

Explicit Grammar Instruction in Communicative Language Teaching: A Study of the Use of Quantifiers

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of the blend of explicit contrastive grammar instruction and the existing teaching approach in KBSM, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). The invariant meaning of English quantifiers was instructed explicitly to Malay ESL learners by highlighting their counterparts in Bahasa Malaysia to develop these students' production of noun phrases in their English writings. Reid (1991) and Tobin's (1990) framework of invariant meaning and Entity Number were adopted to find out the invariant meaning of these grammar items in both English and Bahasa Malaysia. The paired samples t-test and independent samples t-test scores which were obtained through a quasi-experimental design indicate that the integration of semantic-based explicit contrastive grammar instruction into the CLT approach shows a significant achievement in the experimental group's use of quantifiers compared to the control group which did not receive any treatment. The aim of successful/purposeful communication determined by the English language curriculum has overlooked the impact of explicit grammar instruction. The results of this study concludes that CLT furnished with explicit instruction on form and meaning gives exposure to the learners not only to achieve fluency, but also accuracy in language use, especially of grammar items.

KEYWORDS: Invariant Meaning; Entity Number; Explicit Contrastive Grammar; Quantifiers; Semantic-based Instruction

Introduction

It has been widely reported that the ‘inappropriate’ use of the target language (L2) often occurs due to L1 transfer and the ‘defective’ learning of the target language itself, as the learners overgeneralise the rules of the L2 (Beardsmore, 1982; Bhela, 1999; Blum-Kulka & Levenston, 1983; Brown, 2000; Lightbown & Spada, 2000; Marlyna Maros, Tan & Khazriyati Salehuddin, 2007; Mohideen, 1996). Contrary to the negative influence hypothesis, many studies have referred to the facilitating role of L1 in learning the target language (L2) when the transfer of knowledge from L1 to L2 gives positive effect (i.e. improved writing) rather than a negative one (i.e. inappropriate uses due to interference) (Ellis, 1997; Ionin, Zubizarreta & Maldonado, 2008; Kamimura, 1996; Kobayashi & Rinnert, 2008; Kubota, 1998; Mohan & Lo, 1985; Murphy & Roca de Larios, 2010; Nambiar, 2009; Nation, 2003; Paramasivam, 2009; Sabourin & Stowe, 2008; Schwarzer & Luke, 2001 cited in Brooks-Lewis, 2009; Sharma, 2005; Uysal, 2008; Van Weijen, Van den Bergh, Rijlaarsdam, & Sanders, 2009; Wang, 2003; Woodall, 2002).

While language researchers may argue on whether L1 impedes or facilitates the learning of L2, this issue does not entirely rule out the L1 knowledge’s presence among L2 learners, in this case, ESL learners. The L1 knowledge in the linguistic repertoire of an L2 learner works as the default system and any new knowledge or input received is added into the system (Cenoz, 2003). Hence, as an attempt to enhance the L2 learning, L2 learners need to “reconfigure” or “remap” the L1 as they use it during the acquisition of an L2 (Lardiere, 2009:175). The blend of both explicit instruction and implicit learning leads to a greater tendency in improving L2 proficiency (DeKeyser, 2003 cited in Hulstijn, 2005; Ellis, 1995; Li & Tian, 2008; Widodo, 2006). However, in order for the learners to reconfigure the L1 knowledge what is necessary is the explicit knowledge of grammar which involves not only the form but also the meaning and the uses of grammatical structure (Ellis, 2006; Scheffler & Cinciata, 2011). This is parallel to Barton’s (2007:97) view on literacy where “literacy is always contextualised as human activity that always takes place within a context; within a text, the shared knowledge, which all human understanding depends upon, is part of the context.” As learning is a contextualised human activity, in order to instil the understanding of the language system, a theory which accommodates a context model is needed.

The Columbia School of Linguistics sees language as a system, rather than a rule-governed behaviour, in a Saussurean sense, that is, each linguistic item in a *specific* language carries a vague or abstract meaning, identified as invariant meaning, which is constant and specific in the language system. In order to perceive how languages work as systems, the knowledge of both ‘form’ and ‘meaning’ posited in the languages need to be highlighted explicitly in grammar instruction (Ellis, 2006). As both form and function are inseparable entities in learning a language, a language teaching method that accommodates such perspective might be effective in developing the learners’ use of L2.

The current study centres on the situation of teaching and learning of English as a second language in Malaysia, and particularly, the Malay speakers, the major ethnic group in the country. Among Malays, it has often been suggested that the transfer of knowledge from their first language which is Bahasa Malaysia (BM) seems to have a great influence in their English writings which to some extent contributes to errors in the L2. The domain that has been identified as one of the most problematic grammatical

areas in English is ‘determiners’ besides ‘subject-verb agreement’ and copula ‘be’ (Khazriyati Salehuddin et al., 2006; Marlyna Maros et al., 2007; Mohideen, 1996; Nor Hashimah Jalaluddin, Norsimah Mat Awal & Kesumawati Abu Bakar, 2008).

Deriving from de Saussure’s concept of language that works as a system and Ellis’s (2006) concept of explicit grammar instruction in language learning, the Malay ESL learners in this study were taught to avoid merging English into BM system and vice versa (this will be shown in the analysis) as English and BM are two languages which originated from different language families where the system(s) (i.e. semantics and structure) of these languages are also dissimilar. Following the norms of quasi-experimental research, the researchers in this study attempted to find out if there is any difference in producing determiners, especially quantifiers, in English noun phrases between the experimental group which received the semantic-based (i.e. meaning-based) explicit contrastive grammar instruction of the use of quantifiers, and control group which received no treatment.

English language teaching in Malaysian education system and the use of CLT

The curriculum specifications for English language in *KBSM* is developed and established as a standard guide for the teaching of English to the secondary school students in Malaysia. The aims and objectives to be achieved were developed by taking into consideration “the way English is used in society in everyday life, when interacting with people, accessing information and understanding and responding to literary works” (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 2). The *KBSM* syllabus requires the application of Communicative Approach, which is also called Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in the teaching and learning process of English language (Chitravelu, Sithamparam, & Teh, 2001). In the *KBSM* syllabus, it is stated that “grammar is to be incorporated into four language skills and should be taught in context and in a meaningful way” (Ministry of Education, 1990 cited in Chitravelu et al., 2001:198). The primary focus or aim is how the learners use the language in real life situations appropriately. The grammar of the language is seen as peripheral; the idea of teaching this element of language in isolation is not encouraged but integrated along with the receptive skills and productive skills (i.e. reading and listening as well as speaking and writing) respectively providing meaningful contextualised input. The communicative approach to language learning focuses on getting students to use language effectively in purposeful communication (Arshad Abd Samad & Hawanum Hussein, 2010; Brown, 2001; Chitravelu et al., 2001). In CLT, as grammatical structure is immersed under various categories, less attention is paid to the overt presentation and discussion over the grammatical rules (Brown, 2000; Ratnawati Mohd Asraf, 1996; Ting, 2007). Grammar explanation and error correction are incidental in the CLT approach and errors are often tolerated. Thus, errors that are not pointed out and explained from the beginning of the learning stage may become fossilised and lead to inappropriate use of grammatical items (Chitravelu et al., 2001). The strong version of CLT which lays emphasis on communication and where fluency gets more attention than accuracy is beneficial provided that the L2 learners are, at the very least, able to communicate in the language.

Looking into the performance of the *KBSM* product (i.e. students), although CLT has been practised for more than two decades, the ESL learners are still incompetent in the language, especially when the productive skills (i.e. speaking and writing) are in use.

Inappropriate use of grammatical devices can be noticed unavoidably (Marlyna Maros et al., 2007). Thus, we felt that there is a need to integrate explicit grammar instruction into the teaching of meaningful contextualised input. Grammatical competence needs to be acquired along with communicative competence as “being able to use grammatical structures does not only mean using the form accurately but also meaningfully in semantics and appropriately in pragmatics” (Nho, 2005, p. 191). Recent studies have also shown that explicit grammar instruction is purposeful in shaping the learners’ performance in fluency and accuracy (Azar, 2007; Ellis, 2006; Munir Shuib, 2009; Nho, 2005). For this reason, the attention on form-focused instruction escalated over the years making possible a teaching and learning process which gives emphasis over meaning-based activities without leaving behind the importance of language forms needed to develop language proficiency. Hence, in this study, the explicit contrastive grammar instruction within a semantic/ meaning-based approach (i.e. focus on form) is used as a form of treatment to see if there is any improvement in the students’ use of grammar items, especially quantifiers.

