was not strong enough to convince readers of the necessity of the current study and the importance of further investigation. This suggests that Malaysian researchers may lack knowledge of the area of study and this may create doubts among readers about the writers’ accountability. In addition, it shows that the writers may have been unwilling or unable to argue or respond to previous studies. Apart from the above, Malaysian authors do not like to condemn or criticise the work of other people. They respect other people’s views without criticising them and leave it to the readers to judge and evaluate their work. This is part of Malay culture, to save face and to avoid being cynical or sarcastic of other people so that it is inappropriate to comment on people in public. This is proven by Goddard’s (1997) research on cultural values and cultural scripts of Malay (Bahasa Melayu) which found that it seems to be a Malay cultural imperative to avoid friction, that is, not to do or say anything which would clash with or interfere with the other person.
In Move 3, only four (44%) of the CARS texts employed 1A (Outlining purposes). None of them included Step 1B (Announcing present research), 2 (Announcing principle findings) or 3 (Indicating RA structure). These steps were not included by the writers in their introduction section. They hesitated to reveal the findings because it was already written in the abstract section. Therefore, including them in the introduction section was unnecessary. However, they occupied a niche by outlining the purpose of their research in the introduction section. In contrast, a previous study (Joythong, 2001) found that Thai academic writers included 1B (Announcing present research) the most frequent in Move 3. This meant that probably the Malaysian writers preferred to provide the procedure of convincing readers that their research was conducted properly in order to suggest that their data was reliable. Even though they did not indicate this in the introduction section, they preferred to disclose it in the abstract and in the later sub sections of the first chapter. It can be found that most of the sample did not stress on the method, finding and conclusion in their introduction section but preferred to summarise the articles and move to the next section of the academic exercise. Their introductions were written in the manner of reviewing the literature review rather than to assess and provide the rationale of their study. Thus, syllabus designers might include genre awareness courses to indicate to students the features that can be acceptable to the discourse community.

As for OARO model, the study reveals that 21 (70%) out of 30 texts included the OARO model in the introduction section. The writers completed the introduction section by employing Move 0 (Attracting the readers) and Move 1a (Sharing background knowledge) in all 21 texts. They preferred to present the background knowledge to the readers which helped them to get the general overview about the study. This is influenced by a formal writing style where the writing must be written in three parts, namely the introduction, the body and the conclusion which need to be connected from one point to another. For example, to write a composition about cats, it is necessary to have something to say about these animals, otherwise the writers would not have chosen this subject in the first place. It is necessary to recall any related points from various sources to provide enough material before composing the essay. This is the main reason why 100% of the sample included these steps because it seems they are accepted by the local discourse community and in the local research setting.
Move 2a (Discussing current problems) was included by 15 (71%) of the OARO texts compared to only 6 (29%) that included Move 2B in the total of 21 texts using OARO model. The writers most likely wanted the attention and support from readers to read the current study by revealing issues and concerns about the current situation. Referring to this, they were able to attract the readers to keep reading in order to get more information about the topic.

In Move 3 (Introducing the topic), the writers located the concluding part as the introduction of their topic in the introduction section. A hundred percent of the 21 texts included this move in the introduction section. This phenomenon occurs due to the awareness of the norms of writing in an academic exercise by Malaysian writers. They introduced the topic of study to conclude the introduction section to ensure that the readers get the picture about the intended research.

This study reveals clear tendencies in the introduction section. First, when the Malaysian students used CARS model rhetorical structure, they omitted Move 3 (Occupying the niche steps), Step 1B (Announcing present research), 2 (Announcing principle findings) and 3 (RA structure). It shows that a two sequence move pattern is preferred while in Move 3, the students had the greatest space in its steps when they omitted another 3 steps in this move compared to other moves which employed all steps. Secondly, most of the texts employed the OARO model in their academic exercise introduction section with a high tendency to include Move 0 (Attracting the readership), 1a (Sharing background knowledge), 1c (Presenting interesting thoughts), 2a (Discussing current problems) and 3 (Introducing the topic).

The present study applied Swales’ Create a Research Space rhetorical move analysis and Open a Research Option rhetorical move analysis in the TESL discipline to describe disciplinary rhetoric in the academic exercise introduction section. The adaptation of the above structures helped to measure and evaluate the move structures that are applied by TESL students in their introductions so that educators can understand academic writing discourse better in order to provide effective English teaching in academic writing. These rhetorical structures are employed as theoretical models to analyse the level of the stages that are understood by TESL students. These instruments are used to identify the awareness among the TESL
students about the importance of including the moves in their introduction section. The implications of these findings are relevant for descriptions of writing pedagogy which can be recommended to the students in the form of a standard format, either CARS or OARO, to adapt in the writing of introductions.

The comparison of rhetorical structure models revealed that Malaysian writers used the alternative model of Open a Research Option more than the CARS model. The findings of this study can help academic educators and learners to have a better understanding of the discourse of academic writing. Thus, the educators and the learners can create a new learning pedagogy to suit the needs of cultures in order to produce good quality academic writing among Malaysian writers.

The results of this study might be useful in teaching second language writing to Malaysian students. In fact, educators should be sensitive to the differences between teaching the first and the second language which are evident in the rhetorical organisation. It is important to focus on the rhetorical structure of students’ writing rather than focusing on grammatical structures only. Teaching students about rhetorical structures can help them improve their reading and writing skills. In addition, the awareness of rhetorical structures in a particular genre can be applied in their academic writing to suit the needs of the students in the academic field.

