

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

**THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MALAYSIA
WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO WORKPLACE NEEDS**

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**A Thesis submitted for the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

CENTRE FOR LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

FEBRUARY 1995

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

ABSTRACT

EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy

THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN
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This study examines English use in the workplace in Malaysia through the analysis of job advertisements, a questionnaire survey of 34 companies, and case studies of an urban based, multi-national electronics factory, and a local, rural based sugar-cane plantation. The findings from the workplace procedures provide a set of criteria that form the basis for the analysis of the case studies of two fourth form classes in an urban secondary girls' school of mixed ethnic group (formerly English medium), and two form four classes in a predominantly Malay rural co-ed secondary school.

The main findings from the workplace procedures indicate that English proficiency was implicit in the job advertisements for managerial/professional posts or received a general mention such as 'good communication and social and interpersonal skills' and those for non-professional jobs such as secretarial and clerical jobs tended to receive explicit mention, such as 'good command of spoken and written English' while there was no significant difference in requirement between industries located in rural and urban areas. Both the questionnaire survey and case studies reveal that the use of English is dependent on the nature of the company's business, i.e. scientific, technological, or international; and 27 out of the 34 use 75% English or more in their daily operations. Apart from slight variations with regard to the lower categories, English is essential for managerial and professional jobs, technical, secretarial, sales and accounts and generally not needed for manual or unskilled job categories. Employers seek general proficiency above all, but also important are negotiation and discussion skills, and the abilities to participate in international conferences, to carry on a work-related conversation with native and non-native English speaking foreigners, to give technical briefings, write letters with technical content, analytical reports, give presentations using graphical and statistical texts, and narrative, among others.

The extent of students' preparedness in relation to their English proficiency to enter the workplace varied significantly between the two schools. While the majority of students in the urban school case studies have the requisite skills to enter the workplace direct at clerical level or equivalent, and have acquired the potential for training in English for professional careers, only a handful of students in the rural school can aspire to this, with the majority of students qualifying for lower categories, clerical and below, in relation to their English proficiency. This mismatch between workplace demands and the perceived competencies of rural students in particular, are examined and explanations offered for the shortfalls in classroom procedures brought about by administrative guidelines and schools' preoccupation with preparing students for the terminal examination. Suggestions are offered especially with regard to problems of teaching-learning in the disadvantaged school. The study recommends measures to be instituted that focus on improving the proficiency of the rural students so that they can be elevated to occupy the higher levels in the organisational hierarchy.

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Acknowledgements

I would very much like to express my most sincere and heartfelt appreciation to various individuals who have made the completion of this thesis possible.

Firstly, the faculty and staff at the Centre for Language in Education, University of Southampton, chiefly my Supervisor, Professor Christopher Brumfit, who helped to shape and focus the research issues and guided the research to its final completion; and Dr. Ross Mitchell who took over during Professor Brumfit's sabbatical, who helped to structure the voluminous qualitative data. I also wish to thank other members of staff such as Mr. George Blue, Dr. Mike Grenfell, Dr. Ian Bryant and Janet Hooper and fellow classmates, Amanda Bryant, Simon Williams, Elissa and Young Lee in particular; and the secretarial staff who were always ready with encouragement and a cup of coffee, in particular Mrs. Hazel Paul.

For the fieldwork with regard to the workplace, I am very much indebted to Datuk Shamsudin Dubi who assisted in gaining access to the urban case, Encik Baharuddin Ibrahim who organised the interviews, and Datuk Shamusudin's wife, Datin Nor Haliza who provided accommodation at their house for the duration of the urban case study. For the rural case, I am indebted to my brother-in-law, Dato' Radzi Sheikh Ahmad who assisted in gaining access to the rural institution and both Encik Shukor Sultan and Mr. Tang Ewe Meng who organised the interviews, not to mention the interviewees themselves at both institutions who were generous in their co-operation and gave valuable contribution to the study in his/her own special way. I am also grateful to my sister Datin Mahani Hamid who accommodated me (and children) for the duration of the three-month fieldwork, and the assistance of her secretary, Guddi for various secretarial tasks, Encik Idris Sheikh Ahmad for the use of his office facilities, as well as friends and members of Mahani's household, in particular Rajah, Marzuki, Mas Roha and Mas Huda.

For the school fieldwork study, I am indebted to the Wilayah Persekutuan Education Department and the Selangor Education Department for permission to carry out the study and for arranging access to the case study schools concerned, in particular Datin Siti Alfiah Buang from the first institution and the English Language Officer from the second. I am also grateful to the Principals of the two schools concerned who, however, will have to remain anonymous, as well as the four teachers who were open and unstinting in their co-operation and goodwill.

I am especially indebted to Tan Sri Datuk Dr. Wan Zahid Noordin for his inspiration to embark on the programme, Dato' Asiah Abu Samah for her caring and humanity, Encik Osman Jaafar and colleagues in the Ministry of Education who have rendered assistance in one way or another. Among these are Dr. Nor Azmi Ibrahim, Anthony Gomez, Sivagnanachelvi, Zaleha Izzah, Kumarasamy, and Hayati. I would also like to mention Dr. Ibrahim Ahmad Bajunid and Dr. Maheswary of IAB, Dr. Sharifah Maimunah of EPRD and Marlin Karim of the Examination Syndicate.

At home, I am grateful for the support and understanding of my husband, Abdul Hamid Salleh, and our three boys, Amir, Khairil and Hazim, and to Khairil especially who was always at hand to render assistance with any problems I had with the computer and its software.

Foremost, I am especially grateful to my father Haji Abdul Hamid Hassan who taught me the value of education; not least my mother, Hajjah Jariah Daud who had always wanted her daughters to have careers, and my brothers and sisters whom I could always count on for support.

THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MALAYSIA WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO WORKPLACE NEEDS

Chapter One Background to the Study

1.0 Introduction

English language teaching in Malaysia has been problematic ever since the changeover in the medium of instruction in schools, fully effective in 1982. Since the eighties and even more in the nineties, this level of under-achievement has caused much concern to educationists, and various measures, chiefly aimed at raising teachers' professionalism have been instituted, although these have yet to show significant results (refer to page 58 for national exam results). One of the aims for English is to prepare students for its use in working life, and with rapid industrialisation of the country aimed at its goal of achieving full industrial status by the year 2020, this is certainly prudent. Currently, as Malaysia moves towards ever increasing international contacts in manufacturing technology, commerce, politics and diplomacy, the use of English is becoming vital as a medium of wider communication.

The Cabinet Committee Report Reviewing the Implementation of the National Education Policy of 1979 (Ministry of Education, 1979), has laid down the aims of teaching English as a compulsory second language in schools as providing students with the proficiency and skills to enable them to use the language effectively in everyday life, in work situations, and in higher education (Cabinet Committee Report, 1979, recommendations 162, 163 and 167.1). In day-to-day interaction in the classroom, it is probable that students and teachers alike may not be fully cognisant of the post-school needs for English, and may perhaps be failing to foster a sense of purpose to the whole endeavour of learning the target language. Curriculum development has been based on models that have proved effective in the west. Home-grown models are not available, due to a general paucity in published works of research or reporting of teachers' practice in English teaching locally. Hence, these models emulated, which are based on needs in first language situations, possibly do not reflect the needs of the Malaysian workplace. In fact, there is no analysis of workplace needs in Malaysia available in the literature, and if the relevance of schooling is considered important, therefore the topic under study needs to be explored with some urgency.

Coleman (1989:8), who worked in Indonesia, affirmed this general inadequacy of local efforts in English in the workplace by saying that:

"... current research in language use in work contexts is severely restricted in two ways: geographically (by concentrating on Anglo-American society)

and occupationally (by concentrating on the professions)".

Apart from geographical location, there has been very little research on needs analysis in the workplace in relation to school programmes, as most have been for adults who are already working, even when in learner-centred systems, needs analysis is regarded as "a vital prerequisite to the specification of language learning objectives" (Brindley, 1989:63). In addition, even in countries with a similar history of colonialism to Malaysia and a special position and continuing use of English among certain sectors of the economy and communities, research is scarce. Even more, is the case of English use in a cosmopolitan multilingual country with two other main languages, Chinese and Tamil. The problem of determining needs and how these needs have been addressed not only in terms of programme planning, but also in terms of the classroom experience provided by the school, poses certain challenges to the concerns of curriculum development and teachers' practice.

The aim of this study is to gain insight into the English language needs of the workplace, and to utilise this in the examination of teachers' practice and students' learning in the classroom. It is hoped that the findings of the study will be helpful in indicating prospective uses for English for students entering the Malaysian workplace and thereby assist in illuminating curriculum development.

1.1 The background to English language teaching in Malaysia

Ever since independence in 1957 and the establishment and promotion of Bahasa Malaysia (BM) as the national language of Malaysia, there has been a constant tension in the position of the national language vis-à-vis the second language, English. The active promotion of Bahasa Malaysia in government administrative and official business, and its gradual establishment, from 1971, as the medium of instruction, including its dominant use in the media (radio and TV), has led to an inevitable decline in the use of English. English, that once was so predominant in the professional and social lives of the educated middle class and the elite in the urban areas has been relegated to the status of a second language. The reality for the nation as a whole is that English came to assume a minimal and sometimes an almost inexistent role in the lives of ordinary Malaysians.

Currently, Malaysia has become a rising industrialised economy, therefore, a need for workers with proficient English is regarded as vital at certain levels in an organisation's hierarchy. While the need for English has increased, the number of proficient speakers has in fact declined with the establishment of Bahasa Malaysia, i.e. Malay (more commonly referred to as BM), the

national language, as the medium of instruction in schools. The Ministry of Education has attempted to meet this need especially with the comprehensively reformulated Integrated Secondary Curriculum, (KBSM) introduced in 1987 .

In addition, rigorous efforts are being undertaken by the Ministry of Education especially in teacher preparation and curriculum support programmes. With regard to the former, the Ministry of Education in the eighties began to send pre-service trainee teachers and postgraduate in-service teachers overseas to be trained in TESL. This programme has been expanded in the nineties with large scale undergraduate twinning programmes, for both pre-service and in-service teachers, with UK. universities, such as Lancaster University, Moray House, Strathclyde University, Bristol University, and University College of Wales at Cardiff, among others. These graduates henceforth are to take their place as support teachers who are expected to disseminate their skills to other teachers throughout the fourteen states of Malaysia.

With regard to curriculum support programmes, there has been an introduction of a self-access programme in teacher training colleges, wider reading and literature programmes in schools by the Schools Division and process writing by the Curriculum Development Centre. Currently, efforts are being undertaken to revise assessment methods with planning for continuous school-based assessment and a graded objectives assessment by the Examination Syndicate.

1.2 The Malaysian workplace

Malaysia is moving rapidly ahead to achieve its vision of a modern industrial society by the year 2020. The Malaysian Yearbook of Statistics of 1990 (1990:199) notes the composition of its working population as follows:

Occupation	1980	1986	1987	1988	1989
Professional, Technical and related workers	6.7	7.8	7.6	7.6	7.5
Administrative and managerial workers	1.8	2.4	2.0	2.1	2.1
Clerical and related workers	8.3	9.5	9.5	9.4	9.5
Sales and related workers	9.8	11.1	11.9	11.9	11.4
Service workers	9.0	11.9	11.8	11.7	11.4
Agricultural, Animal Husbandry and Forestry Workers, Fishermen and Hunters	35.8	30.5	30.8	30.6	28.9
Production and related workers, Transport Equipment Operators and Labourers	28.5	26.8	26.5	26.9	29.3

Table 1.1 : Percentage distribution of employed persons by occupation, 1980-1989

The fact that the agricultural, animal husbandry and forestry workers, fishermen and hunters sector is decreasing (from 35.8 in 1980 to 28.9 in 1989) while the professional, technical and related workers sector is increasing (from 6.7 to 7.5), in addition to administrative, managerial, clerical, sales, and service workers (1.8 to 2.1; 8.3 to 9.5, etc.), signals a shift in economic activities from agricultural to industrial. The above, however, represents broad classifications and do not reflect adequately the enormous complexity of the Malaysian business and industrial sectors.

The Yearbook of Statistics gives Malaysia's major exports (see Fig. 1.1) as follows: manufactured goods (17.9%), crude petroleum and LNG (16.7%), thermionic valves and tubes, photocells, etc. (14.7%), palm oil (5.5%), sawn logs (5.1%), rubber (3.8%) and others (36.3%). These goods are exported to Singapore (22.8%), Japan (15.8%), EEC (14.9%), other ASEAN countries (6.3%), Korea (4.6%) and other countries (18.7%) (Yearbook 1990:xiii). The fact that Malaysia has trade relations with countries such as Japan, in terms of its export trade, and countries such as America, EEC, etc. (as shown below) , in terms of its import trade, indicates the international use of English.

Yearbook of Statistics, Malaysia, 1990

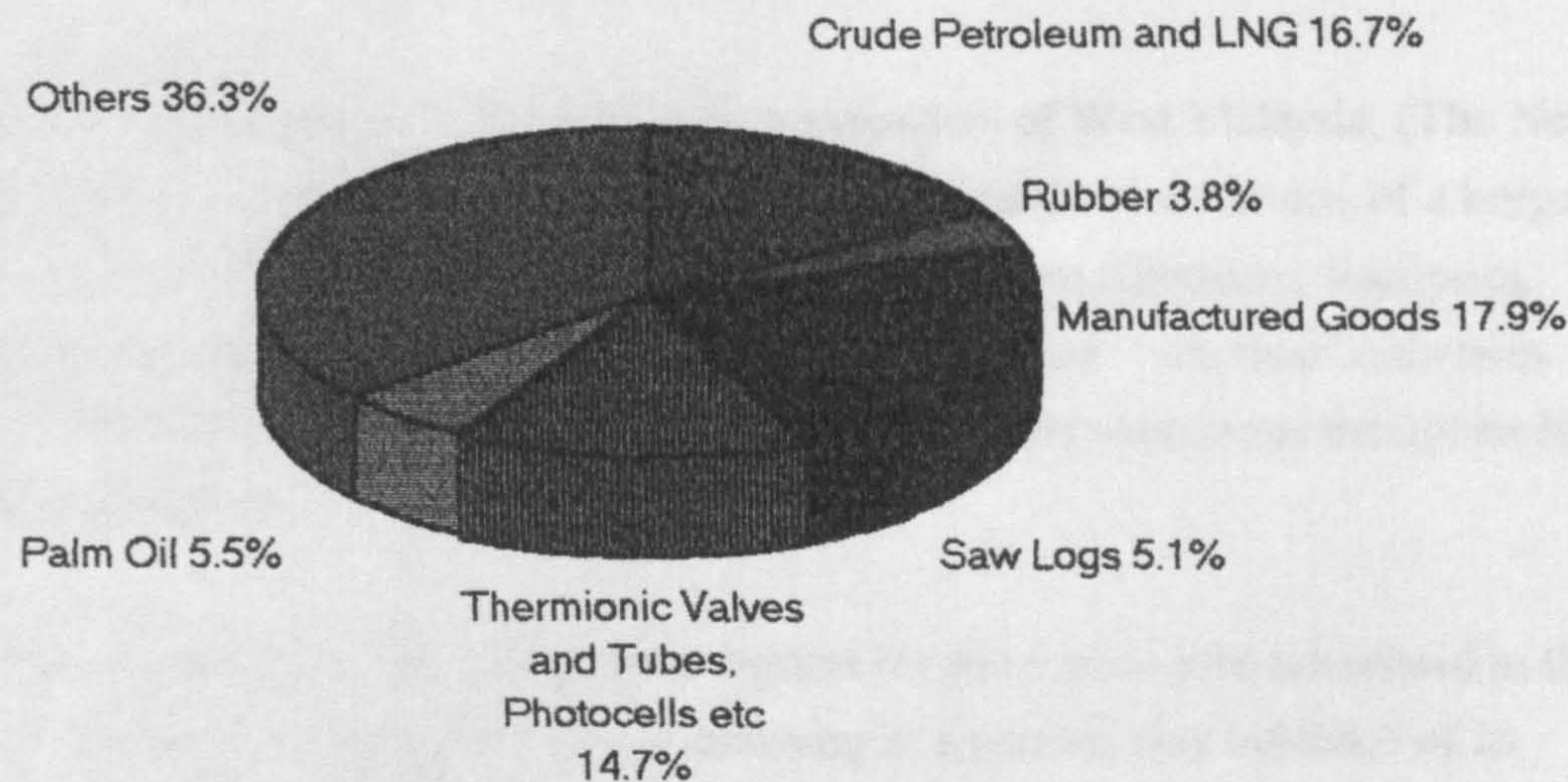


Fig. 1.1: Major exports, 1990

(1990:xii)

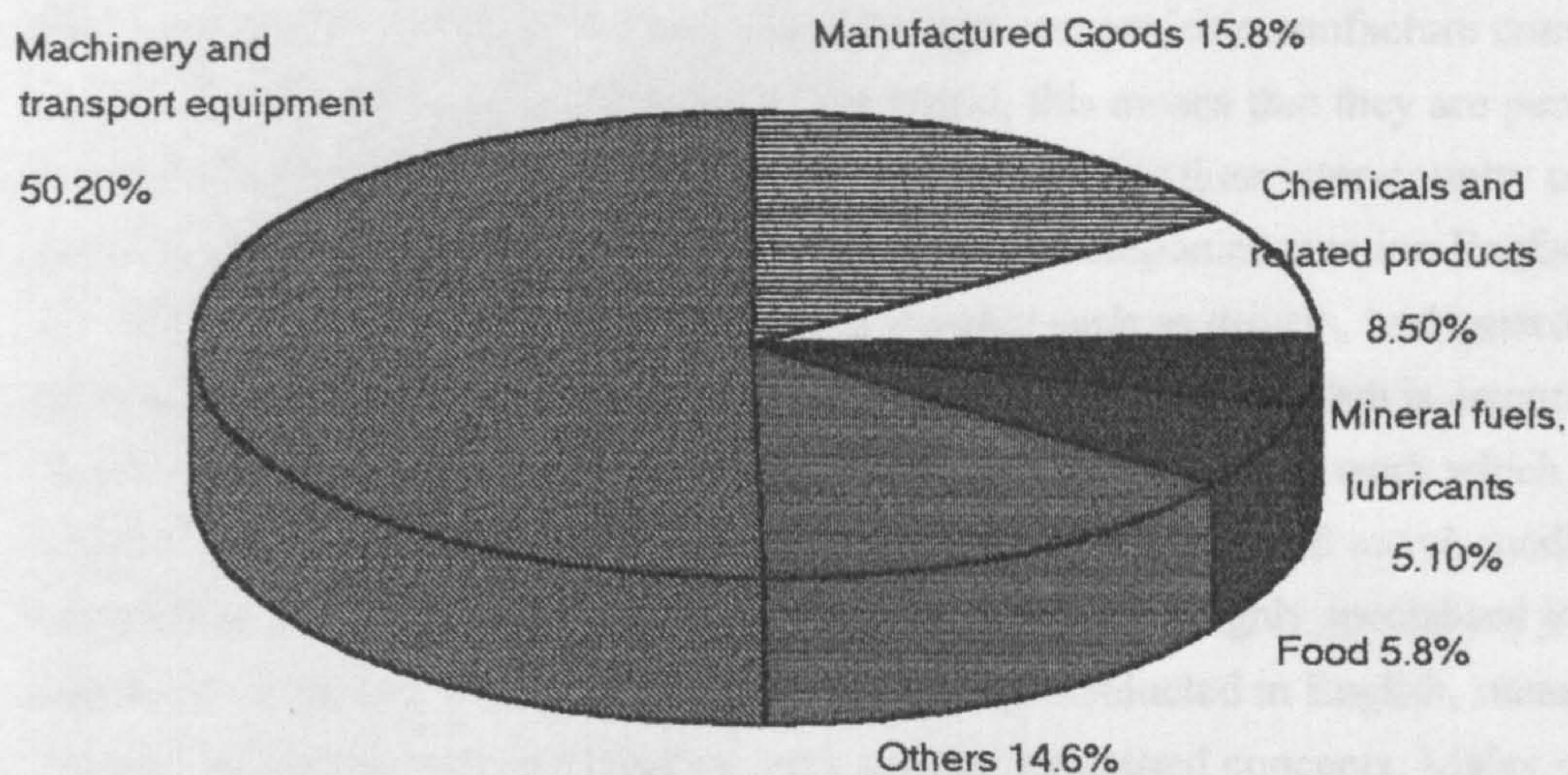


Fig. 1.2: Major imports, 1990

(1990:xii)

The bulk of Malaysia's imports (Fig. 1.2) are machinery and transport equipment (50.2%), manufactured goods (15.8%), chemicals and related products (8.5%), food (5.8%), mineral fuels, lubricants, etc. (5.1%) and others (14.6%). These are imported from Japan (24.1%), America (16.8%), EEC (14.7%), Singapore (15.0%), other ASEAN countries (4.0%), Taiwan (5.5%) and other countries (19.9%).

1.2.1 Jobs in the industrial sector in Malaysia

Job advertisements appearing in the English daily newspapers of West Malaysia, (The New Straits Times (NST) and The Star) reveals a picture of the marketplace as one of a burgeoning technological society. Many of the firms advertising vacancies are American, European, Japanese or Korean companies engaged in joint venture enterprises with their Malaysian partners. The country's stability, infrastructure, cheap labour and various tax incentives has fostered foreign investment.

The New Straits Times of 5th September gives figures for the top six jobs advertised in the paper between 23rd August to 29th August, furnishing in a general way evidence of its technological growth. These are as follows:

Engineers	112	(NST: 5 September 1992)
Executives	100	
Managers	85	
Clerks	79	
Supervisors	67	
Technicians	53	

Top six jobs advertised in the NST in August 1992

Since a large number of Malaysian-based foreign companies manufacture component parts for its eventual assembly in another part of the world, this means that they are part of a wider-world network which would undoubtedly use English for their inter-country communication. As such, a large number of advertisements by these companies mention English explicitly, even for jobs that require relatively little skills or training such as drivers, bodyguards, security guards, receptionists, clerks, typists, and telephone operators. English is essential for certain businesses that have any kind of dealings with overseas clients, or work which are based on western models or systems such as the hotel business, tourism and travel, media and advertising and telecommunications. Highly technical and highly specialised jobs such as finance and banking, and engineering are regularly conducted in English, mainly because of the absence of terminology in Malay to carry certain specialised concepts. Malay or Bahasa Malaysia (BM) is continuously being developed by Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (The Malay Language and Literary Trust) to incorporate terminology in science and technology and other specialised fields. It is true to say that the majority of businesses (except for small Chinese businesses that use Mandarin or a Chinese dialect or Malay cottage industries) uses English predominantly to carry out their day-to-day operations. However, its use is by no means pervasive as the public sector and the education sector use Malay and it is the lingua franca for the 'man-in-the-street'.

1.3 THE MALAYSIAN ENGLISH LANGUAGE CURRICULUM

1.3.1 The 1975 Secondary English Syllabus

The first English syllabus produced by the Curriculum Development Centre was the upper secondary English syllabus of 1975, and this was developed to be enforced when the two streams, Malay and English merged into one at the upper secondary level, i.e. Form Four and Five. English became a single subject on the time-table, rather than a medium of instruction. Prior to this initial effort, teachers were guided by exam syllabuses from British Exam boards. The new syllabus defined the new role for English as a second language:

"... With the increasing use of Bahasa Malaysia in most areas of real-life communication, the need for English language for general utility purposes diminishes ... it assumes an increasingly narrow, defined role and to a certain extent becomes specialised" (The English Language Syllabus in Malaysian Schools, 1977:3)¹.

The syllabus contained a programme of English for occupational purposes, intended to equip the school leaver with:

¹ Date of official publication.

"... the language skills that will enable them to participate in the most common English language activities that go together with the kinds of jobs they are likely to hold" (1977: 4).

Functionally oriented, the syllabus de-emphasised the teaching of the language system and emphasised language mainly as a vehicle for the transmission of messages. Students who graduated from lower secondary (forms 1 to 3) and have progressed through a structural syllabus for nine years of their schooling were deemed to have acquired the language system as well as a language corpus with which to carry out the communicative activities as laid out in the situations provided in the syllabus under the sixteen syllabus areas contained in it.

These sixteen areas of language use are, for example, Area One - Oral: Relaying of information to others; Area Four: Oral: Making and receiving telephone calls; Area Thirteen: Oral and Written: Reply to or argument against a viewpoint: presentation of reasoned opinion. Examples of situations for language use are also given, and carry with them an expected language product. An example of a situation for Area One is:

"You are a hotel receptionist. You receive a call for a guest who is not in. The caller gives you a short message for the guest, asking him to meet the caller at a certain cinema in town. Relay the message to the guest when he returns" (1977: 35).

This provision of situations suggests that it is concerned with speech events in contexts of use. Speech events are deemed to be satisfactorily concluded once the meaning is conveyed, regardless of linguistic finesse. The primary focus on meaning suggests that the syllabus is basically semantic in intent. The simulations for the situations suggest 'fluency' practice (Brumfit, 1979:187), and the syllabus has quite deliberately missed out 'accuracy' considerations. Students who had been exposed to a structural syllabus in the primary and lower secondary years were assumed to have accumulated the necessary linguistic ability to be able to put that competence into functional use in simulated classroom situations.

Since the programme was to be covered in two years, the sixteen areas of use were limited and focused, which leads us to believe that what is aimed at is Widdowson's (1983:11) 'restricted competence' aimed at providing what is high in usability and having a 'high surrender value' (Wilkins, 1976:69). The syllabus has stated that "its terminal outcomes are meant to be immediately usable on the job market" (1977:3).

What seemed to be a perfect solution to Malaysia's needs for English in the workplace in reality was very problematical in its implementation. Teachers, used to a traditional first language approach in the English medium schools, and a structural approach in the Malay medium

schools, balked at having to do role-play and simulations, something they had not been accustomed to. The fact that grammar (the very pillar on which their teaching rests) did not receive emphasis, took away from them all measure familiarity and security. The syllabus was very controversial, not only in Malaysia, but also regionally, because its premise was too revolutionary with its tolerance of grammatical inaccuracy over meaning. What was more revealing, however, was that when the first examination was administered in 1977, the pass rate was under 10% for the old Malay medium schools and just over 60% for former English medium schools (Chandrasegaran 1981) - the traditionally Malay medium schools having a predominantly Malay enrolment, and the former English medium schools a mixed-race enrolment. Although in retrospect there were many factors for students' lack of achievement especially in the traditionally Malay medium schools, (such as motivational intensity, learning strategies, and degree of exposure (Chandrasegaran 1981)), at the time in question, the 1976 'communicative' syllabus was believed to be the cause. In fact, the problem was the incompatibility of the exam construct with the syllabus, with exam adhering to the old construct, of traditional essays, comprehension and grammar tests, far removed from the syllabus' focus of valuing 'fluency' and focus on meaning rather than 'accuracy' (Brumfit, 1984).

1.3.2 The English syllabus in the new integrated secondary school curriculum, 1987

With hindsight and experience, the new secondary English syllabus formulated in 1987 (referred to as the KBSM syllabus) sets out a programme that has widened to provide a broader base into *general proficiency English*, while still defining certain contexts of use. Incidentally, it is notable that the 1976 syllabus was not criticised on content, but rather on its philosophy and method of delivery. The aims of the new syllabus are stated as follows:

"The syllabus aims to build upon and extend the proficiency of the students from the primary schools, so as to equip them with the skills and knowledge of English to communicate in certain everyday activities and certain job situations; and also to provide points of take off for various post secondary school needs" (The Malaysian Secondary English Syllabus, 1987:2).

Implicit in this statement is the idea of competence in language for social use and in performing functions in everyday living, such as shopping, social conversation, telephoning, travel, etc. The rationale is that, should Malaysians find themselves suddenly transported into a totally English language environment, they would have the survival skills to cope. The 1975 syllabus was, in contrast, more focused on English use for work within the country. The syllabus has borrowed extensively van Ek's (1975) notion of a 'threshold level' competence. It aims firstly at overall functional proficiency, such as following instructions, giving directions, etc. In

addition, it retains a feature of the 1975 syllabus in aiming to prepare the school-leaver for English use in the Malaysian workplace, as well as preparing him/her to undertake higher education in English overseas.

While incorporating communicative principles, it has preserved some elements of structuralism in organising content around the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Skills and functions are used interchangeably to denote the competencies aimed at. In addition, topics are included to provide the notional content of the skills/functions. Some examples of topics are - *people, occupations, games, public amenities*, etc. Some examples of skills/functions statements are produced below, to give readers some idea of what they constitute (refer to Appendix 1 for the full syllabus).

Listening and speaking	1.10 Describe scenes and events
	1.13 Hold a conversation on a variety of topics
Reading	2.4 Read and locate main and supporting ideas, and details in stories, letters, articles and reports
	2.10 Read and draw conclusions from given information
Writing	3.3 Fill in forms
	3.5 Write instructions, directions, messages and reports (The Malaysian Secondary English Syllabus, 1987: 4-5)

There are also guidelines on which aspects of the sound system to teach, as well as grammatical items such as tenses, gerunds, interrogative forms, etc. i.e. the old structural classification.

1.3.3 Recommended teachers' practice for the 1987 syllabus

With the implementation of the syllabus, guidelines for classroom procedures were disseminated to teachers through orientation courses. Prominent in these are active student-centred learning with an emphasis on learning by doing. Techniques including simulations, role-play, group-based activity and pair-work are encouraged. Students are often given a task which they have to complete using whatever linguistic resources they possess. The teacher acts as a facilitator, and does not intervene to correct, only to provide appropriate support with language resources, such as vocabulary and grammar.

The holistic approach is favoured. Skills and sub-skills are combined and integrated in the teaching, as recommended:

"... the four skills and the grammar items and the sound system and the vocabulary should be integrated and taught as a whole. For example, the skills of listening to and understanding instructions should be combined with the skills of reading and understanding instructions and the skills of writing instructions. Together with these, the grammatical items, the vocabulary and the sound system required to perform these skills need to be included and taught". (English Language Syllabus Specifications, Form 5, 1990:3)

Following the tradition of communicative language teaching (CLT), one of the features advocated seems to be in line with Brumfit's characterisation of CLT (1987: 5), i.e. "an emphasis on the content of the activity rather than overt language learning". For example, if the skill involved is giving directions, students learn to give real directions to various places in the village or town, and as the focus is on getting the facts right and the task accomplished, the assumption is that the students are not aware of consciously using the language. A map may be produced, for example, adding meaning and authenticity to the task.

The use of differentiated materials based on ability groupings is also encouraged. Use of a textbook alone is discouraged, and teachers are encouraged to produce their own materials based on their students' ability levels and interest. Teachers' co-operative efforts at district level, organised by the respective state or district education office, devote a great deal of time and effort to producing tailor-made differentiated teaching materials for local use.

Furthermore, the secondary programme is committed to a spiral arrangement of skills and topics to ensure reinforcement and consolidation. In a choice of settings, the syllabus moves from the school and neighbourhood of the student to far-off places, the nearby town, the next town, the country to outside the country, which, in this case is South-east Asia or the ASEAN region. With regard to language skills, it is said that, "Language skills need to be built up cumulatively and treated in a spiral manner so that repetition and constant use will maximise learning" (1987:3-4). For example, describing occupations is dealt with every year from Form 1 to Form 5, but the occupations dealt with will change from year to year whereas the student's competence at description, would be honed to a greater sophistication from year to year.

The new integrated secondary curriculum was to have been evaluated from 1992 in an initiative co-ordinated by the Education Planning and Research Division of the Ministry of Education (EPRD) in consultation with three universities. To date, no published reports have been circulated (that the researcher is aware of) therefore it is not known whether the English language curriculum has been successful in overcoming some of the problems associated with the 1975 syllabus, i.e. those of students' lack of achievement especially in traditionally Malay medium schools in rural locations. However, reports from the monitoring efforts of the

Curriculum Development Centre and the Federal Inspectorate of Schools to date (from personal experience as a curriculum officer) show that getting students to talk is not always possible in classrooms where student proficiency is low, particularly in the rural areas. What is encouraging is that there have been reports of a general trend towards more activity-based teaching, but this has yet to yield results in terms of examination grades, which have remained low (refer to national exam results, page 55).

1.4 Conclusion

The chapter above attempts to show that English plays an important role in the economic, commercial, technological and scientific domains in Malaysia because of its status as an international language of communication. It is perceived that even within the country the nature of the economic activities in Malaysia favours the use of English as the national language is still developing the technical terminology to handle communication in specialised fields.

A brief history of English language syllabus development for Malaysian schools was described, and a first attempt in 1975 at developing a secondary English syllabus, which met with a limited success, was outlined. A short description of the present syllabus in use followed. This account is felt necessary in the light of the study that will be undertaken and described in the following chapters.

Chapter 2

Review of Related Literature

This chapter attempts to review the literature on English in the workplace with specific reference to needs analysis.

In researching the subject of needs analysis for English, much of the literature can be found under ESP with its associated branches of EST, VESL, EOP, EAP², and even finer distinctions, such as the language of the law. Most have some limited relevance to the problem under study. It is to be noted, however, that most of these writings are for those aspiring to work in an English language environment, such as immigrant workers, in UK or the USA whereas the situation with Malaysian workers working in their own multilingual environment is somewhat different.

2.1 The relationship between Needs Analysis and the research focus

2.1.1 The Malaysian secondary English syllabus and the development of a general English proficiency

The point is made earlier (page 2) that much work on needs analysis has been concerned with short-term programmes for adults. The concerns of these short term programmes, such as for ESP or EOP, involving entry level jobs, are essentially narrow. The difficulty is to reconcile the utilisation of the results borrowed from needs analysis involving short term programmes in the development of school programmes whose aims are by nature broad and educational.

Widdowson (1983) makes a distinction between educational and training purposes with regard to language learning, in which it is said that *training* is aimed at the development of *restricted competence* and *education* at *general proficiency*. It is correct to assert that the aims of the Malaysian secondary English curriculum are broad and educational and therefore, following Widdowson's argument, are aimed at general proficiency. If such is the case, then, it would be difficult to be specific with regard to needs. Nevertheless, needs analysis is perceived to be essential in any programme formulation, especially if the assumption is made that students will be motivated if they find purpose in their learning, and needs analysis is a way of ensuring the relevance of this learning..

² ESP - English for specific purposes; EST - English for science and technology; VESL - Vocational English as a second language; EOP - English for occupational purposes; and, EAP - English for academic purposes.

2.1.2 The relevance of the syllabus to learners' post-school needs

In this study, the needs analysis of workplace competencies is undertaken in the spirit of examining the relevance of the school experience to the needs of working life after school. The study will not attempt to match the workplace needs one-to-one with the school programme. This kind of match cannot be justified on the grounds that such a narrow focus is misleading considering the broad base of the school programme, which is meant to provide a starting point for future and diverse needs for language use on the job. The relevance of needs in programme formulation is worthy of study because it is pertinent to the issue of learners acquiring the right attitude towards learning. School children often lack motivation because they do not foresee what their needs will be in the future. Porcher (1983a:146) echoes this dilemma succinctly:

"... the true effect of teaching is felt belatedly, by delayed action because it is in adulthood that the learners will see their language practice socially recognised. This delayed action is of capital importance for our argument, in that for a school child the adult future is always uncertain, problematic and even only potential"

Although the study will not delve into attitudes and motivation in a central way, these are worth reflecting on if we consider why a large number of Malaysian students master the intricacies of the pure sciences and mathematics, yet fail to attain a basic proficiency in English. The importance of science and mathematics is clear to them with regard to their career aspirations, but they fail to see that English is equally important for higher education and for their future careers. That high achieving students are not good ESL learners, indicates a learning problem specific to English. Widdowson (1983:7) has made the following observation with regard to the relation between programme objectives and motivation:

"A central problem in education is to know how to define objectives so that they project students towards the achievement of aims, how to fashion particular subjects so that they have relevance beyond themselves. A lack of motivation on the part of students may arise either from a rejection of the aims presupposed by the objectives, or from a rejection of the objectives as a valid mediation towards aims they do accept. These two sources of student disaffection are not always distinguished, but they need to be, because they call for different remedies. If aims are rejected, you need to enquire into your concept of the nature of education. If objectives are rejected, you need to revise your pedagogy."