The Form-Focused Instruction (FFI)

The limitation of the CLT approach, which proposes that comprehensible input and meaning-based activities are adequate in achieving communicative competence, results in the emergence of form-focused instruction (FFI). Ellis (2001a, p. 1) defines form-focused instruction as “any planned or incidental instructional activity that is intended to induce language learners to pay attention to linguistic form.” In FFI, language forms are integrated either covertly or overtly with the meaning-oriented tasks or activities to enable the language users to become familiarised with the forms used within the real context. The two types of form-focused instructions are focus on form (FonF) and focus on forms (FonFs) (Ellis, Basturkmen, & Loewen, 2002; Laufer & Girsai, 2008). FonF exposes the learners to linguistic elements which are integrated into communicative activities whereas FonFs is rather traditional as the linguistic elements are taught separately following the sequence of its importance. This approach underlines the role of the students as not merely language learners but users of the language, where language plays a prominent role as a tool for communication.

It is essential to figure out the types of tasks or techniques in FFI which may efficiently enhance language learners’ proficiency level, claims Ellis “FFI research has moved from the question of whether FFI is effective to the investigation of what kinds of FFI are effective” (Ellis 2001b, cited in Andringa, 2005:2). A number of recent studies have brought to attention the issue of the incorporation of contrastive analysis (i.e., contrastive grammar instruction) with form-focused techniques. It is believed that the inclusion of contrastive linguistic input in form-focused instruction may result in a significant development in second language learning. The conflict of whether L1 facilitates or impedes the learning process of L2 has remained debatable over the years. However, many studies (a few to be discussed in the subsequent topic) performed did obtain compromising significant results when integrating form-focused instruction which focuses on form (rather than forms) with contrastive grammar input (Laufer & Girsai, 2008). In this study, the FonF approach is applied along with contrastive grammar instruction instead of FonFs, practices the teaching of grammar in isolation.

Explicit contrastive grammar instruction and the meaning-based approach

A number of studies in the past have suggested that Contrastive Analysis (CA) can be used as input in second language grammar instruction when highlighting the structural similarities and differences of both L1 and L2 to minimise the grammatical errors produced by the learners (Tan, 2001; White, 1991). The role of L1 in the learning process of L2 which results in positive transfer suggests that the incorporation of L1 in the teaching and learning process of L2 in the classroom is very much valued. Moreover, explicit comparison between the grammatical system of the L1 and L2 through meaning-based tasks serves as an important method of input delivery to develop the second language learners' understanding of the system of the target language (Brooks-Lewis, 2009; Widdowson, 2003). Additionally, the uses of certain items which exist in the native language but not in the target language, the similarities and differences in usage between the two languages and, most importantly, the area of possible confusion need to be explained explicitly to the second language learners to develop their understanding of the language (Tan, 2001). In a study conducted by Ghabanchi & Vosooghi (2006, p.123), CA was utilised not to predict difficulty or to explain errors but for the "definition of salient input" which means an explicit reference or noticeable input of cross-linguistics comparison presented to the learners to facilitate the L2 learning.

For Malaysian learners, CA could be beneficial in teaching English determiners (Khazriyati Salehuddin, Tan, & Marlyna Maros, 2006). Nor Hashimah Jalaludin et al. (2008) found that although BM and English share the same basic structure of 'Subject-Verb-Object' (SVO), there are many other structural differences in these two languages that need to be highlighted such as the copula 'be', subject-verb agreement, determiners and relative pronouns. Hence, the researchers suggest that contrastive analysis of the two languages (L1 and L2) is crucial to highlight the structural similarities and differences of these languages.

Previous studies show that form-focused instruction leads to significantly positive results when it is integrated with a contrastive analysis of the target items and their corresponding options in the learners' L1, in contrast to content-oriented tasks with no attention to target items and meaning-based tasks with attention to forms but without any contrastive linguistic input (Laufer & Girsai, 2008). It was identified that in order to make the target language features noticeable, the learners should be provided explicit cross-linguistic instruction (Laufer & Girsai, 2008). It is the salient role of explicit contrastive instruction to explicate the similarities and differences of L1 and L2 as it is not always easy to figure out how features of the L1 are identical (achieving equivalence) to the L2 or vice versa.

In an experimental study conducted among Malay ESL learners for writing skills, the findings reveal that contrastive grammar instruction (between English and Malay) does serve as an important method of delivering input to improve the clarity and coherence of written work produced by ESL learners (Govindasamy, 1994). In this study, the use of a functional approach with contextualised input to explain the grammatical features produced more positive results compared to formal traditional grammar explanation. Another experimental study tested the presentation of contrastive grammar instruction of grammatical items with computer assisted instruction (CAI). The findings indicate that the knowledge of L1 (Mandarin) does affect the learning of L2 (English) although

the differences found between the experimental group which received the contrastive grammar treatment through a computer assisted instruction and control group which received traditional classroom instruction was not significant (Chen, 2006). Moreover, it was identified that based on the stages and processes of adult L2 vocabulary acquisition, to develop L2 meanings, the use of L2 words rely on the learners' L1 translations and exposure to contextualised input (Jiang, 2004).

As one's knowledge of grammar and lexicon includes its meaning and how it is used in various contexts, the meanings of words are equally important and they have to be highlighted in any grammar explanation. In a study conducted on the acquisition of the English article system by Malay students using the meaning-based approach, it was identified that grammar features can best be taught by keeping an awareness of how the system works (Sudhakaran, 1999 cited in Jarina Abdul Rahman, 2004). The meaning of the grammatical categories when integrated into its teaching and the context of their occurrence in real discourse gives way for the learners to absorb the functions of these grammar items as a system not in isolation with rigid adherence to the rules. Therefore, meaning is an important element that should not be abandoned but instead emphasised in order to enable the learners to use the grammatical categories appropriately to convey intended messages (Sudhakaran, 1999 cited in Jarina Abdul Rahman, 2004). Additionally, the use of the meaning-based approach in teaching the Subject-Verb Agreement for Indonesian EFL college students have developed the students' writing skills in producing messages coherently using the morphological identity '-Ø' and '-s' which are attached to verbs and nouns (Rianto, 1999). The students who were exposed to the meaning-based instruction were able to produce coherent messages, showing that the interpretation of grammatical choices (i.e. grammatical number) is important to enable successful communication of messages.

Thus, we felt that the semantic properties of grammatical categories should be highlighted in any language instruction which involves both form and meaning. In line with this, we adopt the semantic-based explicit contrastive grammar instruction method to help the Malay ESL learners make appropriate uses of quantifiers in English noun phrases.

The grammatical devices in focus

This study discusses the use of determiners, particularly, quantifiers by Malay ESL learners (i.e. Malay native speakers). Quantifiers are a fixed category of words which are used to express the indefinite quantity of a noun, rather than qualify them, (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999). There were altogether nine groups of quantifiers studied in this research; partitives/ classifiers (e.g. a piece of, *sekeping*), indicators of large entity (e.g. many, *banyak*), indicators of small entity (e.g. several, *beberapa*), cardinal numbers (e.g. one, *satu*), indicators of fractions (e.g. two-thirds, *dua pertiga*), indicators of individual entity (e.g. every, *setiap*), indicators of whole entity (e.g. all, *semua*), indicators of optional entity (e.g. any) and indicators of zero entity (e.g. neither).

The types of quantifiers were identified based on grammar books (Azar, 2002; Leech, Cruickshank, & Ivanic, 2009; Nik Safiah Karim, Farid M. Onn, Hashim, Hashim Haji Musa & Abdul Hamid Mahmood, 2008); while further examples were collected from real uses of language, the *parole* in Saussurean terms, in order to see how these

grammatical items are realised in its habitual use. The linguistic analysis performed was not to identify how language *should* be used but rather how it *is being* used in real context for effective communication of messages to take place. Language samples were collected from newspaper editorials (i.e. English language newspaper ‘The Independent’ and BM newspaper ‘*Utusan Malaysia*’), from November 2008 to September 2009; and also from websites that store sizeable quantity of English corpus (www.lexutor.ca) and corpus in Bahasa Malaysia (i.e., *Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka*).

Quantifiers in BM

Quantifiers or ‘*kata bilangan*’ in BM is a type of determiner (i.e. ‘*kata penentu hadapan*’) which pre-modify a noun by preceding the noun head in a noun phrase. Nik Safiah Karim et al. (2008) designate the types of quantifiers in BM into five main categories: numerals, uncountable numbers, collective numbers, separate entities and fractions. These categories were identified based on the functions and the meaning of these quantifiers. In BM, quantifiers are used for both count and mass nouns. However, an exception is mass referents as quantifiers which “do not modify reduplicated nouns as they are unbounded mass referents” (Sew, 2007, p. 24). This means, although reduplicated nouns are count nouns, they signify mass referents which are uncountable or indefinite in number (e.g. buku-buku [tr. books], pelajar-pelajar [tr. students]).