REFERENCES


This study was aimed at investigating how teacher direct written corrective feedback impacted students’ grammatical accuracy in their writing. Besides that, it also looked into how teacher direct written corrective feedback affected students’ usage of grammatical forms in their writing. The study employed quasi-experimental research design and the data was obtained from a set of pre-test and post-test. As indicated from the findings from semester one Diploma in Hospitality and Management students from SEGI University, the students benefitted from teacher direct written corrective feedback and showed improvement in the usage of some grammatical forms which were articles, conjunctions and pronouns. The findings also showed that the majority of the students in this study perceived teacher direct written corrective feedback as useful and helpful in helping them in improving their grammatical accuracy in their writing and they wanted the teacher to continue providing direct written corrective feedback in their writing. The findings have implications on the importance of the practice of giving feedback to student’s writing.

**Keywords:** teacher direct written corrective feedback, writing
INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the basic communication skills in order to convey and address intended ideas and meaning (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996). However, composing a good piece of writing is hard work for learners (Chitravelu, Sithamparam & Teh, 2005; Nooreiny, Hamidah & Kee, 2011) especially for learners with a lower level of proficiency. They face various problems in their writing such as writing anxiety, mental block, and the usage of rhetorical style in writing the intended piece (Shamshad & Faizah, 2007). Not only that, grammatical accuracy is also one of the major problems faced by a lot of Malaysian students in their writing (Neda, Mariann & Seyyed, 2012). The problem students face in writing tend to carry on when they are in higher education although they have studied English for eleven years in school (Nooreiny, Hamidah & Kee, 2011). These can be observed as many tertiary level students are still using poor English in their academic writing (Sarimah & Nurul Ros Adira, 2010).

Many studies have been carried out to help tertiary level students, especially weak students in developing their competency to write skillfully (Shamshad & Faizah, 2007). Teacher feedback on students’ writing is emphasized as one of the important factors that contribute to students’ progress in writing (Hyland, 1998 cited in Shamshad & Faizah, 2007). Teacher feedback plays an important role in helping students to understand and know their weaknesses and strengths in their studies and also to improve their academic achievement (Li & Barnard, 2010; Peterson & McClay, 2010). Giving feedback to students writing is one of the best ways to communicate to students individually (Ravichandran, 2000). A number of studies that examine the effect and effectiveness of teacher feedback on students’ writing in different contexts have positive findings and this has contributed to the existing body of knowledge on this matter (Nooreiny, Hamidah & Kee, 2011; Barnard & Li, 2011; Peterson & McClay, 2010; Truscott & Hsu, 2008; Bitchener 2008; El Tatawy, 2006).

Giving feedback on form in ESL students writing has sparked a much considerable debate in the field of second language acquisition (Sheen, Wright & Moldawa, 2009). A research by Hyland (2003) concluded that feedback that focuses on form helps students in developing their competencies in writing. This is also supported by research by Chandler
The Effect of Teacher Direct Written Corrective Feedback on Writing

(2003) and Bitchener and Knoch (2009) that concluded that corrective feedback on form or grammatical items are able to promote grammatical accuracy. This concurred with recent studies by Sampson (2012) and Sarimah and Nurul RosAdira (2010). They found out that corrective feedback given by teachers is able to improve the correct usage of grammatical features in the students’ writing. Furthermore, research done by El Tatawy (2006) and Bitchener (2008) concluded that corrective feedback has positive impact on students’ writing performance. They found that students that received written corrective feedback managed to produce a better version with less errors on their later drafts of writings. On the other hand, Truscott (2004) pointed out that corrective feedback on form can be harmful to students’ writing motivation. Truscott (2004, 2007) posited that giving corrective feedback on students’ work is harmful and has no significant effect on their writing performance.

Besides that, the method of giving feedback, i.e. direct corrective feedback also plays a vital role in contributing to the improvement of students writing. A research by Sheen, Wright and Moldawa (2009) indicated that direct feedback can lead to greater grammar accuracy. This is also supported by prior studies by Bitchener (2008) and Ellis et al. (2008) whose findings proposed that direct corrective feedback is more effective in comparison to indirect corrective feedback.

Nevertheless, the practice of giving feedback is rarely adopted by teachers in Malaysia (Yeap et al., 2007). Usually teachers opt to give indirect feedback on students’ writing as it is more time-convenient for large classes. Teachers perceive that giving feedback on students writing task is a daunting and time consuming task (Lichtbrown & Spada, 2006; Shamshad & Faizah; 2011). Nevertheless, the importance of the practice of giving direct corrective feedback as an alternative way to help students to improve their writing skill need to be considered by teachers.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The diploma students at SEGi University take General Language Training (GLT) in their first semester, Academic English in Semester 2, and English I in Semester 3 to improve their English Language proficiency. These
courses expose them to the four language skills: writing, reading, speaking and listening. Nevertheless, emphasis is given to writing and speaking. As for grammar, it is emphasized in the writing component. The students for diploma programmes enter with different academic and English requirements in line with their discipline. Going back to the English course that they need to take in the diploma course, the focus of this paper is on the General Language Training (GLT) course in the first semester. This is considered as the basic course to help students improve in their language proficiency.