The aims for English in Malaysia are prescribed in policy statements and are non-negotiable. Furthermore, (from feedback to the CDC, where the researcher had been based since 1979), there are indications that these aims (CCR 1979:57-58) are quite acceptable to parents and students alike. The solution perhaps lies in improving the more immediate objectives of the programme (the yearly, weekly and foremost, daily objectives).

The assumption that students should find purpose in sitting through their English classes day by day, and that this should lead to improvement in their mastery, forms the focus of this study.

2.1.3 Needs analysis, educational aims and the development of language competence

The issue of the role of the school in fulfilling workplace needs is problematic and is further compounded when we consider the expanse of time elapsing between school and the workplace. For most occupations, except in ancillary and semi-skilled occupations, there is a transitional stage between the workplace and school in the form of tertiary education or vocational training (as the diagram below illustrates). This constitutes the pre-training in EOP/VESL or EAP. Once a professional is already in the workplace, any post-training in English would probably be conducted under the aegis of ESP.

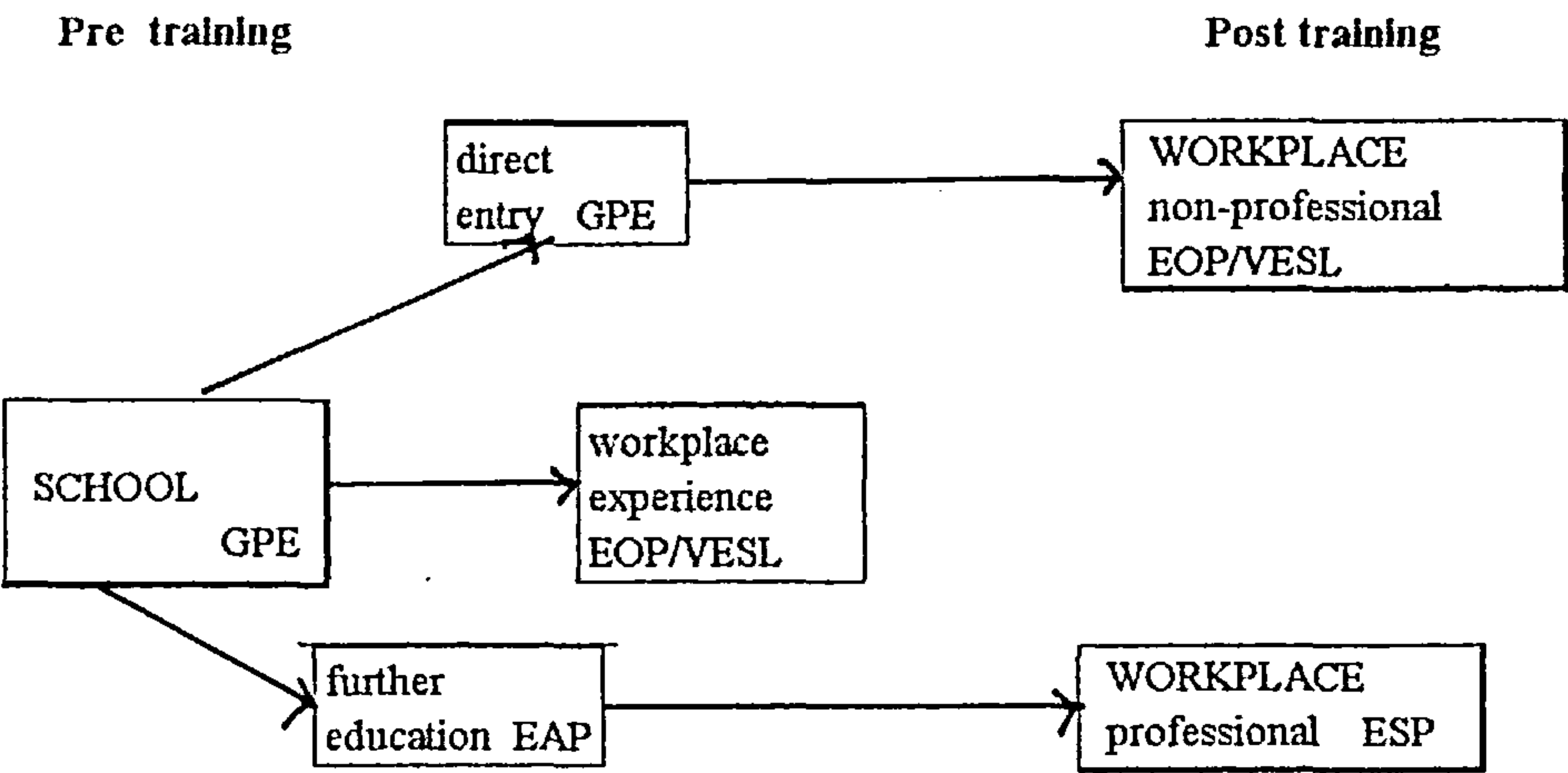


Fig. 2.1: Paths to the workplace and the associated ESP

In designing language programmes for school there is the dilemma of how to reconcile specific workplace needs, which exist in some distant future, with the broad educational aims of the school programme which exist in the present. Roberts (1982:98) defines this problem well.

"Of course, where communicative needs are identifiable, teaching can be highly specific, and efficient in the sense that it can concentrate only on those needs actually identified, instead of aiming for some more ambitious across-the-board competence. But while this is the strength of the 'communicative approach' in relation to learners with clear requirements, the extent of its applicability is not so obvious where young learners taking general school courses are concerned."

Widdowson (1983:6) attempts to reconcile this difficulty by postulating that needs or 'purpose' in this context "has to be conceived of in educational terms, as a formulation of objectives which will achieve a potential for later practical use". He states that needs or purpose "is a theoretical term in that it has to be defined by reference to an educational belief about what provides most

effectively for a future ability to use language". Widdowson suggests that general educational school programmes should develop a creative 'capacity' in learners which would enable them to use the language for various differentiated future purposes.

Widdowson sums up the tension between English for specific purposes (ESP), and general purpose English (GPE), and between training to achieve ESP and education to achieve GPE, in the following words.

"The whole teaching enterprise is seen not as the inculcation of a limited competence by whatever contrivance is most readily available, but as the development of a capacity in the students for using the language so that they can achieve their own competence and their own purposes." (1983:107)

The quotation above helps to resolve the dilemma in this study between reconciling the broad aims of the school programme with the specific nature of workplace needs that will result from a needs analysis exercise. Following from this argument, the proposed study will therefore be concerned with examining how students in school are currently being equipped or are failing to be equipped with a *general enabling ability*, similar to Widdowson's concept of 'capacity', with which they can cope with the learning of new skills or of extending their competencies on the job.

Porcher (1983a:149) reflecting on language needs in the school is keenly appreciative of the educational emphasis of school programmes:

"Teaching a language, like teaching any other subject, not only has a technical aim but also a general educational objective (socialisation, cognitive development, emotional development, etc.) and we must never forget this, even if it is true that the language teacher must beware that he is responsible for this general education".

Certainly, the very essence of the Malaysian integrated secondary curriculum (1987) is designed with the intention of equipping students with a broad general education, whether this is in skills, knowledge, attitudes or values. Its uniqueness lies in the infusion of universal human values across all curricular subjects so as to develop in students the qualities of integrity, uprightness and morality. Hence, the aim of teaching English as with any other school subject is firstly holistic and integrative, with moral values permeating across and colouring the more purely specific aims.

Analogous to this notion of generality, and Widdowson's argument for the development of an overarching 'capacity' as the goal in the L2 for school programmes, the needs analysis study therefore, will concern itself with the *common skills across occupations* to be used as the criteria for classroom observation, rather than any kind of specialised or technical workplace language competencies or register.

At this point it may be appropriate to review the literature on needs analysis in order to identify the factors that can enable the formation of a framework for the proposed study.

2.2 Needs analysis in language teaching

(i). The problem of definition

The concept of needs in language teaching has its origins in education, and one of the first to use this idea was Tyler (1949:8), who defines a need as a difference or "gap" in students' knowledge or skills. Even though the procedures for the assessment of needs are constantly being refined, their definition is problematic and "remains at best ambiguous" (Richterich, 1983:2). Needs are difficult to define partly because they are "felt, expressed and interpreted by individuals differently according to the time, place and circumstances" (Richterich, 1983:3). Furthermore, needs tend to cover a very wide range of concepts such as "expectations, demands, interests, necessities, motivations, desires, ideas and even fantasies" (Richterich, 1983:2), thus adding to the complexity of definition. Unfortunately, it is often the case that the person who really matters, i.e. the learner himself, is usually not consulted as to his/her needs, chiefly because at that stage in his/her life, when s/he is in school, s/he is thought not to be fully aware of what they are as yet.

(ii). Description of language based on needs

The problem of definition compounds the problem of selecting the language content to teach the identified needs. Since the concept of language needs is tied up with their use in the broader social context following Hymes' concept of communicative competence (1979, in Brumfit and Johnson (eds.)), a new classification of the language system had to be developed. This was a daunting task especially when no such classification exercise had been carried out in the first language. As late as 1974, Perren (1974:9) cautions the use of needs analysis in programme development:

"There seems to be some danger, however, of making imaginative and sometimes spurious assumptions about categories of need simply because we have no adequate descriptions of the use of languages in defined circumstances by mother-tongue speakers, let alone by second language users, and certainly insufficiently reliable information to provide practical inventories or checklists of items to be taught".

This caution notwithstanding, the Council of Europe was the first to devise a notional/functional classification of language based on foreign adult workers' needs.

(iii). Models of needs analysis

Apart from the van Ek's Council of Europe (1975) 'threshold level' inventory, a second model is the Munby (1978) model which was designed as an instrument for processing needs. Both models are based on the adult workers' needs (although van Ek later adapted the 'threshold level' for schools). A later model by Richterich and Chancerel (1977) evolved from the work of van Ek and the Council of Europe and has the added dimension of the inclusion of the methodological aspects of needs analysis.

Model 1: Needs inventory by the Council of Europe

In 1971 under the auspices of the Council of Europe, a group of experts sought to develop "a model for the analysis of adult language needs" for adults based on their social and vocational language needs by investigating "notional and functional categories i.e. "the common core" as distinguished from special purposes language" and undertaking a "specification of an initial common language learning target, known as the 'threshold level'" (Trim 1974:24 -25). This was to be regarded as a major breakthrough in classifying the content of language programmes based on language for use as opposed to traditional grammar classifications and formed the basis of many EFL/ESL programmes be it for school or for adults' special needs. Even before the publication of the 'Threshold Level', Wilkins (1976) had already developed his concept of notional syllabuses with its functional, grammatical and conceptual categories, upon which van Ek's model was partly based. The 'Threshold Level' operates along the principles of learner-centredness, and breaks away from the learning of the *language system* to learning of the *language in use*. Rather than learn a language corpus, it specifies a target-level core of notional-functional categories that must be mastered in order to cope comfortably with everyday life and work in the target language environment. Because of its applicability to general proficiency language learning and to language use for non-natives, the present Malaysian secondary English syllabus (1987) adheres to a large extent to this inventory.

Model 2: The Munby model of needs analysis

The Munby (1978) model is focused on the parameters for determining target needs. In the 'Threshold Level' the parameters involved in the selection of the inventory although explicated,

are not highlighted in the same way as in the Munby model, with the effect that all learners are expected to reach the same threshold. Munby, on the other hand, draws attention to these parameters to produce a different inventory for different sets of learners based on their differing profile of occupational or academic needs. The Munby model is extremely cumbersome and has received a lot of criticism (this is discussed in pages 21-23). In brief, the Munby model attempts to take in the following parameters:

1.

purposive domain

- type of ESP involved and the occupational or educational purpose for which the target language is required
2.

setting

- physical and psychosocial
3.

interaction

- interlocutor's role or social relationship involved
4.

instrumentality

- medium, mode and channel of communication
5.

dialect

- standard/non-standard etc.
6.

target level

- desired proficiency level
7.

communicative event

- communicative activity and subject matter
8.

communicative key

- how the participant will carry out the communicative event

The table below (reproduced from Hutchinson and Waters, 1987) shows how the model can be translated into programme specifications. In this example, the learner is a head waiter in a hotel.

Sample 'communication activities'	Related 'micro-functions'	Language forms (productive)
7.1.1 Attending to customer's arrival	7.1.1 1. intention 2. prohibit 3. direct etc.	I will bring the menu I am afraid we are full/closed Please follow me/Will you sit here, please.
7.1.2 Attending to customer's order	7.1.2 1. suggestive 2. advise 3. describe etc.	May I suggest the? (etc.) May I recommend the? (etc.) You may find the too hot/spicy
7.1.3 Serving the order, etc.	7.1.3 1. question for you, sir/madam? The?

Fig. 2.1: Hutchinson's and Waters' example of a needs analysis using Munby's parameters
(Hutchinson and Waters, 1987:55)

This example illustrates quite clearly how the application of the Munby model has the advantage of teaching language which is specifically focused on the learner's occupational needs. It has translated the need to serve customers (the communicative event) into the specific functions of showing intention, giving advice, etc. together with the language exponents that are needed to carry out the communicative event. Such a programme specification is truly economical and efficient (if learner variables do not pose problems) when

teaching a specific EOP course of a few weeks or months. The disadvantage is that it suffers from a lack of flexibility, giving little room for the teacher's own input and creativity and the learner's own view of how he wants to approach his learning. Additionally, the learner would not be able to cope with the occurrence of any unexpected communicative event in the predicted occupational setting, not to mention outside of it.

(iv). Applications of the Munby model

Criticisms notwithstanding, the Munby model has been utilised in programme design, often in modified form, for example Crandall (1979) carried out a needs assessment exercise dealing with immigrant workers utilising parameters similar to Munby's and resulting in an inventory very similar to that of van Ek.

Like Munby, Crandall is committed to a target-oriented view of needs. Some of the aspects she has singled out that are relevant to the study in question are - pronunciation, grammar, and minimal vocabulary, for certain levels of occupation, and cultural preconceptions of education and language classes. Apart from Crandall, Hawkey (1983:83) has also used the Munby model, resulting in a complex profile which includes learners' occupational or study settings, learners' predicted communicative activities and related skills and functions, as well as other aspects of Munby's complex parameters.

The Crandall and Hawkey application of the Munby model shows that even though the model was only a theoretical framework when it was first published, it has been implemented in certain programmes and with reportedly satisfactory results. It is pertinent then, to examine some of the criticisms of the Munby model in the literature.

(v). Criticisms of the Munby Model

One of the first criticisms of Munby is his naivety in not being aware of the myriad of variables operating in teaching-learning that can render such an idealistic model unworkable. One of this is that a degree of subjectivity is inevitable. Porcher (1977:6) agrees with this and quotes Richterich and Chancerel: "... need is not a thing that exists and might be encountered ready-made on the street. It is a thing that is constructed ...".

Similarly, Chambers (1980:28) makes the point that since needs are difficult to establish, they are at best considered judgements rather than true and validated needs and according to him:

"... this is not to argue that we cannot make considered judgements concerning what needs are, and give considered opinions about them, but it seems reasonable to expect at least a strong inferred distinction between an analysis and a considered opinion."

Chambers endeavours to overcome this problem of subjectivity by viewing needs analysis as "analysing *in order to establish needs*, i.e. what one needs to know" (1980:28). Berwick's (1989:53) view reinforces this argument, as the latter feels that needs analysis is dependent on "... who needs what, as defined by whom" and Brindley (1989:65) furthermore asserts that "... needs statements are open to contextual interpretations and contain value judgements. They do not have of themselves an objective reality".

Chambers therefore proposes "Target situation analysis" (TSA) instead of needs analysis as a more practical way of approaching the analysis, which involves:

"... going into the target situation, collecting data and analysing that in order to establish the communication that really occurs - its functions, forms and frequencies - then selecting from these on some pragmatic pedagogical basis." (1980:28).

Indeed, the Chambers model can be utilised as a practical approach to overcome the armchair nature of Munby's analysis, by going into the target situation, and systematically collecting and analysing data empirically basing the analysis on some preferred pedagogical constructs.

The proposed study will in fact involve forays into the workplace, rather than attempt to establish needs in the school setting only, following the argument that students would not know what their future needs will be, except perhaps in a very broad sense. It is the person who is already in the work situation and having to use the language who can provide valid information of what these needs are from his personal experience.

Davies (1981) is critical of the Munby model on the grounds that it has not been tested and **remains at the level of theory**, a fact that Munby himself admits - "The above specification of language realisations (productive and receptive) is based on introspection or native speaker intuition, augmented by reference to authoritative sources and some familiarity with the situation" (1978:152). Davies maintains that there is a danger that syllabus designers are led to think that the model offers a blueprint when it does not. Having a similar opinion as Widdowson (1983:10) that it is 'reductionist', he reiterates that the model offers no simple solution to "the real and difficult and probably intractable problems of language learning and teaching" (1981:332).

Coleman (1988) encountered problems with the Munby model of needs analysis

when he attempted to carry out the analysis of needs for a large university in Indonesia. He reported finding three disadvantages with the Munby model: firstly, the idealisation of the individual and the unwarranted generalisation from the individual to the group; secondly, that the process did not take into account changes to learners that may occur over time; and thirdly, the treatment of learning groups as mutually exclusive. He concluded that the model could not cope with the complexity and dynamism that existed within large organisations.

Widdowson (1983:10) who criticises the process as being **reductionist and divisive**, asserts that the operation "aims at establishing what is most distinct about different varieties, rather than the common features which could lead us to identify them as variants of more general types" and this is consistent with his preference for general purpose proficiency.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) are critical of Munby's preoccupation with linguistic aspects, saying that such an approach renders the whole exercise sterile since it is a *language-centred* approach, and like subsequent writings on needs analysis, Hutchinson and Waters are concerned with process variables. In effect their criticism does not seem to be fair since Munby is mainly concerned with the first step in programme formulation i.e. the syllabus specification and openly declares his view that subsequent steps involved, such as the programme's implementation, is not the analyst's responsibility. To quote Munby (1978:3):

"such variables, (e.g. implementational constraints) although important in the modification of syllabus specifications and the production/selection of materials, belong to the subsequent stage of course design and should not be considered before the syllabus specification has been obtained".

However, in the light of current perspectives on learning and programme building, this view is no longer tenable, since it is now generally established that the learner is the most important variable in the learning process.

(vi). The question of common core English or specific English

Following the criticism of reductionism, it is reasonable to argue that the mastery of specific registers could hardly constitute true communicative competence because the language user would be constrained by only being able to operate in very defined circumstances, with the same set of people talking about very specific topics. Nunan (1988) attempts to discuss this common core/specific language dichotomy. He questions the wisdom of giving priority to specific purposes English in which learning is focused on aspects of the language which are peculiar to the contexts in which it is used and the purposes for which it is used. This will influence the choice of structures, functions, topics, vocabulary items, conceptual meanings

and so on which are unique to a particular occupation, (analogous to the Munby model). The alternative is a 'common core' classification that is transferable across different vocations (more akin to van Ek's threshold). The latter classification is informed by the belief that language is not divided into subordinate and discrete universes of discourse, and that, apart from differences in technical terms, the linguistic items used are quite similar and therefore, whatever learners' final communicative purposes are, teaching content should contain those elements that represent the 'common core'.

While favouring a 'common core' himself, Nunan added that needs analysis is a much more complicated exercise than the determination of target linguistic specifications whether common core or specific language. The learner himself, and the learning process that he undergoes become equally important considerations in setting the parameters involved in programme development.

Subsequent writings on needs analysis stress factors involve the learner undergoing the learning process as part of the needs analysis. Further refinements in the conceptual view of needs analysis are discussed later in this chapter.

Model 3: The Richterich and Chancerel methodological model

Richterich and Chancerel (1977) have concerned themselves with the procedural aspects of needs analysis. The model has been used in many European programmes (Richterich, 1983) such as that by Porcher (1983b) in his needs assessment involving migrant workers in France. The procedure involves gathering information, defining objectives, content and curricula, achieving awareness, negotiating, and continuous fine-tuning to improve the programme. According to Porcher (1983b:16), the following principles are involved in his use of the model.

- "- It was a continuous process and not *only* a preliminary step;
- We understood by 'needs' *all the information*, of whatever kind and from whatever source, which was *essential or useful* for setting up a learner-centred teaching process;
- This identification was constantly related, in accordance with methods which were to be devised, to the preparation of the required teaching material (p 16)."

In this model the question of process becomes important, and is partly realised through negotiation with the learner about his/her learning. It also brings into account relevant teaching methods and materials and, unlike Munby, does not stop at syllabus development. Richterich

and Chancerel (1977:8) proposed a continuing involvement with methods and materials, asserting that an initial needs assessment is only capable of yielding an awareness of "certain facts and data" that has to be tested through implementation. A further step is to ensure that "this realisation should lead to discussion, negotiation and participation between the persons concerned with the aim of finding the compromises necessary for carrying out of any training and without which satisfaction of the individual and collective needs can only be illusory". Richterich (1983) reminds us that the identification of needs from a single decision-making tool in the hands of decision-makers becomes complex and is transformed by the activities and practices of the classroom. The learners' role in this process is to negotiate their position and to be involved in programme formulation.

One unresolved problem in Richterich's view of needs analysis is that ultimately it is the school and the teacher who will determine whether the identification of needs results in its consummation in the classroom. To echo his concern:

"And yet, in practice, we realise that needs analysis, which has played a key role in the reform of modern language teaching and which was at a certain time and for certain people, the answer to all problems, may also change nothing at all, and even be used against its aims and intentions. Experience has taught us one thing for certain: specifying the language needs of a particular target group once and for all at the beginning of a teaching/learning process, in order to determine objectives and content, does not necessarily mean that they will be taken into account *and, even less, that educational practices will thereby be transformed*. In practice, information gathered is rarely exploited satisfactorily in day-to-day work of the classroom, where it comes up against all sorts of *institutional obstacles* and obtuseness. Relating teaching to language needs remains the most difficult problem to resolve in the implementation of learner-centred teaching systems" (1983:3). (italics above are mine)

The issue in question is how to bring to fruition the labour of needs analysis when it steps beyond the planning stage and is put into practice in the classroom, because, once the programme gets underway, what happens is often beyond the control of the needs analyst and programme developer. To reiterate Davies' misgiving (1981:332), we may be misled into thinking that once needs analysis is carried out, it can solve "the real and difficult and probably intractable problems of language learning and teaching". Needs analysis offers no such guarantee, as it is only a first step in the organisation of a language programme. By advocating that needs analysis be an on-going process, some kind of monitoring and supervision is built into its application in the language class and through this unbroken contact with planners and developers, the insights generated through discussion and negotiation of the parties involved can be fed into pedagogy and materials and thereafter refine and up-date the programme continuously.

(vii). Refinements on the concept of needs analysis

One of the first to redefine the conceptual understanding of needs were Hutchinson and Waters (1987). Hutchinson and Waters propose an approach as consisting of *target needs* which are the target outcomes of the learning, and *learning needs* which are what the learner needs to do in order to learn.

Similarly, Prince (1984) distinguishes two approaches to needs analysis. When analysis involves description of work activities in terms of processes and procedures i.e. *work-oriented* analysis, it is *goal-directed*. When analysis is towards describing work-activities in terms of specific human behaviours, or *worker-oriented*, it is *process-directed*. Nunan (1988) makes a similar sort of distinction between goal and process but calls it task analysis and learner analysis. This development of the concept is significant in that a consideration of how students can be helped to achieve those outcomes becomes important.

Robinson (1991) also relates other contrasted views of needs such as *perceived* versus *felt* needs (similar to *objective* and *subjective* needs) and *target* versus *learning* needs (similar to *goal-oriented* and *process-oriented* needs). **Objective** needs are defined as (Brindley, 1989, citing Richterich, 1980) "aimed at collecting factual information for the purposes of setting broad goals related to language content", while **subjective** needs are "aimed at gathering information about learners which can be used to guide the language process once it is under way" (1989:64). Objective needs correspond to a product-orientation view and subjective needs to a process-orientation view. Brindley (1989:63) states that a '**product-oriented**' interpretation of needs sees needs in terms of its *language requirements*, whereas a '**process-oriented**' interpretation is focused on the *learner* and tries "to identify and take into account a multiplicity of affective and cognitive variables which affect learning, such as learners' attitudes, motivation, awareness, personality, wants, expectations and learning styles".

Returning to the question of definition, it is to be noted that Hutchinson and Waters (1987) view needs as a complex combination of *necessities*, *lacks* and *wants*. Necessities are said to be the type of need determined by the *demands of the target situation*, in other words, what the learner has to know in order to function effectively in the target situation as for example, a businessman might need to understand business letters. Lacks are the *gaps* between what the learner knows already and what he still has to learn to reach the specified target. Wants are the *learner's own hopes* for the outcome of the learning. Indeed what the learner hopes to get out of the course may be quite different from the objectives set by course designers and instructors.

(viii). Other writings on needs analysis

There is a need to distinguish writings on needs analysis that originate from linguists and educationists and those that originate from business and industry. Many language programmes, which utilise needs analysis, such as Jupp and Hodlin (1975) and those reported in Hagen (1988), arise out of practical needs of the workplace, often concerning only a particular institution or a group of workers. Needs analysis for programmes developed at the work-site are often infused with social needs and affective considerations, as well as, in many cases, the incorporation of vocational training (e.g. Rae, 1986, child-minding).

Between the mid-seventies and late eighties, there are no fewer than fifteen writings on needs analysis in the language teaching journals, such as TESOL Quarterly and the ELT journal, apart from specialist journals in ESP. Generally these are concerned with the development of programmes for specific groups of workers such as doctors, migrant or refugee groups in industry, tertiary-level students, businessmen, public servants and others. They are, to adopt Widdowson's distinction between ESP and GPE, concerned with short *training* courses and not longer *educational* school programmes. Nevertheless, they have added to our understanding of the complex processes involved in the design and development of programmes for non-native speakers who have to perform their work using English. These writings, recounting the writers' experience in real-world situations, highlight the importance of the inclusion of social-cultural aspects in any second or foreign language programmes since these are the aspects most likely to lead to communication breakdowns. 'Survival' in a new environment and the functional aspects of everyday living are prime considerations. Some of these writings and their emphases are worth reporting here.

Jupp and Hodlin (1975) were concerned with the needs of Asian immigrants in industry who regarded needs as not only linguistic but also social needs for integration into society. Findley and Nathan (1980) saw needs assessment as useful in developing a functional competency-based curriculum whereas Fox (1978) believed in the importance of discourse analysis and the work of Sinclair and Coulthard (1975). Gage and Prince (1982) developed a Vocational ESL programme for adult Indo-Chinese refugees, which stressed functional skills as well as language for safety in the workplace. Tollefson (1986) reported on a programme which integrated functional ESL curriculum with the needs of adult basic education developed for Vietnamese refugees at Refugee Processing Centres (RPCs) in Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines.

Hagen (1988), in surveying the use of foreign languages in British business, was more concerned with the needs of professionals who were required to speak a European language in their work. Similarly, Beneke (1981) surveyed the language needs of executive managers in

fourteen European companies. These studies and those above are useful to the proposed study to the extent of providing information on needs at the target end.

Malaysian works on needs analysis are rare, although ESP forms part of the University of Malaya (UM) English for Special Purposes Project (UMSEPP) programme in conjunction with the British Council and the University of Birmingham. The aim of the project is to "train students, whatever their discipline, in the techniques required to extract important information from textbooks and journals written in English," (UM, 1980: Foreword). Several texts have been produced by the UMSEPP, which is mainly an academic reading skills project, for the specific use of UM students. These texts, even though Malaysian, are limited in their applicability to schools. The report on the project (Chitravelu, 1980), however, does point to 'gaps' in the skills of Malaysian undergraduates required to read references in English, which in essence exposes the reading needs of school leavers intent on tertiary education.

(ix). Robinson's summary of the different concepts of needs assessment

From the literature on ESP, Robinson (1991) has summarised the different concepts that have been proposed in the field. The Robinson model is a composite of the writings on needs analysis and tries to incorporate all salient aspects of needs analysis.

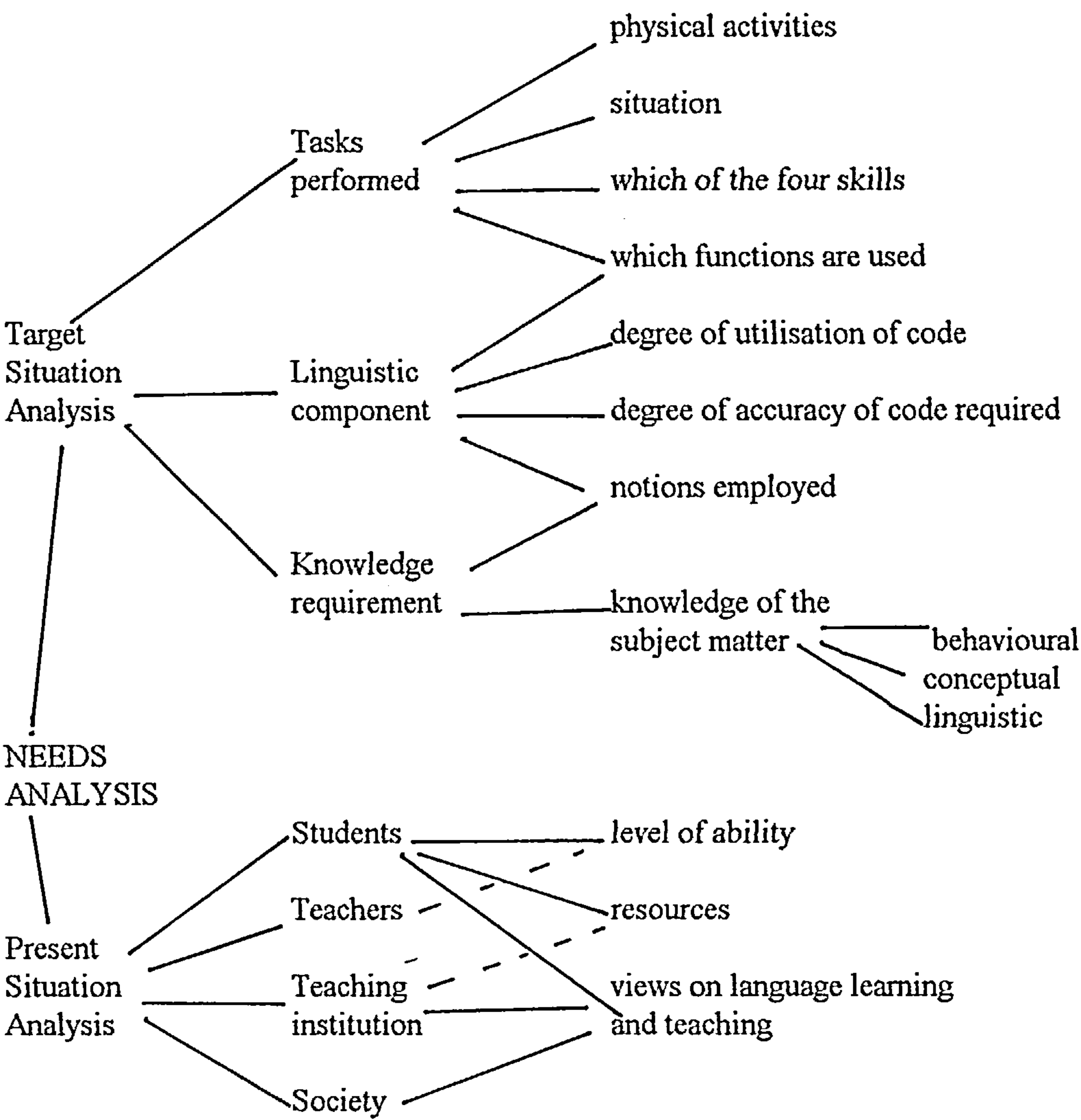
"First, *needs* can refer to students' study or job requirements, that is, what they have to be able to do at the end of their language course. This is a goal-oriented definition of needs (Widdowson (1981:2)). Needs in this sense 'are perhaps more appropriately described as "objectives"' (Berwick (1989:57)). Second, *needs* can mean 'what the user-institution or society at large regards as necessary or desirable to be learnt from a programme of language instruction' (Mountford (1981:27)). Third, we can consider 'what the learner needs to do to acquire the language. This is a *process-oriented* definition of needs and relates to transitional behaviour, the means of learning' (Widdowson, 1981:2). Fourth, we can consider what the students themselves would like to gain from the language course. This view of needs implies that students may have personal aims in addition to (or even in opposition to) the requirements of their studies or jobs. Berwick (1989:55) notes that such personal needs 'may be (and often are) devalued' by being viewed as 'wants or desires'. Finally, we may interpret *needs* as *lacks*, that is, what the students do not know or cannot do in English." (Robinson, 1991:7-8)

Indeed, Robinson (1991) has attempted a summary that comprehensively and adequately reflects current work on needs analysis that incorporates not only linguistic considerations but also social and vocational. It summarises the different facets of the concept of needs, taking into account not only the student's position or role in society, towards whom s/he has certain responsibilities but is also aware of the student's own needs. Firstly, it covers societal expectations of the student (institutional needs), and secondly, the requirements of the marketplace (outcome needs). Aside these sociological aspects, is the pedagogical aspect, i.e.,

the student's entry behaviours and the processes the learner has to go through (process needs) before s/he can realise the needed outcomes. This takes into account the gap that has to be filled by the teaching institution, and indeed incorporates the whole purpose of his/her schooling that is the acquisition of new skills and behaviours. Lastly, it gives consideration to humane and psychological aspects, the learner's personal wants which the society or the teaching institution has a responsibility to provide.

Drawing from the literature, Robinson (1989) has contrived a graphic model, produced below, incorporating the parameters involved in needs assessment:

Model 4: The Robinson's model



(Robinson, 1989:401)

Fig. 2.2: The Robinson Model of Needs Analysis

In this model, needs analysis consists of both target situation analysis and present situation analysis. Robinson acknowledges that Target Situation Analysis (TSA) is borrowed from

Chambers (1980) and the ideas for Present Situation Analysis (PSA) from Richterich and Chancerel (1980). TSA corresponds to the goal-directed approach to needs analysis, i.e. the various tasks the student will have to be able to perform at some future date.

TSA also takes into account what the analyst wants to know "which of the four language skills are made use of, which language functions and language forms" (1989:402). Level of proficiency is another important consideration, and in relation to ESP, it is not only subject specific knowledge that is taught, but also the appropriate social behaviour, taking from Munby (1978). PSA, however, "involves finding out not only what students are like at the outset of their course, but also more about their teachers, the teaching institution and going further, the wider society around" (Robinson, 1989:403).

Robinson's model has the advantage of reference to previous work on needs analysis. Even though she has set down a rather lengthy set of variables to consider, it is a more practical model, and less theoretical than that of Munby, and superficially at least, seems amenable to implementation. The model attempts to operationalise needs analysis and goes beyond target expectations to a consideration of the learner, and the learning situation. Unlike Munby's, and more in line with Richterich, it has moved from the planning stages of programme development into the classroom to consider the realities of the teaching and learning resources.

2.3 Methods of Needs Analysis

Below are summarised the methods that have been used in needs analysis in the literature.

1. *On-site tour and observation* to determine the nature of the work and tasks to be executed and the language necessary in order to carry out these tasks (Jupp and Hodlin, 1975, Crandall, 1979, West, 1984, Svendsen and Krebs, 1984, Gage and Prince, 1982, Hutchinson and Waters, 1987).
2. *Interviews and discussions* with workplace personnel, mainly *management* and *supervision* (Jupp and Hodlin, 1975, Applebaum, 1984, West, 1984).
3. *Interviews and discussions* with the *workers* themselves (Jupp and Hodlin, 1975, Crandall, 1979, Svendsen and Krebs, 1984).
4. *Discussions with vocational instructor*, and perhaps *observation of on-site classes* (Crandall, 1979 and West, 1984).
5. Some form of *survey*, mainly written, at times oral survey as well (West, 1984, Gage and Prince, 1984).

6. *Tape-recordings of communication at work* (Jupp and Hodlin, 1975 and West, 1984).

7. *Document study* of company forms, procedures and training materials (Crandall, 1979, Applebaum, 1984, West, 1984, Svendsen and Krebs, 1984).