Framework of analysis

This study adopted the Entity Number System analysis for analysing the qualitative data (i.e. language samples) and paired samples t-test and independent samples t-test for the quantitative data (i.e. students’ scores).

The Entity Number System

Tobin (1990, p. 51) describes meaning and message as two different entities where “the same linguistic sign with a single invariant meaning can be inferred to have many and diverse messages as well as multiple syntactic and pragmatic functions within different discourse contexts.” The single invariant meaning of a linguistic sign is not pre-constructed but rather postulated by synthesising from the various examples of its use in the real context. In this study, the invariant meaning of the quantifiers are postulated based on the Entity Number System (Reid, 1991; Tobin, 1990). The noun entity according to Tobin (1990) and Reid (1991), carries a grammatical number which is identified through the occurrence of a zero (-Ø) signal (i.e. entity-Ø) and ‘-s’ signal (i.e. entity-s) which signify the meaning of ‘ONE’ and ‘MORE THAN ONE’ entity respectively.

Nonetheless, the signals (‘-Ø’ and ‘-s’) of a noun entity do not always resemble the meaning of ‘ONE’ and ‘MORE THAN ONE’ entity. For instance, in the case of ‘person-Ø’ and ‘people-Ø’, although the latter does not signify an ‘-s’ morpheme (i.e. an indicator of ‘MORE THAN ONE’ entity) but a zero (-Ø) signal, this lexical item is identified as a plural noun referent. The identification of the semantic value of the lexical item based on data extracted from natural language use and also its relation to the message being communicated is able to resolve the problems in contrasting Entity Number signals (Reid, 1991). Hence, based on its use in various natural contexts,

‘person-Ø’ is identified as ‘human being’ whereas although the meaning of ‘people-Ø’ carries a zero signal, it is realised as ‘an aggregate of human beings,’ which means ‘MORE THAN ONE’ entity (Reid, 1991, p. 65).

The zero signal (i.e. –Ø) which indicates ‘ONE’ entity is not only applicable as the morphological identity for singular count noun referent but also to mass referents. “A mass referent can be regarded as ‘ONE’ merely by virtue of being an unstructured whole, like the unbounded but singular surface of a sphere” (Reid, 1991, p.77). Consequently, the morphological identification for mass referents is realised as ‘-Ø’ which signifies the meaning of ‘ONE’ although no physical discrete boundaries are evident in these referents.

It has been postulated by Wierzbicka (1985, cited in Reid 1991) that “mass nouns designate objects whose shapes are not cognitively salient.” Thus, ‘unbounded’ objects which do not have fixed position like ‘water’, ‘butter’, ‘air’ and ‘meat’ are classified as mass nouns. Although the shape of butter is cognitively salient as it has discrete physical boundaries, this noun entity is identified as a mass referent. According to Wierzbicka (1985, cited in Reid 1991) an object which maintains its physical properties despite transformation is a mass noun. As it was mentioned earlier, count nouns possess cognitively salient shapes. Some of the words like ‘furniture’, ‘crockery’ and ‘cutlery’ however serve as problematical to be posited with the meaning of ‘MORE THAN ONE’ as they are always identified as singular referents although they have cognitively salient shapes. This confusion was resolved by Wierzbicka (1985, cited in Reid 1991) who grouped these lexical items as non-taxonomic categories which means “objects of different kinds, sharing no similarity of form and only a general similarity of purpose” and therefore cannot be counted together.

In addition, Reid (1991, p. 80) identifies groups of words which have spanned the semantic opposition between the meaning of ‘ONE’ and ‘MORE THAN ONE’ such as ‘politics’, ‘economics’ and ‘acoustics’. The occurrence of ‘-s’ signal does not signify the plurality of these noun referents but rather illustrates them as noun entities. These words without the presence of ‘-s’ are employed as adjectives as in ‘politic’, ‘economic’ and ‘acoustic’. Hence, these words are mass referents which signify the meaning of ‘ONE’ through the occurrence of the zero signal (i.e. politics-Ø, economics-Ø and acoustics-Ø). Alongside these are words which are categorised as *pluralia tantum* words (i.e. words which always appear in pairs) like ‘scissors’, ‘trousers’, ‘tights’ and ‘pliers’ and are also seen as another group of words which have spanned the semantic opposition. As these objects comprise two identical parts, Reid (1991, p. 75) suggests that the component parts of these objects are sufficiently alike and therefore they are countable as ‘MORE THAN ONE’ entity.

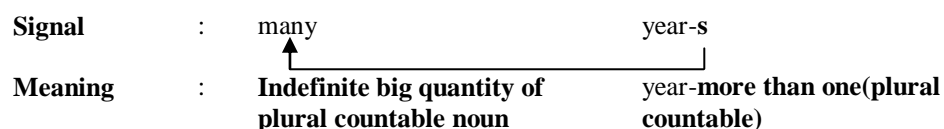
Overall, Reid (1991, p. 73) concludes that in order to perceive a noun as a countable referent, the objects ought to be “sufficiently similar” that means neither “too similar” (i.e. individual grains of rice) nor “too dissimilar” (i.e. a table and a chair). This concept seems to be applicable to certain extent in the analysis of the Entity Number System. However, how the physical properties of these objects are perceived and later justified by someone in the speech community could be another problem which arises in the process of positing the semantic value of a noun referent.

The invariant meaning findings from authentic data

The Entity Number System employed to the noun referents to identify the invariant meaning of the quantifiers in English and BM suggests that the deployment of the grammatical number in English and BM is dissimilar. The grammatical number of the noun entity in English often synchronises with the semantic properties of the quantifiers which co-occur. The morphological identity ‘entity-Ø’ which means ‘ONE’ (i.e. singular or mass referent) and ‘entity-s’ (i.e. plural referent) which means ‘MORE THAN ONE’ of the noun referent often simultaneously indicate the meaning of the quantifiers that quantify these referents. For instance, the ‘-s’ signal reciprocates to the quantifiers ‘many’ in ‘[1] many year-s’ that indicate ‘MORE THAN ONE’ entity. The analyses below illustrate that the ‘-s’ which is indicated in the plural countable in ‘year-s’ determines the choice of quantifier which precedes this noun. The meaning ‘more than one (plural countable)’ suggests that the quantifier which precedes this noun should be an indicator of big quantity of plural countable noun. Thus, the invariant meaning of the quantifier ‘many’ is determined as ‘indefinite big quantity of plural countable noun’.

[1] There also remains the abiding risk that this virus or a bird flu virus could mutate to a more aggressive form - but that threat is no greater now than it has been for [_{NP} many years].

(Keep calm and carry on, 2009)



There were also other instances where the noun referents did not signify any ‘-s’ morphemes but denote the meaning of ‘MORE THAN ONE’ as in ‘[2] lots of young people-Ø’ and ‘[3] plenty of women-Ø’. However, this was resolved through the grammatical number analysis by determining the semantic properties of people as “an aggregate of human beings” (Reid, 1991, pp. 61-5). In other words, although ‘people’ does not carry an ‘-s’, it is a plural countable noun as it is a group of human beings. Subsequently, in this study, ‘women’ is defined as ‘an aggregate of female human beings’. On the other hand, there were also circumstances where the noun referents were identified as ‘ONE’ despite the occurrence of ‘-s’ signal which signifies ‘MORE THAN ONE’. Such occurrence was traced in ‘[4] some welcome news’ when ‘news’ is morphologically identified as ‘news-Ø’ but not ‘new-s’. The identification of ‘-s’ as in ‘new-s’ results in the word losing its point of departure as ‘new’ is not a noun but a part of speech is identified as an adjective. Hence, the ‘-s’ is not an indicator of plurality but a signifier which endows the word with semantic properties of a noun. The analyses are shown below:

[2] But the heat has gone out of that dispute, with everyone agreeing on a new warm, fuzzy consensus that it is a jolly good thing for [_{NP} lots of young people] to go to university, but it is up to each individual student to decide if they want to.

(A-levels have served their purpose – let’s rethink them, 2009)

Signal	:	lots of	people-Ø
Meaning	:	Indefinite big quantity of plural countable noun	people- ONE (one aggregate of human beings) (plural countable)

[3] In terms of our city coverage for example, we always seem to talk to men with red, blue or black braces – yet there are [_{NP} **plenty of** expert *women*] too.

(Data extracted from corpus)

Signal	:	plenty of	women-Ø
Meaning	:	Indefinite large quantity of plural countable noun	women- ONE (plural countable)

[4] There is [_{NP} **some** welcome *news*] in this year's GCSE results.