The General Language Training (GLT) course is conducted for 14 weeks in the first semester for diploma courses. Students learn how to communicate and interact effectively using English for their future line of work in hospitality and management. They also learn grammar and different types of essays such as narrative essays and expository essays. Essay writing is a part of their coursework assessment and constitutes sixty per cent of their overall assessment marks. The types of essays they learn in the class are a preparation for their final examination as similar types of essays are focused on in their final examination.

In view of the importance of writing in GLT to the Diploma in Hospitality and Management students, it is a component in English language learning that needs a lot of attention from students and instructors. However, not many students can successfully produce a good piece of writing. This is not surprising since writing is a complex task that needs ample effort and guidance from teachers (Graham et al., 2005; Ravichandran, 2000). Grammatical accuracy is also one of the problems that these students face in their writing. There are various measures to improve writing skill and one of it is through giving feedback (Lee & Schallert, 2008; Duijnhouwer et al., 2012). In view of the language and grammar problems faced in writing by the diploma students in SEGI University, students need to be made aware of their mistakes and weaknesses in order for learning to occur and to improve their proficiency in writing. In line with this, this study investigated the improvement that Diploma in Hospitality and Management students made in their grammar in writing after they received direct written corrective feedback given by their teacher. It also looked at which grammatical forms they have improved on in their writing.
LITERATURE REVIEW

A number of studies have investigated the common grammatical errors found in ESL learners’ writing (Sampson, 2012; Tengku Nor Rizan, Siti Hanim, Nazlia, Juzaiddin & Saadiyah, 2012; Hu, 2011; Sarimah & Nurul Ros Adira, 2010; Shin, 2009; Saadiyah & Khor, 2009; Saadiyah & Kaladevi, 2009; Nor Hashimah et al., 2008). The study done by Sampson (2012) on EFL Colombian university students’ narrative writing showed that errors in verb tense frequently occurred in their writing. The findings his study also concurred with studies by Neda et al. (2012) and Saadiyah et al. (2007). They concluded that tenses are one of the grammatical errors that always occur in the writing of Malaysian students. The findings of these studies are in line with a local study done by Sarimah and Nurul Ros Adira (2010) on 66 first year University Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) students’ writing. It was found that tenses followed by verbs were the most common errors that the students frequently made. The same findings were derived from the analysis of 400 essays in a research by Tengku Rizan et al. (2012). It was found that tenses, preposition, articles, mechanics and verb to ‘be’ were among the grammatical features that the students were struggling with.

Another form that ESL writers grapple with is subject-verb agreement. A research done by Marlyna, Tan and Khazriyati (2007) on narrative essays of 120 Form One students of intermediate level displayed that the students usually had problems in the usage of subject-verb agreement aside from articles and the copula ‘be’. A study by Saadiyah and Kaladevi (2009) on 72 Form Four Malay students essays also posited that subject-verb agreement was among the grammatical features the students were struggling to comprehend and use in their writing apart from singular/plural form, verb tense, word choice and preposition.

Furthermore, it was also reported by Norhashimah et al. (2008) that Malaysian students also had problems with adverbs, superlative adjectives, relative pronouns and determiners. Another research by Shin (2009) that focused on academic English writing found that relative clauses, complex nominal, passives and adverbial participles were among grammatical features that students had difficulty with.
According to Ravichandran (1996), the feedback given to students in their writing is one of the effective ways to communicate to each individual student their problem area in writing. Research by Peterson and McClay (2010) found that feedback given by the teacher in the classroom led to improvements in students’ writing performance. These findings also concur with a research done by Barnard and Li (2011) among university tutors in a university in New Zealand to obtain their beliefs and knowledge on giving feedback. From the data collected, it was concluded that the teachers’ impression of feedback was that it was a way to improve students’ writing. A prior research by Conrad and Goldstein (1999) posited similar results. They found that students were able to produce better revised version of their writing after receiving corrective feedback from their teachers. Various research such as by Ashwell (2000) and Lee and Schallert (2008) have also proven that teacher written feedback is of value to students as the feedback is able to help them to improve their writing. It was reported in some research that students were able to improve their grammatical accuracy after receiving feedback from teachers (Sampson, 2012; Sarimah & Nurul Ros Adira, 2010).

Knowing how to write feedback on students’ paper can be useful to both teachers and students. Studies by Ravichandran (1996, 2002) highlighted that teachers need to be aware of how feedback is given to students’ writing as students may not benefit as much as the teachers hope due to ineffective feedback. Teacher written feedback is advocated for both teachers and students in the writing process (Montgomery & Baker, 2007). This is because teachers may not have too much time to perform one-to-one conference with students due to the time-consuming nature of feedback (Nooreiny et al., 2012; Ferris, 2007; Goldstein, 2004; Ravichandran, 2002). Writing down feedback can be more time-efficient and the best way to communicate to each student individually (Omer & Ambigapathy, 2011).

Teachers also need to be consistent in providing feedback to help students to improve their writing skill as the feedback given might not be of effect immediately (Fazio, 2001; Bitchener, 2008). Peterson and McClay (2010) also came to the same conclusion that when the feedback given by the teachers is consistent and immediate, it would help students to improve their writing. In providing feedback to students, teachers need to ensure that both the teacher and the students are involved in the process.
If the feedback giving process is teacher-centered, the students can be passive and dependent on the teachers error correction (Lee, 2004, 2008). This can endanger students learning process as they will not be able to critically and creatively evaluate their own writing and rely on teachers for any error correction.