8. Consulting a *reference book on job description* (West, 1984).

The study to be undertaken will utilise in various forms the methods outlined in numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7 above, i.e. mainly interviews and discussions, observations and a questionnaire survey.

Schröder (1981) discusses the various techniques used in needs analysis for European professionals, and their respective strengths and weaknesses. Four methods of data collection concerning foreign language needs of industry and commerce in Europe are discussed. These are *participant observation, detailed interview, questionnaire and analysis of press advertisements*.

With the *detailed interview*, Schröder (1981) comments that a variety of techniques can be used to elicit information, and the main strength of the method is that it enables a profound insight into both the subject matter and the psychological situation of the person concerned. This concurs with Yin's (1984) description of the use of interviews in case studies, and it can also be seen that the interview method has been used by Jupp and Hodlin (1975), Crandall (1979), West (1984), Svendsen and Krebs (1984) and Gage and Prince (1982).

The *questionnaire* is by far the most popular method, according to Schröder. This has been employed or suggested by West (1984) and Gage and Prince (1982). Its advantages lie in the ability to cover a large number of people at the same time and its cost effectiveness. Its chief weakness, warns Schröder, is the possible misinterpretation of questions by respondents or their mistakes in answering them which cannot be discerned until after the collection of data is completed. Another major drawback is the difficulty of ensuring that all basic categories are included in the questionnaire since it would be difficult to predict all possible categories.

In addition, Schröder puts the response rate at 20 % (citing De Mot et al, 1977:60 and Schröder et al, 1978:8), which seems to be a very severe estimate. Cohen and Manion (1989:114) gives the typical pattern of response after three follow-ups as follows:

Original despatch	40%
1st follow-up	+20%
2nd follow-up	+10%
3rd follow-up	+5%
Total	75%

Needs analysis using the questionnaire method in the literature include von der Handt, 1983, German for migrant workers; Rodrigues, 1983, school learners of French in Portugal; Gardner and Winslow, 1983, students in British public sector higher education; Licari et al, 1983, learners of French in Bologna; Mosallem, 1984, English language needs of police officers in Egypt; Zughoul, 1985, EAP; Coleman, 1988, EAP; and Hagen, 1988, foreign language needs in British industry. The *analysis of press advertisements* has also been suggested by Schröder as a way to determine the frequency language skills are specified as necessary or desirable. Schröder reports that this approach has been followed by De Jager and Reunis (1971), who studied 9052 job advertisements in Dutch newspapers and Emmans et al (1974). Analysing press advertisements according to Schröder is the most indirect way of quantifying the needs of industry and commerce although he reports that in the De Jager and Reunis study, the foreign language requirement does not really count as a criterion for selection for some of the firms, even if it has been asked for. He also asserts that it may have been put in for reasons of prestige. Interestingly, some jobs may be advertised without the foreign language requirement because it would be obvious to the insider.

Richterich (1983:9) proposes several methods for determining needs. These are *surveys, polls, interviews, conversations, attitude scales, tests, observation and content analysis*. He reminds us that these methods are by no means truly objective and can be interpreted in a variety of ways, "both at the conceptual and application stage and in the use made of the results", with the admonition to "look for original methods that are in keeping with the characteristics of persons, institutions, time and place, these being by definition always different. And it is this which gives the identification of language needs such a wealth of uses". *Document analysis* is another method commonly employed in needs analysis. Most of the studies mentioned above utilise this method to study various documents connected with the workplace. For example, Longe (1989) has attempted to analyse 'officialese' - the civil service register in Nigeria by analysing letters written by a certain cadre of civil servants when administering the functions of government.

The methods ultimately chosen for this study attempt to reconcile their suitability in exploring the research questions as productively as possible, with the constraints of time available for the fieldwork and the constraints and ethics involved with the researcher's presence in the research settings (such as the need to safeguard intrusions into privacy).

2.4 Why needs analysis

A question to ask is why programme designers engage in needs analysis when clearly its accuracy is uncertain and having performed one the student outcomes are by no means guaranteed since there are other variables operating at the school level? Richterich(1983:4),

having disclaimed the problems associated with it, still maintains that needs analysis is an essential process in programme development as long as its limitations are fully understood, and that its value lies in being one of the tools " for obtaining relative, partial, temporary and circumstantial information which will help us to make choices and take decisions *without any pretensions to scientific, definitive truth*" (italics mine), echoing Chamber's objection on page 20 above.

Having established this, the job of programme development becomes a realistic and practical exercise rather than an idealistic one. Furthermore, although needs analysis appears to be an undertaking fraught with danger, it is a necessary process in programme development, provided the results from the analysis are treated with caution.

Porcher (1983a:128) made the following comment:

"The ground we have to survey is largely fallow land. Very little has been done on the problem of language (foreign language) needs in the school. ... The major objective is to clear what is still virtually virgin soil, to map it out in a sufficiently clear, sufficiently exhaustive and sufficiently *operational* manner, so as to allow for a genuine didactic strategy".

Certainly needs analysis, when executed appropriately, can serve to inform curriculum developers of the intricacies of target needs and present needs to a greater degree of specificity. Where school programmes are concerned, it holds the promise of making the classroom experience relevant and meaningful to learners and hence could improve learning outcomes.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has tried to outline developments in needs analysis, especially as it pertains to ESP programmes. It is noted that determining needs is problematic since it is essentially a subjective exercise and therefore its results, although a good basis for programme design, cannot be considered as empirical and absolute or that it guarantees successful outcomes. Needs analysis should not involve a preoccupation with defining target language outcomes. The learner and the teaching learning process and institutional resources merit equal attention. Needs analysis should be undertaken as a continuing exercise and the resulting programme continually monitored and its methods and materials brought to a high degree of appropriacy and relevance as a result of negotiation with the learner and the learning institution. Lastly, various methods of needs analysis are reviewed, and those selected for the study in question are discussed and justified.

Chapter 3

The research questions and research procedures and the justification for the use of these procedures

3.1 The workplace

3.1.1 The Research Questions

The workplace component of the study examines the question of needs as posed by the questions below:

1. To what extent is English required in the Malaysian workplace and in the day-to-day running of these selected business institutions?
2. What categories of jobs require English?
3. What are the different language requirements for different categories of workers?
4. What are the competencies required for the occupations of the selected interviewees in terms of verbal communication, writing tasks, and the reading demands of the occupations?
5. How much specialised technical language in relation to general English is required of the interviewees of the selected occupations?
6. What are the perceived problems connected with workers' use of English in these companies in general?

3.1.2 The Research Procedures

Sequencing

In the administration of data collection, the researcher faced the problem of distance between the academic institution and the research site, such that data collection was undertaken once only and not in stages which would have enabled the results of initial data collection to inform subsequent efforts. Secondly, the timing for the classroom observation that was to be undertaken had to fit in appropriately with the school term, and should not, for example, be too close to the end-of-year

exams. Logically, needs analysis has to precede classroom observations but due to timing constraints this was not followed (as is explained on page 55). However, some data collection which did not involve going to the field was undertaken subsequent to the field work. The sequence of the study for the workplace component was initially planned as follows.

Phase One	- Advertisement analysis and questionnaire survey
Phase Two	- Case studies on needs analysis
Phase Three	- Case studies on school practice

The details of each phase are described below.

(i). Phase One - Advertisement analysis and questionnaire survey

In this phase, the following procedures were carried out:

1. *Analysis of job advertisements* in an English language daily of Malaysia, i.e. The New Straits Times (NST) with the aim of obtaining a profile of the range of jobs requiring English in the Malaysian workplace and the specifications of skills needed for these jobs.
2. *Questionnaire survey* of a small number of employers (30-50) in the Klang Valley, with the aim of recording their perceptions of their organisation's English language needs.

(ii). Phase Two - Case studies of workplace needs

Approximately six respondents were selected to represent the various levels in the organisational hierarchy, i.e. managerial, professional, middle management, technical, secretarial, clerical and semi-skilled or unskilled categories. The case studies employed a mainly *unstructured interview* format.

(iii). Phase Three - School case studies

This is given below under the school component.

3.2 The school

3.2.1 The Research Questions

(i). The Teacher

1. How does the teacher view the teaching of English, and how has this influenced his/her practice?
2. What are the perceptions of the teacher with regard to students' interest and attitude towards English, including students' views of its importance?
3. What, from teachers' assessment, are the competencies students possess? How do these relate to the competencies identified as needed for English in the workplace?

(ii). The Teaching Learning

4. How effective is teaching in realising the objectives set for the year, in terms of students' learning?
5. How meaningful and motivating is the experience of learning to these students?
6. What are the problems associated with teaching-learning in these two schools and how are they being addressed?

(iii). The Students

7. Are there factors in students' (interviewees) backgrounds that have bearing on their proficiency in English?
8. What are the perceptions of students (interviewees) with regard to the importance of the learning of English in terms of its usefulness (or lack of usefulness) for them in their future working lives?
9. What competencies do students (interviewees) possess, in their own assessment. How do these competencies relate to the English competencies that are needed in the workplace?

10. Are students' learning problems confined to English only, or do students have general learning problems of which English is only a part?

(iv). The match between school and the workplace

11. How do student competencies relate to the perceived English competencies that are needed in the workplace?

12. How effective is school practice in realising the perceived needs for English use in the workplace?

The procedures outlined below were followed in data collection.

3.2.2 The Research Procedures

1. A *systematic observation schedule* was utilised, which recorded the frequency of occurrence of the practice of variables such as skills, topics, behaviours, etc. When it was initially developed, the schedule contained predetermined categories of variables identified as relevant to the practice of workplace language skills (refer to Appendix 2). However, after a pilot was undertaken in a Kuala Lumpur secondary (co-ed) school, it was found that most of the predetermined categories did not emerge in the teaching. A decision was therefore taken to leave the columns blank, and to note down particular behaviours, skills, etc. as they manifest themselves in the classroom. In other words, the structure of the schedule was retained, as well as a few of the categories, such as classroom organisation and teacher talk and student talk, but all other behaviours were recorded as they occurred. This procedure proved to be quite successful. The schedule also contained space for recording field notes (refer to pages 118-119).

2. *Audio-recording* of the classroom proceedings, which served to complement the systematic observation above as well as act as a test of validity. Furthermore, audio-recording was able to focus more directly on small group discussions and highlight the dynamics of students' interaction with each other. It also served as a source of evidence for conclusions made especially in terms of providing quotations from teacher's and students' involvement and participation.

Additionally, in order to determine teachers' teaching philosophy, methodology and attitudes, and teachers' assessment of students' language competencies, as well as to clarify events observed in the classroom, the following procedure was followed.

3. *Unstructured teacher interviews* were conducted on three separate occasions of one hour duration or more - before the observations commenced, during the period of observation, and between one to two weeks after the observations were completed. Even though largely unstructured, an 'aide memoire' was also employed, in order not to omit aspects that were considered important to data collection.

4. A short *teacher questionnaire* was used to obtain information on teachers' background and experience, the common classroom techniques they utilised as well as their views on the 1987 KBSM English syllabus.

Finally, student interviews were utilised in order to secure information on students' home backgrounds, their subjective needs, their attitudes and feelings towards English as well as their own assessment of their various competencies as it pertains to speaking, reading and writing, and including students' opinion of teachers' teaching, as stated below.

5. *Unstructured student interviews* of between 20 to 30 minute duration, comprising of three to five students in each class, and undertaken during the school attachment period.

In order to establish students' overall proficiency, the following procedure was utilised.

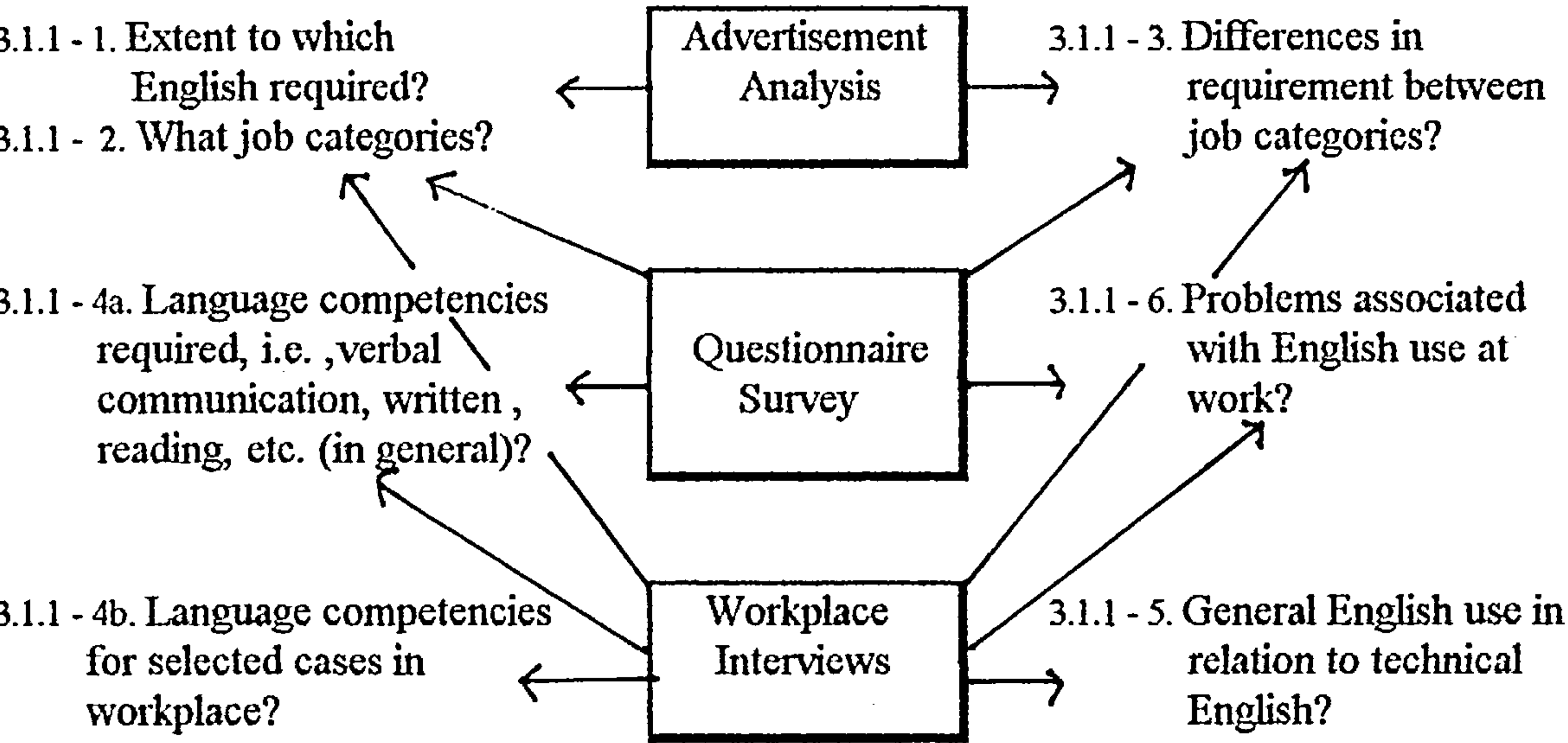
6. An examination of *teachers' assessment records* throughout the year.

7. Also examined were the school's leaving certificate results (SPM) for English.

The research methodology is given in summarised and diagrammatic form below, firstly, the main research questions as they relate to the procedures used for data collection; secondly, the cases selected and the quantitative sampling in relation to these procedures.

3.3 SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH PROCEDURES

WORKPLACE



SCHOOL

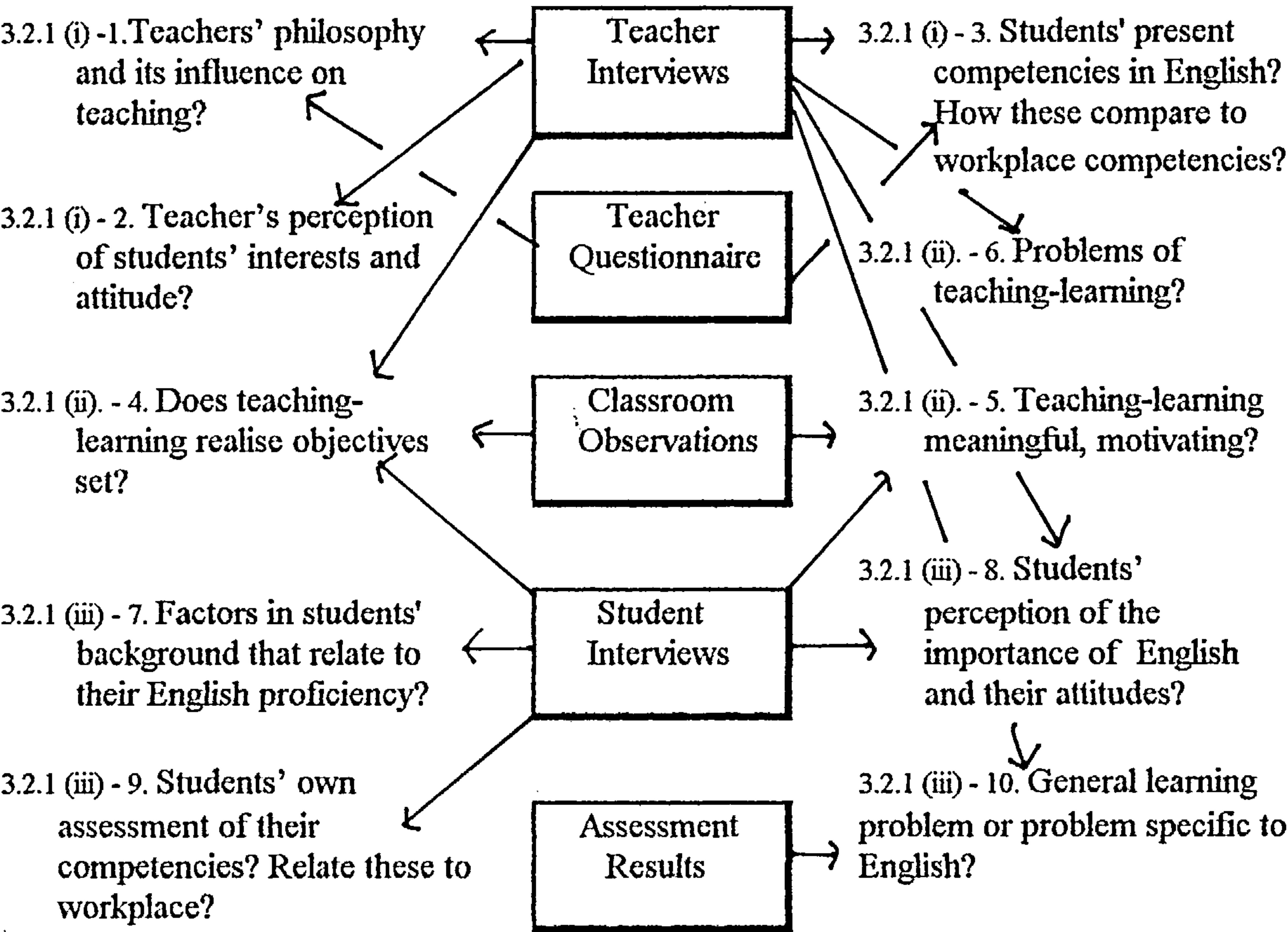
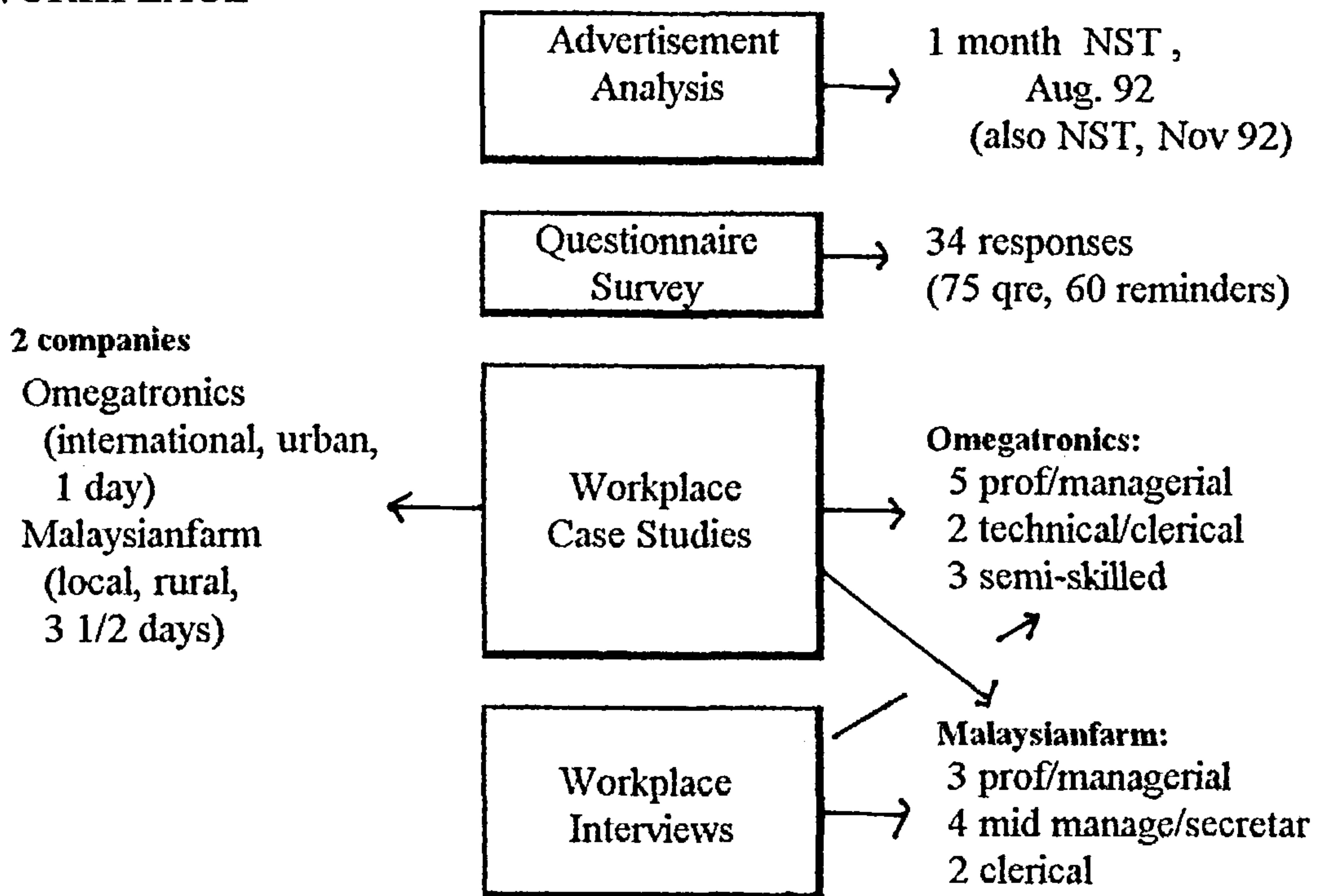


Fig: 3.1: Research procedures and research questions

3.4 Sampling

WORKPLACE



SCHOOL

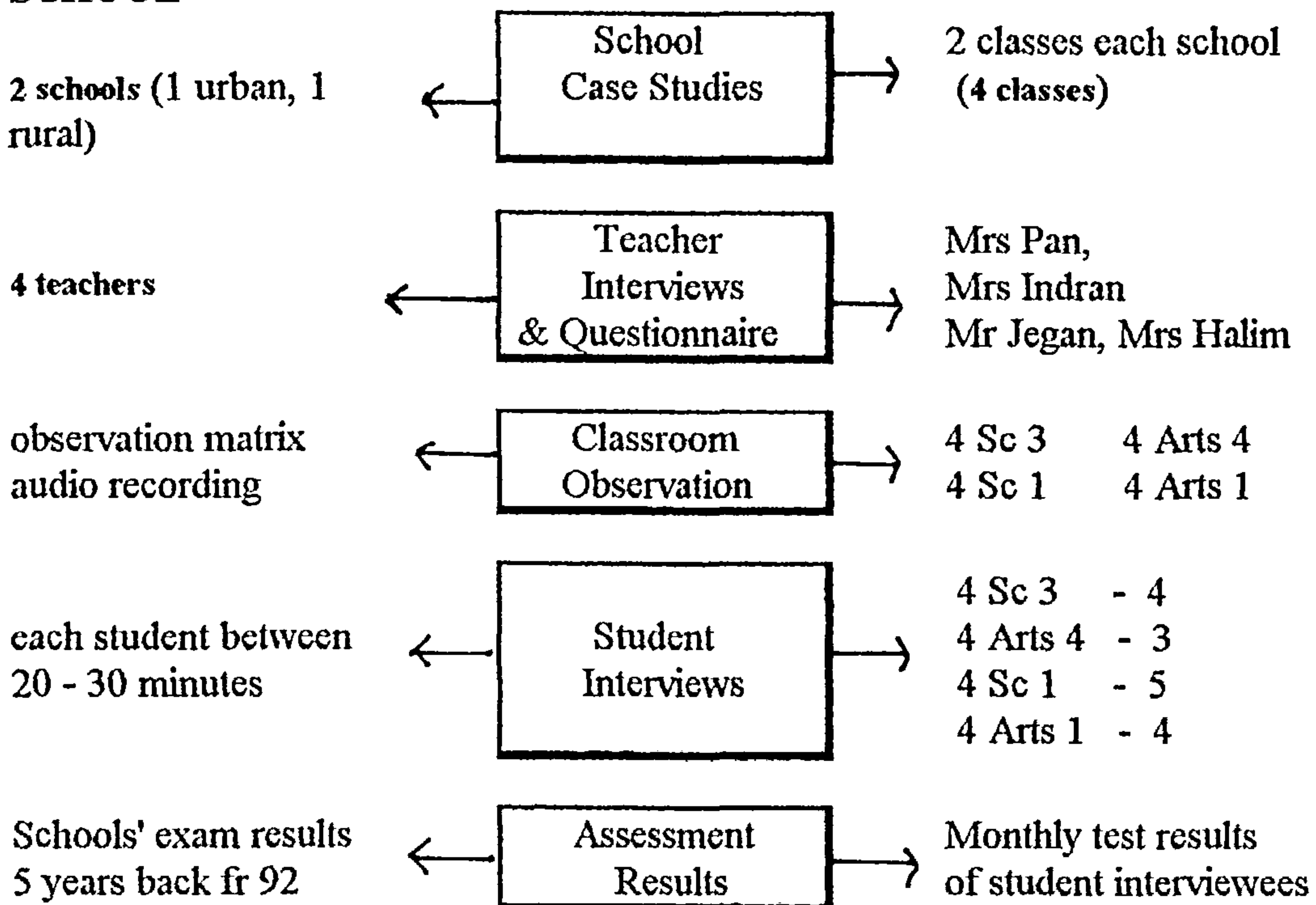


Fig. 3.2: Sampling

3.5 Justification for the use of the research procedures for both the workplace and school components

3.5.1 The use of ethnographic techniques

The study in question collected data in two separate contexts; i.e. the workplace and school. Needs analysis was conducted in the workplace, from which a set of criteria on language needs was developed and brought to the school context so that they can be matched with students' proficiency and other aspects of the teaching learning experience. For both, an attempt was made to utilise both quantitative and ethnographic techniques in a somewhat limited way within the parameters of case studies. Pure ethnography was not possible in the sense described by Lutz (1993:108) below, considering the amount of time available to expend in both school and workplace settings, but similar techniques of observation and analysis were used as in ethnography,

"Ethnography is a holistic, thick description of the interactive processes involving the discovery of important and recurring variables in the society as they relate to one another, under specified conditions, and as they affect or produce certain results and outcomes in the society. It is not a case study, which narrowly focuses on a single issue, or a field survey that seeks previously specified data, or a brief encounter (for a few hours each day for a year, or 12 hours a day for a few months) with some group. Those types of research are ethnographic but not ethnography!"

Hammersley (1993 reports that researchers in favour of ethnography, who hoped to obtain quick answers to educational problems but could not afford the time in the field, found a solution by using the procedure of *case studies utilising ethnographic techniques*. The strategy made the following modifications:

1. the amount of time in a setting is reduced, on the grounds that it is necessary to produce results rapidly to be usable, so that the information does not get out of date;
2. access is negotiated on the basis that those studied control the data collected, and must give permission for its publication.

The proposed study adopts the procedure described above, largely utilising observation and interview techniques. Additionally, quantitative techniques were also utilised within the case studies, as this type of data is appropriate for a study involving "matching" (Eggleston et. al. 1975:55). For the school component, this involved the use of a standardised observation schedule with different classes and for the workplace, a questionnaire survey of the workplace was utilised to provide quantitative evidence.

3.5.2 The use of case studies

Stake (1985:277) defines the case study and explains its popularity:

"Case study is becoming more widely accepted as a research approach. Defined as the *study of a single case or bounded system*, it *observes naturalistically* and interprets higher order interrelations within the observed data. Results are generalisable in that the information given allows readers to decide whether the case is similar to theirs. Case study can and should be rigorous. Whereas experimental design has checks built into its methods, in case study the responsibility lies more with the researcher. While other styles of research aim to elicit general relationships, case study *explores the context of individual instances*." (italics mine).

The features that are salient to the proposed study are; firstly, the definition of boundaries i.e. a 'bounded system' in its context of individual instances, rather than a sample from a population; and secondly, that it is naturalistic and interpretative and concerned with relationships within the data; thirdly, shifting the focus from the utilisation of valid instruments, to putting the onus on the researcher for the rigour of the study, and lastly, that results are generalisable in the sense that there would be other cases that resemble that under study.

In case studies, the researcher is able to utilise ethnographic techniques of observation and informal participation and conversation to gather data on the social interaction that is taking place within the group under study (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). Use of ethnography and its techniques in educational research was a response to "structuralist reproduction theories to grossly abstract and overtheorize about what goes on in the daily life of cultural institutions or informal settings, whether they are schools, families, or youth subcultures" (Roman and Apple (1990:44) citing Geertz, 1973). Researchers now believe that it is a better method with which to study the social sciences. Its influence on educational research has led to a focus on the detailed qualitative analysis of patterns of social interaction in classrooms (Hammersley, 1993: xii) shifting away from "quantitative analysis of large samples towards detailed, qualitative investigations of smaller amounts of data, even of single lessons" (Hammersley, 1993: xii). It provides "...thick" contextual descriptions of social subjects as they actively and creatively make sense of their social worlds" (Roman and Apple (1990:44)).

Ethnography (and ethnographic techniques) lend themselves well to grounded theorising (Glazer and Strauss, 1967) as they help to investigate how people interpret each other's actions and act in ways that are influenced by their beliefs, values, perspectives, motivations. The researcher endeavours to examine from the inside, into how these groups of people have constructed their highly distinctive cultural realities (Woods, 1986:4-5), in the belief that "human actions cannot be

understood without taking into account of the processes of interpretation which generates them" (Hammersley, 1993:xii).

Woods (1985:52) explains the procedure for grounded theory:

"The main emphasis is on discovery rather than testing of theory, but analysis is sequential - it is both guided by and guides data collection. Categories and their properties are noted and 'saturated'. Concepts emerge from the field, are checked and rechecked against further data, compared with other material, strengthened or perhaps re-formulated. Models of systems are built up in the process of research, and gradually a theory comes into being with its distinctive characteristic of explanation and prediction linking the revealed concepts into an integrated framework, the operationalization of which has been demonstrated".

The study in question has no ready hypotheses at the outset because the aim is to go into the research situation with an open mind and with a commitment to understanding the situation in the hope of being able to formulate explanations as to why certain phenomena occur on the basis of observations. The study will not extend to theory formation since the data obtained from case studies will not be adequate to allow theory formation, but some explanation and interpretation will be attempted.

3.5.3 The use of unstructured interviews and strategies for conducting them

This is the preferred interview style for this study, and is in harmony with qualitative techniques. Aside from factual and descriptive data, it is hoped to be able to draw out attitudes, interest, commitment and other affective states of both teachers and students. This type of interview is perceived of as conversations, in which the interviewer acts as a friend and confidant and attempts to build up trust (Burgess, 1984:103-107), as well as rapport (Powney and Watts, 1987:133), allowing the interviewee time to get used to the interview situation, and to "give the impression of talking, rather than quizzing". The qualities of the interviewer should be one of inspiring trust, having curiosity, and being natural and unobtrusive (Cohen and Manion, 1985: 310).

Skill in drawing out the information sought is essential, as suggested by Powney and Watts (1987), these being: logical order for questioning; good listening skills; good retention of what has been said, so that it can be followed up later in the interview; being perceptive to (non-linguistic) paralinguistic cues; having empathy towards the interviewee; being adaptable to people and circumstances; being aware of the impression one's appearance creates and being prepared to *change negative appearance or behaviour*; being comfortable with the agenda of the interview that has been planned; being able to handle difficult questions; being prepared to prompt and probe; being able to handle silence in the interview, so as to allow time to the interviewee to formulate

his/her thoughts; accurate recording; being able to make a decision of whether to end or continue the interview, if for example, a previously reticent interviewee becomes voluble when the interviewer begins to leave; and lastly, making certain that the interviewee is left in a calm state should the interview had been upsetting in some way (Powney and Watts, 1987:134-140).

An 'aide memoire' or agenda, of topics, themes and questions, should be used mainly to ensure consistency across all interviews so that similar information is collected to enable comparison across cases. Good listening skills and care with words, gestures and comments will safeguard against advancing or impeding the interview, and not interrupting unnecessarily will allow a smooth flow of talk (Burgess, 1984:108 -111).

Problems to be aware of include "question wording, bias, rapport and avoiding loaded questions" (Burgess 1984:119). The interviewer will "need constantly to monitor the direction, depth, and detail of the interviews " (p. 120) and to manage time well, with regard to the total length of the interview (not more than two hours; one and a half is considered optimum). An estimation must also be made about blocks of time to devote to particular topics (Burgess, 1984:120).

Again, the creation of rapport and trust will guard against the problem of validity, as the interviewee would more readily reveal information that would not otherwise have been revealed in more formal circumstances or if the interviewee has been more guarded (Cohen and Manion, 1985: 319).

In discussing the problem of inadequate response in interviews, Moser & Kalton (1979 cite five principal symptoms of inadequate response, taking from Kahn and Cannell (1957), which are:

"(The) *partial response* in which the respondent gives a relevant but incomplete answer; *non-response*, when the respondent remains silent or refuses to answer the question; *irrelevant response*, in which the respondent does not answer the question asked; *inaccurate response*, when the question is answered by a reply which is biased or distorted; and the *verbalised response problem*, when the respondent explains why he cannot answer the question, perhaps because he fails to understand it, because he lacks the information necessary for answering it, or because he thinks it is irrelevant or inappropriate" (Moser and Kalton, 1979:276-7).

Interviewer skills should come into play in dealing with the problem of inadequate response. The interviewer would also have to tread a fine line between pressing for the response and information that is needed, or leaving matters as they are, in order to maintain goodwill, and perhaps better co-operation at another time.

3.5.4 Interview training and piloting

For the study in question, the researcher was able to enlist the assistance of three fellow research students to pilot the conduct of the unstructured interviews in two groups, which included the researcher herself. In addition, the researcher was also able to obtain various materials, e.g. questioning strategies, and audio-transcripts of interviews from the University of Southampton Knowledge About Language (KAL) project which proved invaluable to the researcher in structuring the procedures and techniques and their administration that were later utilised in the case studies of both school and workplace. Lastly, it is to be noted that the teacher interview procedures were piloted along with the other data collection procedures in the school pilot study (page 35, 3.2.2 - 1). These experiences were able to prepare the researcher adequately to handle the interviews in the actual research settings and increase her confidence in using them.

3.5.5. Analysis of interviews

When an audio-recording is used Burgess (1984:121) suggests that firstly, the interview needs to be played once through before transcription begins. Secondly, an index should be prepared using the counter on the tape recorder so that a record is kept of the themes that occur throughout the tape. Thirdly, only relevant materials should be completely transcribed.