(Do we need GCSEs if the school leaving age is raised?, 2009)

Signal	:	some	news-Ø
Meaning	:	Certain members of the group of uncountable noun	news- ONE (uncountable)

In BM, the Entity Number System employed to the noun referent illustrates that all noun heads which occur with the quantifiers are signified as ‘ONE’ as in ‘*pelajar-Ø*’ and ‘*guru-Ø*’ despite the occurrence of the quantifiers which indicate ‘MORE THAN ONE’ entity such as ‘[5] *para pelajar-Ø*’ (tr. many students). The indication of plurality in BM is reflected either through the quantifiers which indicate ‘MORE THAN ONE’ without pluralising the noun head or through the reduplication of the noun head without the presence of any other quantifiers. Hence, the Entity Number System suggests the morphological identity of ‘entity-entity’ for a BM noun referent to indicate plurality, for instance, ‘*pelajar-pelajar*’ (more than one student). In addition, the choice of the quantifier in BM depends on the classification of the noun, whether it is animate (human), or inanimate (non-human), classifications which are not applicable in English. The analysis of authentic language samples illustrate that ‘*para*’ only appears to quantify animate (human) noun which shows ‘a generic reference to the crowd’ such as below :

[5] *Bagaimana kita hendak mengetahui [_{NP} **para** pelajar] benar-benar menggunakan Bahasa Inggeris kerana mereka cuma menulis jawapan pilihan 'A hingga D'.*

(How we know if the students are really using the English language as they only choose between A to D for multiple choice questions).

(Data extracted from corpus)

Signal	:	<i>para</i>	<i>pelajar-Ø</i> (noun)
Meaning	:		
		Indefinite large quantity of animate (human) noun; generic reference to the crowd	

The countability function of quantifiers and whether or not they can be used to quantify count or mass noun referent is made clear through the Entity Number analysis. However, the noun number does not have any effect in determining the precise amount (degree) of the quantifier (i.e. the scale whether big or small). Therefore, the context of occurrence needs to be taken into consideration in identifying the invariant meaning of the quantifiers in English and BM, which may possess some salient differences. Moreover, Reid (1990, p. 77) opined that nouns are employable as both ‘mass’ and ‘count’ referents and hence, their “morphological identity does not resolve their interpretation but it must be resolved by the context.” Although various dictionaries that resemble the prescriptivists’ view of grammar provide information related to the function of quantifiers and whether or not they are applicable to countable or uncountable nouns, the invariant meanings are not explicated. Thus, it is necessary to point out that the analysis of Entity Number with invariant meaning has undoubtedly furnished the meaning or function of these grammatical items more appropriately.

Method

This study aimed to find out if there is any difference in producing quantifiers in English noun phrases between the experimental group which received the semantic-based explicit contrastive grammar instruction on the use of quantifiers and the control group which received no treatment. The invariant meaning(s) of the quantifiers were established based on grammar books and language samples extracted from editorials which highlighted the use of these grammatical items through the analysis of invariant meaning by Tobin (1990) and the Entity Number System by Reid (1991). These meanings were taught explicitly to the students in the experimental group, which involved a quasi-experimental design for data collection (the treatment will be explained in the Research Instruments section). Due to the constraints of creating an artificial group for the purposes of the experiment since the researchers lacked control over the participants (students) enrolled, the researchers used intact groups for the experimental group and the control group.

Participants

The samples were semester 1 Malay students of Politeknik Sultan Idris Shah, Sabak Bernam, Selangor. There were 76 participants altogether: 39 students were assigned to the experimental group (i.e. Diploma in Programming 1B) and another 37 students were assigned to the control group (i.e. Diploma in Programming 1C). For clarification, the sections (i.e. 1B and 1C) do not signify the students’ ability. They were placed in different sections following their enrolment numbers (i.e. registration identification). These students were homogeneous in terms of their academic achievement in *SPM (Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia)* or the Malaysian Certificate of Education, a national examination equivalent to the O-Level) and has fulfilled the minimum requirement of 5 credits upon enrolling for the Diploma in Programming.

Research instruments

Pre-test, mid-test, post-test, treatment and questionnaire

Five instruments were used altogether throughout the study as method of data collection: a pre-test, mid-test, post-test, the treatment (a CLT-approach and semantic-based explicit contrastive grammar instruction on the use of quantifiers), and questionnaire. A pilot experiment was also initially conducted on a separate group of students which were not part of the experimental or control group of the study. The pilot test was carried out to see the feasibility of the instruments and whether or not they were suitable in achieving the desired data. During the pilot experiment, there was no list of quantifiers provided in the test instrument. This resulted in very few traces of quantifiers in the students' essays. In some cases, there were no traces of quantifiers found in the essays. Therefore, the test instruments (i.e. pre-test and post-test) were refined by providing a list of quantifiers and the total number of quantifiers that should be used.

In the pre-tests and post-tests, the students were instructed to write a narrative in English and another narrative in BM numbering approximately 350 words each within 2 hours, which is similar to the SPM requirement for essays with the same time allocation of 1 hour for each. The essay questions for both English and BM versions were designed to be identical. The title of the English narrative was "*An unforgettable experience in my life*" whereas "*Satu pengalaman yang tidak dapat dilupakan di dalam hidup saya*" was the title of the BM narrative. The students were provided with a list of the grammatical category of quantifiers in the form of appended lists for both English and BM essays obtained from various grammar books of both languages. The students were instructed to include or use at least 80% of the words listed to find out the appropriacy of use in their writings. There were 46 quantifiers supplied for the English narrative and 38 quantifiers for the BM narrative.

A mid-test was distributed to both the experimental and control group in the middle of the treatment. This was carried out two weeks after treatment and two weeks before its completion. Unlike the pre-tests and post-tests, this is an objective test where the students were required to choose and underline the best answer. The aim of the mid-test was not to see the effectiveness of the treatment, rather it was administered to figure out the most confusing pairs of quantifiers in English and BM and to facilitate this in the treatment process.

The grammar items were grouped in pairs and students were tested on their understanding and ability in distinguishing the quantifiers that have similar semantic properties. There were 46 and 38 objective questions which were constructed for the English and BM mid-tests respectively. Some sample questions for English and BM mid-tests are as follows:

1. (*Many / Plenty of*) choice is the best thing that I've ever seen in the shopping mall.
2. Projek yang telah lama dirancang itu tidak dapat dilaksanakan kerana masih ada (*sesetengah / setengah*) penduduk kampung yang belum memberikan persetujuan.

(tr. The project which has been planned long time ago could not be carried out as some of the villagers have still not given their consent.)

Some recurring patterns identified in the students' writings in both English and BM inspired the researcher to distribute a list of open-ended questions to the students to explore further the reasons for such occurrences in their writings. The questionnaire was found more appropriate than the interview as a method of data collection at this stage as the students faced difficulties articulating their thoughts verbally. Consequently, 20 students from the experimental group were randomly selected by the researcher to find out their views over such occurrences. The researcher chose this group to be interviewed as there was no difference identified in the students' *patterns* of writing from pre-test to post-test despite the 10-hour treatment. This instrument was found important in determining the students' perception towards the role of L1 (BM) in their L2 (English) learning.

Treatment implementation

The treatment was implemented on the experimental group while students from the control group continued with their regular English course throughout the process of the experiment. The treatment conducted to the students in the experimental group was a semantic-based explicit contrastive grammar instruction on the use of determiners (i.e. quantifiers) in English and BM using the CLT approach. During the treatment session, the students were taught the meaning of the quantifiers explicitly as identified from the Entity Number System analysis. The treatment was conducted for 10 hours. It started a week after the pre-test and lasted for 5 weeks consecutively, totalling 2 hours a week. A post-test was administered after the last session of the treatment.

On the first day of treatment, the students were introduced to the types of nouns with corresponding examples in both English and BM. The idea of what a noun is and its type in both languages were generated first through a brainstorming session. Then, the students were asked to locate all the nouns from two articles taken from 'The Independent' and 'Utusan Malaysia' and then categorise them into their respective types (i.e. singular and plural countable and uncountable nouns for English and animate and inanimate nouns for BM) based on the meanings they know to further create an awareness of the differences and similarities in the two language systems. These similarities and differences were explained to the students further through some explanations and a handout on the analysis of invariant meaning and another handout which consists of the analysis of count and non-count nouns and animate and inanimate nouns (see Appendices, Table 7 & 8). Additionally, some sample sentences which highlight the use of these quantifiers were discussed to further expose the students to the functions and use of these words in real context. For the practice session, the students were given two cloze passages (English and BM) which were also taken from 'The Independent' and 'Utusan Malaysia'. These passages were modified and retyped with omission of some of the quantifiers which the students were asked to fill out, in the blanks, with the correct words. At the end of the session, the original texts were revealed and a discussion between the students the researcher followed.