Moreover, the way teachers structure the writing classrooms and the feedback will have impact on students’ perspective of the class and the feedback as well (Paulus, 1999). Although giving feedback is a part of a teacher’s role, it is a dangerous and risky practice (Hyland & Hyland, 2001). The feedback that teachers give needs to be clear and precise so that students will not have a hard time understanding the feedback (Lee, 2008). This is to prevent any misunderstanding from occurring while the students try to internalize the feedback given by teachers. In Hyland’s and Hyland’s (2001) research, it was found out that the students sometimes were confused and misunderstood the feedback given by their teachers although the teachers tried to respond positively and effectively.

In addition, students’ reactions and perceptions of the type of feedback that teachers give them need to be taken into account as well (Hyland, 2003). Lee’s (2008) study found that students with lower proficiency level do not prefer error correction given by teachers as it is de-motivating. This concurs with the findings from Truscott (2004, 2007) that error correction is de-motivating and harmful. Thus, teachers need to know how to give feedback, especially corrective feedback without risking the students’ motivation and self-esteem (Peterson & McClay, 2010). A local research by Sarimah and Nurul Ros Adira (2010) found that 66 first year students from University Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) preferred their mistakes and errors to be highlighted in order for them to improve their grammatical accuracy.

Teachers also need to bear in mind the level of the students and how they utilize the feedback given in order to help them in their writing. This is because the needs of different students from different levels of fluency are varied and has to be addressed accordingly (Hyland, 1998, 2003). Students with low proficiency level will not benefit much from feedback that requires them to self-detect the mistakes. On the other hand, students with high proficiency level may be de-motivated if they are consistently corrected on the same mistakes over and over again. As a result, they will not be motivated to write and their writing development would be jeopardized.
Besides knowing how to give feedback, teachers also need to know the type of written feedback given to students (Conrad & Goldstein, 1999; Hyland, 1998; Montgomery & Baker, 2007; Lee, 2008). The question on the type of feedback given by teachers to students in order to improve the students’ writing performance has become one of the major concerns of researchers (Sheen, Wright & Moldawa, 2009) in this field. According to Schmidt (2010), students need to be able to identify their mistakes in order for learning to occur. If the students are unaware of the mistakes they do in their learning, they can never be able to learn from the mistakes and learning would hardly happen. Thus, the feedback a teacher gives can make students aware of their mistakes and learning can occur as they understand the mistakes that they make.

There are research findings that conclude that written feedback on form, i.e. grammatical structures is preferred by students. According to Ashwell (2000), feedback on form can help students in improving their fluency and accuracy in the target language as grammatical structures serve as the basic structure that need to be mastered by students in order to be fluent and accurate users of the language. This concurred with a research by Sampson (2012) which found that direct written feedback was able to improve student’s grammatical accuracy.

A research done by Hyland (2003) posited that teachers usually unavoidably gave written feedback on form although the teachers believed that writing should be about the whole process of writing rather than focusing on grammatical structure solely. Some students who received the feedback on form in the research were able to perform well in revising their writing. Bitchener (2008) in his research on 75 international school students in New Zealand found that the students that received feedback on form outperformed the students that did not receive any type of feedback; hence, significantly improving their accuracy in the usage of some grammatical structures in the target language.

The feedback that teachers give should be direct and precise to make students notice the mistakes they make and learn from them. According to Ellis (2008), direct written corrective feedback can help students in their writing as it helps in giving explicit guidance to the students on how to correct their mistakes. This is especially essential for students
with lower proficiency level (Ferris & Robert, 2001) as they will need ample guidance from their teachers. Ferris and Robert also believe that direct written corrective feedback is better than indirect written corrective feedback as it helps students better in their writing. Hyland and Hyland (2006) prescribed direct feedback to help students correct errors in their writing. They viewed that teacher direct written corrective feedback helped students to be successful in utilizing the feedback as they transcribed or copied the teacher’s suggestions to improve their consequent writing draft. They concluded that direct feedback was used consistently and effectively compared to other types from their review of error correction studies on writing (Hyland & Hyland, 2006).

Moreover, direct corrective feedback focuses on students’ mistakes. When mistakes are apparent, the students can examine the way the language is used and thus, this can be embedded in their mind. This is proven by a research by Ellis et al. (2008) on forty-nine, students enrolled in English courses in a university in Japan and by Sheens et al. (2009) research on US international and immigrant college students who had to enroll in a language class in a pre-academic ESL programme. Both of these studies found out that the implementation of direct written corrective feedback can contribute to the grammatical accuracy in English whereas indirect corrective feedback can only help in certain aspects of English language grammar. This is also supported by a research by Conrad and Goldstein (1999) on three international university students that had been in the United States for more than six years. They enrolled in an advanced ESL composition course in an urban university where they found the direct written corrective feedback that their teacher gave help them in producing a better revised version of their writing in contrast to the indirect feedback in their writing. Besides, the findings from a research done by Bitchener and Knoch (2009) on 39 low intermediate students from the English Language Department of a university in New Zealand also indicated that direct written corrective feedback improved the students’ usage of articles in their writing. Similarly, Ferris and Robert (2001) found that California State University students who enrolled in a composition class were able to correct their mistakes effectively through the direct written corrective feedback given by the teachers.
Besides, students also show preference for direct written corrective feedback. In Diab’s (2005) research on 156 English as Foreign Language (EFL) students who enrolled in English language courses in American University of Beirut (AUB), it appeared that the students preferred this type of feedback as it was easier for them to make corrections. Similarly, Santos, Lopez-Serrano and Manchon (2010) found that students preferred direct written error correction as it was easier to detect and incorporate into their text.