3.6 The Rationale for the Workplace Procedures

3.6.1 Rationale for the analysis of job advertisements

In undertaking the analysis of job advertisements, it is hoped to obtain a significant account of people looking for jobs who are conversant in English and therefore read English newspapers, and would be able to perform jobs in which English is used. In addition to giving information on the range of occupations that require English to a greater or lesser degree, it is envisaged that the analysis will clarify the target level of proficiency required for the various categories of occupations to some degree.

3.6.2 The questionnaire survey

The items in the questionnaire (Appendix 5a.) for the workplace survey were utilised to clarify certain suppositions regarding English practice at work. These were drawn from the literature and the advertisement analysis, and the survey is undertaken to confirm or dispel these suppositions.

3.6.3 The rationale for the workplace case studies

The rationale for case studies has been given above. The case studies of two business institutions are undertaken mainly to obtain information on workplace needs for English in its context from within, and from the actors' perspectives, as in ethnography. Both the advertisement analysis and the questionnaire survey are felt to be inadequate to give a definitive account of language use at work. In order to determine more conclusively and specifically what English uses are important in

the workplace, *two institutions* that are located in different settings, are selected, for their comparative value. One was an *urban based multi-national electronics factory*, Omegatronics, and the other a *rural local sugar-cane plantation*, Malaysianfarm. Considering the constraints of time and access, unstructured interviews are felt to be the most productive way to probe interviewees' experiences with English at work.

The competencies identified from this workplace data were used to develop a set of criteria to compare with the school data to determine how well the practice of teaching-learning in the two case study schools matched the needs of the workplace.

3.7 The Rationale for the School Procedures

3.7.1 Rationale for the use of systematic classroom observation procedures

Before the use of a systematic observation procedure can be justified, a brief review of systematic classroom observation in the literature is in order, and the issues that are involved discussed, so that any disadvantages and weaknesses of the method can be addressed.

(i). Brief review of systematic observation procedures

At present, there is no instrument available in the literature that seeks to find the relationship between workplace needs and classroom teaching, even though many of these instruments contain aspects that are relevant to the proposed study. This part of the paper will report on these instruments as reviewed in Croll (1986) and will draw on features that are relevant.

The "One in Five" schedule (Croll and Moses, 1985), investigating teacher-student interactions of children with special needs, employs a time-based recording at every ten second interval and the procedure is to observe each child for a few minutes, each time moving from child to child. The ORACLE PROJECT (Observational Research and Classroom Learning Evaluation) (Galton et al, 1980) on student and teacher activities and interactions in the primary school classroom in relation to their school achievements focuses on the behaviour and interaction of students and teachers. It employs a time-based recording at twenty-five second intervals for the students and a separate period of observation for the teacher.

FIAC (Flanders Interaction Categories) (Flanders, 1970) focuses on teacher talk and student talk and a continuous recording every three seconds is made. More suited to classes with a traditional orientation, a point made by Walker and Adelman (1993:7), it sees "teacher-student interaction in terms of the transmission of information ... (and) ... does not concern itself with talk as the expression and negotiation of meanings ...". Further criticisms by Delamont and Hamilton

(1976:8-9) centred on its focus on discrete bits of behaviour making it difficult to go beyond these categories and thus impeding theoretical development.

The Teacher's Day (Hilsum and Cane, 1971) employs a continuous recording of the changes in teacher's activities during the day rather than focus on behaviour at timed intervals, as FIAC does.

A study of schooling (Gieson and Sirotnik, 1979) employs four different observation procedures which concern the physical environment, the teaching-learning activities, the details of student-adult interactions and the fourth records aspects concerned with space, materials and decision making.

The design and construction of these schedules give a number of indications for the development of a specific schedule for this study in that they provide examples of the structure of the instrument, of variables and categories and the type of recording used.

(ii). Criticisms of systematic observation

Hammersley (1993:xiii) reports on the main criticisms of systematic observation, which are:

1. The use of pre-established categories prevents recognition of the complexity of classroom behaviour and obstructs the development of theories that are sensitive to this complexity.
2. That by using arbitrary time sampling, systematic observation neglects natural patterns in classroom interaction.
3. That classroom interaction is studied without any attempt to understand the context in which it occurs and in particular the perspectives of the teachers and pupils involved.

These weaknesses cited by Hammersley are valid if systematic observation is used in isolation of other techniques. However, in the proposed study, it is hoped that the use of ethnographic observation and interviews will overcome most of the weaknesses mentioned.

Moreover, Croll (1986:50) makes the following point when a decision has been made to design a new schedule, i.e. "when a researcher decides that the research questions being addressed require a new system rather than using an existing one it will almost certainly be of value to incorporate some aspects of a well established schedule".

Of the schedules reviewed, some are capable of being imitated in terms of their structure observational categories, but ostensibly it is the aims of the study that determine the content of the instrument. For this reason a decision was made to develop a separate systematic observational schedule specific to the needs of the study, but at the same time emulating the design and some of the features of schedules available in the literature.

(III). The development of a systematic observation schedule for the study

For this study, close readings and study were made of the COLT (Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching) and TALOS (Target Language Observation Scheme) (both in Ullmann and Geva, 1984). They were the main schedules utilised in the development of the systematic observation instrument. COLT is aimed at distinguishing communicatively-oriented classrooms from non-communicative ones, while TALOS was used in the formative evaluation of a French second language programme.

The structure of the schedule is modelled closely on COLT. Some of the categories (indicators) were also taken from COLT as well as from TALOS above. At the same time, other models reported above have been utilised to a lesser extent, such as combining some of the indicators or categories from the 'One in Five', and adapting the recording system of 'The Teacher's Day'.

An initial schedule (refer to Appendix 2) was designed based on the above considerations. This schedule was subjected to a pilot study at a secondary (co-ed) school in a suburb of Kuala Lumpur which is not named for reasons of confidentiality. After this study various changes had to be made to the schedule to render it workable. Chapter 10 on page 117 describes the how systematic schedule worked and its results. The final schedule appears on page 118-119.

3.7.2 The qualitative component of the classroom observation through audio-recording and unstructured teacher and student interviews

Although it was originally intended to take notes simultaneously with the recording of the systematic schedule, it was felt that this may not be feasible as the researcher's attention would also be focused on filling in the various categories of the schedule. Therefore, other qualitative information would be obtained from the tape-recorded lessons, which will be transcribed and analysed.

Similarly, to obtain factual information about teacher and student attitudes, perceptions, motivations, opinion of teaching learning, etc., the procedure of unstructured interviews was used. Teacher's interviews were carried out for a period of approximately one hour each, three times, following the procedure used in KAL (refer to 3.5.4, page 43). These interviews were unstructured, but an 'aide memoire' was used (Appendix 6a).

Chapter 4

Report on the general conduct of the workplace research component

4.1 The sequencing of case studies

The workplace case studies were administered after the school case studies because of the simultaneous problems of distance and timing. The fieldwork was conducted and completed over three months in Malaysia, from July to September 1993, away from the academic institution (Southampton University, U.K). The schedule was arranged to fit in with the school term. If the workplace studies had been undertaken first, then the school phase would have occurred too close to the end of the last term of school, when the classes would be engaged in revision or the end-of-term tests. This would not have given an accurate picture of normal classroom practice. However, this sequencing even though considered a disadvantage initially, did not affect the study adversely, since qualitative data covering all aspects of teaching, not only those relating to the workplace, was compiled on which the analysis of workplace criteria was performed subsequent to the fieldwork period. It would have been ideal if data collection was executed in proper sequence, but it was not crucial, since, where classroom practice was concerned, the teaching data would have remained the same regardless of what went on in the workplace prior to or subsequent to the classroom observation. The consequences would have been more harmful if the school attachment had taken place late in the term and yielded unreliable data affected by the intrusion of tests and revision work.

4.2 The conduct of interviews in the workplace

The language of the interview was determined by the language the respondents were comfortable with. Some of the interviews were conducted wholly in English, some using both languages, i.e. code-switching was present, and a few, mostly with the Malay production operators in Omegatronics, and a Malay clerk in Malaysianfarm, were conducted almost wholly in Malay.

Only the Malay interviewees resorted to code-switching. If an interviewee had begun in English, and appeared to show a clear preference for English, the researcher would then proceed to use English almost wholly, except for the occasional Malay word. Those who used both languages would usually begin in English, and code switch almost immediately

into the interview. The researcher would also lapse into code switching since this is natural behaviour for Malaysian English speakers. Similarly, the researcher would switch to more non-standard speech when dealing with those who tended to speak in that way.

The interviews were very unstructured, and the interviewees were usually allowed to relate whatever information they wished to divulge, although occasionally they would be prompted on those aspects that were contained in the 'aide memoire', mainly items involving speaking, writing and reading. The fact that interviewer and interviewee came from different professions made it difficult at times to be economical with questions or employ time management. For example, interviewees could not use linguistic terms in their description of their work and therefore, their feedback had to be sieved and recast in the reporting. All the respondents had a tendency to recount their areas of responsibility rather than the language skills that came into play in carrying out these responsibilities. Generally respondents gave relevant responses. Sometimes there was need to ask for clarification of aspects of their work that were rather technical and strangely enough this was more common with the non-professional staff such as the production operators of Omegatronics. Professional personnel, such as the Senior Engineer of Omegatronics, took care to use layman terminology with the researcher.

Due to the nature of the interviews, i.e. unstructured, a great deal of information was obtained that was not sought, some of which was relevant, and some of which was not. Also, because of the lack of structure, different respondents volunteered different types of information, making it difficult at times to establish common categories across the data. However, there were some questions that were asked of almost all of the respondents, and these were:

- designation and academic and professional qualifications
- a short description of the job
- proportion of English use to Malay
- persons interacted with in English on the job
- phone calls
- use of spoken English
- writing tasks in English
- reading demands of the job
- international dealings and interactions with native speakers and English speaking foreigners
- proportion of spoken or written English use
- proportion of technical English use to general English
- management's problems in relation to staff's English
- respondents' opinions about English language teaching in schools

Other categories that arose from the interviews, that were mainly unsolicited, were:

- respondents' own experience in learning English, including learning strategies used
- their own difficulties with English even in present circumstances
- *use of the computer to communicate (electronic mail)*
- company's additional activities that require English, such as the 'Total customer satisfaction' (quality circles) programme.
- additional English language needs e.g. that of translation and summary and simplification of technical materials
- diversity in respondents' mastery of standard speech; use of non-standard English and code switching

Most of the respondents were friendly and co-operative. In fact it appeared that most people opened up very readily and some were very eager to share experiences. As far as she could, the researcher tried to be amicable and unthreatening, but in general the managerial and professional interviewees were relaxed and voluble and the non-professional staff such as clerks and production workers were more reticent and guarded and did not volunteer information readily.

Another aspect worth mentioning is the brief and superficial nature of most of the respondents' responses to questions. Malaysians are not eloquent or elaborate when reporting as a rule and this was certainly true of all questions of a factual nature. For example, a question like 'Who are the people you interact with in the course of your job?', or 'What kind of writing do you have to do?' nearly always needed additional prompting to access more specific or detailed information. Perhaps the respondents failed to understand the significance of everyday events and interactions that they perhaps considered mundane. Most thought of their job as mainly doing paperwork, to the extent that it seemed that there was more interaction with print and paper rather than live interaction with people. Indeed this is quite true and an example of an inadequate response can be illustrated by the following example. When I asked Fazrina, the Environment and Safety Engineer of Omegatronics, who she interacted with, she said, 'My boss, in the US and the one here'. When I asked, 'What do you interact about?', she said '*Biasa*' meaning routine things. As we got side-tracked into discussing other areas, the researcher failed to establish what these routine matters entailed. Often, to press for information would not be appropriate in terms of what the respondent was willing to divulge and it would also interrupt the flow of the conversation. The lack of structure of the interviews also meant that the interviewees led the

agenda, in terms of what aspects they wanted to disclose, which may be associated with the way they interpret what is significant about their environment, its people and happenings.

However, most of the respondents were more eloquent when it came to expressing opinions, such as 'Do you have any ideas on how to improve English teaching in schools?'. Everyone had his/her own convictions when it came to what the education authorities should be doing. Quite a few of the respondents were curious about the investigation, and those that made a point of understanding the research area, tried hard to supply the information they thought was relevant and useful.

The researcher was quite unprepared for the diversity in the use of non-standard and more standard speech of the respondents, and was almost diverted into analysing the various forms of non-standard speech, which is a rich sociolinguistic area and much researched with regard to English in Malaysia. Although dialect is not one of the focuses of the study, nevertheless, the improper mastery of standard Malaysian dialect that has resulted from schooling needs to be commented on, and would appear to be one of the gaps that would have to be closed.

4.3 Modifications to the procedures

The original plan was to undertake observations of three contrasting workers in each company and to conduct interviews with them and with three others. In retrospect, while the main criteria were given to persons representing the institutions who organised the interviews, the selection of workers and their categories of occupations were the prerogative of the institutions in question. These persons, it turned out, were concerned that workers were drawn from different departments, perhaps to enable the researcher to see the nature and breadth of their business, with less attention to levels in the hierarchy. As such, more executive level workers were selected, perhaps also because these were the people using the most English. Similarly, there was no opportunity for observation, mainly because work stopped when the researcher was present. This was the experience in the sugarcane plantation, the first attachment; in the second, the staff appeared so busy that the researcher did not feel comfortable about taking more of interviewees' time than was necessary. Hence, the main procedure used was interviews and these formed the main basis for the report on each case study of the business institutions. However, in spite of the reliance on one procedure, the researcher was quite successful at procuring the data she sought, as it was not difficult to develop rapport with the interviewees as Malaysians are generally open and

confiding. Therefore, it was felt that these adjustments in procedure did not affect the rigour of the studies in terms of their original intent.

The following example serves to illustrate how work stopped with the presence of the researcher; this happened at the first place of attachment, the sugar-cane company. After having spent the whole of a previous afternoon and a whole morning of the next day in Lee's (the Administration Manager) office, Lee received only one phone call from his wife, who could not get into their house because she had mislaid her keys, and only one member of staff, the accountant, came in to discuss some minor arrangement with regard to the repair of a computer. It is possible that staff and colleagues in both institutions were unwilling to disturb the interviewee when there was a visitor in his/her room.

Aware that the interviewees would not want to be so open about certain aspects of their work, the researcher was sensitive to the ethics involved in taking part in the attachment and was careful not to intrude unduly. Indeed, as an example, when the secretary of Malaysianfarm was asked for some copies of letters, she was not able to oblige as she explained that most were confidential. Only Yau, the purchasing officer of Malaysiafarm obliged with a sample letter (Appendix 5c).

4.4 How the analysis was performed

The following practice was adhered to when analysing the data.

Transcription: The tapes were listened through once, then they were transcribed almost completely, mainly for future checking and to get an idea of the flow of the conversation, and something of the respondents' attitudes, sincerity, etc. Themes and categories sought, as determined by the research questions, were noted down on the right of a sheet of A4 with the main dialogue occupying the space on the left. The transcription was faithful to the way the respondents spoke, for example, code-switching by respondents was transcribed as such. Pauses, hesitations and backtracking were also recorded, and quoted as such, as were grammatical and other mistakes. The real names of the respondents were kept (mainly to aid memory) until the final first draft, when these were substituted with pseudonyms.

Some quantification was possible especially with regard to the questions that were asked of all or almost all the respondents. Unfortunately these tables were later edited out of the final copy in order to adhere to the word limit.

General information about the needs of the workers in relation to the organisation as a whole was obtained by asking the person who organised the interviews, i.e. Ridzuan in Omegatronics and Lee in Malaysianfarm. Supervisors and managers were also asked about the English language needs of staff under them in order that certain information could be validated by reference to another source. For example, the language needs of production operators were obtained by talking to the production operators themselves, the Human Resource Manager and also with the Specialist Clerk, Shariffah, who was involved in their recruitment and was once an operator herself.

Once the transcriptions were completed, and the interview data was exhausted of the themes it had to offer, the transcript was scanned again for quotes which would mainly serve to function as evidence for statements or conclusions made. When the first draft was being compiled, there was often a need to go back to the primary interview transcripts to check and clarify ambiguities in the description.

With regard to quotations, only salient phrases were selected (for economy) and three dots usually signify that words, phrases or sentences were being omitted. Generally, what was omitted were repetitions. Additionally, three dots sometimes signified a pause in the flow of talk, although this was less common.

After both workplace case study descriptions were completed, a list of criteria of workplace competencies was drawn up to be used to compare with student competencies from the school case studies.

Chapter 5

Report on the General Conduct of the School Component

5.1 The schools selected for the case studies

The school study selected two classes each in two schools, one an urban secondary girls' school called **Lembah Tua Secondary (Girls) School** situated in a central business district of a major Malaysian town (referred to as school A), and the rural case was a co-educational secondary school called **Kampung Inai Secondary School** situated on the fringes of rural habitation, but close to a major town (referred to as school B). The names of these institutions and individuals have been fictionalised. The selection of school A with its origins as a former mission school and its strong tradition of English language and literary activities may have had a significant influence on the findings of the study, as the school has one of the highest achievements in the English language paper (SPM) in the country. However, the fact that it is a girls school is less significant than its tradition, as a boys school with a similar tradition would also be strong in English.

(i). **Lembah Tua Secondary (Girls) School, School A**

Lembah Tua (Girls) School is an old established former mission school with a tradition of academic excellence, and a high standard of English among its students. The majority of students are from middle class professional families and speak English among themselves. It is a select school which means that enrolment is strictly controlled. The school is situated in the middle of a busy business and shopping district that is frequented by tourists. The classes chosen by the school for the case studies are 4 Science 3 and 4 Arts 4. The criteria given by the researcher was that one class should be a high achieving class and the other a less high achieving class. Form Four is equivalent to Year Ten in the UK, although the students are two years older at sixteen, sitting for the school leaving certificate, *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia*, SPM, the year after, i.e. in Form 5 when they are 17. Classes are streamed in the upper secondary forms i.e. Form 4 and Form 5, and as a rule, students who are selected to enter the science classes are usually the more successful students in the Form Three exam (*Sijil Rendah Malaysia*, SRP). However, for the cases chosen, the arts class, 4 Arts 4 is the higher achieving class for English while 4 Science 3 is the lower achieving class. Arts students take humanities and general science. Science students take pure science or an advanced science paper.

The form teacher of 4 Science 3 is Mrs Pan, who is in her early to mid thirties, and the teacher for 4 Art 4 is Mrs Indran, who is in her late twenties to early thirties. The school principal is a dynamic and hardworking Chinese lady who at the time of attachment was preparing for retirement but was still working very hard. The Head of Department is also a Chinese lady,

but there was very little interaction between her and the researcher during the attachment period.

(ii). Kampung Inai Secondary School (co-ed), School B

The classes observed in Kampung Inai Secondary School, the rural case, were 4 Science 1 and 4 Arts 1. The science class was chosen as the more advanced class by the Head of Languages. The form teacher for 4 Science 1 is Mr. Jegan, who is in his late twenties, while the form teacher for 4 Arts 1, the lower achieving class, is Mrs Halim who is in her mid thirties. The Head of Languages is a Chinese lady, Mrs Gan, who was keen to interact and discuss with the researcher during the attachment period. In her advisory role as Head, she reported her attempts to improve standards, such as acquiring supplementary teaching materials, setting classes, and other measures. These measures have had no effect on the pass rate, which remains at between 30%-50% (see Fig. 12). Mrs. Gan expressed strong views on the KBSM syllabus during the attachment.

The school is made up of four three storey blocks and has a student population of well over one thousand. As with other Malaysian schools with large enrolments, the school has double sessions and the upper secondary classes are held in the morning. The city has begun to encroach on the somewhat rural district within which the school is situated and the area is cluttered with bulldozers and building materials as a highway is being built close to the school. The traffic to Bukit Tinggi district is very heavy during peak hours, with commuters, as modern housing has encroached into the area and there are several factories within the district. However, the area beyond the school, to the east, has not been built up and consists of various small Malay villages and rubber and oil palm plantations. Most of the Malay boys and girls come from these numerous surrounding villages, some of which are quite isolated. The Indian boys come from the rubber and oil palm plantations. The Chinese boys and girls come from shopkeeper and construction worker families. The school also has students of more professional families from the middle class housing estate, although these are fewer in number.

5.2 Number of periods observed

Although the total possible number of periods that could be observed over the two week attachment for each class was ten, due to timetable clashes some classes were observed for fewer periods than others (refer to Table 5.1 below).

Name of school	Lembah Tua (Girls), School A		Kampung Inai, (co-ed), School B	
Name of class	4 Sc 3	4 Art 4	4 Sc 1	4 Art 1
Student enrolment	33	30	25	30
Name of teacher	Mrs. Pan	Mrs Indran	Mr Jegan	Mrs Halim
Number of periods observed	8	7	8	9

Table 5.1: Number of periods observed

Below is given the national results for English, against which the achievement of the two case study schools can be compared.

5.3 The Examination

(i). National Results for English

Year	Student	Dist	Cred	Pass	% Pas	% Fail
1988	171406	12.0	24.8	23.0	59.8	40.2
1989	169949	8.4	24.7	25.5	58.6	41.4
1990	168344	6.8	23.7	26.5	57.0	43.0
1991	169126	7.8	26.4	25.7	54.4	45.6

Table 5.2: National results for English, 1988-1991

Besides the national examinations result in English, both schools' exam performances are also given below. These results allow comparisons of the schools' performances to be made with the national results.

(ii). School A: Lembah Tua Secondary (Girls) School, School Leaving Certificate Results 1987 - 1992

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total stud	Total pass	Total failur	Aver pass
1987	173 51.33	58 17.21	51 15.13	9 2.6	10 2.9	17 5.0	11 3.2	7 2.0	1 0.29	337	336	1	99.70
1988	218 61.75	49 13.88	39 11.0	12 3.39	7 1.9	14 3.9	8 2.26	2 0.56	11 3.11	353	349	11	99.71
1989	146 47.40	61 19.80	47 15.2	9 2.9	17 5.5	16 5.1	8 2.5	3 0.9	0 -	308	308	0	100.0
1990	121 39.8	38 12.5	50 16.44	12 3.9	20 6.5	30 9.8	21 6.9	9 2.9	3 0.9	304	301	3	99.01
1991	118 39.0	56 18.5	63 20.8	17 5.6	10 3.3	18 5.9	8 2.6	8 2.6	3 0.9	302	298	3	99.0
1992	149 49.66	44 14.66	47 15.66	9 3.0	15 5.0	13 4.3	11 3.6	9 3.0	3 1.0	300	297	3	99.0

Table 5.3: School A's SPM English Results, 1987-1992

It can be seen that English as a subject in this school has had a long tradition of success, and is likely to continue. From the school leaving certificate examination results of the last six years, it would seem that Lembah Tua has few problems with English language attainment. Each year

only about three out of about three hundred students fail the English paper. Therefore the Lembah Tua reputation is one of unqualified success. The highest percentage of grades attained (about 60% and above) seems to be 1 and 2, i.e. distinctions, those getting credits, 3, 4, 5 and 6, between 20% to 30%, and those with a pass grade, 7 and 8, about 5%.

(iii). School B: Kampung Inai Secondary School, School Leaving Certificate Results 1987 - 1992

Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Passes	Failure	Student	% pass
1987	0	0	2	1	2	6	8	33	102	52	102	154	33.8
			1.2	0.6	1.2	3.7	4.96	20.4	63.35				
1988	3	9	7	4	4	13	24	19	73	83	73	156	53.21
	1.92	5.77	4.49	2.57	2.5	8.33	15.38	12.18	46.79				
1989	0	2	5	2	6	17	16	27	84	73	84	157	47.17
		1.26	3.15	1.26	3.77	10.69	10.06	16.98	52.83				
1990	0	3	9	3	4	16	20	9	68	64	68	132	48.49
		2.27	6.82	2.27	3.03	12.12	15.15	6.82	51.51				
1991	1	0	4	2	6	14	20	23	70	70	70	140	50.0
	0.7		2.9	1.4	4.8	10.0	14.39	16.4	50.0				
1992	0	1	2	4	4	12	5	18	94	46	94	140	32.9
		0.7	1.4	2.9	2.9	8.5	3.5	12.8	67.1				

Table 5.4: School B's SPM English Results, 1987-1992

While in school A above, the majority of students fall into the distinction and credit categories, in school B, they fall in the pass (7&8, i.e. about 25%) and fail (9, i.e. about 50%) categories. The results for school B have in fact fallen between the 30-50% mark. This is below the national average of 54 - 59% (as shown in Fig. 10). These results provide useful background data from which the performance in English of the cohorts in the case studies can be gauged.

(iv). The exam format

An understanding of the exam format and a familiarity with its questions is essential for an understanding of teachers' classroom practice. A 1992 exam paper is appended (Appendix 3a and 3b). Although the paper has global items such as essay writing and reading comprehension, a good proportion of it demands responses of a limited/controlled nature. These word/phrase level question types are listed below. Teachers in the case studies find it easier to drill the students in these controlled question types. They appear to bear little resemblance to the holistic, activity-based interactive language practice recommended by the syllabus:

- | | | |
|----|---------------------------------|--|
| 1. | language forms and functions | (Appendix 3a., pp. 11-13; 3b. pp. 5-6) |
| 2. | identification of errors | (Appendix 3a., pp. 13-14) |
| 3. | text completion (cloze passage) | (Appendix 3b., p. 3) |
| 4. | word omission | (Appendix 3b., p. 4) |

With regard to essay questions and reading comprehension, pages 8-9 of Appendix 3b show the guided nature of the essay questions, and pages 2-10 of Appendix 3a contain three comprehension passages with multiple-choice questions.

In the syllabus, functions are integrated with the skills of listening, speaking and reading and writing, upon which the syllabus is organised. Yet, in the exam, forms and functions are tested in a direct and formal way. Students therefore need to be familiar with the question format and master the terms under which functions are labelled. The 'word omission' question is intended to test the use of structural words such as prepositions, articles and conjunctions while the error identification question is mainly a test of grammar. 'Text completion' is a cloze test, i.e. a test of overall language proficiency, yet, nowhere in the syllabus are 'cloze passages', 'word omission' or 'error identification' ever mentioned. Again, the 'forms and functions' part of the paper covers many more functions than can be found in the syllabus as attested by Mrs Gan at Kampung Inai Secondary School.

The examination does not share the same construct as the syllabus. Therefore, the syllabus that is taught represents a compromise between the teaching syllabus and the need to prepare students to perform well in the examination.

5.4 The Scheme of Work

Appendix 9 gives an example of a scheme of work. The programme for the year is set out in the common scheme of work that is developed by the English Department in most schools. Most schemes outline the objectives and lesson content for the year, and this is divided into terms. School A and B have combined both the teaching syllabus and the type of questions contained in the SPM exam into their scheme. The scheme is very structured and it has been noted that most classes of the same year in a school, even if taught by different teachers or consisting of students of different proficiency levels, would be at the same syllabus area at any one week of the academic year. In some cases the district education office imposes certain regulations such as, that two weeks be given to the teaching of one syllabus area (e.g. of a syllabus area is 'giving opinions on current issues'), and this is incorporated into the scheme.

5.5 The Record Book

The record book sets out outline of the teacher's weekly and daily lesson plans and this is handed in to the School Principal on Friday evening. It is checked and approved by the school Principal and returned by Monday afternoon.

5.6 The Analysis of the School Component

The systematic observation is reported separately from the case studies. Each class case study is treated separately under three broad headings:

The Teacher

The Lessons

The Students

The interviews and classroom recordings were transcribed partially, and the transcription was faithful to the way the respondents spoke or interacted. Some of the student interviews were conducted in Malay when the students indicated their wish to be interviewed in the first language. The same procedure of analysis was undertaken with the workplace case studies (refer to page 51), particularly with regard to the interviews.

In order to obtain other contextual information, teachers' schemes of work for the year, and additional material that were discovered to be significant to the enquiry, such as past examination papers, and supporting materials such as readers were also examined. Informal chats were also undertaken with the school Principals, and Heads of English Departments. In fact, in school A, the researcher was recruited to participate in the judging of the district's drama competition that took place one weekend and which the school organised and played host. This gave the researcher a sense of being involved with that part of the school's tradition of valuing and sustaining activities connected with the promotion of the English language and this incidence contributed to the overall ethnographic spirit of the school study.

The match between the workplace criteria and students' level of competence as well as classroom practice is reported in the final chapter.

Chapter 6

The Advertisement Analysis

This chapter presents the results of the first research procedure used for the workplace component, i.e. the analysis of advertisements for jobs. The analysis was performed on job advertisements in the English daily, The New Straits Times (NST) and covered those that appeared between 3rd August 1992 to 7th September 1992. A total of 842 advertisements were analysed, involving 2164 vacancies, out of which 8 categories of workers were delineated, based on required academic qualifications. All the posts advertised are in the private sector because during this period of analysis public sector vacancies did not appear in the daily. Some advertisements from the November NST are also used for in the descriptive examples.

Job categories

Category	Abbreviation
Graduates	Grad
Degree/Diploma	Deg/Dip
Diploma/Certificate	Dip/Cert
Secretarial group	Sec
Malaysian School Certificate (SPM) & Higher School Certificate	Sch Cert
Skilled workers	Skil
Semi-skilled workers	Semi
Unskilled workers	Unsk

(An explanation of the difference between skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled categories is given in Appendix 4.)

The following section takes up the first question:

6.1 'To what extent is English required in the Malaysian workplace?'

The table below gives a rough indication of the extent of the need for English for all occupational categories.

Requirement/ Categories	Total & %*	Grad- uate	Deg/ Dip	Dip/ Cert	Secre- tary	Sch Cert	Skilled	Semi- skill	Un- skill
English language required	370 18.8	59 10.4	32 10.1	56 13.7	34 34.7	134 28.8	18 20.7	27 18.6	10 13.2
Communication skill required	238 9.4	91 16.1	40 12.6	42 10.3	16 16.3	37 7.9	7 8.0	4 2.8	1 1.3
No language required	1556 71.8	415 73.5	246 77.3	311 76.0	48 49.0	295 63.3	62 71.3	114 78.6	65 85.5
Total	2164 100.0	565 100.0	318 100.0	409 100.0	98 100.0	466 100.0	87 100.0	145 100.0	76 100.0

(* the percentage figure is the percentage averaged from the eight categories combined)

Table 6.1: Language requirement in the advertisements

It would seem from the table above, that a need for English is not essential, because taking the average of all eight categories of employment, *only 18.8 % of all advertised vacancies mentioned English as being explicitly required*, with an additional 9.4 % mentioning general communication skills being needed, which is taken to include both English and Malay. In fact many of the advertisements mentioned both languages, and sometimes even a Chinese dialect, such as, 'good communication skills in English and BM' (Bahasa Malaysia), or, 'proficient in English, BM and Chinese'. The above table cannot determine definitively the extent of English use at this stage. There is need to explore further evidence to determine more conclusively to what extent English is required.

6.2 'What categories of jobs require English?'

i). Secretaries, School Leavers and Skilled Workers

Again, this cannot be answered definitively from the advertisement analysis. What can be determined are the categories that do not require English, and these are the positions in the lower hierarchy of the workplace. Among the eight categories, the categories requiring English that are more frequently mentioned than the rest appear to be the secretarial category (34.7%), the school leavers category (28.8%), and the skilled category (20.7%) (Fig. 13). The requirement for general communication skills is also comparatively higher for the secretarial group (16.3%). Hence, there is a need to be explicit for secretarial positions as it is for the school leaver and skilled categories.

ii). Jobs that do not contain mention of English

No English requirement mentioned is high (71.8% overall) for most occupations. For example, for graduate level (73.5%), for degree/diploma holders (77.3%), and for

Diploma/Certificate holders (76%), also for skilled workers (71.3%), semiskilled workers (78.6%), and unskilled workers (85.5%) (fig. 13). However, at the higher levels in the employment hierarchy, e.g. graduates and diploma holders and professional workers, e.g. accountants, engineers, etc. it is postulated that the English language requirement is implicit and would be obvious to the insider.

iii). English requirement is implicit for professional and managerial groups

The case studies that follow (chapters 8 and 9) will clarify whether the English language requirement is indeed implicit for certain job categories. However, certain evidence from the advertisement data seem to indicate that this assertion is justifiable. Firstly, the advertisements are placed in an English language newspaper, which means that the person reading it is familiar with English. To illustrate, an advertisement placed in The New Straits Times (NST), November 3, 1992, by an international company (Daya Gail plc) whose business is to recruit workers for oil/gas petroleum industries of South-East Asia, advertised for the posts of engineers without mentioning English. Since the position would entail working in a South-east Asian country with different national languages, this would mean that the worker would need to interact in a common medium of communication i.e. English, and this would be obvious to the insider. Another argument showing that the *English requirement is implicit* is the fact that, for such a *specialised field* as petroleum, petrochemical and chemical engineering, no training is available locally, hence the training will have to be undertaken overseas, in an English speaking country, such as the UK, USA or Australia. To strengthen this assertion, the case study will clarify

iv). Requirement for English is stated in general terms for professional/managerial group

Below is an example of a rather detailed description for the communication skills that are demanded of the senior post of Regional Marketing Executive (Zen Concrete Industries, Lahar, Perak (NST, November 5, 1992)).

'Must be able to communicate effectively with all level of management , capable of composing an effective correspondence and have the ability to communicate and "sell ideas". Must be able to cultivate and maintain good customer relationship. Skills in gathering, analysing and interpreting and writing concise analytical report will be an advantage.'

Notice that the language concerned is not mentioned, but, since the advertisement appears in an English newspaper, and the job is one at a regional level, it is again postulated that the language concerned is English. Here, *oral communication skills, letter writing skills, ability to 'sell ideas' and write good concise reports* are emphasised. Social interpersonal skills are also deemed important, i.e. the ability to cultivate and maintain a good customer relationship.

v). No mention of English for unskilled groups is taken to mean 'not needed'

At the lower levels of the occupational hierarchy, such as *skilled, semiskilled and unskilled* workers, when English is not explicitly stated to be required, it is interpreted to be *not needed*. Again, the case studies of the two business institutions will clarify whether this argument is tenable. As the advertisements show, in 85.5% of cases in the unskilled category, and 78.6% of the semiskilled category (Table 6.1), English would not be needed.

Presumably, even for the skilled category, spoken skills in English are probably not as important as being able to perform the mechanical operations associated with the work concerned, since manipulative and psychomotor rather than verbal skills are required, although some advertisements do mention the need for skills in reading technical drawing.

However, certain semi-skilled and unskilled categories such as drivers, security guards, receptionists, despatch boys, etc. are required to have English in certain companies, presumably those where English is used preponderantly because it is their work culture.

vi). English requirement is made explicit for non-professional groups

At the lower levels, there is a greater tendency for English to be mentioned explicitly mainly because either training for those positions is undertaken locally, or no training is required and English language skill cannot be taken for granted. For example, in the NST, November 3, 1992, TDK (electronics) in Nilai, Seremban, when advertising the posts of Assistant Managers (engineering graduates), Electrical Engineers, and Factory Supervisors, did not mention English; whereas non-professional jobs such as the posts of *Line Leaders and Clerks* ask for fluent/good English.

In another advertisement, NST, November 5, 1992, SDF-SCAN Dairy & Food in Tampoi, Johore, no mention of English was made for the professional categories of Managers, Engineers and Food Technologist, Lab Technicians, Production Supervisors and Accounts Assistants, to name a few. English is *explicitly mentioned* for the posts of *Personnel/Administration Officer* (middle management, not necessarily graduates), *Secretaries and Receptionists*. There is similarly no mention for the posts of *Drivers and Security Guards*, which in this case probably means *not needed* although certain other companies may also require their drivers and security guards to have English, as mentioned in 6.2 (v) above. An example of the description of English required for *receptionists* is 'Pleasant personality with *good communication skills in spoken English and Bahasa Malaysia*', and for the post of secretary, '*Must be fluent in the English language and Bahasa Malaysia, both oral and written*'.

6.3 Urban/rural variables

This variable is analysed on the basis of the company being the unit of analysis, rather than the position. Some of the companies advertised several positions, however, if any of these required English then this was indicative of the needs of the company generally.