The subsequent weeks of treatment were initiated by introducing the definition and types of determiners in English and BM. Determiners in English are classified into four types: possessives (e.g. 'my', 'your', 'his', 'our', Mahmud's and Radika's),

demonstratives (e.g. 'this', 'that', 'these' and 'those'), articles (e.g. 'a', 'an' and 'the') and quantifiers (e.g. 'many', 'a few', 'either', 'all' and 'enough') (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999). Alternatively, in BM, Nik Safiah Karim et al. (2008) identify two types of determiners (tr. *kata penentu*) which count as demonstratives (tr. *kata penentu belakang*) (e.g. 'itu' and 'ini') and quantifiers (tr. *kata penentu hadapan / kata bilangan*) (e.g. 'segala', 'beberapa', 'dua', 'para' and 'sedikit'). Although there are several types of determiners, the students were informed that for the purposes of the study, only quantifiers would be focused upon throughout the treatment. From the invariant meaning findings, the English quantifiers were matched with the nearest equivalent in BM and grouped into their respective classes based on their explored meanings. The meanings of all the quantifiers in these nine groups were introduced explicitly to students throughout the treatment.

Data analysis

To establish inter-rater reliability, the students' English essays obtained through the pre-tests and post-tests were marked by one of the researchers and by another English language teacher from the same institution, while the BM essays were rated by the researcher and another BM teacher. The language teachers were given a briefing that in order to see the effectiveness of the treatment, the students' performances are to be measured by looking at the appropriate use of the quantifiers. Thus, mistakes like spelling made by the students when producing the noun phrases in their essays were ignored. Likewise, other elements of writing such as cohesion, clarity and content were excluded in the scoring procedure as the only focus was the appropriate use of quantifiers in the noun phrases.

There were two methods applied to calculate the scores. In the first method (i.e. score 1), the number of appropriate use of the quantifiers was multiplied by 100% before dividing it to the total number of quantifiers used in a particular essay. Alternatively, another method (i.e. score 2) was also employed whereby the number of appropriately used quantifiers was multiplied by 100% before dividing it to the number of obligatory occurrences (i.e. the minimum number of quantifiers that should be used based on the instructions for the pre-test and post-test). During the process of scoring, the researchers found that the first method was inadequate as it might not reveal the true scores obtained by the students. This was evident in some of the students' writings who have used a very limited number of quantifiers (despite the instruction to use at least 80% of the listed quantifiers) which were all unexpectedly correct. This has led to a circumstance where the more words used in the writings resulted in a lower score as there were more inappropriate uses of the quantifiers identified. Since the length of the essays were not a major concern of the researchers but the number of quantifiers used appropriately, the second method, the figure concerning the number of obligatory occurrences was determined (i.e. the required number of use) (see Appendices, Table 6).

In order to achieve a general consensus, before finalising the scores, a discussion with one of the researchers and two other raters was held to justify and negotiate the scores awarded to the students' essays. The Kappa statistics indicates a high inter-rater reliability (i.e., .8) for both the pre-tests and post-tests.

Additionally, the mid-test was marked by the researchers by counting the percentage of the number of correct answers over the total number of objective items. Both

descriptive (i.e. mean, median and mode) and inferential analysis (i.e. paired samples t-test and independent samples t-test) were also used to analyse and interpret the quantitative data.

Findings

Results from pre-test and post-test

Traces of inappropriate use of quantifiers manifested through individual item analyses have revealed better performance in seven groups of quantifiers: partitives / classifiers, cardinal numbers, indicators of large, small, fractions, individual and whole entities from pre-test to post-test. The paired samples t-test analysis show that the students' scores (i.e. score 1 and score 2) have indicated significant improvements ($p < .05$) between the pre-test and post-test within the experimental group. The findings from the independent samples t-test disclose that the experimental group significantly (i.e. $p < .05$) outperformed the control group in producing quantifiers in English noun phrases. The tables below illustrate the findings from the paired samples t-test and independent samples t-test for the English pre-test and post-test:

Table 1. Mean difference between the English pre-test and post-test for score 1

Group	Pre-Test (Score 1)	Post-Test (Score 1)	Paired samples t-test (Sig. < 0.05)
Experimental <i>N</i> = 39	<i>M</i> : 54.32 <i>SD</i> : 16.86	<i>M</i> : 65.15 <i>SD</i> : 14.01	0.000
Control <i>N</i> = 37	<i>M</i> : 48.91 <i>SD</i> : 20.66	<i>M</i> : 50.93 <i>SD</i> : 15.99	0.511
Independent samples t-test (Sig. < 0.05)	0.214	0.000	-

Table 2. Mean difference between the English pre-test and post-test for score 2

Group	Pre-Test (Score 2)	Post-Test (Score 2)	Paired samples t-test (Sig. < 0.05)
Experimental <i>N</i> = 39	<i>M</i> : 30.97 <i>SD</i> : 15.76	<i>M</i> : 46.41 <i>SD</i> : 23.01	0.000
Control <i>N</i> = 37	<i>M</i> : 24.40 <i>SD</i> : 14.87	<i>M</i> : 33.72 <i>SD</i> : 15.66	0.000
Independent samples t-test (Sig. < 0.05)	0.066	0.006	-

It was not one of the aims of this study to see if there was any statistically significant mean difference in the scores produced by the students for the BM post-test after the treatment (i.e. within the groups and intergroup). However, descriptive and inferential analyses were likewise performed on the scores achieved by the students in both groups for the BM pre-test and post-test to see if there was any effect or development in the students' BM writings due to the 10 hours of contrastive grammar treatment. In these incidental findings concerning the BM post-test, the results obtained were rather inconclusive, subsequently indicating that a semantic-based explicit contrastive grammar instruction does not significantly affect BM post-test scores. Although the results of the paired samples t-test suggest that there is a significant improvement (i.e. $p < .05$) in the scores achieved by the students in the experimental group between pre-test and post-test for both score 1 and score 2, no significant difference was found between the scores in between the groups for independent samples t-test. The tables below

illustrate the findings from the paired samples t-test and independent samples t-test for the BM pre-tests and post-tests:

Table 3. Mean difference between the BM pre-test and post-test for score 1

Group	Pre-Test (Score 1)	Post-Test (Score 1)	Paired samples t-test (Sig. < 0.05)
Experimental N = 39	M : 90.38 SD : 6.57	M : 94.48 SD : 3.85	0.001
Control N = 37	M : 89.89 SD : 7.75	M : 92.91 SD : 6.06	0.033
Independent samples t-test (Sig. < 0.05)	0.766	0.187	-

Table 4. Mean difference between the BM pre-test and post-test for score 2

Group	Pre-Test (Score 2)	Post-Test (Score 2)	Paired samples t-test (Sig. < 0.05)
Experimental N = 39	M : 76.92 SD : 22.55	M : 92.07 SD : 13.60	0.000
Control N = 37	M : 88.02 SD : 16.71	M : 91.22 SD : 13.48	0.281
Independent samples t-test (Sig. < 0.05)	0.017	0.785	-

Results from mid-test

The findings disclose that ‘less / least’ is the most problematic English quantifier pair for the students in the experimental group as there was an incidence of 79.49% of inappropriate use identified for this pair. The quantifier pairs (i.e. ‘much / a lot of’, ‘a few / several’, ‘some / a little’ and ‘any / either’) seem to appear tricky as well as more than half of the students (above 50%) in this group have made inappropriate choices among these pairs. However, the results also illustrated that the students in this group did not face much difficulty in differentiating the following quantifier pairs: ‘a large amount of / a great number of’, ‘most / more’, ‘most / much’, ‘a few / a little’, ‘all / both’ and ‘another / some’ as less than 10% of the students have produced an inappropriate choice of quantifier from these pairs. On the other hand, ‘*masing-masing / ramai*’ is identified as the most complicated BM quantifier pair for the students in this group as percentage of 64.86 of inappropriate usage was traced for this pair. Unlike the English quantifier pairs, the results of the BM mid-test indicate that most of the quantifier pairs in BM seem to be unproblematic to the students in the experimental group. These findings were found to be beneficial in determining the most confusing pairs of quantifiers to the students in the experimental group and subsequently, these pairs were given more attention along the process of the treatment to the students.

Discussion

The findings of this study have shown that the semantic-based explicit contrastive grammar instruction is to some extent effective in developing the students’ use of quantifiers when producing English noun phrases. These findings are similar to the findings of several previous experimental studies which suggested that the use of explicit contrastive grammar is, to a certain extent, useful in developing the students’ use of L2 (Ghabanchi & Vosooghi, 2006; Govindasamy, 1994; Laufer & Girsai, 2008; Tan, 2001; Wheeler, 2006). To reiterate, the findings of this study suggest that explicit

contrastive grammar instruction within a semantic-based approach which focuses on both form and meaning (i.e. focus-on-form) is indeed beneficial for Malay ESL learners in the use of grammar items, especially quantifiers. Despite the differences in terms of the participants, such as different L1s, the duration of treatment, item of analysis in focus and context (i.e. EFL / ESL), the findings of these previous studies show that the method of explicit contrastive grammar instruction is effective in developing L2 learners' use of both L2 grammar and vocabulary (see Table 5).