**METHODOLOGY**

The sample for this research was twenty Diploma in Hospitality and Management students. All of the students were in the first semester of their first year of study and their proficiency in English ranged from lower intermediate to intermediate level. All of these students were attending a compulsory English course, i.e. General Language Training as part of the requirements for their three year diploma programme. These first semester diploma students were selected as the sample in view of the problems these students face in grammar in writing at the start of their studies in the course. This course is a pre-requirement for them to undertake other advanced Academic English course in their second semester.

Quasi – experimental research design was the research design for this study. One group pre-test and post-est was used in order to observe improvements made by the students in their grammatical accuracy in writing after receiving teacher direct written corrective feedback. Besides that, the improvements in the type of grammatical features in the students’ essays were also examined using the pre-test and the post-test.

The pre-test and the post-test were narrative essays written by the respondents. The reason why the students were asked to write narrative essays was because they let the students express their thoughts more creatively and more personally compared to other types of essay genre (Baker, Brizee & Angeli, 2013). Moreover, as the students’ proficiency level ranged from lower intermediate to intermediate level and they were in their first semester of the diploma course, narrative essay as a start allowed them to expand their ideas and write with confidence. Both the pre-test and
the post-test essays were on the same title as the focus of this study was on grammatical features in essays and not on the ideas or organization. The essays consisted of five paragraphs and the word count was between 250 – 300 words. The students were instructed to write a story entitled “Love Hurts”. This title was chosen because the students discussed about love songs in their language class prior to writing the essay. This helped them in generating sufficient and appropriate ideas in their writing and also allowed them to be able to write with confidence.

Before this study was conducted, the students were taught the basic of writing. They were taught how to write introduction and thesis statement, topic sentences, paragraphs and paragraph organization (coherence and cohesiveness) and conclusion. These aspects were taught over the duration of two weeks. The research started after the students learned about essay writing. The procedures for data collection spanned a period of five weeks.

In week 1 of the research, the pre-test was administered to the sample. The students wrote a narrative essay of 250 to 300 words. The students went through the intervention stage from Week 2 to Week 4 of the study. At this stage, the students wrote three essays based on the topics that were discussed during the English lessons. After the students submitted their essays, the General Language Training lecturer of the class gave direct written corrective feedback in the essays and returned them to the students during the next class. The lecturer underlined the mistakes in grammar in the students’ writing assignments. Other aspects of writing, e.g. ideas and organisation were not focused on in this research. In line with the direct written corrective feedback approach, after underlining the grammatical mistakes that the students made in their essays, the correct forms were indicated by the lecturer above the mistakes. The mistakes that the students made were categorized into six categories. These categories were based on the mistakes that the students frequently made in their writing. The categories and the abbreviations were: tenses (T), pronouns (Pro), subject-verb agreement (SVA), conjunctions (Conj) and articles (Art). Besides these categories, the teacher also wrote some notes at the end of the students’ essays, briefly explaining the correct usage of the grammatical features that the students made mistakes in. Marks were also assigned to the essays before they were given back to the students. The students referred to the feedback given by the lecturer in their first draft before writing a revised
version of the essay. The students incorporated the feedback that was given in the second draft of their essays. The second draft of the essay was then given to the lecturer to be marked and graded. The same procedures were repeated for essays 2 and 3 during the intervention period. After the intervention period, a post-test was administered to the students. This was done in Week 5 of the study. The students wrote a narrative essay on the same topic they did for the pre-test.

The approach used by Ashwell (2000) who focused on both form and content feedback in his research was adapted in marking the pre-test and the post-test essays. However, for the purpose of this study, only the approach used in assessing grammatical errors by Ashwell (2000) was employed. The grammatical errors students in this study made in their essays were underlined to indicate their occurrence and their corrections were written above them. Then, the grammatical mistakes that occurred in an essay were counted and totaled. The mark assigned to an essay was obtained by dividing the number of grammatical mistakes that occurred with the number of words in an essay. In addition, the grammatical mistakes that students made were also coded into categories. These categories were to look into which grammatical forms students improved in after receiving direct written corrective feedback. In order to obtain reliability in marking the students’ essays, two experienced ESL lecturers and marked the writing tests and gave direct written corrective feedback. The marks of the two markers were then compared. A Pearson’s product-moment correlation was performed to determine the coefficient concerning measurement of inter-rater agreement for pre-test and the post-test. The result shows that there was a positive strong and significant relationship between marks given by Rater A and Rater B (r = 1.000, p=value = .000).