Location/Requirement	Total & percentage	English required	Communication skills required	No English required
Kuala Lumpur & surroundings	525 100.0	128 25.0	130 25.0	267 50.0
Outside Kuala Lumpur	322 100.0	108 32.0	43 14.0	171 54.0

Table 6.2: English need for rural urban variable in advertisements

Again, for the category 'explicit mention' the difference between urban and rural location is not significant, similarly for the generally stated 'communication skills' requirement. The percentage in the category 'no English requirement' is similar for both urban (50%) and non-urban locations (54%). Therefore, there would seem to be little variation in English requirement for urban and rural locations, the main reason being that the profile of the companies are similar, and there is deliberate and concerted effort on the part of the government to bring industries and employment to the countryside.

6.4 English requirement descriptions

Below are given language descriptions for managers and clerical posts to show the contrast between the descriptions at the upper and lower end of the hierarchy These are taken from the NST for November 1992.

Managers	Clerks
Strong leadership skills	Good command of English
Interpersonal skills/interact well at all levels	Proficient/fluent in English
Good communication skills/communicate effectively	Credit/good results in English
Good communication and interpersonal skills	Pass in English
Write effectively	Communicate in English
Good verbal and written communication skills	Conversant in English
Good command of English	Converse well in English
Fluency/proficiency in English	Good oral and written communication skills
Communicate well/effectively in English	Converse well and correspond well in English
Effectively bilingual in English and Malay	Type well in English

From the above, we can see that descriptors given for the managerial category are more general, requiring sophisticated linguistic behaviours, and those for the clerical category mention English explicitly more often, and tend to mention it at a more basic proficiency level, e.g. 'Pass in English' or 'Conversant in English'.

The range of requirements for English for all the jobs found in the advertisements are as follows:

1. Communicate effectively in English
2. Good communication skills in English
3. Fluent/proficient in English
4. Good command of English
5. Distinction/credit/good grade in English
6. Pass/conversant in English
7. Spoken English (required)
8. Articulate/good speaker
9. Presentation skills
10. Written English
11. Report writing skills
12. Handle correspondence in English
13. Write and communicate in English
14. Read and write simple English
15. Read, write and converse in English
16. Some knowledge of work-related English
17. Good telephone manners

Numbers 14, 15, 16 and 17 above are descriptors assigned to the semi-skilled and unskilled groups whereas 8, 9 and 11 appeared more for the professional/managerial category.

6.5 Conclusion

From the above interpretive account of the advertisement analysis, it is fairly evident that proficiency in English is needed for work to a significant extent. A company's origins, culture, and its management's preference exert a large influence on whether English usage prevails in the work environment or otherwise. However, it is felt that English use is more predominant for international, and highly technical businesses. For professional and managerial posts, the requirement is often not mentioned except in general terms because it is implicit and should be obvious to the insider. At the lower levels of the hierarchy there is a greater need to make

the requirement explicit, such as for the secretarial, school leavers and skilled worker categories.

From the requirements stipulated in the advertisements, a set of criteria was developed and taken as representing workplace skills for English and is given below. Some of these broad categories are derived from a cluster of similar skills, that has been summarised into a single descriptor.

Criteria of English needs derived from the advertisement analysis
(simplifying the list in 6.4 on page 63)

Excellent/effective communication skills
Fluent in spoken English; good command of English
Presentation skills
Report writing skills
Distinction/credit/good grade in English
Good spoken and written English
Basic English
Ability to speak simple English; conversant in English
Communicate in English
Handle correspondence in English
Some knowledge of work-related English
Good telephone manners

Chapter 7

The Questionnaire Survey

Approximately seventy-five questionnaires were sent out followed by a first reminder during the months of August and September 1993. Out of this total, thirty-four companies responded, of which seventeen were international and seventeen were local companies. The sample was taken from the Directory of Malaysian Manufacturers, 1991. The sample was produced following a random stratified selection incorporating the various types of industries, for example metal works, textiles, electronics, and services, e.g. banking, and a balance of those with a larger number of workers and those with less workers. A greater response was received from the larger local companies and multi-nationals. An eighteen item questionnaire (Appendix 5a) was used in the survey.

The following section takes up the first research question:

'To what extent is English required in the Malaysian workplace?'

7.1 Extent of English Use

Question number eighteen in the questionnaire showed the extent of use as given below.

90 - 100 %	15
75 - 89 %	11
50 - 74 %	3
25 - 49 %	3
0 - 24 %	0
No response	2
Total	34

Table 7.1: Extent of English use

With reference to the first question, 15 companies use 90-100% English; 11 companies use 75-89% English; 3 companies use between 50-74% English and 3 companies use less than 50% English. Putting the first and second category together, this means that 27 companies use 75% English or more in their day-to-day activities.

Those reporting 25-49% use level are a Malay owned retailing company, a predominantly Chinese textiles company, and a rural-based cement manufacturing company supplying the local market. Even though predominantly ethnic employed or ethnic owned companies cite a

lower use of English, nevertheless, the questionnaire returns reveal that for these companies, positions at the professional, managerial, technical, sales and marketing categories are still required to have English proficiency.

Companies that cluster around the 75-89% use level of English, would, in addition to managerial, professional, etc. also require middle level jobs to have English language proficiency, such as administrative and secretarial jobs, and clerks and receptionists but it would not be expected of its factory workers. These include a flour milling company, a match and lighter factory, a factory manufacturing medical equipment and a paper-manufacturing company.

Companies that cluster around the 90-100% use level are mainly international companies and include an aircraft maintenance company, a food and beverage manufacturing company, and a hardware/software services company, which also demanded a minimal level of English proficiency of its security guards, unskilled factory personnel and general workers. Those who are not required to be proficient are cleaners, sweepers and gardeners.

There are therefore gradients of use, which are presumably influenced by the type of industry and their amount of international business dealings.

'What categories of jobs require English?'

7.2 Jobs requiring English proficiency

Some of the comments obtained from the questionnaire survey (Question 11) with regard to the *jobs that require English* are given below:

'Essentially all technical, managerial, administrative jobs require better than average English comprehension, written and spoken. Our business is international and technical. English is the only accepted standard of communication.'

(Aircraft and engine/component maintenance co.)

'Managerial/executive level in all departments. especially marketing department'

(Cigarette manufacturing)

'Clerical positions and above.'

(Electronics manufacturing company)

It would seem that English proficiency is certainly needed by the upper echelons of the organisation, i.e. managers, professionals and technical staff, although some of the companies also require it for clerical positions and above.

From the same question as above, (Question 11) that asked for jobs for which English is essential, the most common occupations that received two mentions and more are given below:

19 mentions	8 - 11 mentions	6 - 7 mentions	4 - 5 mentions	2 mentions	
Managerial positions	Sales	Personnel	Accounting	Professional (3 mentions)	Purchasing
	Technical	Secretarial	Engineering	Telephone operator	Administrative
	Executive	Supervisory	Marketing	Receptionist	Warehousing
		Clerical		EDP	Production
				Superintending	

Table 7.2: Jobs requiring English proficiency

In addition, there were other occupations receiving single mentions, which were - Divisional Heads, Financial Controller, Systems Analyst, Geologist, Logistics and Planning, Export Department, and Typist. At the same time some gave general descriptions e.g. 'clerical positions and above' received two mentions, and a single mention each for the following descriptions, i.e. 'all except general workers', 'most categories' and 'all except production operators'.

(i) Some responses regarding positions requiring English proficiency:

Below are given some of the responses made by the respondents regarding jobs for which English proficiency is essential.

Receptionists, Telephone operators, Export Department, General Manager's Office and Personnel Department, but unnecessary for production operators.
(Batteries manufacturer)

Divisional Heads, Financial Controller, Finance Managers, EDP Manager, System Analyst, Product Sales Managers, Branch Managers, Area Sales Managers, Sales Executives, Supervisors, Secretaries, Clerks, Warehouse Managers.
(Consumer trading company)

Engineers, Superintendents, Technicians, Supervisors, Managers, Accountants, Secretaries, Executives (A paper manufacturing company in East Malaysia)

Executives, Sales Personnel, Secretary, Clerks, Telephone Operators and Typists
(A frozen food and cookie company)

Security guards need basic English; and that English is essential for those holding posts in sales, marketing, EDP, Personnel and Production Supervisors.
(Unnamed manufacturing company)

Clerical and Line leaders and above.
(A rubber products manufacturing company)

Apart from production operators, all jobs. (Footwear manufacturer)

(ii). Jobs not requiring English proficiency

To a question (Question 10a) regarding jobs that *do not require English*, one comment was '*Low rank jobs that do not deal with others*'. For a breakdown of the responses, see table below:

4- 6 mentions	2-3 mentions		1 mention
General worker	Machine operator	Driver	Janitor
	Casual factory worker	Gardener	Store hand
Factory operator	Cleaner	Sweeper	Sweeper
Production operator	Unskilled worker	Labourers (IMG group)	Workshop attendant
	Housekeeping/ facilities maintenance		Loader operator
			Security guard
			Clerical worker

Table 7.3: Jobs not requiring English proficiency

The general picture that is obtained is that English is generally needed for any worker involved in paper work such as clerks, or positions which deal with people such as receptionists, but it is not needed for those workers engaged in manual work. Once a worker is involved in interaction with upper and middle management, he or she will begin to need English. Whereas companies generally agree on what categories of workers require English proficiency, there is less consensus about those who do not require it, with some companies requiring even semi-skilled groups to have a certain level of proficiency.

Below are given some responses (Question 11) regarding the categories of workers who do not need English proficiency, invariably, these are menial jobs.

Not necessary for production operators. (An agricultural herbicides company)

Not necessary for machine operators, gardeners and sweepers.
(Fabricated metal products company)

The only groups of workers that do not require English are 'the lowest level, i.e. facilities maintenance, gardening and cleaning.'
(An aircraft and engine/component maintenance company)

Not needed for drivers, general workers, loader operators and security guards.
(Supplier of readymixed concrete)

The next section takes up the question below:

'What are the different language requirements for different categories of workers?'

7.3 Language requirements for different categories

Responses to an itemised question, (Question 3) regarding the levels of proficiency as they relate to different categories of workers are given below:

	English requirement	Job category
1.	Fluent English	professionals, managerial, secretarial, sales and purchasing
2.	Intermediate to basic	technical, clerical
3.	Basic English	telephone operators, drivers, receptionists, security department, general workers
4.	English not required	* cleaners, general workers, production operators, unskilled workers

(* 5 companies maintained that some basic English is also required for the semiskilled (e.g. drivers) and unskilled worker categories (e.g. general workers))

Table 7.4: Levels of proficiency for different categories

Apart from the fact that generally a higher language proficiency is demanded of managerial/professional and higher categories, the detailed requirements of each level was not available in the data. This does not pose a problem to the study however, since employers are not concerned so much with specific competencies upon entry as much as a general competency from which the worker is expected to take off into more specialised and sophisticated uses once employed.

With reference to question number 4 (Fig. 19), the professional and managerial categories received the most number of responses for the majority of the competencies named such as 'negotiate at top level', 'lead discussions and give presentations', 'read and extract gist of specialised literature', 'participate in discussions' and 'follow gist at meetings'. The technical category received the most number of responses for the competency 'use and understand specialised technical language (spoken and written)'. The secretarial category also received a great significant amount of ticks for the category 'follow gist at meetings'. Unusually, the competency which was predicted to be most needed for factory staff which was 'read/understand notices, written warnings', was highest for secretaries (30 mentions) and clerks (32 mentions) . It can be concluded that either the item failed in making clear the distinctions between language use between categories or, that from his/her experience, the

person filling in the questionnaire could not see any difference in English use between these categories. It may also be that the question was interpreted to be the reading of correspondence from business partners, etc. giving notices and warnings.

Category	Requirements
Professional, Managerial	Negotiate at top level Lead discussions and give presentations Read specialised literature Participate in discussions Follow gist at meetings
Technical	Use and understand specialised technical language
Secretarial, Sales	Participate in discussions Follow gist at meetings
Clerical	Follow gist at meetings Use and understand simple work related language
Semiskilled, Unskilled (e.g. machine operator, driver)	Use and understand simple, work related language Read and understand notices and written warnings

Table 7.5: Skills needed according to job categories

7.4 Activities that require English

(i). The following table details the results of question number 6 with reference to the language used for company activities:

	Activity	English	Malay	Malay and English	Chinese
1.	Phone calls	23	12	18	10
2.	Memos/letters	27	11	15	2
3.	Meetings	31	5	10	2
4.	Minutes	33	6	2	2
5.	Reports and Technical papers	32	1	3	0
6.	Spoken promotional activities for products and services	23	6	11	4
7.	Written publicity (company literature)	25	14	9	6
8.	Training	22	8	16	3
9.	Entertaining	19	9	19	11
10.	Others: correspondence with small shops & notices on notice board	0	0	2	1

(Note: One company uses Tamil occasionally in company literature)

Table 7.6: Languages used for various activities

From the above, it would seem that the majority of the companies use English more than any other language in their daily activities, as well as occasional activities. However, Malaysia being a multi-lingual country, the languages of the main ethnic communities are also used in most companies' daily operations when dealing with the ethnically mixed Malaysian public..

(ii). In an open-ended item (Question 8), the following responses were obtained with regard to company activities that require English.

Companies' activities at international level

9 mentions	7 mentions	5 mentions	4 mentions	2 mentions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Purchase of equipment, machinery, and supplies . Marketing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Sales (inquiries, after sales) . Conferences/ Seminars . Conferences/ Seminars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Cross Training/ Host Training/ On-site Technical Training /short courses . Liaison with overseas clients on export orders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Product exhibitions/ Trade Fairs . Product launching/sales drives/sales presentations . Meetings - partnerships, head office, with clients . Meetings with head office, liaison with overseas associate cos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Consulting/ Up-dating knowledge of industry

Table 7.7: Companies' activities at international level

As can be seen, these activities involve interactions at the international level, such as purchase of equipment, machinery and supplies, meetings, product launching and marketing, and training and updating of knowledge.

(iii). **Some responses as to company's activities of an international nature**

'Negotiations for the sale of paper, specification of our paper, ordering of parts and chemicals for mills, etc., problems and discussions on mill performance and getting up-dated information on the Pulp and Paper Industries, worldwide.'
(Manufacturer of paper and paper products)

Marketing, technical presentations and seminars, on-site technical training, logistics/purchasing (Aircraft and engine/component maintenance)

Sales - meeting with foreign buyers, purchasing - buying raw materials such as cotton, chemicals, spare parts (Textile manufacturer)

Participation in International Trade Fair, Meetings/Discussions/Sales with Foreign Buyers (Frozen food and cookie company)

An open-ended item (Question 17) was included regarding aspects of English use in the company that could be probably be included in the school programme described later in this study. This is helpful in discussing the issue of whether the classroom is aiming to promote the same set of skills that are needed in the workplace. Furthermore, what they judge to be the quality of performance of their employees with regard to their English use (see 7.5 below), are analogous to what they regard as shortfalls in the school situation.

7.5 Skills school should promote

(i) . Skills to be promoted in school

3 mentions	2 mentions	1 mention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Writing skills in terms of attention to syntax, tenses, etc., and expressive ability . Grammar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Reading . Public speaking/ presentation/oral skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Business English . Advanced oral and written English . Active participation in discussion . Eradicate code switching . Able to comprehend English so that use of translation can be eliminated . Spelling . Scientific terms . Tense

Table 7.8: Companies’ suggestions of skills to be promoted in school

**(ii). Skills needing improvement
(Question 17)**

- 'Spoken English is adequate, but written English needs to be improved.'
- 'English grammar must be emphasised to improve writing skills; to emphasise reading from young.'
- 'The ability to express and put thoughts in writing - not communication English - "Good morning, etc. ..."'
- 'To promote the active participation in a discussion or a meeting, where English is the medium of communication; To restrain and also eradicate the habitual use of dual (mixed) language in conversation, the practice of which over a period of time leads to imperfect usage of English both in written and communication.'
- 'Technical language comprehension is a speciality, and perhaps not applicable to general school programmes. Written English needs proper attention in areas of sentence structure, syntax, tenses, etc. We use a lot of literal translation from English to Bahasa, which is acceptable but not efficient or professional.'

Another open-ended item (question 12b.) was included to inquire whether managing directors perceived specific shortcomings in English use among the staff that could be improved. It is related to the research question below.

'What are the perceived problems connected with the English use of workers in these firms in general?

7.6 Gaps in the workplace

The views of these employers, however, are not an assessment of the quality of work of the employees as they are subjective judgements. However, they do point to the fact that some of these skills would need to be sustained at an early stage, i.e. in school. These views are given below:

i). Employees' problems with English
(Question 12b.)

9 mentions	5-6 mentions	3-4 mentions	1-2 mentions
. Spoken and written English	. Oral communication . Written communication . Report writing (technical)	. Grammar . Oral (business) presentations at meetings and conferences . Pronunciation	. Spelling . Letters . Business English . Tense

Table 7.9: Employees' problems with English use

A criticism from a hardware company was that graduates recruited in the past two to three years were generally poor in both spoken and written English.

Common weakness are reported below:

- 11 companies mentioned writing skills
- 4 companies mentioned presentation skills specifically
- 10 companies reported both spoken and written skills
- 4 companies mentioned grammar, spelling and pronunciation specifically
- 1 mentioned correspondence

ii). Some responses regarding aspects that need to be improved
(Question 12b.)

- 'Report writing and presentation (verbal) in meetings/conferences'
- 'Business presentation skills'
- 'Technical report and presentation'
- 'Written expression is average to low average and could be improved company wide'.
- 'Spoken English/Presentation skills and report writing.'
- 'Basic verbal communication'
- 'Perhaps verbal skills for certain categories.'

A significant feature of the comments made is that employees' writing is quite poor, with inaccuracies in grammar. Spoken English can be poor, but does not pose a serious problem when carrying out a discussion or conversation. Spoken English as it pertains to verbal presentations is a serious problem, and it is seen that as well as writing skills, presentation skills also need to be improved.

7.7 Conclusion

It is the nature of a company's business, its ownership, and the scenario within which it operates that determines whether a company uses English predominantly. It is clear from the findings above that companies with international dealings tend to operate in the medium of English; as do companies whose business is highly specialised and technical.

Companies that use English predominantly, tend to demand proficiency of all levels of workers, with the exception of cleaners and gardeners, which suggests that once a worker has dealings with the technical and managerial level, he/she will need to use it to interact in his/her job. It is mainly the clerical level and above that require English, but below this, receptionists, drivers, security guards and telephonists often require it too. Production operators, involved in the manufacture of sophisticated technological products also need to know some work-related English. Certainly, English is needed in the higher echelons, such as managerial and professional categories, and also technical, because technical language is accepted as English. It is similarly the case with marketing, if the company distributes overseas; and purchasing, if the company obtains supplies from abroad.

Criteria of needs derived from questionnaire survey

- Good and *standard* spoken English**
- Presentation skills (business and technical)**
- Presentation skills at meetings and conferences**
- Discussion skills**
- Good and accurate written English**
- Report writing**
- Technical report writing**
- Business Correspondence**
- Syntax, tenses, expressive ability**
- Speak without code switching**
- Eliminate the need for translation**

Chapter 8

Workplace Case Study One: Omegatronics (urban)

Omegatronics was selected to represent the urban case. Access to the company was negotiated by utilising a personal network in the person of a prominent public servant of the state, who is an old friend. It was felt that the use of this personal network, did not however, affect the validity of the study in any way and, if anything, it ensured good co-operation among the respondents.

Omegatronics is a multi-national electronics company producing semiconductors for the telecommunications and the automotive industry for a world-wide market. This Malaysian factory was established in 1977 and employs four thousand seven hundred workers. The company's headquarters is in Phoenix, U.S.A, and its corporate office is in Singapore.

8.1 The time and duration of the visit to Omegatronics

The Omegatronics study was undertaken after the rural case, Malaysianfarm. The time taken for the study was one full working day i.e. Tuesday, 7th September 1993. Although it was originally intended to spend a few days in the factory, circumstances transpired to shorten the visit. The Human Resource Manager succeeded in ingeniously squeezing all interviews of the requested six respondents into one day, although it was a long day. Since the staff appeared to be extremely busy, and security was tight, it was decided to conclude the visit to encompass that single day. The situation was quite unlike the sugar-cane plantation, in which the timing for the visit coincided with the quiet season, so everyone was relaxed and had time to talk, and the presence of a visitor was a welcome diversion.

The researcher utilised the second day by visiting a training centre run by the state government, whose premises are often used by Omegatronics to conduct their courses for their staff. There were three classes going on that day - 'Effective Presentation' and two on aspects of engineering. The researcher sat in on one, but it was a technical lesson - the putting together of component parts of a machine segment, and hands-on practice for supervisors and technicians. The researcher left after ascertaining roughly the technical language used in such courses but also sat through the class on effective presentation and held a short interview with the training officer giving the class.

Even though the visit was rather short, it was felt to be sufficient to give a focused and singular view of English use within the company. In fact, in terms of language skills accumulated from the

interview data, somewhat more information was gleaned from this study than the rural case. It could well be that the nature of the company's business necessitated more verbal interactions within the institution.

8.2 The company's business

Kamil, a senior engineer describes Omegatronics business as follows:

"... the parts we produce here we call them finished goods. But it is really not finished because it is part of an electronic circuit. So, we ship it to our customers, or we ship it to our own Omega plant to be assembled into other things like radios, or in the motorcar control - engine control module, and things like that."

These semi-conductors are distributed world-wide, which encompasses, as Ridzuan recounts, "... Asia ... Asia to Hong Kong, and then Europe also we sell. Almost all over the world." Omegatronics interacts at the technical level with Omega's own counterparts throughout the world which, according to Kamil, includes "... mainly ... our counterpart in the US, or any other part of the world that we have Omega - in France, in Japan."

The nature of the company's business i.e. the distribution of its products and purchase of supplies, therefore involves a great deal of interaction and travel at the international level. Within its own network of companies, communication is conducted through the cc (electronic) mail with its various sister companies throughout the world such as in France, Mexico, Japan and Korea. In addition, an officer may undergo job rotation to another plant in another part of the world to give him wider exposure and experience; or an exceptional worker may be sent to a company having difficulties to solve the problems there. There seemed to be a free flow of staff between the various plants in those countries mentioned, either on short visits or on longer term attachments. A case in point is the managing director currently serving, who is an American; his predecessor was a Malaysian.

8.3 The respondents interviewed

The respondents were chosen by the company. Names of the respondents have been fictionalised as has the name of the institution. The Human Resource Manager and contact person, Ridzuan, selected the respondents. My request was for six respondents, two from management or professional, two from middle level, technical or secretarial, and two from the lower level workers, such as typists or drivers. Ridzuan tended to draw the respondents from his own department (3 out of the 6). Fortunately, one of the three, Kamil, was newly transferred from his job as Senior Engineer in the Testing Division to Human Resource. The researcher, therefore requested him to talk about his old post rather than his new post in Human Resource. The

interviews with two production operators and a security guard were obtained as a result of the researcher stationing herself at the cafeteria and the main lobby at lunch time and engaging in casual conversation with the workers who were milling around there.

The following is the list of respondents interacted with during the visit to the Omegatronics.

Interviewee	Designation	Qualification
Ridzuan (an introductory chat about staff, rather than about his work)	Human Resource Manager	Did not ask, but possibly Arts degree, local university
Laili	Staff Manager, Side Services	UK (polytechnic) trained, but omitted to ask speciality
Kamil	Senior Manager, Testing	Engineering degree, Australia
Fazrina	Senior Engineer, Environment and Safety	Medical Biology (UK); Environmental Science (postgrad, US)
Danker	Human Resource Officer, Compensation and Benefits	Did not ask, possibly Arts degree, local university
Leong (unscheduled)	Training Officer	Did not ask; possibly arts degree, local university
Ng	Technician	Did not ask, possibly technical diploma
Shariffah	Specialist Clerk, Staffing & Recruitment	School Certificate (Malay); Typing Certificate
Mazni (unscheduled)	Security Officer	School Certificate (English)
Norida (unscheduled)	Production Operator	School Certificate (Malay)
Letchumi (unscheduled)	Technical Operator	School Certificate (Malay)

Table 8.1: The respondents who were interviewed in Omegatronics

8.4 How the analysis was performed

For a description of the analysis of the interviews refer to 4.4 on page 51-52.

The first research question for the workplace case studies is:

'To what extent is English required in the day to day operations of these selected business institutions?'

8.5 Extent of English use

Ridzuan, the Human Resource Manager, claims that the company uses above 90% English to carry out its business. This includes both internal and external communication.

Most interviewees at the executive level reported that in Omegatronics, the day-to-day operations at most levels were conducted almost wholly in English. The exceptions are external dealings with government departments, and internal communication with the Malay production operators, but not with the Chinese and Indian operators, many of whom speak English. Danker, an executive with the Human Resource Department sums up the nature of the communication below:

"If it is with operators, we deal in Bahasa (Malaysia) when they come to see us ... All other levels is all in English. We have this electronic mail ... it's all in English."

Fazrina, the Environment and Safety Engineer, confirmed that almost all paperwork is in English. She is one of the few interviewees who needs to correspond with government bodies, for which she uses Malay:

"I'm basically stuck with paper work. ... a lot of English. The Malay ... it's mainly the letters to the government agencies."

The other respondent who reported having to deal with government departments was Shariffah, the Specialist Clerk. Fazrina has to interact with the Ministry of the Environment and Shariffah with the Employees Provident Fund (EPF) and the Social Security Organisation (SOCSO) concerned with workers welfare. However, within the company itself, even at clerical level, Shariffah reported that English is the medium of communication between her and both her superiors in the Human Resource Department and her subordinates, the production operators. Her words are quoted below.

"Most of the time, *dekat sini* we communicate in English. Only seldom *kita orang cakap* Bahasa Malaysia. ... it's the way of working we talk in English ... *kadang-kadang* production operator also *pun*, *kalau* Indian or Chinese, *kalau* they come down also, they talk in English. This is our communication."

(even the Chinese and Indian production operators communicate in English when they come to see me)

If use of Malay is confined to communication at the operator level and to correspondence with government agencies, this would lead us to affirm Ridzuan's assessment of English language use, i.e. about 90% and above of the company's operations. It is consistent with the findings from the advertisements analysis and questionnaire survey that a company producing highly technological products and which has international dealings invariably uses a high percentage of English in its daily operations.

The next section takes up the three questions below. For a full coverage of the third question, however, refer to Appendix 5d.

'What categories of jobs require English?'

'What are the different language requirements for different categories of workers?'

'What are the competencies required for the occupations of the selected interviewees in terms of verbal communication, writing tasks, and the reading demands of the occupations?'

8.6 English use among different categories

According to Ridzuan, managerial and professional levels, secretarial, sales and purchasing categories, and production personnel, including the supervisory level, and technicians, all require a good standard of English. At the clerical level and below, e.g. line leaders and security officers, the employee would be able to function with a lower level of proficiency, perhaps an intermediate level.

8.6.1 Tasks in English and requisite skills for managers, professionals and executives

Kamil, a senior engineer, gave a general account of English language use in his job below:

"my mode of communication is English. That includes writing memos, speaking to my subordinates, speaking to my supervisors, my interaction with the outside world is mainly in English. There is no necessity for me to speak in Malay, except when I am interacting with the operators. Even then, most of the terminologies that we use here are in English, so we are easily understood by the operators."

Danker's account of his job as a Human Resource Executive is produced below:

"There's so many things in English that you do, like market survey, writing proposals ... We do constant surveys to compare the structure of salaries and benefits ... if we see there is a need for increasing of benefits, we prepare proposals, which we send to the US for approval ... Those have to be in English, for sure."

Indeed, at the professional level, English is one of the criteria for recruitment as attested to by Kamil:

"... that is one of the criteria I look at when I interview people, That is whether their English is good."

Some of the skills demanded of the professional, managerial and executive levels are described in the section that follows.

a. Spoken Skills

(i). Presentation skills

Laili said that in her position as senior manager, spoken skills, especially speaking to an audience was important in the workplace. In addition, she stressed, as being necessary, familiarity with the register of business English and expressive ability.

"... in school you're not encouraged to speak freely ... where you find that once you're working ... you need that a lot ... Presentation skills ... computer knowledge ... how you use English in the business sense ... how you use the language to express thoughts and ideas."

The senior staff and officers are often called upon to give presentations, as reported by Danker, Kamil and Laili. According to Kamil, the types of presentations he does are:

"**Informal** presentations to my guys, to present to them what the management communication is ... In terms of presentation to my management, then I do my **formal** presentations on what are the projects we are doing, what the status is, what are the problems ... I've also presented in technical seminars and symposium."

(ii). Negotiation and discussion skills

Laili stressed the need to participate actively in discussions, and to be able to negotiate effectively.

"I deal with suppliers, sometimes I have partnership meetings. And when you do negotiations, things like that, you have to sit across tables, and then you discuss...Can be pricing, can be dealings like you want them to do something - cost reduction - *kita tak boleh cakap* - go back and do it! *Kadang sembang satu jam, bagi dia faham apa matlamat kita* ... But what has Omega got to offer? *Jadi, kena cakap, cakap, cakap.*"

"... when you do negotiations ... you have to sit across tables, and then you discuss"

Basically she claims that when the company needs to negotiate something such as a price reduction from their suppliers, they cannot be too direct in putting their demands across, but that they would have to spend a lot of time convincing the other party that they would stand to gain from it too. This type of negotiation involves a lot of talk (*cakap*)! It requires an ability in the interpersonal skill of handling people.

(iii). Clarity of expression

Laili reported that her staff have difficulties with presentations, in terms of putting ideas across with clarity, therefore, what the staff prepare is always vetted by her first, and rehearsed with the whole unit present. In addition to difficulties with expressing and putting ideas across with clarity, staff also find it difficult to command the attention of the audience. To quote Laili:

"They're brilliant in their work - engineering ... but they couldn't express. *Bila nak express tu stumble. Bila orang tu tanya, dia angguklah* ..."

(When they want to express (their ideas), they stumble; and when they are asked a question, they merely nod)

Ridzuan concurred in this:

"... even though they have the facts, they cannot sell their ideas ... you have something, you want to sell it, but because you are not good at your language, you cannot sell it."

Kamil agreed that staff generally have difficulty in expressing themselves effectively:

"In terms of technical work, they may be good. But this is one of the hindrance. ... I don't think they have much problems understanding what other people are saying - it's trying to make themselves understood!"

(iv). Problems with grammatical accuracy

Part of the vetting Laili does is concerned with checking for grammatical accuracy:

"Baru tu saya cakap dengan staff. I said English is not our mother tongue yet we still have to make sure that spelling is right, grammar is right ... So, I have to take more time lah ... duduk, kena baca balik, tengok ... makan masa"
(just a while ago I have to sit down with them, read, check and revise their work ... it takes time)

From the above, we can see that **editing skills** are important for senior managers.

To conclude, spoken skills for the managerial, professional and executive levels in the workplace include discussion, negotiation, and presentation skills; the ability to express and put across ideas with clarity, to get the attention of the audience; the ability to influence and sell ideas; making oneself understood; and the importance of accuracy in spelling and grammar.

(v). Phone-calls

Phone-calls may have been somewhat reduced with the installation of the cc mail. Laili and Fazrina reported receiving phone calls more in the nature of queries from Headquarters or sister companies. Kamil and Danker tend to use the cc mail more than letters or phone calls. The company is committed towards protecting the environment by building a paperless society.

b. Writing

Strangely enough, there is not much extended writing required in Omegatronics. Much writing is completed to a standard format and in note-form, and is usually to do with status reports regarding progress, issues and highlights.

i). Weekly reports

Below, Kamil is quoted with regard to his weekly reports, and the procedure followed for report writing:

"... it's very simple. Like what are some of the ... what we say red flags or problems that they have encountered. Generally looking back the week that had passed and also what are their plans for the future. So, that report to us is not much of a problem because it is in point form and most of the time we are looking at numbers, how much they do."

Statistical information therefore, is important in technical reporting which is the most common form of reporting within the organisation. Analytical skills on the part of the writer are important, as well the ability to assess and identify priorities of a situation in order to decide what to include and exclude in the reporting.

"Over here what we have is the traditional kind of writing. The subordinates write a report to the supervisor. The supervisor writes a report to the next level. So, it's all the way up to our General Manager (who) will write a report outside."

Kamil's comment above implies that those in senior managerial positions who have to produce the final comprehensive report will have to exercise the skills of compiling, synthesising, summarising and editing.

ii). Writing for operations review

In writing for presentations as part of their operations review, it is even more important to give the facts and figures in graphic form as reported by Laili.

"Kebanyakan I buat macam preparation for operations review - for presentation ... banyak dalam graphical form. Kita banyak gunakan computer" (the graphs are done on the computer)

"... I do weekly report writing ... Berkenaan dengan unit kita. Progress dia. Apa masalahnya. Ada issue ka. Ada highlights ke. ... Anything that people ask you respondlah. Kadang-kadang may be through that mail (cc Mail). Orang tanya, you jawablah." (you have to answer queries - sometimes on the cc mail)

(iii). Writing on the cc mail

As Laili recounts above, there might be a query on the cc mail which she has to reply to. Therefore dealing with memos in the nature of queries on the cc mail is another language skill demanded of professionals and managers. Laili added that the writing has to be precise, containing main points only, and a lot of the details may have to be omitted, therefore there is again a need to assess a situation and identify priorities.

(iv). The infrequency of extended writing

Perhaps, of all the respondents, Danker is the one who uses more extended writing, for example, when he produces the results of surveys or when proposing a new appraisal system. Otherwise, technical writing is mainly in the form of graphs, diagrams and figures with little narrative prose.

(v). Reading

Kamil, the senior engineer, admitted to not having time to do much reading whereas Laili, the staff manager of side services, said that she takes reading seriously and makes time to read. Kamil is in fact doing research and delivers technical papers quite often at local seminars. Since he keeps up-to-date with the latest developments in his field, it is hard to believe his claim that he does not read much.

When asked about the kind of materials read by her, Laili said:

"Kalau setakat Omegatronics ini, read about Omegatronics lah!"

Meaning, that if you are an employee of Omegatronics, what you read about is mainly about Omegatronics! With this remark both of us fell into fits of laughter! She went on to relate that most employees make a point to read the articles circulated about Omegatronics:

"Kalau fasal Omega, dia orang baca. To be updated, they have to read."

Omegatronics circulates materials in abundance. Many of the materials she referred to were information about the company; "about work", said Laili, "about working materials tentang Omega ni", its products, innovations, and of course articles on management, "leadership", "credibility", motivation etc. intended to improve staffs' performance. There is even a specialised library on-site.

Within Omegatronics, the network of plants share knowledge and innovations among themselves as described by Kamil:

"Within Omegatronics, we have what is known as 'fan in, fan out'. So, if we discover something here, we will fan it out to all other Omegatronics plants. So, if they find out something else, we will fan in from them. So, that's how we keep up to date within our own area. But external to that we have to do our own research, or to take our own initiative to find out."

Much of this 'fan in, fan out' takes place on the cc mail.

(vi). Travel

Some employees travel more than others. Fazrina travels often, because her department, Environment, Safety and Health is just breaking new ground in their commitment to protecting the environment, and she liaises more frequently with the parent company in Phoenix. Leong travels now and again to Phoenix to learn how to utilise the various training packages prepared centrally.

Interactions on the international level are for negotiating and securing supplies, and most of the interviewees are engaged in some travel. According to Ridzuan: "... components you buy it from all over the world, we have to communicate with them."; and Laili reported, "*kita punya piece part - bahan-bahan mentah yang buat semiconductors tu*" (we purchase the piece parts ...). According to Laili, the staff in her department who are involved in purchasing travel very frequently, although she herself travels less frequently because the purchases concern a specialised area which only trained personnel can handle. According to Ridzuan, China supplies a lot of the piece parts; "Actually, some of the parts now in China ... (but) we still communicate in English."

Vendors can be international firms, e.g. Samimoto, Goto, Tosira from Japan and American Fine Wire from America as reported by Laili. These dealings are conducted in English.

Laili reported on the reasons she embarks on travel:

"travel *tu macam kita ada* partnership meeting, *macam mana nak eratkan lagi antara supplier ... Omega pun ada* meeting, *macam mana kita nak tengok lima tahun hadapan - long term planning ... tulah ... language becomes very important*"

She says that the meetings she attends overseas are those to strengthen ties with suppliers, or meetings with Omega headquarters for their long term planning programmes, and that for these activities, language becomes very important.