It is difficult to compare the results of this study with that of some previous studies which did not produce positive results despite the identical treatment method. However, Chen (2006)'s experimental study findings using the contrastive grammar instruction of L1 (Mandarin) and L2 (English) with computer assisted instruction (CAI) were not convincing as the results did not indicate significant improvement. However, the unsuccessful results may not merely be due to the treatment but also due to many other factors suggested by Chen (2006). One of the factors may have been the duration of treatment where a total of 16 treatment hours was insufficient to cover the eight parts of speech which were the items in focus.

Pointing out the highest contributing factor which resulted in the success of the treatment of this study as compared to previous studies is also quite detrimental (for each previous study's method is significant in its own way). The main difference in the method used in this study compared to previous studies is the engagement of L2 participants into an explicit learning of the L2 grammar within the Communicative Language Teaching framework. Also, perhaps the longer duration of treatment as compared to the other two studies mentioned (see Table 5) and the semantic properties (i.e. invariant meaning) of the L2 grammar (i.e. quantifiers) have made a difference. Nonetheless, the findings of this study are compatible with current calls for a focus-on-form approach within an ESL communicative context.

Table 5. A comparison of previous studies

Previous Studies	Ghabanchi & Vosoghi (2006)	Laufer & Girsai (2008)	This study
Method of Instruction	Experimental group: Explicit Contrastive Linguistic Input (CLI) with Consciousness-Raising tasks. Control group: Implicit Comprehensible Input	Group 1: Meaning-focused Instruction (MFI). Group 2: Non-contrastive Form-Focused Instruction (FFI) Group 3: Contrastive Analysis and Translation Form-Focused Instruction (meaning and form).	Experimental group: Semantic-based explicit contrastive grammar instruction. Control group: No instruction but followed the regular English course.
Duration of treatment	<i>-not mentioned-</i>	130 minutes	10 hours
Item in focus	Active/Passive and Conditional	Single words and Collocations	Quantifiers
L1 of participants	Persian	Hebrew	Malay
Target language	English	English	English
Context	EFL	EFL	ESL
Findings	The experimental group outperformed the control group	Contrastive Analysis and Translation Form-Focused Instruction (meaning and form) group outperformed the other two groups.	The experimental group outperformed the control group.

Learners' responses

The analysis of students' responses in the questionnaires illustrate that these students were not aware of the formation rules of a noun phrase. There were many instances in their writings where these students have included articles redundantly to begin an English noun phrase, for instance:

**a several minutes, *a two village, *a much friend, *a enough tool, *a various place, *a fewest minutes, *a all of them, *an a half hour, *a this final examination, *a an abundance of rose flower.*

It was reported that the students did not have much exposure on how to use articles appropriately in English despite several years of formal English lessons in the classroom. This implies that these students may not know when or when not to apply the articles. The inclusion of articles to begin a noun phrase in English suggests that the students have at least understood the concept of an English noun phrase that begins with a determiner without necessarily realising the types of determiners in English which includes not only articles (including zero articles) but also demonstratives and quantifiers. The responses below were extracted from some of the students' responses when asked why articles are used when writing most of the phrases which begin with quantifiers:

"... because it sounds better."

"... it's confusing. we don't know how and when to use them."

"...because I thought that it wouldn't be perfect without the 'a' and 'the'."

The students' responses also show that learners have very positive attitudes towards the role of L1 (BM) in their L2 (English) learning. Some interesting expressions were found in the students' writings which can be explained as the influence of their L1:

many *kuih-muih* (tr. many cookies), some *buluh* (tr. some bamboos), all the time table trip (tr. all the trip timetable), two those people (tr. those two people), some biscuit *raya* (tr. some Raya biscuits), one *baju raya* (tr. one / a Raya dress), a lot of Muslim person (tr. a lot of Muslims), one *sijil* (tr. one / a certificate), a piece of *selendang* (tr. a shawl), this *pulau* (tr. this island), a great number of *penduduk kampung* (tr. a great number of villagers), so much of *kelip-kelip* (tr. an abundance of fireflies), one *van forensik* (tr. one / a forensic van), a lot of member parties (tr. a lot of party members), half the money salary (tr. half the salary), more *kesedaran* (tr. more awareness) and some *jamuan* (tr. some feast).

These learners reported that their limited vocabulary in English is one of the main reasons why such instances of code-switching occur. Besides, some of the expressions such as '*baju raya*' and '*kuih-muih*' were found relevant as these expressions reflect their culture and there is no definite substitute in the L2 (English). Thus, there was no other choice for the students but to resort to their L1 (BM) to help them compose in English. These students perceive their L1 as a 'saviour' which helps them express their idea rather than an 'intruder' which delimits their performance (Kobayashi and Rinnert, 2008; Nambiar, 2009; Nation, 2003; Paramasivam, 2009; Sabourin and Stowe, 2008; Uysal, 2008; Wang, 2003; Woodall, 2002). Some of the students' responses have expressed how their L1 helps:

"... good to use BM because we can get idea."

"... thinking in BM able to explain content."

"... at least I can write something rather than nothing when I think in BM."

These findings suggest that the quantifiers are not the only challenging grammatical categories that need to be given attention when producing the appropriate English noun phrases. The appropriate use of articles is equally essential for the students to be exposed to in order to produce appropriate English noun phrases, as a noun phrase is made up of determiners (i.e. articles, demonstratives, quantifiers and possessives), pre-modifier and a noun head. This needs to be further explored in future studies.

Conclusions and pedagogical implications

Whether or not to teach grammar in an ESL classroom and, if it is taught, what the best method to deliver the input of grammar is, will always remain debatable. Both implicit and explicit teachings were found favourable in the teaching of grammar (Ellis, 1995). However, the effects seem to be peripheral when these methods are employed independently. Therefore, the integration of both methods in teaching the ESL grammar is welcome as it was found that this has a greater tendency to improve the learners' language proficiency in terms of accuracy and fluency (DeKeyser, 2003 cited in Hulstijn, 2005; Ellis, 1995; Ellis, 2006; Li & Tian, 2008).

The aim of the KBSM (*Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah*) syllabus is to develop the students' ability to use the English language appropriately in real life situations. In the CLT approach, grammar is not taught in isolation but is integrated into the four language skills as fluency is the primary concern. Grammar explanation becomes supplementary in CLT and, therefore, the students' ability to use the language accurately especially in speaking and writing becomes disputable. Thus, the explicit instruction over forms is seen as indispensable in order for accuracy to be attained.

Form-focused instruction needs to be highlighted as another method of introducing the form or rules of grammar with meaning-based activities.

The integration of meaning or semantic-based approach into the explicit teaching of grammar seems to be applicable in developing the L2 learners' use of the language to some extent. However, the issue of L1 (first language) interference into the learning process of L2 (second language) appears to be another drawback in learning appropriate uses of L2 as it is believed that the students' native language serves as a source of inappropriate use of L2 (Marlyna Maros et. al 2007; Nor Hashimah et al., 2008). For this reason, this study employed the contrastive grammar with semantic-based explicit grammar instruction to teach grammar items to Malay ESL learners. The element of linguistic meaning analysis was integrated into the teaching and learning method to see its effectiveness in developing the use of quantifiers in producing English noun phrases.

The linguistic analysis performed on the language samples in this study could be beneficial for language teachers to apply in the classroom as this study has made an attempt to reveal the importance of identification of meaning and message as a whole in order to define the function of a grammar item. The strategy of identifying the semantic properties of a noun referent by categorisation could be applied by the students in the language classroom when learning to use appropriate quantifiers. ESL teachers should by all means expose students to knowledge on how to categorise things, such as how quantifiers are appropriately used in writings to generate appropriate noun phrases. The findings of this study is parallel to the Saussurean claim that language is flexible and inconsistent where there is no pre-determined principle which indicates how it should be used. However, it all depends on how the message is being communicated in context. Therefore, language should be taught as 'a system as a whole' and not as discrete items.

Recommendations

Explicit teaching of the grammatical category of determiners (i.e. quantifiers) is recommended if contrastive grammar instruction is to be practised by the ESL teachers in the classroom to explain meaning. This might help the learners better in comparison to the other methods, such as the absence of teaching it explicitly. The teaching of quantifiers can begin with the analysis of the semantic features of the noun referent. Quantifiers are best taught by relating them to the meaning of the noun referent (i.e. ONE for singular and mass referent and MORE THAN ONE for plural referent) based on their context of occurrence. Following this, it is also suggested that the students in the ESL classroom be exposed to language which are extracted or derived from materials of an established standard, such as newspapers or magazines. A vast exposure to the use of language in real context alongside the integration of explicit meaning can be a valuable strategy for language educators to adopt and exercise in the ESL classroom.