Following this, the marks of the pre-test and the posttest essays were analyzed using paired-sample t-test. Paired sample t-test is used when only one group is involved and the data collected from the group is from two or more different occasions (Pallant, 2005). The marks from the pre-test and the post-test were analyzed in order to draw a conclusion on whether students’ accuracy in writing improved after teachers gave direct corrective written feedback. The data was analyzed by looking at the significant mean difference of the marks from the pre-test and the post-test. Next, the frequency of grammatical errors made by the students was tallied according
to their categories. They were also analyzed using paired sample t-test. The significant mean difference of the grammatical errors for the same category was compared between the pre-test and the post-test. This determined which grammatical features that the students had improved in after receiving teacher direct corrective feedback. The categorizations of the grammatical errors were done by the same two lecturers who rated the students’ essay. The inter coder reliability was also 90%.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

**Students’ Grammatical Accuracy in Writing and Teacher Direct Written Corrective Feedback**

Table 1 shows the mean and the standard deviation of the students’ marks in the pre-test and post-test. The mean score of marks obtained in the pre-test was 2.45 (SD = .999) compared to 3.00 (SD = .918) in the post-test. The findings depicted that the post-test mean was higher than the pre-test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre Test</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Test</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.918</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 1=0-19, 2=20-29, 3=30-49, 4=50-59, 5=60-69

Next, to determine whether the two means were statistically significant, a paired-sample t-test was conducted. Table 2 illustrates the findings of the paired sample t-test of the students’ marks obtained from the pre-test and the post-test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre Test – Post Test</td>
<td>-4.069</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

63
The paired sample t-test revealed a significant difference in the mean of the pre-test and the post-test, (t (19) = 4.069, p<.05). This indicated that the mean for marks for the pre-test (M = 2.45, SD = .999) was significantly different from the mean for marks for the post-test (M = 3.00, SD = .918). This indicated that for this group of students, the score for the post-test was significantly higher than the pre-test. This result shows that teacher direct written corrective feedback helped to improve students’ grammatical accuracy in their writing.

One reason for this improvement in writing is the teacher direct written corrective feedback helps the students to notice the grammatical errors they made. Myles (2004) pointed out that feedback can enhance students’ awareness of their writing and the skill to edit it. Another reason is because when teacher direct written corrective feedback was given in the study, the errors were underlined and the correct forms were written above the respective errors. This provided explicit information to the students on the wrong forms they used and the correct ones to rectify the errors. Hyland and Hyland (2006) strongly believe that students’ success in utilizing direct written corrective feedback is due to the action of directly transcribing or copying teacher feedback to correct their errors in later drafts.

The results of this study concur with the findings of past research. Bitchener and Knoch (2010) in their study found that students who received direct written corrective feedback outperformed students that did not receive any feedback. Conrad and Goldstein (1999) and Peterson and McClay (2010) found that the students in their research improved in their writing accuracy after receiving teacher direct written corrective feedback. Moreover, studies by Ellis et al. (2008) and Sheen et al. (2009) also yielded similar results. In their studies, they agreed that the implementation of direct written corrective feedback helped students to improve in their grammatical accuracy. Besides that, studies by Ashwell (2000) and Sampson (2012) concluded that giving written direct corrective feedback on grammar was able to make students improve in their grammatical accuracy. As their grammatical accuracy improves, so did the fluency in their writing (Ashwell, 2000). The findings of this study are also in accordance with the findings from Ferris’ and Robert’s (2001) research. They found that the group of students that received direct written feedback was able to improve in their grammatical accuracy in writing compared to the group that did not receive
any feedback. They were also able to improve in some grammatical forms compared to the other group. Furthermore, the students in their study were also able to utilize the direct written corrective feedback given by their lecturer to effectively correct their errors in writing. As pointed out by Ellis (2008), the provision of direct written corrective feedback can help students to be better writers as this type of feedback gives guidance to students on how to correct their errors.

**Students’ use of Grammatical Forms in Writing and Teacher Direct Written Corrective Feedback**

This section presents the findings on the students’ improvement in the use of grammatical forms in their writing after receiving teacher direct written corrective feedback. This section highlights the salient grammatical errors that occurred frequently in the students’ essay. They were: tenses, pronouns, subject-verb agreement, conjunctions and articles. The findings here look into the differences in these grammatical forms in the pre-test and post-test.

### Tenses

**Table 3: Paired t-test of Students’ Mistakes on Tenses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.(2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Test</td>
<td>4.90</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.107</td>
<td>2.032</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Test</td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.875</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*1=1-5 mistakes, 2=6-10 mistakes, 3=11-15 mistakes, 4=16-20 mistakes, 5=21-25 mistakes, 6=26-30 mistakes

Table 3 illustrates that the mean for students’ mistakes on tenses in the pre-test was 4.90 (SD = .107) whereas for the post test was 4.65 (SD = .875). In order to determine whether the two means were statistically significant, a paired-sample t-test was conducted. The paired sample t-test showed that there was no significant difference in the pre-test and the post-test means for students mistakes on tenses, ($t(19) = 2.032$, $p>.05$). This showed that the mean of the student’s mistakes on tenses of the pre-test was not significantly different from the mean of the post-test. This indicates...
that the teacher direct written corrective feedback did not help to improve students' use of tenses in their writing.

**Pronouns**

Table 4: Paired t-test of Students' Mistakes on Pronouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.(2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Test</td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.137</td>
<td>2.629</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Test</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.251</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*1=1-5 mistakes, 2=6-10 mistakes, 3=11-15 mistakes, 4=16-20 mistakes, 5=21-25 mistakes, 6=26-30 mistakes

Table 4 illustrates that the mean score for students’ mistake on pronouns in the pre-test was 4.65 (SD = 1.137) whereas for the post-test was 4.25 (SD = 1.251). To determine whether the two means were statistically significant, a paired sample t-test was conducted. The analysis showed that there was a significant difference in the pre-test and the post-test of students mistake on pronouns (t(19) = 2.629, p<.05). This showed that the mean for students' mistakes on pronouns for the pre-test was significantly different from the mean of students' mistakes on pronouns for the post-test. This shows that teacher direct written corrective feedback helped students to improve in their usage of pronouns in their writing.