If supplies or services are obtained from within Malaysia, both Laili and Kamil reported that these local vendors may use a Chinese dialect or Malay, although, since a specialised area is involved, English is often more common.

8.6.2 Tasks in English and requisite skills for technicians and supervisors

At the supervisory and technician level, there is less need for presentations, negotiations and reporting. However, the staff still need to be able to handle both English and Malay competently as reported by Ng, the technician. Supervisors and technicians use English in interactions with

superiors and Malay in interaction with the production operators they supervise. Their main English need is to read **technical material** in English, and to convey this to the production operators in simplified and summarised form in the training courses. Use of **translation** is involved here. Indeed, technicians and supervisors may find being bilingual and practising code-switching the most effective way to communicate in their jobs.

8.6.3 Tasks in English and requisite skills for clerks

At the clerical level, at least an intermediate level English is needed, as a clerk, such as Shariffah, needs to handle routine correspondence in English, and would have to use a computer to assist her in her clerical duties. Since the PC is used as a means of communication, and computer programmes are in English, it is essential even for clerks to have a good working knowledge of English. Shariffah was promoted to specialist clerk from her position as production operator. She explained that if one had to use the computer, then knowledge of English was essential.

"... *kat sini pun*, everyone of us have our own PC kan, so most of the PC ... most of the command is in English."

She also needs to interact with the expatriate staff when handling their visas, etc. and therefore has to be able to handle both **simple work related conversation** as well as social conversation.

Since Shariffah handles recruitment in Omegatronics, she reported that the calls she received concern queries about job vacancies.

"I receive a lot of phone calls. Sometimes they want to know whether there is any vacancy in Omegatronics ... but, most of it is in English lah. Outside calls. Most of it in English. ... Even though for production operator also, I mean, sometimes some calls from girls, especially Indians, or Chinese - most of them will talk in English."

Letters

Shariffah also reports that writing letters is simply a matter of taking a standard format, and just changing the name, address, etc.:

"... *macam* rejection letter, the format is there. I only insert the name, the address, what position, just that *lah*".

Therefore, at the clerical level, staff deal with routinised correspondence, following a fixed format.

8.6.4 Tasks in English and requisite skills for production operators

(i). Need to understand technical terms

Having been an operator herself, Shariffah was also able to recount the English needed by a production operator. The main requirement is to execute written instructions in English, and a familiarity with the technical terms associated with one's line operations is also necessary.

"In fact, when the girls go to the line also, the most terms that they use - 'reject' - whatever unit they expose to it - all in English. Even the specs also in English. Spec *tu kalau kita ada* this operation, *kita ada* 'die bonding', 'wire bonding', *so macam mana dia orang nak buat* 'bonding' *tu ada* one specs, the specs will be in English, because it comes from US, so most of it is in English."

She says that operators have to understand the **terminology** associated with their line operations which are written into the specifications of procedures to follow that are posted on the machines. They need to be able to **read and understand their work specifications** which are in English. This concurs with Ridzuan's report about English use among the operators:

"If you go on the line, they have their worksheets all ... most of the instructions in English."

(ii). Need to carry out simple work-related conversation

With regard to spoken interactions, Shariffah reported that when she was an operator herself, she noticed that supervisors almost always use Malay with the operators, but that the non-Malay engineers often tended to use English. Even expatriates sometimes would need to communicate with the production operators regarding some aspect of work, therefore, operators need to be able to carry on a **simple work-related conversation** too. Additionally, their training programme would also be conducted partly in English.

(iii). Participation in the 'TCS' programme

Apart from the English which is required to carry out their line operations, operators need English to be able to take an active part in a programme called 'total customer satisfaction' (TCS), which is a kind of 'quality control circle' common to Japanese companies and aimed at solving problems collectively in a bottom-up manner. The best team among the operators have the opportunity to present their project in the US, in English. As recounted by Shariffah:

"... here also *kita ada* TCS - total customer satisfaction- which all the line, they perform one team, every month, so every year *kita ada* competition, whoever won, they will be sent to US, even though *dia* production operator. ... when you go to US, when you want to present your project or whatsoever, you must talk in English. If you talk in Malay, nobody, I mean, they don't understand what you are saying!"

With the TCS programme, even production operators have the opportunity to travel, and the researcher was told this presents a big incentive to the lower level workers to learn English for their career development.

(iv). English upon entry for hazardous operations

In fact, Shariffah reported that their recruitment policy with regard to hazardous operations demands good English language proficiency for operators upon entry because their work involves the handling of chemicals.

"... the wafer fab ... are looking for those that can speak English. Because that line they deal a lot with chemicals, *nanti dia orang salah campur* chemicals, the whole thing will ... only one specific department. The rest *macam, dekat sini* we can train them, because *dia orang tak* expose a lot to chemicals kan, so we train them."

Production operators recruited into the wafer fabrication section must be equipped with English since their work carries some risk, and the taking of precautions necessitates understanding instructions in English. Not all operators require English upon entry. Nevertheless, new recruits are constantly monitored, and they are moved around until a position that is appropriate for them is found.

(v). Training materials in English

Regarding the training of the operators, Ridzuan reported

"All the syllabus is in English ... Sometimes it is translated by the instructors."

Training for production operators is usually conducted in both languages. While the language of instruction is Malay, the terms are kept in their original English.

(vi). Read signs and notices

Additionally all signs and notices are in English. As Shariffah reported:

"Most of the notice board here, *kalau Puan Rohani* aware, most of it is in English."
(if you are aware)

Fazrina concurred with regards to materials she had to circulate regarding environment and safety that are posted on notice-boards in the walkway:

"Some we circulate, some we just post it up there. *Dekat walkway tu kan?*"
(at the walkway)

"... *Bila* deal with the operators, then the material is in *bahasa*. We get items from overseas that is in English, then we have to reword it into *bahasa*."

(vii). Writing

At the production operator level, writing consists of making ticks in a matrix as to the tasks that have been executed. An operator would have to understand these records and to follow up on another operator's record of work completed.

8.6.5 Tasks in English and requisite skills for security guards, cleaners, cook

(i). Spoken English

According to Mazni, the security guard, even security guards need English as the factory always has approximately ten expatriate staff at any one time, as well as frequent non-native English speaking visitors, such as their Japanese counterparts. Security personnel need to be able to direct these visitors to the right office or person. Even unskilled workers, such as cleaners need some basic English, as according to Ridzuan. "(for) the general workers ... it's an advantage. Even the guards, they need to speak because we have a lot of foreigners coming in." In fact, the researcher had a chance to talk to the chief cook of the company cafeteria, Leow, a young Chinese man, and I observed that he spoke very fluent English.

(ii). Phone calls

Mazni, the security guard, also reported the need to answer the phone and take messages in English.

"Bila dah bekerja tu kan, selalu gunakan dalam telefon. Kita selalu dapat message dari Phoenix, Jepun, Hong Kong. Jadi, kita kena faham apa dia. Kalau tak faham, macam mana kita nak sampai-kan message tu kan? Problem juga."

(We sometimes have to take phone messages in English from overseas, therefore we need to know English, otherwise we won't be able to relay the message).

(iii). Report writing

Her job also involves writing daily reports in English. This is routine reporting to a set format.

"Menulis ada. Dalam buku report kita. Macam report - kita recommend tentang security"

Indeed, use of English in Omegatronics permeates right down to the lower levels of workers, since it is the language of management and the language they use to carry out their daily operations. Indeed, a production operator may need to interact with expatriates; he/she may be promoted to a desk job, like Shariffah. Therefore it can be seen that the potential for English use exists even at production level, and may surface at any time in one's career. Presumably that is why Omegatronics encourages staff to take English proficiency courses and reimburses 75% of the fees.

The following section takes up the question below:

"How much specialised technical language in relation to general English is required of the interviewees of the selected occupations?"

8.7 Use of Technical language

Use of technical language in relation to general language use was one of the variables that was investigated and direct questioning was employed for this. A production operator's use of English while on the production line is limited to technical terminology, while the language of verbal instruction from the supervisor may be in Malay. Below is quoted what Norida had to say about her line operations.

"Arahan semua dalam Bahasa Inggeris. ... Bahasa Inggeris untuk perkara penting. Bahasa Malaysia bahasa hubungan; bahasa Inggeris jadi bahasa kerja ... Unit-unit dari wafer buat 'die bond'. Dari 'die bond' ke 'wire bond' - semua dalam bahasa Inggeris; nama-nama machine semua dalam Bahasa Inggeris." (Translation: All instructions are in English ... English is used for important matters. Malay is the language of communication; English is (our) work language ... the units from the 'wafer' go to the 'die bond'. From 'die bond' to 'wire bond' - all (instructions) are in English; the names of the machinery are all in English.)

All work instructions are in English and English is used for communication on important matters. Malay is for non-work-specific communication as English is the language of work. Production workers are expected to master specific technical language related to the job such as 'wafer', 'die bond' and 'wire bond'.

It is to be noted that for professionals such as Kamil and Fazrina, both technical language and non-technical language demand a high level of mastery, whereas technical language use is more limited for those in administrative positions such as Laili or those in a non-technical field, such as personnel, i.e. Ridzuan and Danker.

8.8 Other Themes

i). Computer software and the (cc) Mail

Since the computer is so widely used in Omegatronics, computing skills and knowledge of software are definitely an essential need of the workplace, since as Laili relates, writing for

presentations involves using the computer to produce graphs, charts, diagrams and tables. In addition, there is the cc mail. Although there are no conventions to electronic mail writing, nevertheless, a certain style has developed that is more informal than formal letters. Between friends, it can be very personalised, chatty and light-hearted.

When questioned about the style employed on the cc mail, Kamil reported:

"(It's) not that formal. Whatever we want to express, we just express it in any way we want. ... We change styles too. It depends on whom we are talking to. Sometimes we make jokes. It's like talking, but you are not there."

There is a need to vary styles between superiors, equals and subordinates which requires a sophisticated use of the language. However, according to Kamil, members of his staff do make mistakes on the cc mail, and although he does not consider it his responsibility to edit his staff's letters, memos, etc., nevertheless, if he comes across a very poorly worded letter, for example, he would reword it and resend it!

ii). Translation

Two of the respondents interviewed said that translation is an important part of their job. One is the technician Ng, who relates that whenever there is a change in line operations he has to read the manuals, break down the operations into manageable tasks, rewrite the specifications, and translate the specifications in the training that he will be doing with the operators. Even though the final specifications posted on the machine are in English, the briefing and familiarisation with the operation is translated into Malay during the training.

Fazrina reports that she also needs to make translations of certain announcements or materials on the environment and safety measures intended for the operators that are pinned on the notice-board at the walkway. Mazni, the security guard sometimes finds herself having to translate what is written on the security pass (since the pass is in Malay) to Japanese, French and American visitors and even those from Singapore. Whereas, Fazrina and Ng are translating from English to Malay, Mazni has to translate from the Malay to English.

The final section attempts to answer the following question:

"What are the perceived problems connected with workers' use of English in these companies in general?"

8.9 Problems with English

i). Respondents' assessment of their own and their staff's English ability

Quite a few of the managerial and professional employees complain about their staff's weaknesses in English. Some feel that their own English could benefit from some improvement. Of the senior interviewees, Laili mentioned this; and of the junior personnel, Shariffah feels very humble about her own adequacy in the language. Even the researcher could discern various levels of prowess with regard to spoken English among the staff, some being very fluent and standard, and others rather non-standard in their speech.

(ii). Problem areas of English with regard to staff

Generally, senior staff who possess good proficiency are not happy with the standard of English of their subordinates. Senior staff, however, who themselves are not so fluent, are quite content with the quality of English of their officers on the whole even though they admit that there are specific areas that need improvement. To quote Kamil, who feels that engineers should have a good mastery of the language:

"I strongly believe so (i.e. that an engineer must have good English). He should be able to communicate in verbal and written English. Let me just tell you, some of the English I've seen from the engineers and my own engineers is really disgusting, to say the least."

He then talked about how he arranged an English class for these engineers.

"This is important because I've seen messages being written to outside people, and you can't figure out what they are trying to say. Not only grammar is wrong, the idea they are trying to portray ... here they speak broken English we understand, but, to the Americans, for example, people we interact with, ... Inaccurate is one, and misleading is another, and they don't understand at all is worse. They come back to us and ask, 'what are we trying to say?'. On the phone, most of the time, they ask, 'can you repeat what you're saying?'"

According to Kamil, the problem is bad enough to affect efficiency.

"I had six engineers. I would say that at least two are in need of improvement in English ... Sometimes they send messages and people (counterpart in US) don't understand, then the reaction will not be as efficient as we want it to be. Sometimes it is urgent, you know. They send a message, please respond to us by today. The guy comes back, and say he doesn't understand what we are talking about, or what we want."

Kamil also has higher standards, because he expects the engineers assisting him to be able to produce technical papers related to the work they are doing, and to present them in professional circles, a skill that they have yet to acquire.

Apart from grammatical errors, Kamil is also concerned that some members of staff have very poor pronunciation. Certain staff exhibit an unconcerned attitude towards their command of the language. Talking about the English course that he has arranged for the engineers, Kamil says:

"Let me also tell you - some of them, they are not very enthusiastic in attending. Really, it's the thing that upsets me a bit - because people who are really in need of it, those are the people who are not very keen in learning. And that is why in the first place they don't have good English, because when they were learning, they were not interested."

Problems with writing is another area that merits concern among the senior staff. As mentioned earlier, there is a failure to employ the appropriate business genre and an inability to express ideas clearly and with precision. With regard to speaking, it is the inability to respond appropriately to questions by native speakers during verbal presentations.

It was also reported, especially by Ridzuan, that a lack of proficiency in English affects a person's self esteem seriously enough to impair his/her efficiency especially when interacting at an international level. Personnel who are not fluent tend to be timid and passive, thus reducing their visibility within the organisation perhaps denying their opportunities of getting promotions.

8.10 Importance of English

Most of those interviewed were very concerned about the current standard of English in schools. Many were eager to discuss why it is important, and what should be done to improve standards. Leong, the training officer said this:

"I think, Malaysia, uh, we still need English. And why a lot of investors come to Malaysia, uh? Because we are bilingual. We can speak English. ... "

Fazrina also stressed its importance:

"... if we are talking about technical reports *ke*, details *ke*, and social reports,... It will take some time before Malaysia can catch up and translate all the journals and what not... And then, international news - English, right?... English is an international language, so, somehow or other we have to. *Mahu ke tidaknya* we have to (we have to whether we like it or not)."

8.11 Conclusion

In Omegatronics, English is required from the lowest production operator level of the organisational hierarchy. The explanation lies in the nature of the company's business, which

concerns the production of high technology products. Since the knowledge base is not home grown, as in Japan, for example, the borrowed technology has to be executed in the language of the people borrowed from.

Ninety percent of the company's spoken interactions involve the use of English, and almost 100% of its written business dealings. Informally, and verbally there is use of Malay, and code-switching between speakers of the native language. There are distinct differences between the use of English among professional and non-professional staff, and between technical and non-technical workers. However, all categories require a basic general purpose English proficiency.

Chapter 9

Workplace Case Study Two: Malaysianfarm (rural)

The access to Malaysianfarm was negotiated through utilising a personal network, in the person of a prominent local politician. As with Omegatronics, the use of this personal network had no unintended effect on the study apart from ensuring good co-operation among the respondents.

Malaysianfarm is a local Chinese owned plantation of some 11,000 acres, growing sugar-cane and situated in a remote part of Peninsular Malaysia to the north. It was selected to represent the rural case. Malaysianfarm employs about two thousand five hundred workers, one thousand and eight hundred of these being Thai migrant workers who work in the fields for six months of the year at harvest time, beginning around November and lasting until May the following year when the replanting is completed. In addition, there are four hundred local farmhands who are employed full-time.

The sugar produced is refined in an adjoining refinery which is a separate enterprise. The processed sugar is sold for local consumption. In fact, Malaysia produces only about 10% of its needs, importing the bulk of its consumption, in the form of raw sugar, from Australia and which is processed mainly by the company's subsidiary refinery in another state. This plantation started its operations in 1971. Neighbouring is another plantation which is quasi-government-owned and is run by settlers, (although Thai farmhands are also utilised during harvest time). There is a high level of mutual assistance and sharing of knowledge and expertise between the management of the two plantations and they share a common research laboratory.

9.1 The time and duration of the visit to Malaysianfarm

The visit to Malaysianfarm was made from the afternoon of Monday, 23rd August to noon of Thursday, 26th August 1993. Thursday is a half day for the state, and marks the end of the working week and Friday is the weekend for this state. This made a total of two full days and two half days in all. Half a day was spent with each senior level member of staff, and about half an hour each with the clerks mainly because their reticence made it difficult to sustain the interview.

9.2 The company's business

According to Lee, the Administrative Manager:

"Our operation is to grow cane, and send the cane to the gate of the factory, Kilang Gula. Those people at the factory process the cane into table sugar."

Malaysianfarm does not have as complex an administrative structure as Omegatronics and has a smaller number of administrative staff. Lee reports that there are three departments: Agriculture, Engineering, and Administration. The agriculture department is the backbone of the company responsible for growing the cane. The engineering department is in charge of water, fuel, transport and buildings. The administration department deals with non-technical matters such as accounting, purchasing, legal matters, personnel and public relations. Agriculture and engineering staff work mainly in the cane fields and operate from the field office and workshop, while the administrative staff are confined to the main administrative building.

The person who is mainly responsible for running the plantation is Tan, the Plantation Manager who is in his late forties. The Chairman/Director, is Tengku Idris, who is slightly older. According to Tan, both of them conduct a routine inspection of the plantation together every morning. Tengku Idris is something of an anglophile ('Tengku' meaning someone from an aristocratic family and was probably trained overseas) and uses only English with the senior staff.

9.3 The respondents

The respondents were chosen by Lee the Administrative Manager, although the contact person who had helped to arrange the access was the Personnel Officer, Marzuki. Lee tended not to select staff who did not use much English, which ruled out clerical and supervisory levels and below. In fact, the interviews with the two clerks were arranged by personal request, and were obtained through the assistance of Nancy, the secretary. As with Omegatronics, Lee not only selected respondents from different levels in the organisational hierarchy, but also from different departments, presumably to ensure that the researcher obtained a good picture of the operation of the plantation as a whole.

The following is the list of respondents interacted with during the visit to Malaysianfarm.

Interviewee	Designation	Qualification
Tan Ley On	Plantation Manager	Agriculture degree, University of Malaya (UM)
Lee Keat Seng	Administrative Manager	Economics degree, UM
Goh Ah Chai	Assistant Plantation Manager	Engineering degree, Taiwan; Postgraduate Studies, UK
Leo Tan Lok	Accountant	Accountancy Certificate

Yau Kim Fook	Purchasing and Administrative Officer	School Certificate (Chinese medium)
Nancy Ooi	Secretary to Senior Managers	School Certificate (English medium) Secretarial Diploma
Marzuki Marican	Personnel & Public Relations Officer	School Certificate (English medium)
Maznah Karim	Payroll Clerk , Personnel Dept.	School Certificate (Malay medium)
Kamala Muthusamy	General Clerk, Accounts Department	School Certificate (Malay medium)

Table 9.1: The respondents who were interviewed in Malaysianfarm

(With the exception of Kamala Muthusamy who is 29) all the staff are in their mid to late forties or early fifties, and have been with the company since it was established in the early seventies)

The researcher was also able to interact with the Assistant Manager of the Sugar Refinery, Lim Chia Eng. This was unscheduled. What happened was that, after completing a guided tour of the plantation, conducted by Goh, the agriculture engineer and assistant plantation manager, the researcher was left at the gate to the sugar refinery by Goh, perhaps because he thought her education of the sugar industry should be rounded off by following the cane to the very end. Lim showed the researcher around the sugar factory and explained how the sugar was refined. It was quite useful as it revealed how the factory workers had to be familiar with the work procedures which were given in English, and also how the warning signs around the factory were all in English. It was reported that a lot of the workers had been working in the factory for a long time and were quite fluent in English as most were from the old English medium schools. It was only the packing section (for wholesale) that had workers who did not use much English.

9.4 How the analysis was done

The same procedures as with Omegatronics were adhered to when analysing the data (refer to 4.4 on page 51-52).

The section following takes up the first question:

'To what extent is English required in the day to day operations of these business institutions'?

9.5 Extent of English use

Lee claims that Malaysianfarm uses over 90% English. He is, however, referring to the white collar positions. Perhaps Leo, the accountant, is more accurate in assessing that English is only used (in spoken form) by 25% of the staff. This is probably a more accurate assessment if the

two thousand farmhands are taken into account. Certainly senior managers such as Lee, professionals such as engineers (Goh), the accountant (Leo), and agronomist and Plantation Manager (Tan) report using mainly English in their jobs.

To quote Tan, the Plantation Manager regarding English use within the organisational levels:

"At our farm level, we use Malay from worker up to the FA, Field Assistant level, we call it Conductor level - Form 5 level. ... Because all our boys are Malay medium; few of them can speak English. ... Then, among the officers, among the managers, we are from the English trained and we converse in English."

Lee, the Administrative Manager, concurs with this: "Up to the Supervisor level, they may still know some English. ... Below that it's verbal instructions, and in Malay." Leo reports that English is used up to supervisor level because "Supervisors need to keep accurate records" and these records are kept in English. He also confirmed that very little English is used in the cane-field, and in the administrative section the majority of the junior clerks do not speak English. As to the activities that are conducted in English and the job categories that use English, Tan reports:

"All our correspondence with outside world, outside country all in English. Except with government, we use *Bahasa*. Even with government research (division), MARDI, when we have err ... what we call - discussion ... are all mainly in English ... only for formality we use *Bahasa*. Then, dealing with contractors, dealing with workers ... all in *Bahasa*, no English. English mainly among the senior level, with outside world, with commercial people, all English."

Lee in turn reports the following activities as needing English, and excerpts of the conversation is produced here:

"Dealings with HQ all in English ... internal circular to all, we use BM and English concurrently ... in day-to-day operations"; "... Management level meetings all in English ... (and) minutes ..."; "Deal with suppliers, except for small Malay companies, who send quotations in *Bahasa*. Big Malay companies also use English - correspond in English."

Leo, the accountant, concurs that all account statements from suppliers such as ICI and Bayer, are in English. The reason for the high percentage of English use in a company situated in the country is explained by Lee:

"The level of English used by a company in this part of Malaysia depends on its dealings with Kuala Lumpur. If you are purely localised company - making bricks, supplying local markets, may be the level of English use may not be that much. Because we are just operation unit of corporate public company, so we have a lot of communication with our HQ. We use a lot of English in that sense."

Malaysiafarm began as an ethnic Chinese company but as its founder spoke English, business was conducted in English from the beginning. Some Chinese companies may have started off using Chinese, but may find themselves having to revert to English later. As Lee recounts:

"Unless you're talking about those sundry shops *lah* ... most Chinese companies use English, because accounting you have to use English ..."

To conclude, all day-to-day operations in the administrative section uses English. This includes dealings with the HQ, meetings and minutes, discussions, correspondence, internal circulars, and dealings with commercial people. *Bahasa* is used for dealings with government agencies such as MARDI, the agricultural research department, the contractors who carry out work in the fields, and suppliers that are small Malay companies. As to English use among levels of workers, English use permeates down to the Supervisors. Malay begins to be used from the Field Assistant level downwards. However, in the administrative section, at the level of clerks, Malay is used in spoken interactions although written work is conducted in English.

The section that follows takes up the first question below mainly, and the question following it in part. A more comprehensive account that deals with the second question is given in Appendix 5e.

'What are the different language requirements for different categories of workers'?

'What are the competencies required for the occupations of the selected interviewees in terms of verbal communication, writing tasks, and the reading demands of the occupations?'

9.6 English use among different categories

When I asked Lee, the Administrative Manager, what constituted an acceptable level of communicative competence in his organisation, he reported that it would depend on the job:

"If they are telephonists, communication skills is enough. If you are an officer, say a graduate, you have to put your thoughts down on a piece of paper - you need written skills ... Written skills is very important if you are holding a higher post. And ability to write without mistakes."

In fact, Lee is quick to point out that at the professional level, they recruit only staff with English. To quote him, "If an engineer comes in with first class honours, but no English, we won't take him in."

9.6.1 Tasks in English and requisite skills for managers and professionals

According to Lee, since a Manager engages in conceptual thinking when planning, making projections and calculating risks, this requires a sophisticated command of the language. His/her language needs would not be the same as a manual worker who engages in physical action in the here and now. To quote him:

"... if you hold the post of departmental head, you need good communication skills. Because you're no more involved in the physical operation of it."

The agronomists and engineers are in the field on a daily basis and are the ones responsible for producing the crop, by managing irrigation, transport, etc. They tend to leave most administrative matters and interactions with the outside world to the Administrative section. The engineering section is divided into two - the water, fuel and building section under Goh who is also an Assistant Manager, and another section responsible for the fleet of about a hundred vehicles that belong to the company under supervision of the mechanical engineer who is also the Workshop Superintendent and an Assistant Manager. Goh sees his work in terms of practical rather than verbal skills.

"We don't have much chance to contact with the people who are outside. We are just ... doing the planting of the cane and send the cane to the factory. That's it, our part."

a. Spoken skills

i). Phone calls

Malaysianfarm does not use the electronic mail. The number of staff engaged in desk jobs is quite small, hence networking among themselves or even using the phone (except for the field crew) is not necessary as they can just lean over to the next table or walk a few feet to interact face-to-face. Surprisingly, when asked about outside phone-calls, respondents tended not to have much to say about the matter, especially those from managerial and professional levels. Tan and Goh who are in the field or at the field office leave the phone calls to Nancy, who handles the bulk of the calls. If they are needed in the office they are reached through the radio-phone. Even though the frequency of telephone communication is not high, nevertheless, Tan says that the phone is essential because of their remote location. Lately, there has been an increasing tendency to use the fax machine.

" We are in this part of the country, err ..., very seldom people come here. A lot of things are through the phone. ... Now, with the inclusion of fax, it's very convenient *lah*. Otherwise, over the phone, difficult. Now, the thing we do is fax. Before is telex. Now, no more telex. All fax."

And, according to Lee:

"All phone calls that come into this office use English as the language of transaction."

ii). Participation at meetings

Strangely enough, meetings are not held frequently in this organisation. According to Goh:

"When there is a lot of problems, you tend to have a lot of meetings. And the company is doing well (now). ... meetings become lesser and lesser."

When meetings are held, extended presentations are very rare, but important matters are presented briefly and discussed. Meetings at the Headquarters are mainly attended by Tan. However, since the parent company is a public listed company with numerous subsidiaries, the Malaysianfarm agenda would last for approximately ten minutes including verbal reporting and discussion.

b. Higher level spoken competencies

Skills associated with negotiations, discussions and oral presentations were not reported as being needed seriously. The oral presentations that do occur, are for visitors to the plantation and are mainly handled by Tan, the Plantation Manager:

"Occasionally, there are visitors who come over here. We give oral presentations to the visitors." (Tan)

However, even though they are seldom called upon to speak, they do not deny its importance in the workplace.

Negotiation and discussion skills are not highlighted by the interviewees, since the company has been established for some time; and Malaysianfarm handles no distribution as all the cane is delivered to the adjoining refinery. Whatever negotiations are carried out are concerned with the occasional purchase of machinery overseas; most of their supplies for fuel, fertilisers and chemicals are obtained locally. Negotiations are in fact needed mainly for the immigrant labour that is recruited from Thailand. The recruitment of these workers are obtained through official channels, and it was reported by the personnel officer, Marzuki, that a lot of bargaining takes place. However, these negotiations are conducted in Thai through interpreters!

c. Writing

The administrative section is the one that is involved with the most paperwork. Lee's job requires him to write memos, reports, contracts and agreements, papers and other occasional writing such as a manual of procedures of working for a new plantation in Indonesia that he was engaged in when the visit was made. Again, there very little extended writing required by Malaysianfarm. Much of the writing involves filling in a standard form, with a column for additional comments and this can be executed quite quickly. At the executive level, for posts held by graduates, Lee stresses good writing ability as a way of creating the right image for oneself and the company one represents:

"... Because that carry weight, you know. People look at you first time ... you make so many mistakes in one sentence, no matter how brilliant you are - this first impression is very important."

i). Reports

Tan commented that reports are "not a lot, but we do write reports." These reports are written for Headquarters.

"Our company report - every month, but it's all standardised. You can do one report in 15 minutes. That sort of standardised format. More often than not, it's spoken, rather than written. Very seldom we're called upon to write ten, twenty pages like that - feasibility study and things like that. Very seldom."

These monthly reports are:

"These are sort of ... company state of affairs; what you have been up to; what is the progress, percentage of the completion of work you have done up to this point of time. ... Not much English being used - standard sort of thing. Not a descriptive sort of thing."

Reports in his line of work says Tan, have to be 'concise and precise', and choice of words is important. "The choice of words got to be very careful ... Reports to directors have to be very precise - concise and precise." Usually, a unit will contribute information concerning its activities, which will go into a combined report. According to Goh:

"We have a progress report, but those reports are all combined, rather than from different sections. ... We have the daily operations report, but all are in format form, you know. So, you just fill in, *lah*. You just put some remarks there *lah*. If there is anything, you put it down there *lah*. But, it's all combined *lah* - the whole plantation."

Lee is the person responsible for compiling the report:

"In this company only a few people need to write reports. The admin. manager mainly. They put up their version, I polish it up. I deal with the HQ mainly."

Again, as with Omegatronics, the senior manager has to have the skills of compiling, synthesising, summarising and editing.

ii). Writing proposals

When asked about whether he has to come up with proposals when suggesting an innovation, purchase of equipment, etc., Goh reports that the expenditure involved is more important than the verbal narrative:

"so long within the budget ... you carry out the thing ... what the headquarters more concerned is ... how much money you are making a year."

Very rarely does Goh have to put in a proposal, perhaps for a study tour of a plantation overseas, or some expenditure with regard to water, fuel and building. When this occurs, it is a brief proposal:

"It all depend, probably a simple sort of letter ... could be one or two pages."

Occasionally, there is a need to write technical reports, which do not contain much narrative, "because technical reports usually full of figures" (Lee). Goh reported that much of his work involves the actual planting and nurturing the crop with the field crew and this involves more speaking than writing:

"I would say more speaking than writing. Of course, sometimes we do (write) ... normally, the budgeting only *lah* ... figures mostly."

iii). Letters

Letters about routine matters usually have a fixed format and are easy to produce. Goh reports:

"... big items we normally get tenders for the quotation. Those we have a standard format. So, there's no problem. ... they are the same ... sort of thing, so, when they write a different sort of letter, so they just fill in the thing, you know, what they want the contractor to do."

Technical letters are handled by the managers/professionals themselves, but more general types of letters are dealt with by the secretary.

"The technical part, we write the actual letter. General letter, (he would ask the secretary) 'Okay, please reply this letter' ..."

And Goh reported: "it all depends *lah*. Writing - we can write ourselves." Nancy concurs with this: "Some bosses like to write their own ... write out their own letter."

d. Reading

Tan claims that he does a substantial amount of reading, of both technical and non-technical materials. The company boasts a small library, (the librarian happens to be the clerk, Maznah), and the management is very amenable to buying technical material that can help enhance staff's professionalism. Various sugar journals are acquired in addition to business journals. Tan reported on the journals that they subscribe to:

"We read Qantas, Fortune, Economic magazines, Harvard Economic Review ... We have The South African Journal, ... the Australian Sugar-cane journal ... Indian Sugar-cane journal, ... IYAZUKA journal ... Spanish."

Leo the accountant admits frankly that he does not read, but Lee claims to read widely. Some of the field crew may need to read "technical material" (Lee) but most of the time, it is practical, hands-on work. Goh concurs by reporting that the mechanical engineer needs to read manuals; he "has to do the reading and interpret it to whoever operate the machine." . Additionally:

"... actual engineering, what you need are drawings. We just follow the specs ... it's not like agriculture side where you have to do a lot of reading, where ... a lot of new ideas, new products, you have to follow. Otherwise you'll be left behind."

Engineers, according to him, who are more involved in physical operations do not have to undertake lengthy reading or do much writing. Much of the work, such as vehicle maintenance or irrigation has already become routine, and the need to consult manuals frequently does not arise. Once in a while there might be a need to interact with international consultants who visit the plantation, in which case, "spoken English is adequate for dealing with consultants" (Lee).

While interactions on an international level are in English and treated under the heading 'Travel' below, local interactions with regard to the language used are examined in the section that follows.

e. Language used in external communication with local vendors

Vendors who supply certain equipment and service machinery may use a Chinese dialect or Malay, although, since it is such a specialised area, English is often more common. Similarly, in this remote region, a retail shop supplying spare parts may use a Chinese dialect. More

commonly, however, as their suppliers are companies like ICI, Caltex and Bayer, interactions are in English. As Lee relates:

"Funnily, most of the outside companies we deal with use English, even Malay companies. Only about 1 or 2 percent ... even Malays doing sales ... who don't speak English."

Lee reports that the field office and workshop that maintains the fleet of vehicles mentioned earlier - harvesters, tractors etc. deals with the outside world through the Administration Section.

"We have a very big workshop - repair the pumps, engines, under the engineer. Usually they don't deal with the outside world, except the supplier. Anything else will come to the admin department or go through admin."

However, Goh, interacts more with the contractors who lead the different teams of farmhands engaged in fieldwork such as harrowing, etc. He uses English with suppliers, but uses Malay with the contractors who manage the labour doing the harvesting, etc. With regard to his interactions with them, he has this to say:

"It all depends. ... If you are dealing with the technical people, I mean, you tend to speak English lah. But, you're going for the contractors, no lah, you know. Some of those contractors, small contractors, I don't think they are ... they need those sort of education lah. So, a lot of those contractors, they'll use the local language lah (i.e. either a Chinese dialect or Malay)."

Goh tends to use Malay when interacting with Supervisors, Field Assistant, etc. in the field:

"I tend to use *Bahasa*. Because if I were to use English, certain people understand, certain people don't. I've got to do it twice."

However, it appears that this situation where local companies use Malay or a Chinese dialect is not likely to last into the future. Leo, the accountant, seems to think that gradually, even small businesses may move towards the use of English rather than Malay or local Chinese dialects.

To quote him:

"Society so advanced. From those Chinese firms when they computerise, they switch to English ... rice mills, spare parts shops - they computerise their stocktaking. If, at my age, I don't know English, you automatically retire. You cannot do anything. You won't surprise those Chinaman companies, small spare parts shops, rice mill, petrol station, all computerised. If you don't know English, how you operate your computer? How you read the manual? How to print out? Always English very important."

Leo interacts with the vendors in terms of checking the bills, to make sure that everything is in order.

e. Travel

Where Malaysianfarm is concerned, interactions on an international level are limited. This is because the cane is consumed locally. In fact, of late the only person who does any travelling abroad is Tan, the Plantation Manager. Once in a while a few will attend the four yearly world sugar conference, held in various sugar growing countries such as Australia, America, the Philippines and Cuba. The Plantation Manager reported that much of the travel was done in the 'early days', a favourite phrase often used by the pioneers. These were the turbulent years of setting up the company and learning about cane by a group of young graduates who had no experience of cane-growing in a country that had never grown cane on a commercial basis.

With expansion, interaction on a regional level is for the purpose of setting up a new plantation in Indonesia. Further afield are the occasional visits to sugar plantations in Australia and America, mainly to update knowledge of new techniques in growing cane. In the early days, consultants from Australia used to stay for several months to help the plantation become established. The pioneers, Tan, Lee and Goh reported that these Australian sugar specialists carried out training of personnel in various aspects of cane-growing which included lectures in the board room, as well as physical demonstrations in the field and the construction of earth dams. Now that working procedures have been established, and profits have been good, particularly in the last few years, there has not been much interaction with foreigners, for most of the staff, with the exception of the plantation manager. Tan has this year travelled to Bangkok, the Philippines, and was going to Indonesia (Sumatra) that weekend to conduct a feasibility study into building a new plantation. Tan explains the higher frequency of travel in the early days:

"... actually, this is supply and demand. When there is plenty of problems, they send you abroad. (Laughs) Because they want you to solve the problems."