The interference of L1 (i.e. BM) into the students' English writings was not salient. Hence, this study recommends the use of contrastive grammar (i.e. English and BM) in the ESL classroom as a method of teaching grammar items to the learners as it helps them to understand the *concept* of the grammatical devices in both languages by comparing the similarities and differences. Additionally, this may also inculcate the awareness among the ESL learners over the existence of a varied system in different languages which then leads them to value the uniqueness and the exclusiveness of both languages.

The importance of integrating the linguistic element into the teaching and learning process in an ESL classroom appears necessary. Teachers are not merely language educators and this role needs to be expanded. This study serves as a platform for language teachers to consider the inclusion of elements of linguistic analysis to reinforce the pedagogic explanation. Hence, each language instructor to some extent should be able to take a stance to perform the role of a language researcher before teaching the language.

Suggestions for further research

The students' responses through the questionnaire illustrated that albeit exposed to the grammar of the language (i.e. overtly or covertly) in primary and secondary education, the ESL learners are still not aware of the 'appropriate' use of the articles (i.e. when to use and when not to use). As such, further research on the use of articles among ESL learners is needed to find out the causes of the inappropriate use of articles occurring in their English writings and bring to light the most appropriate strategy of teaching this grammar item to the ESL learners. This study has limited quantifiers as the determiners in focus. However, as a noun phrase is made up of determiners (i.e. demonstratives, quantifiers, possessives and articles) and a noun head, in order to achieve development in students' use of noun phrases, the semantic-based explicit contrastive grammar instruction is suggested to be applied in teaching all four categories of determiners to see its effectiveness in generating complete appropriate noun phrases in English. Overall, perhaps the results of this study and other similar studies would be beneficial to ESL teachers in their attempts to develop, improve, increase, and further strengthen and sustain the level of proficiency in the English language among Malaysian learners in their language classroom. The existence of eclectic teaching approaches, whether conventional or contemporary, is useful but educators need to be selective and should be able to personalise the context of the teaching and learning process to meet their own students' level of understanding.

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APPENDICES

List of English Quantifiers

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. A piece of | 26. Several |
| 2. A slice of | 27. A few |
| 3. An item of | 28. Fewer |
| 4. Hundreds of | 29. Fewest |
| 5. Thousands of | 30. A couple of |
| 6. Many | 31. A number of |
| 7. A large number of | 32. One |
| 8. A large amount of | 33. Two |
| 9. A great number of | 34. Two-thirds |
| 10. A great deal of | 35. Half |
| 11. The majority of | 36. Each |
| 12. An abundance of | 37. Every |
| 13. Plenty of | 38. All |
| 14. A lot of | 39. Both |
| 15. Lots of | 40. Any |
| 16. Much | 41. Either |
| 17. More | 42. Neither |
| 18. Most | 43. No |
| 19. Numerous | 44. Another |
| 20. Various | 45. Enough |
| 21. A little | 46. Twice |
| 22. A bit of | |
| 23. Less | |
| 24. Least | |
| 25. Some | |

List of Malay Quantifiers

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. <i>Sekeping</i> | 21. <i>Beberapa</i> |
| 2. <i>Sehelai</i> | 22. <i>Satu / Se</i> |
| 3. <i>Sebiji</i> | 23. <i>Dua</i> |
| 4. <i>Seorang</i> | 24. <i>Dua puluh</i> |
| 5. <i>Seseorang</i> | 25. <i>Tiga ratus</i> |
| 6. <i>Sebuah</i> | 26. <i>Sepuluh ribu</i> |
| 7. <i>Sebatang</i> | 27. <i>Sejuta</i> |
| 8. <i>Seekor</i> | 28. <i>Dua pertiga</i> |
| 9. <i>Ratusan</i> | 29. <i>Setengah</i> |
| 10. <i>Beratus-ratus</i> | 30. <i>Separuh</i> |
| 11. <i>Ribuan</i> | 31. <i>Tiap-tiap</i> |
| 12. <i>Beribu-ribu</i> | 32. <i>Setiap</i> |
| 13. <i>Jutaan</i> | 33. <i>Masing-masing</i> |
| 14. <i>Berguni-guni</i> | 34. <i>Semua</i> |
| 15. <i>Banyak</i> | 35. <i>Segala</i> |
| 16. <i>Para</i> | 36. <i>Sekalian</i> |
| 17. <i>Ramai</i> | 37. <i>Seluruh</i> |
| 18. <i>Pelbagai</i> | 38. <i>Kedua-dua</i> |
| 19. <i>Sedikit</i> | |
| 20. <i>Sesetengah</i> | |

Table 6. The difference between score 1 and score 2

<p>Score 1: $\frac{x}{y} \times 100$</p> <p>‘x’ refers to number of appropriate use of quantifiers used by a student in his / her essay.</p> <p>‘y’ refers to total number of quantifiers used by a student in his / her essay.</p> <p>E.g.: $\frac{10}{15} \times 100 = \mathbf{66.67\%}$</p>	<p>Score 2 (English): $\frac{x}{37} \times 100$</p> <p>Score 2 (BM): $\frac{x}{30} \times 100$</p> <p>‘x’ refers to number of appropriate use of quantifiers used by a student in his / her essay.</p> <p>‘37’ (80% out of 46 quantifiers) refers to total number of quantifiers which should be used by a student in his / her English essay.</p> <p>E.g.: $\frac{10}{37} \times 100 = \mathbf{27.03\%}$</p> <p>‘30’ (80% out of 38 quantifiers) refers total number of quantifiers which should be used by a student in his / her BM essay.</p> <p>E.g.: $\frac{10}{30} \times 100 = \mathbf{33.33\%}$</p>
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Table 7. The invariant meaning of quantifiers in English and BM

No.	English		Bahasa Malaysia	
	Quantifiers	Invariant Meaning	Quantifiers	Invariant Meaning
PARTITIVES / CLASSIFIERS				
1.	A piece of	A single item of uncountable noun.	<i>Sekeping</i>	Classifier; singular flat 2D dimension inanimate noun.
2.			<i>Sehelai</i>	Classifier; singular light 2D dimension inanimate noun.
3.	A slice of	A small portion of uncountable noun.		
4.	An item of	A type of uncountable noun.		
5.	-		<i>Sebiji</i>	Classifier; singular small 3D dimension inanimate noun.
6.	-		<i>Seorang</i>	Classifier; an identified singular animate (human) noun.
7.	-		<i>Seseorang</i>	Classifier; an unidentified singular animate (human) noun.
8.	-		<i>Sebuah</i>	Classifier; singular big 3D dimension and abstract inanimate noun.
9.			<i>Sebatang</i>	Classifier; singular long inanimate noun.
10.			<i>Seekor</i>	Classifier; singular animate (animal) noun.
INDICATORS OF LARGE ENTITY				
11.	Hundreds of	A quantity of plural countable noun; more than one hundred.	<i>Ratusan</i>	A quantity of animate and inanimate noun; more than one hundred.
12.			<i>Beratus-ratus</i>	A quantity of animate and inanimate noun; more than one hundred.
13.	Thousands of	A quantity of plural countable noun; more than one thousand.	<i>Ribuan</i>	A quantity of animate and inanimate noun; more than one thousand.
14.			<i>Beribu-ribu</i>	A quantity of animate and inanimate noun; more than one thousand.
15.			<i>Jutaan</i>	A quantity of animate and inanimate noun; more than one million.
16.			<i>Berguni-guni</i>	Classifier; sackfuls of inanimate mass noun (large quantity).
17.	Many	Indefinite big quantity of plural countable noun.	<i>Banyak</i>	Indefinite large quantity of animate and inanimate noun.
18.			<i>Para</i>	Indefinite large quantity of animate (human) noun; generic reference to the crowd.
19.			<i>Ramai</i>	Indefinite large quantity of animate (human) noun; emphasis on quantity in larger scale.
20.	A large number of	Indefinite bigger quantity of plural countable noun (greater than many).		
21.	A large amount of	Indefinite bigger amount of uncountable noun (greater than much).		
22.	A great number of	A very large quantity of plural countable noun.		
23.	A great deal of	A very large amount of uncountable noun.		
24.	The majority of	Almost all / the entire plural countable and uncountable noun.		