**Subject Verb Agreement**

Table 5: Paired t-test of Students' Mistakes on Subject - Verb Agreement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.(2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Test</td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.424</td>
<td>2.032</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Test</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.188</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*1=1-5 mistakes, 2=6-10 mistakes, 3=11-15 mistakes, 4=16-20 mistakes, 5=21-25 mistakes, 6=26-30 mistakes
Table 5 shows that the mean for students’ mistakes on subject-verb agreement in the post-test (M = 4.6, SD = 1.424) was lower than the mean for the pre-test (M = 4.65, SD = 1.188). To determine that the means were significantly different, a paired sample t-test was conducted. The paired sample t-test revealed that there was no significant difference in students subject-verb agreement mistakes for the pre-test and the post-test, (t(19) = 2.032, p>.05). This indicated that the mean of students’ subject-verb agreement mistakes for the pre-test was not significantly different from the mean for the post-test. This shows that teacher direct written corrective feedback did not help in decreasing the students’ mistakes on subject–verb agreement in their writing.

Conjunctions

Table 6: Paired t-test of Students’ Mistakes on Conjunctions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.(2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Test</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.951</td>
<td>2.349</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Test</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.827</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*1=1-5 mistakes, 2=6-10 mistakes, 3=11-15 mistakes, 4=16-20 mistakes, 5=21-25 mistakes, 6=26-30 mistakes

Table 6 depicts that the mean for the pre-test (M = 2.80, SD = .951) was higher than the post test (M = 2.50, SD = .827) for students’ mistakes on conjunctions. In order to determine that the mean scores are significantly different, a paired sample t-test was conducted. The paired sample t-test showed that there was a significant difference in students’ mistakes on conjunctions in the pre-test and the post-test, (t(19) = 2.349, p<0.5). This indicated that the mean for the pre-test was significantly different from the mean for the post-test. This is indicative that for this group of students, teacher direct written corrective feedback helped them to decrease their mistakes in using conjunctions in their writing.
Table 7: Paired t-test of Students’ Mistakes on Articles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.(2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre Test</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.649</td>
<td>2.666</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Test</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.745</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*1=1-5 mistakes, 2=6-10 mistakes, 3=11-15 mistakes, 4=16-20 mistakes, 5=21-25 mistakes, 6=26-30 mistakes

Table 7 shows that the mean of students mistakes on articles in the pre-test (M= 3.00, SD = .649) was higher than the mean score obtained in the post-test (M = 2.65, SD = .745). To determine that the scores were significantly different, a paired sample t-test was conducted. The paired sample t-test showed a significant difference in students mistakes on articles between the pre-test and the post-test (t(19) = 2.666, p<.05). This indicated that the mean for the pre-test was significantly different from the mean for the post-test. This shows that teacher direct written corrective feedback helped to improve students’ ability in using articles in their writing.

The findings showed that the students had problems with five grammatical forms in their writing. These grammatical forms were tenses, pronouns, subject-verb agreement, conjunctions and articles. The findings concur with the findings of research by Tg Rizan et al. (2012), Sarimah and Nurul Ros Adira (2010), Norhashimah et al. (2008) and Marlyna et al. (2007). They found that tenses, subject-verb agreement, articles and pronouns were among the grammatical forms that ESL students always struggled with.

More importantly, the results of this study indicated that teacher direct written corrective feedback was able to help the students improve the usage of some grammatical forms in their writing. They were: pronouns, conjunctions and articles. The decrease in the mistakes made by the students in the usage of pronoun was reflected through the mean of both the pre-test and the post-test. It was reported from the t-test that there was a significant difference in the pre-test and the post-test with regard to the mistakes that
the students made in using pronouns in their writing \((t(19) = 2.629, p<.05)\). It indicated that the teacher direct written corrective feedback helped the students to improve in their usage of pronoun.

Meanwhile, the analysis of the t-test with regard to the mistakes the students made in the pre-test and post-test for the usage of conjunctions and articles also showed significant difference. The paired sample t-test analysis \((t(19) = 2.349, p<0.5)\) indicated that the marks of the pre-test and the post-test were significantly different and thus verified that the teacher direct written corrective feedback helped the students to improve in their usage of conjunctions in their writing. A similar analysis was obtained for the students’ improvement in using articles in their writing. The significant difference of the pre-test and the post-test through the analysis of the paired sample t-test \((t(19) = 2.666, p<.05)\) depicted the usefulness of teacher direct written corrective feedback in helping the students in their writing. These findings showed that teacher direct written corrective feedback benefitted the students in enhancing their usage of these grammatical features.

However, they did not show any improvement in the use of tenses and subject – verb agreement after provision of teacher direct written corrective feedback in their writing. With regard to the usage of tenses, the insignificant difference of means score of the pre-test and post-test from the analysis done using paired sampled t-test \((t(19) = 2.032, p>.05)\) showed that the students did not improve in the usage of tense. The same result was obtained for the usage of subject – verb agreement. The paired sample t-test for the mean score of the pre-test and the post-test was not significant \((t(19) = 2.032, p>.05)\). These findings showed that the students did not benefit from the teacher direct written corrective feedback in improving their usage of subject-verb agreement. These findings also indicate that students show improvements in only some grammatical forms in their writing after getting teacher direct written corrective feedback.