Part of the reason for his travels is because he also acts as consultant to other plantations in the region, for example Thailand, Indonesia and even Taiwan:

"... the visit to neighbouring countries, some of us do occasionally, once a year ... they got problems - 'Hey, come over, I got this problem. You help me see this, see that'. So, you go there - (and you say) 'Oh, you should do this, you should do that.'"

Occasionally, he travels at the invitation of plantations who feel that they have something new to demonstrate:

"... then they also invite us - (and they say) - 'Okay, this is what we do, this sort of thing down here', (then) you ask them what you want to know."

When I asked whether he is invited as a consultant, he says:

"In a certain capacity as a consultant, in certain capacity as a friend, certain capacity as a participant. Just go there, see what they do, that's all."

Another activity on the international scene is attendance at seminars and conferences. Since a good command of spoken English is quite important for these functions, Lee explained their policy with regards to attendance:

"Travel and seminars - we only send people who has an English background. No English background we don't send them, because, waste of money if proceedings conducted in English".

However, Lee, reports that he seldom travels, acting as 'desk manager' mainly:

"Once in a while ... Seminars, to buy new machines; and to visit other sugar operations so that we have the latest techniques."

Nevertheless, he interacts with foreigners often, but through the media of telecommunications:

" ... with ease of communications, I'm speaking to people in Australia, in Hawaii. I can dial direct"

When he was asked about the dealings he has with Australia and Hawaii, he said:

"We buy harvester from them. We buy spare parts. Sometimes we arrange for our people to visit them."

According to him, the visits are to enable them to learn the technology associated with the use of the machinery.

According to Goh, it is only the managerial level who have the opportunity to travel, but even then he travels less than once a year. These visits are mainly to learn about new developments in the field.

"Last year we went to Australia ... (But) it's not a fixed sort of thing."

"The practices and all that, what they have done there. You know, you look."

9.6.2 Tasks in English and requisite skills for Technical Assistants

For middle level workers, such as technical assistants, the ability to read manuals is important in order to be able to carry out maintenance of machinery. Technicians have to service the transport vehicles, harvesters, etc. for which Lee maintains they will "need at least 1119 level of English in order to read a manual"; 1119, being the paper that those intending to study in UK institutions must take and pass with a satisfactory grade, before they can be accepted into these institutions. Lee reports that most of the time their technicians are not able to read the manual

that comes with the machinery. Goh, the Assistant Plantation Manager, however, feels that most of the technicians possess an intermediate level English, which is adequate for their needs. Moreover, since most of the repair work is routine, according to Goh, anyone with experience in engine repair should have little difficulty in carrying out maintenance work since the principles involved are the same.

9.6.3 Tasks in English and requisite skills for Secretaries and Administrative Assistants

Spoken Skills

(i). Phone calls

Secretaries must have a good command of English, and a secretary like Nancy needs both spoken and written English. Some of Nancy's tasks are filing, flight bookings, and co-ordinating work between the managers and HQ, and between relevant officers and suppliers, etc. To quote:

"Other companies (vendors) will come to me first. Sometimes I will know who they need to speak to; whether it's urgent. You'll have to use your judgement a lot."

"Sometimes the factory has a problem, then I will have to liaise with people in the field and tell them what happened ... we use radiophone - 'Oh, there is a problem here. Stop sending so much cane'; at times when the weather is bad - so my job is actually co-ordinating."

"Correspondence will come to me first. And I will decide who to give it to. Then later on what is the follow-up. Sometimes they sit on the letter, so we have to remind them."

Nancy also says that it is very important for secretaries to be courteous, tactful and to be conversant with current affairs.

Goh reported that Yau, the Purchasing Officer (who is also an administrative assistant) also needs to use the phone often to order materials and supplies. The initial phone call is always followed by a letter, in order to have a record of the purchase. Both he and the secretary handle a great deal of correspondence in the form of letters and faxes.

"Purchasing, they need to contact suppliers ... they tend to use more telephone *lah*.

Nancy, of course *lah*."

"when you talk on the phone ... there is no record ... so ... it's better for them to fax it. It's all there, the information, you know."

Written Skills

(ii). Letters

Nancy reports that most of the senior managers prefer to write their own letters. Much of her responsibility includes:

"Simple things I'll do myself, example, fax their itinerary, flight arrangement, accommodation, correspond with journals ... But I still have to show them first."

However, she does write letters and has to be familiar with the technical content of letters because she has to verify spelling:

"Sometimes they give us some rough notes. A lot of it is very technical. They talk about fruits, weather, climate, soil, acreage ..."

Regarding letter writing, Nancy says that it is important to be brief and polite: "Don't be too flowery. And more to the point. And you end up in a polite way."

9.6.4 Tasks in English and requisite skills for Clerks

(i). Spoken skills

It is not essential for clerks in this company to have proficiency in spoken English, although they would have to be familiar with the English terminology in routine paperwork. The company's recruitment policy with regard to clerks is stated by Lee below:

"When we interview them we require English, but there are clerks who don't have English." "We always have a job for them. If you don't speak English, you're behind the scene type".

I found out later after interviewing two clerks, Kamala and Maznah that the non-Malay clerks tend to be able to speak English, whereas the Malay clerks tend not to be able to speak it. While general clerks may not need English, specialist clerks such as those in the accounts department like Kamala, is recruited with the minimum requirement of a pass in English and a pass in Maths because s/he will need to be familiar with accounting terms (as reported by Leo). Leo also reported that of the six clerks that he has, only two can speak English, and that this number conversant in English "is good enough already" to carry out the work in his section. Yau, referring to the clerks assisting him and the amount of English they have to handle in their jobs, said that they have to be trained when they come in, and that with training they will be able to acquire a minimum competency which apparently is quite adequate to enable them to carry out their duties.

"So far, they can communicate. Written will take more time. Fauziah and Ahmad can speak (some) English. If I am not around, they can handle the work."

Maznah, the payroll clerk, reports that she handles mainly Malay correspondence but does type English materials occasionally. She also says that although she has never spoken English at work, most of the paperwork is in English. But this mainly involves filling in forms. She

expresses a strong desire to improve her spoken English, because her job involves quite a lot of speaking which she presently does in Malay. Kamala, the accounts clerk, who can speak English, reports that English is necessary for her job:

"For communication with boss, you need English, because he is a different race, I'm different race. I'm the only Indian in accounts department."

Furthermore, at times she would need to interact with suppliers who conduct business in English. In addition, her job involves use of accounting terminology and handling correspondence in English.

(ii). Letters

Much of the letter writing entrusted to clerks is routine, and these letters will be overseen by Nancy. Nancy says that they have learned to work around the problem of the lack of proficiency of certain clerks. For example, the Malay clerks are only required to write Malay letters. And Nancy was quick to add: "Even if they cannot speak, they do the work well."

(iii). Record keeping

Clerks in the field office assist the Plantation Manager to keep records of when a particular field is being planted, and whether planted from plant cane or ratooned (i.e. grown from the stools left over from harvesting); when harvesting took place, and associated problems and failures. The eleven thousand acres are divided into fields which are given a name (number). According to Goh:

"It's all programmed - when did you harvest the cane, when did you plant the cane, and when did you ratoon the cane ... the previous years ... you have to have all those recordings. You have to keep record also, what sort of problems you have. Failure also we have to record *lah*." ... "That's why we have the computer - to record also."

"The field assistant, even the officers ... here *lah* (in the field office). ... most of the time they are in the field *lah*. Except when you need to record some figures, you come back here and do some paperwork *lah*."

(iv). Book-keeping

There is very little writing in the accounts department. According to Leo, the accountant, his assistants' main task is to keep the books in order:

"Your assistants only need know how to keep the books right. Don't need good grammar. My assistant no need, just work with figures. Terms of accountancy must understand. If you don't understand, you won't know what to do."

(v). Reading

Leo, the accountant, claims that the clerks in his section do not read much. Whether this is due to a lack of reading skills cannot be determined, however:

"To ask them to read books is quite difficult. ...First they don't have the language. Secondly, they don't understand other than the day-by-day. Those day by day, okay. New things they find difficult. Within their scope, they do their work quite well. Beyond their scope, they cannot."

9.6.5 Tasks in English and requisite skills for the telephone operator

The only other person in Malaysian farm, below the level of supervisor, who needs some English, is the telephone operator. She has a minimal command of English, which is sufficient for her to engage in the routine language use that her duties entail. Lee reports that a telephonist must be able to handle initial conversation on the phone.

"Even my telephonist, she speaks reasonable English and so, can communicate with the outside world ... handle initial conversation ... (e.g.) 'who do you want to speak to?'"

9.6.6 The office boy

Lee reported that the office boy understands English, but does not speak it. He is able to handle banking transactions efficiently: "They don't need English, but they understand. You give him \$5000 (cheque) to cash, he will come back without problems."

9.6.7 The mechanics

Mechanics have practical experience, but are not really able to read technical manuals, as Goh reports:

"We have the Workshop Superintendent, staff in charge of the workshop, and he should be able to read it (manuals) and interpret it to the boys. ...those mechanics ... I don't think they read so much in English. They don't quite understand."

9.6.8 The farmhands

Plantation hands do not speak English. The one thousand eight hundred Thai migrant workers, speak neither Malay nor English, but are given instructions through a Thai interpreter.



When asked how field workers who handle machinery manage without knowing how to read manuals, Lee says: "Physical demonstration to them." He went on to give an example of a field operation, that of spraying chemicals on the plants:

"The mixture, the cocktail ... this policy is formulated by the Plantation Manager, then passed on to his Assistant Manager, then to the officer. Up to that level, it's still in English. From then onwards, either in *Bahasa* or physical demonstration ... (i.e.) implementing the spraying operation."

The following section takes up the question below:

'How much specialised technical language in relation to general English is required of the interviewees of the selected occupations?'

9.7 Use of Technical language

(I). Specialised language use for agronomists and accountants

Use of technical language in relation to general language use was one of the variables that was to be investigated and direct questioning was employed for this. The Plantation Manager, Tan, said that everybody in the company will inevitably become familiarised with the technical terms of agriculture. Referring to the accounts department, he said:

"... they do have to know a bit - all this technology, the operations, okay, what is harrowing, what is ploughing, what is levelling, they have to know. What do you do? What do you mean by harrowing? So, they have to learn agriculture. So, the chemical we use - why you buy this? Buy so much? So, they also acquire, they also gain knowledge ..."

He admits that he uses more technical language in his job.

"During our university all are technical English. So, you come out, you don't find it strange."

For Leo, he not only has to know the technical language of accounting, but also of agriculture. He went on to say, that, just as accounting staff need to know the technical language of agriculture, agriculture staff too need to know the language of accounting.

"some of the terms, example, pesticide, transport, soil improvement ... we must know ... (for reasons of classification) They (the layman) may look upon it as an expense item, we may look at it as capital item. This is the difference. By these differences can cause your profit more or less."

In recent years, accounts have been handled on the computer, so knowledge of computer programmes and hence of English is essential. "Every year we have a review of the system (the

accounting programme) - whether we need to simplify the system or not. Every year we change where necessary."

He maintains that there is a need to refer to the manuals to understand the programme in detail, and even if you have been given training to operate the programme, you will need to refer to the manuals when you encounter problems:

"You still need to read. When you encounter problems, you will know how to solve problems. But, you must understand the English. First you know the English; then you know a bit of the technical language."

Leo, the accountant, reports that accounting is a field that uses technical language.

"Contact with people ... especially the instructions issued by Head Office - how to do ... banking ... all in English (e.g. loan agreement)."

"In banking also, for documentation - documents in English."

(ii). Familiarity with technical language for secretaries

Even a non-technical person like Nancy Ooi, the secretary in Malaysian farm, reports that she has had to learn the technical language.

"We must understand the reports that you help type. If handwriting is bad, we must know the spelling. Difficult in the beginning because cannot find in the dictionary. Some technical terms we don't understand, so, we must ask them. Sometimes we go to the plantation to find out - example the word 'onbarring'"

It is worth noting that professionals use a high degree of technical language, while non-professionals less so. Clerical workers do not use either spoken or written language frequently as they are engaged on paperwork that is routine, following routine procedures and routine formats that do not require language outside of their specific domain. Clerks do not have to be creative with language or to do extended writing.

9.8 Other Themes

i). Translation

Some translation is used. Goh gives instructions to farmhands in Malay, and since his work as an agricultural engineer is quite technical, he undoubtedly uses a great deal of translation although use of both Malay and English must come quite spontaneously to him.

The next section takes up the following question:

'What are the perceived problems connected with workers' use of English in these firms in general?'

9.9 Problems with English

(i). Problem areas of English with regard to staff

Generally, senior staff in the administrative section, dealing with paperwork, (e.g. Lee) are not satisfied with the standard of English of their subordinates. Senior staff, however, who work in the field, (e.g. Goh) are generally quite content with the quality of English of their officers. Goh feels that in engineering, accurate language is not as important as technical knowledge, and the actual performance of the tasks in his area.

Lee, on the other hand, complained that even his engineers and agronomists write poorly:

"... even my engineer, agronomist, may be they are not arts students. Their sentences plenty of grammar mistakes. I have to edit before it goes out to HQ or outside world. Image is very important."

According to Tan, even the agriculture graduates that they employ recently are not proficient in English. This can be quite problematic when they attend seminars overseas or discuss their research:

"They suddenly find that they can't converse well ... in international conferences. We find that, our research workers, when they go there, they can't express, they can't converse well ... They are not ... what you call it - no confidence ... If the English is not very good, the knowledge gained, the exchange ... is very limited."

The problem is worse with regard to non-graduates:

"Supervisor officer, uh, we do send them for training ... quite a lot of them say, 'Can I don't go, uh?'. Because they feel very insecured."

According to Lee:

"I think those who graduate mid-80s is very poor. Now, it's improving again. May be they study overseas. I should have kept one letter. I counted 17 mistakes."

"If I change my conversation to Malay, then they open up. ... If I insist on speaking English to them, they sort of clamp up."

According to Nancy, the proficiency in English of the clerical staff is quite poor:

"I find they couldn't speak. They're all from Form Five level. Compared to our time 20 years ago, if you are in Form 3 or Form Two, you can really rattle off. When you talk to

them (in English), they will answer in Malay. ... When a phone call comes, anything that is of an English conversation, they have no confidence in themselves, they will pass it on to me."

The most serious problem concerns grammar. According to Lee, these problems include: the absence of the 's' marker for third person singular, failure to mark for plurals, wrong use of tense and subject verb agreement such as "The capital budget for the crop *are* ...". In addition, Lee reports: "The sentences are badly constructed" In terms of writing, Lee reports that wrong choice of vocabulary is common, e.g. "marketing instead of sales". Spelling is not reported to be a problem as the staff can check it on the computer. Speaking of his own proficiency, Yau, the purchasing officer said:

"I wish it was better. Grammar - most important is grammar. Sometimes you have ideas. How to put into sentences? This is the important thing. If you know so many words, but whether you use it correctly or not. My English is not good. I started late. You must start young. By standard six you must already have a basic proficiency. Primary school is vocabulary and beautiful phrases you learn. And new words coming to you."

Regarding higher level speaking skills, Leo comments that argumentative skills should be taught when young, in school:

"Argue with people must have substance, not simply argue. You read more books ... you have the facts ... you have better, more accurate, useful point. In Chinese school, they very lack of this type of practice for arguing. If you argue with your parents, senior, it is considered very rude. It's the culture. In future, we must let our children know how to argue the point."

As a secretary, Nancy admits that she does correct superior's letters at times, discreetly:

"Yes, that is understood. We do it quietly. We don't point it out to them. We cannot let a mistake go."

9.10 Importance of English

Most of those interviewed are very concerned about the current standard of English in the country. Many are eager to tell me why it is important, and what should be done to improve standards. Regarding its importance, Leo says:

"In future, how you work? If you work within Malaysia still all right. Work overseas, you need English. In Malaysia, you work in Government bodies still all right."

In engineering, although, according to Goh, knowledge of the subject matter and concepts of engineering are important, a certain proficiency remains essential, especially for professional reading:

"When I was in Taiwan, (the engineering students) they don't write much, they don't speak much. Well, when they came across a textbook, an American textbook, they can understand it. ... I don't think you need very good English, if you want to take up science. But, you do need some English, definitely."

9.11 Conclusion

As with Omegatronics, Malaysiafarm reports a predominant use of English in carrying out its day-to-day administration. It would seem that location has no effect on the amount of English used where these two workplace case studies are concerned. Even though they have less dealings with colleagues and partners outside the country, and although its operations are not of the high technology type, nevertheless, it has become an entrenched culture of the company since its inception, to carry on its business in English. However, this is true only for work carried out in the administrative and field offices and workshop. Once a member of staff steps into the field, the main mode of communication for interactions with fieldhands and contractors is Malay.

Hence, in Malaysianfarm's case it is culture and tradition rather than pure necessity that has exerted influence on the language used. Here lies the difference between this company when compared to Omegatronics, for whom use of English is unavoidable due to the nature of its high technology business. It is also to be noted that in Omegatronics, English use permeates through to clerical level where it is used fully and at production operator level partially to carry meanings of technical concepts. However, in Malaysianfarm, the clerical level does not use much English in spoken communication, and therefore its full use stops at middle management and supervisory level (refer to Appendix 5g for variations in proficiency levels with regard to job categories). This difference in the pattern of use between the two companies has to do with the extent of its international interactions and the extent of the specialised nature of its business.

A summary of the competencies needed in the workplace with regard to the organisational levels as summarised from these two case studies is given in Appendix 5f.

Chapter 10

Findings from the systematic observation schedule

10.1. A description of the final systematic observation schedule

The final schedule (Table 10.1) was patterned closely on the structure of COLT (Ullman and Geva, 1986: 124-125), i.e. taking the columns and rows and some aspects of its method of recording. Like COLT, the main focus is placed on classroom activity; in which the activity observed is written down in the activity column together with the time it took place. Then, check marks are made for the categories (of behaviours, language skills, etc.) that appear to the right of the activity column. The reason why the COLT structure was emulated was because the researcher felt it was simple to administer compared to most of the other schedules reviewed, and that it lent itself well to the modifications that were necessary with regard to the categories on which to base the observation, i.e. aspects of classroom interaction behaviours as well aspects of language that were judged relevant to give a broad picture of normal classroom practice.

The content categories of the columns of the final two-page schedule differs from COLT, since they are aimed at different purposes. The schedule focuses on three broad categories - *Conversation/Discussion*, *Comprehension* and *Writing*, borrowing in part Brumfit's (1984: 70) categories of language use, but, unlike Brumfit's classification, all writing is featured, not only extended writing. The detailed contents of these broad skill categories are, however, left blank, due to changes made as a result of the pilot study (refer to page 35). Particular behaviours and skills, to do with the broad classifications, i.e. conversation/discussion, etc. are noted down as they manifest themselves, with the emphasis being on students' behaviour rather than teachers' behaviour.

Apart from language skills, other relevant categories are delineated, which are *Language Awareness*; *Workplace Topics*; *Participation* of teacher and students in terms of the dominant, intermittent or balanced nature of their talk; *Classroom Organisation* i.e. class, group, individual, other; development of *Affect*, such as co-operation; *Level of English* i.e. simple, complex or mixed, and lastly, columns for field notes.

The systematic observation schedule

School :

Topic/Skill:

Class:

Teacher:

Date and Time:

Time	Activity	Conversation/Discussion		Comprehension		Writing		Notes
		Note down the specific skill observed here	Do this with all the empty columns					

Write down each activity that happens in the activity column and note down the time this happens in the time column. The criteria to determine a new activity is when it occurs for half a minute or more. Should there be no change in activity after five minutes, revert to a five minute time-based recording. However, if the event lasts over half a minute, but less than one minute, it is still recorded as one full minute for ease of recording. Multiple recording is allowed. Specific skills could be written down as it appears in the columns on top, eg. 'take notes' and ticked in the relevant column below it. Teacher talk and student talk to be coded: 'd' - dominant; 'i' - intermittent; and 'b' - balanced.

10.2 The operation of the systematic schedule

i). Recording

Let us say that a particular observation commenced with the teacher reading out a passage from the textbook. The observer will note the time the activity commenced in the first column on the left and writes down 'listening comprehension' in the activity column. While this activity is going on, the observer will need to note other behaviours, occurring in the columns to the right, as it relates to all the broad categories such as 'conversation/discussion', 'classroom organisation', 'affect', etc. To illustrate, imagine that, as they listened, students take down notes. The observer will jot down 'take notes' under 'Writing', and makes a check in the appropriate space below ; if the teacher asks questions during the reading, then students' behaviour say, 'answer comprehension questions', will be noted down under 'Comprehension' and a tick made.

If the teacher stops reading after two minutes and gives instructions for students to get ready to answer questions, then this new activity e.g. 'give instructions' will then be listed down in the activity column, and the time this happens, and checks have to be made in the relevant columns on the right if certain related behaviours e.g. 'understand instructions' manifest themselves. Each change of activity is recorded as long as it occurs for 1/2 a minute or more. If the teacher goes on reading without stopping for more than five minutes, then 'listening comprehension' will be jotted down again in the activity column after each five minute duration, and the time noted.

This continuous type of activity was seldom observed to happen with whole class teaching, because behaviours such as asking questions, making comments, and giving answers to questions tended to constantly shift back and forth from teacher to students. It is usually 'discussion' which tends to go on for at least fifteen minutes each time, in which case if that happens 'discussion' will be listed three times, once every five minutes. The activity column records teacher's behaviour and turns in the lessons. However, it is mainly students' behaviours, noted in the top right-hand columns, that are checked and tallied.

ii). Tallying

To explain the numerical data in the findings that follow, take Table 10.2, for example. The first activity 'Supply words from clues/make words from letters (in a word game)' has a count of twenty for class 4 Arts 4. This means that either that activity occurred on twenty occasions during the course of the two weeks, each time for periods of anything between one minute to five minutes, the minimum amount of time taken for that activity would be twenty multiplied by one minute, i.e. twenty minutes in all; or that it occurred for a possible maximum total of twenty times multiplied by five minutes, i.e. one hundred minutes, if it was a continuous

activity. In this case it happened that each count marked one set of words made, i.e. one turn in the game, e.g. Juice - Juicy- Fishy (refer to Appendix 8b. i for details).

An example of a tally for a continuous activity is Table 10.5, in which 'Discussion' registers a count of thirty-six for 4 Science 3. This means that discussion for that class could possibly have taken place for a total of thirty-six multiplied by five minutes i.e. a possible maximum total time of one hundred and eighty minutes in the two weeks, and indeed the class in question did devote a considerable amount of time to group discussion. However, in analysing and interpreting these tallies, it is felt that the actual numerical quantities is not as important as its *comparative value*, as for example in Table 10.16, where it is obvious that dominant teacher talk far outweighs dominant student talk in school B, whereas it is either balanced or less dominant than student talk in school A. 'Intermittent' talk is taken to mean talk that occurs sporadically, i.e. talk that is unsustained.

In retrospect, one unintended effect of the schedule was that it became exceedingly useful in showing the overall organisation, timing, sequencing, development and flow of the lessons. These aspects would not have been readily retrieved from the audio-recording alone. The field notes were especially useful in clarifying and elaborating events as they occurred, particularly in putting the audio-transcripts into the structure and context of particular lessons.

10.3 Findings from the Systematic Classroom Observation

The findings are intended to illuminate question 5 mainly, and 4 and 6 partly (page 34) which concerns the effectiveness of teaching learning and its associated problems.

(i). Students' spoken skills within a classroom organisation

a). Lower order spoken skills, word/sentence level

Activity/event /behaviour /skill	4 Sc 3	4 Art 4	4 Sc 1	4 Art 1
Supply words from clues/make words from letters	-	20	-	7
Supply answers to teacher's questions in oral activity	10	5	19	19
Supply answers orally to reading comprehension question	-	-	6	-
Failed to respond to questions	-	-	-	6

Table 10.2: Spoken interactions within a class organisation

b). Higher order spoken skills

Activity/event/behaviour/skill	4 Sc 3	4 Art 4	4 Sc 1	4 Art 1
Give ideas/information	1	4	-	-
Make comments	-	1	-	-
Make suggestions	-	1	-	-
Argue/rebuts	2	11	-	-

Table 10.3: Higher order spoken skills within a class organisation

When comparing the two tables above, it is obvious that higher order spoken skills such as ‘give ideas/information’ was not observed to happen in both classes in school B. Only lower order spoken skills at word and sentence level occurred with these classes. It is 4 Arts 4 that registers the highest incidence of higher order spoken skills.

c). Spoken skills, extended discourse

Activity/event/behaviour/skill	4 Sc 3	4 Art 4	4 Sc 1	4 Art 1
Make presentation (prepared)	17	5	5*	7*
Make presentation (spontaneous)	1	8	-	-
Make presentation of guided exercise	-	-	-	3

(*the majority of presentations in both these classes were quite unintelligible)

Table 10.4: Verbal presentations in front of class audience

As can be seen above, ‘make presentations’ was observed in all four classes, the count being exceptionally high for 4 Science 3 in school A. In school B, many of the deliveries were flawed by inaccuracies in pronunciation, grammar, syntax, etc. and were rather incomprehensible to the observer.

d). Spoken skills within a group organisation

Activity/event/behaviour/skill	4 Sc 3	4 Art 4	4 Sc 1	4 Art 1
Discuss (in English)	36	25	-	-
Discuss predominantly in Malay but compose product in English	-	-	8	13

Table 10.5: Spoken interactions in a group setting

The counts in the table above show a preponderance of the practice of discussion for both schools and the count for ‘discussion’ correlates with ‘make presentations’ above, as discussions are usually a prelude to presentations.

(ii). Comprehension

a). Listening comprehension

Activity/event/behaviour/skill	4 Sc 3	4 Art 4	4 Sc 1	4 Art 1
Listen to sentences read by teacher	8	-	-	3
Listen to passage read by teacher	3	-	4	2
Listen to teacher give information/talk	-	-	-	6
Listen to teacher introduce topic	-	2	-	-
Listen to teacher’s explanation	15	-	18	8
Listen to teacher sum up/conclude	2	9	1	6
Remember details from passage heard & classify sentences into categories	-	-	-	9

Table 10.6: Listening comprehension

Listening comprehension here is taken to encompass all classroom interactions where the students are engaged in listening to teacher’s instructions, etc. as well as formal listening comprehension. With regard to the first type, as the above table shows, the counts registered are consistent with the researcher’s own observation that the 4 Science 3 teacher (once she got used to the researcher) in school A and the 4 Arts 1 teacher in school B have a more traditional approach to the teaching, and methods are more teacher-centred. They tended to keep up a stream of talk, much of which was akin to ‘light nagging’, i.e. repeating instructions, giving reminders, admonitions, etc.. There was less evidence of this in 4 Arts 4 and even though the 4 Science 1 teacher in school B favoured class teaching, he did not speak more than was necessary.

b). Reading comprehension

Reading text types

Activity/event/behaviour /skill	4 Sc 3	4 Art 4	4 Sc. 1	4 Art 1
Read sentences	2	-	-	3
Read passage	-	-	-	5
Read notes	1	-	-	4
Read chart	-	-	-	4
Read literature/poetry	-	6	11*	-

(* this was reading of simplified readers)

Table 10.7: Reading text types

The reading activity in 4 Science 3 was for the purpose of coming up with a written product, in which the reading passage contained ideas that could be used or expanded on in the written text to be produced. However, the reading activity in 4 Arts 4 was a poetry lesson, in 4 Science 1, it was the reading of a short story in a simplified reader. The reading in 4 Arts 1, like that of 4 Science 3 was reading as a prelude to a written exercise.

Comprehension skills

Activity/event/behaviour/skill	4 Sc 3	4 Art 4	4 Sc 1	4 Art 1
Answer comprehension questions	2	-	-	-
Get main idea/gist of material read	1	-	-	-
Comprehend & sequence sentences	3	-	-	-
Reconstruct ideas in reading passage following a given outline	-	-	-	4
Evaluate what is read	2	-	3	-
Use bilingual dictionary	-	-	14	6

Table 10.8: Reading comprehension skills

4 Arts 4 in school A did not have any reading or listening comprehension exercise in the two weeks, whereas all the other classes had reading comprehension as an activity.

(iii). Writing

a). Copying

Activity/event/behaviour/skill	4 Sc 3	4 Art 4	4 Sc 1	4 Art 1
Copy out text/instructions on board	1	10	-	10
Copy out text prepared by group	-	-	4	3

Table 10.9: Copying activities

These copying exercises are usually of the guidelines or outlines for particular written activities given by the teacher. The behaviour 'copy out text prepared by group' entails mechanical copying for record purposes, since teachers have to show the Head of the English Department that students have logged a certain amount of written work.

b). Writing at word and sentence level

Activity/event/behaviour/skill	4 Sc 3	4 Art 4	4 Sc. 1	4 Art 1
Fill in blanks	4	-	3	2
Sequence sentences	5	-	-	-
Reconstruct & sequence ideas in passage heard following given outline	-	-	-	6
Take dictation	4	-	-	-

Table 10.10: Writing skills

c). Higher order writing skills

Activity/event/behaviour/skill	4 Sc 3	4 Art 4	4 Sc 1	4 Art 1
Do written comprehension exercise	-	-	4	-
Take notes	-	4	-	-
Expand notes	12	-	-	-
Write in group for group presentation	6	6	2	3

Table 10.11: Higher order writing skills

In Table 10.11, the skill 'take notes' in 4 Arts 4 represents the attempts of two teams to make notes of what is being said by the opposing team so that they could rebut their arguments. The activity 'write in group for group presentation' usually comes at the end of a group discussion session, and sometimes involves only the student chosen to do the recording for the group. All classes show a significant amount of time devoted to extended writing in groups.

(iv). Language Awareness

Activity/event/behaviour/skill	4 Sc 3	4 Art 4	4 Sc 1	4 Art 1
Punctuate sentences	-	-	-	5
Form and functions			9	5
Syntax	15	-	2	7
Syntax -imperative form	6	-	-	-
Syntax - question form	-	-	1	-
Passive form	5	-	-	-
Grammar	3	-	-	-
Punctuation	-	-	-	9
Paragraphing	4	-	-	-

Table 10.12: Language awareness

As can be seen above, the level of grammar and grammar related activities are rather high for the three classes, but none occurred with the most able class. The anomaly is that it is the able and fluent students who would benefit from accuracy activities, (and they themselves reported the need to improve on grammar in the interviews). As the classroom case studies would later reveal, teachers tended to give grammar exercises to weak classes and fluency activities to more able classes. Perhaps teachers are governed by what students are able to manage in the language, and grammar activities tend to be word level activities which low achievers can cope with. The fact that teachers' classroom procedures are at variance with students' professed needs is something that needs to be reviewed.

(v). Vocabulary

Language	4 Sc 3	4 Art 4	4 Sc. 1	4 Art 1
Vocabulary	9	26	24	37

Table 10.13: Vocabulary

As can be seen, vocabulary is given class time. Although its level of occurrence is high in all cases, the quality of the teaching and its effectiveness, is something that will need to be reviewed. The reason that 4 Arts 4 (see Appendix 8b. i) and 4 Arts 1 have high counts of vocabulary occurrences is due to a whole period being devoted to a vocabulary game. The game was rather mechanical and was successful in retrieving words from students who already knew these words, but it did not teach them new vocabulary. In 4 Arts 1, students were not able to cope with the vocabulary game, i.e. a crossword puzzle, because the words (to do with traditional medicine) were rather esoteric. In 4 Science 3 and 4 Science 1 attention was given to vocabulary which appeared in context either from a stimulus for a writing exercise or as part of a comprehension exercise, although in 4 Science 1 the vocabulary dealt with in Lesson 5 was not common (e.g. beef extract). This was felt to be self-defeating, as students need to build up and strengthen a basic corpus before venturing into more advanced corpuses.

(vi). Discourse and rhetoric

Language	4 Sc 1	4 Art 4	4 Sc 1	4 Art 1
Idioms	-	-	-	1
Rhetorical device	1	-	-	-
Register	4	3	-	-
Description of processes	9	-	-	-
Speech discourse	16	16	-	-
Poetry discourse	-	10	-	-

Table 10.14: Discourse

As is to be expected, the high achieving classes in school A devoted rather a substantial amount of time to different discourses, but hardly any attention was given to discourse in school B,

since it is doubtful that the students in school B would be able to cope. Students were not told explicitly that they were dealing with a particular discourse, but teachers' cues and instructions pointed to the use of certain discourses in these instances.

(vii). Workplace Topics

The following table gives information on whether the topics for lessons of the two weeks were related or not related to the workplace.

Topics	4 Sc 3	4 Art 4	4 Sc 1	4 Art 1
Related	1	0	1	0
Not related	7	7	7	9

Table 10.15: Topics relating and not relating to workplace

For 4 Science 3, it is felt that one of the topics dealt with in the first week which was 'processes and procedures of manufacturing paper' is relevant to the workplace because it deals with an industrial process. In the case of 4 Science 1 the topic 'How tea is made' was thought to have relevance to the workplace, because again, it is an industrial process. All other topics such as 'Teenage Runaways', 'Unemployment', 'Traditional medicine' etc. were considered not to be relevant.

(viii). Teacher Talk and Student Talk

Participation	4 Science 3		4 Art 4		4 Science 1		4 Art 1	
Teacher/student	T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S
Dominant	46	43	15	34	38	18	74	28
Intermittent	41	23	20	25	28	32	44	34
Balanced	4	4	14	14	1	1	3	3

Table 10.16: Teacher talk and student talk

In the dominant category, 4 Science 3 experienced teacher talk and student talk in equal amounts; 4 Science 1 and 4 Arts 1 of school B had dominant teacher talk, and surprisingly in 4 Arts 4 in school A dominant student talk was higher than dominant teacher talk!

In the intermittent category, 4 Science 3 shows a higher incidence of teacher talk, and 4 Arts 4 again shows a higher incidence of student talk. In school B, 4 Science 1 shows a higher incidence of student talk although the difference is not great, and again, 4 Arts 1 shows a higher incidence of teacher talk. Of the four classes, students of 4 Arts 4 were given the most opportunities to speak, followed by 4 Science 3. 4 Arts 1 students show the lowest incidence of student talk in comparison to teacher talk especially in the dominant category (74 counts for teacher to 28 counts for students). Again, we see that the more able the class, the more talk students engage in. Certainly, the 4 Arts 1 teacher of school B had no choice but to speak

because students were unwilling to speak unless expressly cued (except for one or two). Again, *the class that would benefit the most from increased student talk is the one in which classroom procedures tended to curtail such talk.*

(ix). Level of English

Language	4 Sc 3	4 Art 4	4 Sc 1	4 Art 1
High, literary	-	10	-	-
Complex	11	24	-	1
Basic	7	27	8	31
Simple	1	1	13	-
Mixed	56	16	27	37

Table 10.17: Level of English

Here 'mixed' means that a single extended discourse contains variable levels of use, sometimes basic language intersperses with complex language or difficult vocabulary, whereas in 'complex' or even 'basic' only one level of discourse is used. It is noted that 4 Arts 4 shows the most varied language use in terms of levels, and 4 Science 3 shows the highest incidence of mixed levels English being used. Predictably, school B tends to cluster around the mixed and basic levels. 'Simple' and 'basic' is differentiated in the sense that 'simple' is taken to mean *speech that consists of words and phrases rather than full formed utterances, such as used by those with a severely restricted corpus.*

(x). Classroom organisation

Classroom organisation	4 Sc 3	4 Art	4 Sc 1	4 Art
Class	69	51	35	66
Group/Pair	29	16	18	16
Individual (e.g. written work)	9	10	28	10
Combination	-	6	-	-
Transition	10	2	10	3
Administration	10	8	5	-

Table 10.18: Classroom organisation

Although the predominant organisation is whole class., all classes gave a good amount of oral discussion in groups. Apart from the production of extended text, teachers tend to allow *students to discuss discrete point written exercises in groups or pairs, prior to doing it individually or before discussing it with the teacher as a class.* 'Administration' represents those activities such as when the teacher marks the register, obtains letters of excuses from students, distributes books, etc.

As can be seen, the 'transition' and 'administration' categories are not predominant, and indeed, there was very little time being wasted in these classes. From the researcher's personal

experience, a point to make about pacing in the case studies that concerns Malaysian classrooms generally, is that teachers tend to force too fast a pace on students by cramming as many activities as possible into a period.