25.	An abundance of	An excessive large quantity of plural countable and uncountable noun.		
26.	Plenty of	Indefinite large quantity of plural countable and uncountable noun.		
27.	A lot of	Indefinite big quantity of plural countable and uncountable noun.		
28.	Lots of	Indefinite big quantity of plural countable and uncountable noun.		
29.	Much	Indefinite big amount of uncountable noun.		
30.	More	Indefinite bigger quantity of plural countable and uncountable noun; greater than usual.		
31.	Most	Almost all / the entire plural countable and uncountable noun.		
32.	Numerous	A very large quantity of plural countable noun.		
33.	Various	Indefinite large quantity of different types of plural countable noun.	<i>Pelbagai</i>	Indefinite large quantity of different types of animate and inanimate noun.
INDICATORS OF SMALL ENTITY				
34.	A little	Indefinite small amount of uncountable noun.	<i>Sedikit</i>	Indefinite small amount of inanimate noun.
35.	A bit of	Indefinite small amount of uncountable noun.		
36.	Less	Indefinite smaller amount of uncountable noun; lesser than usual.		
37.	Least	Almost none of the uncountable noun.		
38.	Some	Certain members of the group of countable and uncountable noun.	<i>Sesetengah</i>	Certain members of the group of animate and inanimate noun.
39.	Several	Indefinite small number of plural countable noun.	<i>Beberapa</i>	Indefinite small number of animate and inanimate noun.
40.	A few	Indefinite small number of plural countable noun.		
41.	Fewer	Indefinite smaller number of plural		
42.	Fewest	Almost none of the plural countable noun.		
43.	A couple of	Indefinite small number of plural countable noun.		
44.	A number of	Indefinite small number of plural countable noun.		
CARDINAL NUMBERS				
45.	One	Cardinal number; a singular item of countable noun.	<i>Satu / Se</i>	Cardinal number; a single item of animate and inanimate noun.
46.	Two	Cardinal number; definite quantity of plural countable noun; more than one but less than three.	<i>Dua</i>	Cardinal number; definite quantity of animate and inanimate noun; more than one but less than three.
47.			<i>Dua puluh</i>	Cardinal number; definite quantity of animate and inanimate noun; twice a ten.
48.			<i>Tiga ratus</i>	Cardinal number; definite quantity of animate and inanimate noun; thrice a hundred.
49.			<i>Sepuluh ribu</i>	Cardinal number; definite quantity of animate and inanimate noun; ten times a thousand.
50.			<i>Sejuta</i>	Cardinal number; definite quantity of animate and inanimate noun; thousand times a thousand.
INDICATORS OF FRACTIONS				
51.	Two-thirds	Fraction; definite two-thirds portion of the countable and uncountable noun.	<i>Dua pertiga</i>	Fraction; definite two-thirds portion of the inanimate and a group of animate noun.
52.	Half	Fraction; definite equal portion of the	<i>Setengah</i>	Fraction; definite equal portion of the inanimate and a group of

		countable and uncountable noun.		animate noun.
53.			<i>Separuh</i>	Fraction; definite equal portion of the inanimate and a group of animate noun.
INDICATORS OF INDIVIDUAL ENTITY				
54.	Each	Specific reference from a group of singular countable noun.	<i>Tiap-tiap</i>	Specific reference from a group of singular animate and inanimate noun / generic reference of singular animate and inanimate noun.
55.	Every	Generic reference of individual singular countable noun.	<i>Setiap</i>	Specific reference from a group of singular animate and inanimate noun / generic reference of singular animate and inanimate noun.
56.			<i>Masing-masing</i>	Specific reference of single animate (human) noun.
INDICATORS OF THE WHOLE ENTITY				
57.	All	The whole of the countable and uncountable noun.	<i>Semua</i>	The whole of the animate and inanimate noun; inclusive of individual entity.
58.			<i>Segala</i>	All kinds of inanimate noun.
59.			<i>Sekalian</i>	The whole of the animate (human); physically discrete referents as a single thing.
60.			<i>Seluruh</i>	The whole of the animate (human) and inanimate noun; physically discrete referents as a single thing.
61.	Both	All two plural countable nouns.	<i>Kedua-dua</i>	All two animate and inanimate nouns.
INDICATORS OF OPTIONAL ENTITY				
62.	Any	One of the options between several singular countable nouns.	-	
63.	Either	One of the options between two singular countable nouns.	-	
INDICATORS OF ZERO ENTITY				
64.	Any	None of the plural countable and uncountable noun.	-	
65.	Neither	None of the options between two singular countable nouns.	-	
66.	No	None of the countable and uncountable noun.	-	
67.	Another	An additional / a different countable noun.	-	
68.	Enough	Sufficient quantity of plural countable and uncountable noun.	-	
69.	Twice	Double the amount of countable and uncountable noun.	-	

Table 8: A checklist of the use (i.e. singular or plural and animate or inanimate) quantifiers in English and BM

No.	English Nouns				Bahasa Malaysia Nouns			
	Quantifiers	Count		Non-count	Quantifiers	Animate		Inanimate
		Singular	Plural			Human	Non-Human	
PARTITIVES / CLASSIFIERS								
1.	A piece of	-	-	√	<i>Sekeping</i>	-	-	√
2.					<i>Sehelai</i>	-	-	√
3.	A slice of	-	-	√				
4.	An item of	-	-	√				
5.	-				<i>Sebiji</i>	-	-	√
6.	-				<i>Seorang</i>	√	-	-
7.	-				<i>Seseorang</i>	√	-	-
8.	-				<i>Sebuah</i>	-	-	√
9.	-				<i>Sebatang</i>	-	-	√
10.	-				<i>Seekor</i>	-	√ (animal)	-
INDICATORS OF LARGE ENTITY								
11.	Hundreds of	-	√	-	<i>Ratusan</i>	√	√	√
12.					<i>Beratus-ratus</i>	√	√	√
13.	Thousands of	-	√	-	<i>Ribuan</i>	√	√	√
14.					<i>Beribu-ribu</i>	√	√	√
15.					<i>Jutaan</i>	√	√	√
16.					<i>Berguni-guni</i>	-	-	√
17.	Many	-	√	-	<i>Banyak</i>	√	√	√
18.					<i>Para</i>	√	-	-
19.					<i>Ramai</i>	√	-	-
20.	A large number of	-	√	-				
21.	A large amount of	-	-	√				
22.	A great number of	-	√	-				
23.	A great deal of	-	-	√				
24.	The majority of	-	√	√				
25.	An abundance of	-	√	√				
26.	Plenty of	-	√	√				
27.	A lot of	-	√	√				
28.	Lots of	-	√	√				
29.	Much	-	-	√				
30.	More	-	√	√				
31.	Most	-	√	√				
32.	Numerous	-	√	-				
33.	Various	-	√	-	<i>Pelbagai</i>	√	√	√

INDICATORS OF SMALL ENTITY								
34.	A little	-	-	√	<i>Sedikit</i>	-	-	√
35.	A bit of	-	-	√				
36.	Less	-	-	√				
37.	Least	-	-	√				
38.	Some	√	√	√	<i>Sesetengah</i>	√	√	√
39.	Several	-	√	-	<i>Beberapa</i>	√	√	√
40.	A few	-	√	-				
41.	Fewer	-	√	-				
42.	Fewest	-	√	-				
43.	A couple of	-	√	-				
44.	A number of	-	√	-				
CARDINAL NUMBERS								
45.	One	√	-	-	<i>Satu / Se</i>	√	√	√
46.	Two	-	√	-	<i>Dua</i>	√	√	√
47.					<i>Dua puluh</i>	√	√	√
48.					<i>Tiga ratus</i>	√	√	√
49.					<i>Sepuluh ribu</i>	√	√	√
50.					<i>Sejuta</i>	√	√	√
INDICATORS OF FRACTIONS								
51.	Two-thirds	√	√	√	<i>Dua pertiga</i>	√	√	√
52.	Half	√	√	√	<i>Setengah</i>	√	√	√
53.					<i>Separuh</i>	√	√	√
INDICATORS OF INDIVIDUAL ENTITY								
54.	Each	√	-	-	<i>Tiap-tiap</i>	√	√	√
55.	Every	√	-	-	<i>Setiap</i>	√	√	√
56.					<i>Masing-masing</i>	√	-	-
INDICATORS OF THE WHOLE ENTITY								
57.	All	√	√	√	<i>Semua</i>	√	√	√
58.					<i>Segala</i>	-	-	√
59.					<i>Sekalian</i>	√	-	√
60.					<i>Seluruh</i>	√	-	√
61.	Both	-	√	-	<i>Kedua-dua</i>	√	√	√
INDICATORS OF OPTIONAL ENTITY								
62.	Any	√	-	-	-			
63.	Either	√	-	-	-			
INDICATORS OF ZERO ENTITY								
64.	Any	-	√	√	-			
65.	Neither	√	-	-	-			
66.	No	√	√	√	-			
67.	Another	√	√	-	-			
68.	Enough	-	√	√	-			
69.	Twice	√	√	√	-			