One reason why the students could improve in the usage of pronouns, conjunctions and articles is that there are less rules of usage to learn for these forms in contrast to tenses and subject-verb agreement. Studies by Bitchener and Knoch (2009, 2010), Sheen et al. (2009) and Ellis et al. (2008) also found that the students in their research improved in the usage of articles “a” and “the” in their writing after receiving direct written corrective feedback.
from their teachers. Nonetheless, the students inability to improve in the usage of tenses and subject-verb agreement after receiving teacher direct written corrective feedback disagree with some studies. The studies by Ellis et al. (2008), Sheen et al. (2009) and Sampson (2012) concluded that their students improved in the usage of both tenses and subject-verb agreement after receiving teacher direct written corrective feedback.

However, in this present study, the absence of these grammatical forms: tenses and subject-verb agreement in the students’ native language can be a factor that contributes to the students inability to improve in using tenses and grasping the concept of subject-verb agreement. This is in accordance with the findings of past research (Nor Hashimah, Norsimah & Kesumawati, 2008; Saadiyah & Khor, 2009). They also stressed that the morphology of English language is different compared to other languages. Some English morphology features are absent in other language morphologies. To illustrate, Mandarin Chinese does not have the grammatical features of definite and indefinite articles and tenses (Saadiyah & Khor, 2009; Li & Thompson, 1981 cited in Hu, 2011).

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study shows that Diploma in Hospitality and Management students in SEGi University benefit from teacher direct written corrective feedback in their writing. Thus, the practice of giving direct written corrective feedback should be implemented by teachers in SEGi University. This can help students to be more proficient in English and help them to write better. The issue of large classes and avoidance of feedback by teachers need to be addressed at the university if students are to be better in writing accuracy. No doubt, as Myles (2004) states, giving feedback can be tiring and frustrating to instructors, nonetheless, it can help in creating and stimulating awareness among the students in taking charge of their own learning and be attentive to the mistakes they made in their writing.

The findings of this study also indicate that the Diploma in Hospitality and Management students have problems with grammatical features for example, tenses, subject–verb agreement, articles, pronouns and conjunctions. No doubt, there is improvement in the usage of articles,
pronouns and conjunctions after receiving teacher direct written corrective feedback, they still need help in grammar. This suggests the need for teaching of grammar even at diploma level of study in the university. Thus, grammar teaching needs to be given priority, all the more if students’ proficiency is of lower intermediate and intermediate levels as in the case of the students in this study. Focus also should be given especially to tenses and subject – verb agreement which the students have more problems in and are forms which usage they do not improve in after receiving teacher direct written corrective feedback. This implies that in the English courses which are compulsory and offered to the diploma students, grammar input should be re-evaluated and given more attention.

REFERENCES


The Effect of Teacher Direct Written Corrective Feedback on Writing


Shamshad Begham Othman, & Faizah Mohamad. (2011). The effects of teacher feedback on multiple-draft compositions in ESL classrooms. The
Second Biennial International Conference on Teaching and Learning of English in Asia: Exploring New Frontiers (TELiA2).


CALL FOR PAPERS

Asian Journal of University Education

The Asian Journal of University Education (AJUE) is an on-line scholarly international refereed journal. It is published twice a year by the Asian Centre for Research on University Learning and Teaching (ACRULeT), Faculty of Education, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia.

The objective of the journal is to provide a forum for the publication of research and discussion on all aspects of university education such as internationalization of higher education, teaching methodology, learning styles, assessment, curriculum development, educational leadership, educational management and administration, leadership, gender issues and quality assurance in higher education. Articles related to school education that have implications for higher education are also welcomed. The journal hopes to receive papers that use a variety of methods including experimental, qualitative and case studies. Theoretical and narrative studies will also be considered. Book reviews and shorter research notes are also welcomed.

The journal is published by the Asian Centre for Research on University Learning and Teaching (ACRULeT), Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam, Malaysia. It has a policy of double-blind reviewing. As an international journal, it welcomes contributions from researchers and teachers from all parts of Asia and elsewhere.

Submission Requirements

Articles should be written in English and should not exceed 30 double-spaced pages using font size 12. The format should be Microsoft Word version 6 or higher. Reviews, research notes and comments should not exceed 10 pages. All submissions should be accompanied by a statement that the said articles have not been submitted and will not be submitted for publication anywhere else.

Articles must be submitted to The Chief Editors as an e-mail attachment to ajue09@yahoo.com. Articles must be submitted together with a short biodata of the author(s) on a page separate from the article.
This should include the title of the article, author or authors, address for correspondence, e-mail address and relevant telephone number(s). Contact information must be given for all co-author(s).

**Style**

Orthography may follow British or American conventions but should be consistent throughout the text.

**Citations and References**

Citations and references should follow APA conventions. Notes should be used as sparingly as possible and should be in the form of endnotes rather than footnotes.

**Abstracts**

Each article should be accompanied by an abstract of not more than 200 words.

For further information, please contact:

**Head**

Centre for Research on University Learning and Teaching (ACRULeT)  
Faculty of Education, UiTM Section 17 Shah Alam 40200 Selangor Malaysia  
Tel : 603-5522 7409 / 7432  
Fax : 603-5522 7412  
E-mail : ajue09@yahoo.com