(xi). Affective Behaviour

a). Social interpersonal behaviours

Behaviours	4 Sc 3	4 Art 4	4 Sc 1	4 Art 1
Work together on task; cooperate	16	19	16	20
Contribute ideas & opinions & accept ideas & opinions	24	32	-	-
Pay attention to teacher & peers	21	11	6	12
Show tolerance and empathy	-	5	-	-
Volunteer/ agree to deliver presentation in front of class	4	5	-	-

Table 10.19: Social/interpersonal behaviours

Students were given plenty of opportunities to lead, to contribute to discussions and make their opinions felt within group activities. This is a most encouraging development that has come with the new curriculum (KBSM). However, there was a tendency for the more able students to dominate and to lead, and for the slower and less proficient students to contribute very minimally to the group effort. The behaviour ‘show tolerance and empathy’ was believed to be manifested when 4 Arts 4 had a class discussion on homosexuality.

(xii). Teacher's behaviour

Behaviour	4 Sc 3	4 Art 4	4 Sc 1	4 Art 1
Teacher encourages	-	5	-	-
Teacher draws out ideas from students	2	7	-	-
Teacher corrects	3	-	-	12

Table 10.20: Teachers' encouragement & correction

On the whole all the teachers exhibited quite a liberal attitude towards the students. They were patient and did not correct unnecessarily with the exception of the 4 Arts 1 teacher whose students were consistently making errors.

10.4 Discussion

The section below takes up briefly the relationship between school practice and what has been determined as requisite language behaviour in the workplace case studies, as it pertains to the findings of the systematic observation.

'How effective is the school experience in realising the needs for English use in the workplace?'

It has been established from the workplace case studies that discussion skills are important for the workplace (refer to p. 81. a (ii), and appendix 5f, p. 259). The systematic schedule shows that discussion activities are quite predominant (Table 10.5). The main problem with school B, as borne by the systematic observation and validated by the audio-recording, was the students' tendency to discuss in Malay and to rely on the bilingual dictionary to translate their ideas into English. Although this may be an interim measure with these false beginners, it cannot be predicted if they would be able to eradicate the habit at some future time. Unless students are prepared to undertake discussions in English, they will not be equipped for the workplace.

Writing in groups for presentations (Table 10.11) has become popular on in schools, and should be sustained. Table 10.4 above shows the amount of practice students receive in making verbal presentations in front of the class audience. What it lacks in terms of workplace definition of presentations, particularly at managerial levels is the use of graphs, charts, diagrams and statistics to convey information. Similarly, the practice of taking notes such as when attending briefing activities, meetings and negotiations, and progress reporting and compilation of reports were not observed. Equally important, at non-professional levels, writing formatted routine reports or standard letters was not undertaken in either school.

Social skills, especially the ability to get along with co-workers at all levels of the organisation, and to lead and to manage staff is essential in the workplace, and the school does provide practice in some of these skills (Table 10.19).

Reading is rather neglected in both schools. Although workplace data showed that reading, apart from letters and memos, was not as prevalent as speaking and writing, nevertheless reading is perhaps the best way for students with little exposure to the L2 to familiarise themselves with the language, and therefore, ample opportunities should be provided for students' reading.

The predominant skills discerned from the systematic observation are as follows:

Respond to teacher's questions	Copy out text
Discussion skills	Write in groups for presentation
Presentation skills	Vocabulary work
Listening comprehension	Social skill - Work together on task
Reading comprehension	

SCHOOL CASE STUDIES

CHAPTER 11

**SCHOOL A (urban)
Lembah Tua Secondary (Girls) School
School Case Study One
4 Science 3**

Summary information

The teacher	- Mrs Pan
The form	- 4 Science 3, Lembah Tua Secondary (Girls) School
The students interviewed	- Mee Ling - Masliah - Teh - Chelvi

The chapters on the school case studies present the findings under the three broad headings of - The Teacher, The Lessons and The Students. All the chapters will present the findings in the same sequence, as they take up the research questions one by one. The questions are recorded for the first case study, i.e. for 4 Science 3 but not for subsequent cases for reasons of economy.

11.1 The Teacher

Data on this section is taken from the teachers' interview procedure described on page 46. Refer to Appendix 6a. for the 'aide memoire' used in the interview.

Mrs Pan has a B.A. (Hons) in English and History (1980) and a Diploma of Education in TESL (1981) from a local university. She has twelve years teaching experience and has spent four of them in this school, discounting a two year break when her husband was studying in the UK. Apart from the English language, she also teaches English literature to Forms Five and Six.

Mrs Pan initially taught the 1976 upper secondary communicational syllabus (described on pages 7-9). From the first encounter itself, Mrs. Pan disclaimed her expertise in KBSM/TESL techniques, labelling her approach as "the ancient method". Not having attended any KBSM orientation course, she asserts that her pre-service training equipped her with only "the rudiments" and "the basics", and that the faculty did "not really teach the communicational syllabus ... during my time" apart from communication games.

Mrs. Pan is pleasant, rather self-effacing and slightly anxious but helpful and co-operative throughout the observation period. Although it appears from the observation that the majority of the students are proficient in English. Mrs Pan is fond of lamenting that the class does not compare favourably with most classes in the school, and that teaching a low achieving class is an arduous task.

11.1.1 Researcher effect

Mrs. Pan admitted her initial nervousness. This probably stemmed from her feeling that she had not been adhering to recommended KBSM methodology in her teaching. She became more relaxed and confident, as she disclosed, once she got to know the researcher personally and understood the purpose of the research.

She admitted to making a departure from her normal classroom practice for the duration of the observation, by giving more group work/discussion because she did not want to do too much talking. Under normal conditions her classroom practice consists mainly of written work, mainly sentence level or discrete-point exercises and occasionally, controlled extended writing.

This section attempts to describe the principles underpinning the teacher's practice as it takes up question 1:

'How does the teacher view the teaching of English, and how has this influenced her practice?'

11.1.2 The teacher's philosophy and teaching approach

Mrs Pan exhibits a pragmatic approach towards her teaching, describing her class routine in terms of broad skills or activities, such as 'oral work', 'comprehension', 'essay

writing' and 'grammar' and preparing the students for the exam rather than employing a pedagogical classification. Experience informs her practice rather than any theoretical affiliations.

Mrs. Pan had few comments regarding the KBSM syllabus that provides the parameters for her teaching saying, "I just go along", "I just accept", and "... may be I'm not so strongly into language". This in itself shows that she has not reflected upon the programme, due perhaps to the lack of autonomy given her to adapt it, and indeed, in her judgement, her main responsibility is to deliver the curriculum as she has been directed.

Mrs. Pan professed to give students little exam practice in Form Four to prepare them for the SPM, preferring to leave it to Form Five, although her counterpart, Mrs. Indran in the second case study, gave quite a different feedback with regard to school A's guidelines concerning exam preparation (refer to page 153). From her account, it appears that she has managed to reconcile the twin (and opposing) demands of syllabus and exam and does not find the combination conflicting or contradictory.

"We incorporate (exam practice) into the actual syllabus." "We let them practice the exam format ... for example, letter writing ... 'these are the beginnings and endings', so, they sort of memorise a few phrases".

However, she did comment that the syllabus emphasised spoken English, whereas the exam emphasised written work:

"... (syllabus) not so much written ... but we have to give written because of the exam."

Most of the time, students in this class claim that they are given individual written work from the textbook. This practice stems from the belief that written work benefits those who are poor in spoken communication "... for weaker classes, you have to give more written work" and that grammar practice reinforces the language "I try to do grammar, but not much. But, for the weaker students, it does help ...".

Classroom techniques and materials

Mrs. Pan's responses to a question (Teacher's questionnaire - Appendix 6b.) on classroom activities are as follows:

Most of the time	Sometimes	Rarely
Discussion	Language games Project work Problem solving activities Debates Poetry/drama/novels	Drama Simulation/role play

Unfortunately, the questionnaire omitted the category 'written work', which was the activity reported to be the most consistently practised. During the observation, there were indeed discussion in groups and whole class discussions following a group/pair discussion on set tasks. Vocabulary games are another popular activity and very occasionally project work is given. One of the students interviewed, confirmed working on a project in that year in which a certain amount of research was involved.

"Description of a place - Sarawak - how we can go there, what are the interesting places ... we take the travel brochure, so we take some information from there".
(Chelvi)

(The project involved a trip to a neighbouring tourist information centre to obtain brochures containing information about the locality.)

Mrs. Pan confirmed that students enjoy project work and group discussions, but that she is not always able to cater to their preference. By her own admission, her teaching is very guided and controlled, mainly to cater for the low achievers. Even for free discussion activities, some guidance is given, "We give them a topic ... a few notes", by providing vocabulary, structures, format or outline, in the form of questions or headings, as well as significant points or ideas. This practice probably stems from the guided nature of essay questions in the SPM paper (refer Appendix 3b, Part 3, questions 4, 5, and 6).

The textbook (Yunus and Spykerman, 1990), prescribed for the school is decidedly unsuitable, "... it's too difficult for the students." "I try to use it because the girls have bought it", and that "Many teachers are not using it."

She expressed the need for more teaching aids and the sharing of materials developed by the teachers.

"... we don't have enough. ... May be we could have a library of teaching aids. Could be charts, brochures, articles. Now individual teachers keep their own."

The school has a supply of workbooks and revision courses as a ready resource for written exam-type exercises.

The KBSM syllabus and students' post-school needs

Further into the observation period, Mrs Pan proffered some comments concerning KBSM. In her opinion, the KBSM syllabus is generally appropriate, however, the old communicational syllabus was more focused, restricted in its contents and more manageable. In her opinion, the KBSM topics cover a broader area and lay undue emphasis on topics outside of the country:

"Generally, the KBSM English is comprehensive, but the textbooks have a tendency to concentrate on ASEAN region".

Furthermore, KBSM has not dealt with certain content areas adequately, such as summary writing, formal letters and speeches - "... they have missed out things like summary ... speeches ... Speech of welcome, farewell speech ... are not really emphasised". This comment was obtained without her knowing of the workplace focus of the research concerned.

The teacher is cognisant of the curricular aims for English, and this may have a positive effect on her teaching.

"... when they go out into society ... to work, they are able to use the language and communicate effectively, be understood by others ... overseas ... For tourism and all that."

The next section presents data from both the qualitative aspect of the systematic schedule and transcription of the audio-recordings of the classroom proceedings. The description that follows will focus on answering the research questions posed earlier (pages 34-35) in connection with the lessons observed. The outline and details of the lessons are given in the section immediately following, partly to explore the classroom situation as posed by question 4:

'How effective is the teaching in realising the objectives set for the year, in terms of student learning?

11.2 The Lessons

In the first study of teaching learning presented here, the lessons are given detailed day-by-day reporting as an archetype of a close study of classroom practice for one class. For the other three cases, the detailed outline of lessons are given in accompanying appendices.

Week One

Syllabus area	Activities	Organisation	Skills/Language
Lesson 1 Description of processes and procedures 'How to mend a punctured tyre' 'How to withdraw money from the Post Office'	1. Question and answer: Join sentences using connectors	Class (7 min)	Sentence connectors
	2. Discussion: Study example of model (exam question) of how to write on processes and procedures from notes and diagrams. Identify sentence connectors used.	Class (10 min)	Sentence connectors
	3. Discussion: Sequence sentence strips & identify sentence connectors	Group (10 min)	Comprehend and sequence a process
	4. Present sequenced passage from activity in #3 above	Class (2 min)	Read out sequenced passage

Join and sequence sentences

Week one commenced with the syllabus area, 'Description of processes and procedures'. As an introduction, the teacher began with a sentence level activity from the textbook in which students joined two sentences into one using connectors. Students were then introduced to the type of essay question that would appear in the exam for this area, and a model answer on 'How to mend a punctured tyre' was presented for discussion. For the third activity, students in groups were given sentence strips that they were required to sequence. The last activity consisted of reading aloud the sequenced sentences to the class by individuals.

These activities are the normal activities one would expect from this area, and were taken from the textbook, except for the sentence strips, which the teacher devised (perhaps using another source). It was rather difficult to ascertain the effectiveness of these activities in a single forty-minute lesson. Students were co-operative, they were engaged on task, and they supplied appropriate responses. There was no overt enthusiasm for the lesson, but on the other hand,

no overt boredom was discerned either. Students obviously could manage the tasks given quite comfortably, perhaps too much so, leading one to think that it may have been rather unchallenging for the majority of students.

Syllabus area	Activity	Organisation	Skill/language
Lesson 2 Description of processes and procedures	1. Text completion (exam question) i.e. cloze passage	Class (5 min)	Supply words for blanks; overall language proficiency
'Recycling paper'	2. Expand notes based on diagram of a process	Pair and class (20 min)	Construct sentences based on notes and diagram; Sentence connectors; Passive voice
	3. Copy out completed text	Class and individual (6 min)	Copy out text

Text completion

In the second lesson, the students were given a text completion exercise which was an exam type question (refer to Appendix 3b, page 3) and was executed as a class activity. In activity two, the students worked in pairs. This was also an exam-type question (although this type of question did not appear in the sample exam paper appended), similar to the model presented in Lesson One on mending a punctured tyre. The stimulus given consisted of short notes and diagrams on the factory process of recycling paper. In this activity, students engaged in pair interaction while simultaneously being called upon by the teacher to give answers for each step in the process. Students later copied out the properly sequenced integrated text into their exercise books.

Again, students exhibited no overt excitement or boredom. The topic for the second activity was workplace related in the sense that recycling paper is an industrial process and has some relevance for those seeking future employment in assembly line production.

Syllabus area	Activity	Organisation	Skill/language
Lesson 3&4 Description of processes and procedures	1. Administrative matters and teacher's instruction	Class (6 min)	Understand classroom instruction
Topic of students' choice	2. Write given process on making an item	Group discussion (40 min)	Construct sentences describing a process using connectors

	3. Present group product	Class (6 min)	Listen to presentation
	4. Copy out group produced text	Individual	Copy out

Describe a process

In this lesson, the teacher introduced extended work on the same area, in which students had to describe the process of making an article of their choice. To initiate the activity, the teacher circulated some Ladybird books that contained descriptions of processes of making various items, no doubt to serve as examples of how the activity could be tackled. The result was that the students did not devise their own topic, but in fact chose those from the Ladybird books which already contained descriptions of the sequence of making certain articles. As such, the students were not engaged in an original or creative description of a process, but, were reconstructing the descriptions from the Ladybird books. Students had, in fact, been told to come prepared the day before, but either they had failed to comply or they were not happy with the topics suggested by the group members.

This lesson illustrates the kind of guidance that is usually given. Teacher's instructions comprise the following verbal, followed by written instructions:

"... (describe) an item you'd like to make or a procedure or process which you can break down into various steps. What are the things you need?"

- 1. List down all the items/things needed.
- 2. Write in point form the steps taken to present your group work.
- 3. Choose a girl from the group to present your group work.
- 4. Remember to use sequence connectors to describe your process.

Whether students benefited from the outline above cannot be ascertained. However, students found difficulty in choosing a topic. The group that was taped went through three different changes, finding difficulties with each one before finally deciding on a topic they had abandoned earlier (i.e. making a glass paperweight). Refer to Appendix 8a. i. and ii. for authentic hand-written examples of students' products.

The last activity in this lesson required students to copy out their group product into their individual exercise books. This practice of members copying a common text produced by the group is prevalent in schools because teachers find it convenient to correct group essays from four to five groups rather than correct thirty individual essays.

The teaching of this syllabus area has the potential to develop analytical abilities in students, by learning to break down a complex task into small manageable steps, and to teach the skills of synthesis, by arranging the steps to form a coherent and cohesive text - an ability that is clearly appropriate to the workplace. The handling of the lesson, however, showed the teacher failing to exploit the lesson's full potential.

Syllabus Area	Activity	Organisation	Skill/language
Lesson 5 Description of processes and procedures	1. Exam practice: Text completion using connectors	Class (10 min)	Sentence connectors
	2. Exam practice: Describe process of making margarine from diagram and notes (1979 paper)	Pair (25 min)	Construct sentences Sequence process Use connectors

Guided essay

Lesson 5 is the last lesson for this syllabus area and is ended with exam practice.

It is to be noted that three out of the five lessons for week 1, (Lessons 1, 2 and 5) are concerned with exam practice. This is in spite of Mrs. Pan's claim that she does not do exam work with Form Four classes. The predominant practice seems to be testing rather than providing experience in more integrative activities where students would be engaged on using language and developing their communication skills.

Nevertheless, in the first week the teacher made some attempt at developing the syllabus area, 'description of processes and procedures', from more discrete level activities to more global integrative tasks. Firstly, by joining sentences using sentence connectors to show sequence; secondly, by sequencing sentence strips; thirdly, by composing a guided text to describe a process; fourthly by using a free writing exercise on describing a process on a topic of students' choice, and lastly, using reinforcement by practising an exam question. The researcher felt, however, that the teacher could have exploited the area and students' ability

and interests more effectively. There was a feeling that the teacher could have provided more challenging activities, for example, making students work on a project to produce an item and reporting the process. To teach in this manner would not only entail meticulous planning but, even more, teachers would need more support such as a lighter workload. In addition, teachers ought to be given the autonomy to adapt the syllabus, not to mention the scheme of work, in ways that tap their creativity. This may have the effect of keeping boredom at bay for the students, and will enable them to be stretched to their full capacity.

Week Two

Week Two began with a new syllabus area - 'Giving opinions on current issues'. In the two week observation, two syllabus areas were covered.

Syllabus area	Activity	Organisation	Skill/language
Lesson 6 Giving opinions on current issues	1. Teacher's instructions	Class (5 min)	Topics: 'Child abuse'; 'The ozone layer'; 'Teenage loitering in shopping malls'; 'Abortion'.
Topics chosen by students	2. Discussion	Pair (12 min)	Structures: 'Personally, I feel ...';
	3. Presentation	Class (5 min) 8 presentations	'In my opinion ...'

Spontaneous presentation

In lesson 6 there was free writing in pairs on a topic of students' choice. The teacher supplied relevant structures e.g. 'In my opinion ...' to aid the students. 'Giving opinions' is one of the more demanding skill areas of the syllabus where students are required to give both prepared and spontaneous talks in front of an audience. Those who volunteered to speak, spoke very eloquently, spontaneously and autonomously. This seems to support the researcher's opinion that some students are operating at a level far below their true competency.

Syllabus area	Activity	Organisation	Skill/language
Lesson 7 Giving opinions	1. Discussion	5 groups of 6-8 students (20 min)	Reinforce structures taught the day before

'In Malaysia today, are boys and girls treated equally and fairly?'	2. Presentation (5 presenters)	Class (16 min)	Debate/argue Present a viewpoint
	3. Comments from the floor	Individual volunteers	

Lesson 7 was a lesson on debating skills. It was not a whole debate, but part of one, in which one student from each group was required to simulate a speaker at a debate. There was widespread excitement as all groups chose the contention that girls were not treated fairly when compared to boys. Clearly this is a topic that students can associate with. While a presentation was going on, other students who did not agree with the speaker were free to interject with their comments (refer to excerpt of transcript below). These comments were often one word comments or short questions demanding clarification. The presentations were lively because communication was two-way. However, it was the vocal students who were vociferous, not only during the group discussions, but also while the presentations were going on.

Syllabus area	Activity	Organisation	Skill/language
Lesson 8&9 Giving opinions 'Women and work'	1. Listening comprehension (teacher reads out passage)	Class (33 min)	Listening comprehension
	2. Tick true or false to statements read out based on passage heard	Group (10 min)	
'Should women work?'	3. Discussion	Class (10 min)	Debate
'Mothers should not hold a job outside the home'	4. Presentation (5 presenters)	Individual (9 min)	Argumentative speech
	5. Write out a speech		

Write for presentation and answer questions from the floor

Writing for a debate is a useful skill for the workplace. It has relevance for the presentation skills and rebuttal skills that are needed at higher organisational levels. In this respect, lesson 8/9 relates directly to workplace needs. While the topic is not directly related, this is not a serious deficiency when we consider that different jobs will deal with different content areas and school should not be expected to take responsibility for all content areas. Rather, if skills

such as that of argument and persuasion are dealt with, schools would have met many of the workplace needs for discussion and negotiation skills.

It would be ideal if the teacher could proceed systematically further and incorporate the skills of rebuttal, defence, negotiation or promoting one’s ideas or views, etc. more concerted because these skills are exceedingly critical in the workplace, bearing in mind that the students in this class obviously have the English proficiency to be coached in these higher level spoken skills. As part of the lesson, the students are asked to write their own individual essay, rather than to merely copy out their group's product. Although the topic is very similar to the one discussed in groups, but phrased differently, (compare 'Should women work?' with 'Mothers should not hold a job outside the home'), nonetheless, this was the most demanding task given to students to execute individually in the two weeks.

Syllabus area	Activity	Organisation	Skill/language
Lesson 10 Comprehension 'Health Care'	1. Listening comprehension (teacher reads out passage) 2. Classify statements based on passage heard into categories of habits done 'usually', 'sometimes', 'rarely', 'never', etc.	Class (time cannot be determined because only audio- recording was taken, systematic observation was not carried out)	Comprehend passage Answer questions Use words denoting frequency: 'usually', 'sometimes', 'rarely', 'never', etc.

Listening comprehension

As we can see, lesson 8/9 previously and lesson 10 above both incorporated listening comprehension. In the first part of lesson 8&9, students listened as the teacher read out a comprehension passage and then ticked true or false to a list of statements heard aurally comprising of ideas contained in the passage read. The fact that the class could not find the answers to this activity and the listening comprehension activity of lesson 10, revealed that students were probably not used to this type of activity or that their listening comprehension skills needed improving, or that the passage chosen was too inaccessible and would lend itself better to a reading comprehension exercise. On the other hand, it could be that this type of listening activity, using what seemed to be a reading comprehension passage, was artificial, and that the teacher should look for authentic materials that promote purposeful listening, such as announcements or a news flash, for example.

The section that follows takes a sample of classroom interaction in order to glean students' spoken competency, and the extent of their engagement on task for the purpose of exploring question 5 on page 38. This question is taken up later under student interviews.

Students' involvement and participation

An extract from a group discussion

(Lesson 7: Discussion on 'In Malaysia today, are boys and girls treated equally and fairly?')

- | | |
|----------|---|
| Mala | Boys have more freedom and priorities! Than? Than the girls ... than girls <i>lah!</i> This is because ... why? Why they have more freedom? |
| Jesse | Because they are allowed to go anywhere. |
| Mala | I know. Why? Must say why. |
| Student | ... (inaudible) |
| Mala | No <i>lah!</i> The parents will ask, 'Who are you going out with?' |
| Yee Ping | No, you have to explain why they have to go out with friends. |
| Mala | No, that's what I'm telling you. For example, boys have more freedom, right? Freedom and priorities than girls. Boys are allowed to go out with friends, meanwhile, girls ... |
| Jesse | Meanwhile, the girls are not allowed. Parents want to know who you are going out with - blah, blah and all that ... |
| Mala | Boys go out without any questions from parents. You see, see, boys are allowed to go out with friends. |

In the group that was taped above, Mala assumed leadership and dominated the discussion. Not all members of a group contributed equally, some being more assertive than others and therefore students did not get equal turns in group discussions.

Below is given one group's presentation, delivered by a Chinese girl, Christine, as an illustration of students' skills at managing presentations. Mistakes are kept intact. Comments from the floor are also included.

An extract from a presentation

- Mrs Pan All right. Next group, Christine!
(Christine comes up and begins the presentation)
- Christine In our point of view ...
Mrs Pan From our point of view
- Christine From our point of view, girls are treated equally, but there are certain families which bring up boys much more superior than girls. In another words we say that boys get away from house chores, they don't do much work most of the time. Not all boys, but there are certain boys. They can go out whenever they like, without certain curfew times. They have much more freedom than girls do, or the small little mistakes they do, but girls ... umm get ...
- Student Exaggerated.
(from the floor)
- Christine Ah, ya! Sometimes exaggerated by parents *lah!* They take it much more seriously if the girl does it *lah*, than the boys. Boys ... elder brother sometimes like to pinpoint their younger sister's mistakes and like to boss the younger sister around ...
- Mrs Pan They like to boss you around?
- Christine Ah ha. They are more appreciated in the house because they are so called the junior father of the house. Like the man of the house *lah*, so called junior man of the house. They are given more priorities in the sense that, whatever the father does, the sons do.
- Student Not everything!
(from the floor)
- Christine Not everything *lah*. Certain things. And then girls in other words supposed to be homely, polite. Of course must do all the house chores and then ah ... supposed be well behaved in front of everybody.
- Mrs Pan What about the school? Do you think boys and girls are treated differently?
- Christine Ah ... Boys ... they are much more rougher than girls. But, boys, I mean, their punishment are sort of heavier than girls. Because in their hearts ... because girls seldom do that much chaos than boys ...

We can see from the above that fluency is not the problem with the high achievers, i.e. a third of the class or more. Students do not seem to lack ideas, opinions or even general knowledge. Rather, the main problem is the use of the Malaysian dialect, and the deviant speech patterns and forms that they acquire from using the language with their non-native speaking friends as well as the limited exposure to standard forms of speech, especially in informal circumstances. The problem appears to be two-fold, i.e. the need to build up the fluency of the low achievers, and having achieved that, to improve the accuracy of fluent students.

The two extracts above also serve to illustrate that high achievers such as Christine and Mala are capable of spontaneous speech, and can respond to questions freely.

The summary below gives a brief account of classroom practice with regard to the skills and topics dealt with in the two weeks i.e. mainly the content of the lessons. The summary gives a clear picture of the competencies given treatment in the two weeks that will be useful in making the match with workplace criteria (questions 11 and 12 on page 35) in the concluding chapter, in terms of both outcome and process needs.

Summary of topics and language skills given treatment in the two weeks

Topics:

Description of processes and procedures e.g. *'How to withdraw money from the Post Office'*

Current issues: *Women and work*, and topics related to this theme

Competencies/skills

Discussion skills

Presentation skills

Sequencing skills - sentence level

Descriptive writing of processes

Writing out an extended text for presentation with group collaboration

Writing an argumentative essay with group collaboration

Listening comprehension

Using sentence connectors

11.3 The students

Four students were interviewed from this class. The two Malay girls, Masliah and Teh spoke Malay during the interview while the Chinese girl, Mee Ling, and the Indian girl, Chelvi, spoke English. The interviewees' abilities in English range from average to poor and unfortunately the high achievers were not included in the sample. The 'aide memoire' used is appended (Appendix 7).

This section takes up the issue as stated in question 7:

'Are there factors in students' (interviewees) background that have bearing on their proficiency in English?'

Students' backgrounds

Mee Ling is a Chinese girl who speaks a Chinese dialect at home, and non-standard Malaysian English with friends in school. Mee Ling has no definite plans for higher studies and does not seem aware that English may be needed to for her post-school needs. She reveals her ambition to become - 'Accountant may be. And designer - fashion designer, architect and all'.

Chelvi speaks a non-standard Malaysian English fluently with friends at school even though she does not speak it at home. Her father manages a small retail shop. Her ambition is to go to medical school in India following in the footsteps of her brothers, one of whom is a dentist and the other, an engineer.

Masliah does not speak English at home although her father can speak English. Her father gives her a lot of encouragement and the family subscribes to three English papers. Masliah aims to train as an engineer prior to becoming a commercial pilot.

Teh stays in a hostel for rural students, set up to enable them to study in academically superior town schools. Unlike the other students in the class who came from the Lembah Tua primary school, she entered this school at the secondary level. Her father is a factory supervisor and her mother works as a village nurse. She does not feel confident enough to speak English, but thinks that she can manage a simple conversation. She aims to study medicine in a local university. Teh rarely has an opportunity to use English since she does not mix with the English-speaking non-Malay girls.

The next section takes up question 2:

'What are the perceptions of the teacher with regard to students' interest and attitude towards English, including students' views of its importance?'

Teacher's perception of students' interest and their awareness of the importance of English
Mrs Pan asserts that students generally have a positive attitude towards English:

'Some of them, they do not really place a lot of importance where English language is concerned. So, they are generally, you know, ... they don't really show interest. But, on the whole they are all right. They do have the right attitude.'

The next section examines students' attitudes from their own perspective (question 8):

'What are the perceptions of students' (interviewees) with regard to the importance of the learning of English in terms of its usefulness (or lack of usefulness) for them in their future working lives?'

Students' awareness of the importance of English

All of the interviewees seemed aware that English is important in their lives. Excerpts of their comments are given below:

Masliah:

"... kalau kat sini, nak belajar dekat universiti pun, need English. Kalau nak pergi overseas pun, need English".

(You need English regardless of whether you go to a local or foreign university)

Teh:

".. kalau fikirkan untuk masa depan, terpaksa juga guna. Jadi terpaksa belajar semua ni, walaupun, dulu tak suka, tapi sekarang, rasa suka lah English tu."

(If I think about my future, I will have to learn it. I didn't use to like it until now.)

Chelvi:

"Because, if outsiders come to our country, we only know Malay, so we cannot speak to them. So, it's better to learn English. It's not a waste to us to learn English."

"... we have to learn English, because it is an international language."

Mee Ling was not forthcoming with her views on the importance of English. She was generally reticent and guarded during the interview in relation to the other interviewees.

The next section attempts to take up the issue stated in question 10:

'Are students' learning problems confined to English only, or do students have general learning problems of which English is only a part?'

The English assessment results of the four interviewees up to the time of attachment are given below. Generally speaking, the students who are high achievers in their other subjects are also good in English, similarly, the less able students are also poor in English. English therefore, does not seem to be a specific problem where these interviewees are concerned.

The students' assessment results

	<u>Test 1</u>	<u>Test 2</u>	<u>Test 3</u>	<u>Test 4</u>	<u>Total Eng marks</u>	<u>Term 1, Total marks, Ave marks and position</u>	<u>Term 2, Total marks, Ave marks and position</u>
Mee Ling	55 C6	61 C5	61 C5	80 A2	257/400	465 51.5% 10/36 Pass	489 54.4% 4/33 Pass
Mas liah		75 A2	58 C6	40 F9	213/400	491 54.4% 5/36 Pass	511 56.8% 2/33 Pass
Teh	32 F9	54 P7	absent	absent	86/200	370 41.0% 21/36 Fail	134 33.6% - -
Chel vi	24 F9	44 P8	40 F9	47 F9	155/400	375 39.3% 25/36 Fail	351 39.0% 25/33 Fail

Table 11.1: Assessment results of 4 Science 3 student interviewees

However, it does suggest that overall cognitive ability may be the factor that is salient here, although this cannot be determined in this study, since no measure of intelligence was carried out. Mee Ling and Masliah are in the top 10 in the class for Term 1 assessment and top 5 for Term 2 assessment, while Teh and Chelvi are in the lower third, achieving the 21st and 25th positions in class. The difference in terms of position in class is rather wide, however, the difference between their English scores are not that great.

The researcher could not discern any significant factors in the students' environments that would predispose Mee Ling and Masliah to acquire English more successfully than the other two students. In fact, in terms of use and exposure to the language, Chelvi has a better set of conditions for achieving a better performance than Masliah, in that she uses English both at home (with her brothers) and at school; however, this is not the case. In Teh's case, it does seem logical that her proficiency is lower, considering her rural background, and her late exposure to a good English language environment that Lembah Tua provides.

This following section attempts to explore question 5.

'How meaningful and motivating is the experience of learning English for the student interviewees?'

Students' opinion of the teaching

Students' opinions obtained from the interviews are summarised below:

Mee Ling	Maslih	Teh	Chelvi
Opinion of teaching: "(it) is fun, the way the teacher teach."	The teaching: "Group work <i>jarang</i> . <i>Selalunya kita kena buat seorang-seorang</i> " ((Group work) seldom . Usually we do the work individually)	"(Bahan) photostat ...ada cabaran. <i>Textbook boring lah.</i> " (It's challenging when the teacher uses other materials) " <i>kenal lah buat, hari ni aktiviti lain, esok akitiviti lain. Jadi tak ada siapa yang boring.</i> " (Teacher should vary the activities otherwise students will get bored) " <i>Kiranya berkesan. Dia banyak bimbinglah. ...jadi senanglah</i> " (Teacher's guidance is good for weak students like her).	"Before like first term didn't do anything. Maktab perguruan (college trainee) ... do group work." (The teacher did not use to give group work, but the trainee teacher did) "The teachers in this school do less group works." "Like comprehension, I hate most. When teacher just talk ... then boring"

Three of them report that the teacher is fond of using the textbook for most lessons which they find boring and that group work is uncommon. The interviewees find the lessons more interesting when the teacher brings in photo-copied materials from other sources. Teh, however, thought that the guided nature of the teacher's lessons was rather useful for a student with her level of ability. Only Mee Ling had no criticisms of the teaching.

Clearly, from the comments above, the classroom experience is not totally motivating or challenging. However, it is not without potential, because there are techniques and materials that the teacher uses that students find interesting.

The section that follows attempts to describe students' competencies, firstly, from the teacher's assessment of the abilities of the whole class and, following that, the student interviewees' assessment of their abilities is given. The description is intended to illuminate question 3.

'What, from teacher's assessment, are the competencies students (interviewees) possess? How do these relate to the competencies identified as needed in the workplace?'

It is to be noted that these assessments are the teacher’s expert, though subjective assessments and are not the result of any measure or test. Similarly, students’ assessments of their competencies are their individual perceived judgements, and are not the result of any measure. This is true for all four case studies.

The teacher's assessment of the competencies of the whole class

The teacher's responses to an item in the questionnaire (appendix 6b., question 2, p. 265) regarding students' competencies are as follows:

Nearly all	Some	Very few
Understand verbal instructions Engage in phone conversation Fill in forms Take notes Write formal letters	Understand talks/lectures Carry on social conversation Read for gist Read for information Write summaries Write reports Make presentation/speech	Argue/negotiate

a. Spoken skills

Most of the students are able to carry on a simple social conversation, to talk on the phone and some can take part in discussions. The school is very close to an arts and crafts centre for tourists as well as several shopping malls and big hotels. Students frequently encounter tourists who need help with information or directions, and generally, students are able to interact with them.

Only a handful of students are able to deliver short spontaneous speeches, but they would be unable to sustain an impromptu speech of three minutes or more, according to the teacher’s feedback at the second interview (appendix 6a., interview 2, question 3, p. 263). She reported that they are able to give their opinions but the majority are not able to argue, rebut or defend. Debates and speeches are within the scope of a third of the students, while most of the rest could perhaps manage prepared speeches with guidance and preparation and with the help of the dictionary.

b. Writing skills

Mrs Pan put emphasis on writing formal letters, such as letters of application for jobs, letters of requests, and letters of complaint to the newspaper. Less emphasis was given to friendly letters, although the teacher thinks students are able to write them, although with some

grammatical inaccuracies. Few essays or reports are set, according to Mrs Pan. Generally, an exercise such as expansion of notes or text completion is later copied out into the books for reinforcement. Students are given little practice in writing expressive, narrative essays, but according to Mrs. Pan the low achievers are able to manage simple essays such as 'Hobbies', 'Holidays', and 'A visit to the zoo' autonomously.

Students are also said to be able to fill in forms and take notes, although the researcher has reservations about their ability to take notes, since the results of group discussions were invariably written down as whole sentences to be read out verbatim rather than jotted down in note-form and the presentation made from notes.

c. Comprehension skills

The teacher confirmed that the students are able to read English newspapers and magazines such as the Readers Digest, and female magazines, i.e. lighter reading, but find magazines on current affairs such as Times or Newsweek, less accessible. Most of the girls read popular, romantic fiction on a regular basis.

Reading comprehension with multiple choice questions is something nearly all students perform adequately suggesting strong receptive skills. Students are able to cope with some literature texts with guidance, although most confessed to having difficulty with poetry. Most students have difficulty with listening comprehension especially if the material read from is dense and lacks redundancies.

d. Students' weaknesses

The teacher did not go into details of student weaknesses. Teachers have a tendency, when asked about students' weaknesses to speak in terms of the questions they cannot do in the exam, hence, according to Mrs Pan, students' weakness lies in *error identification*. Writing skills are also said to be in need of improvement, especially with regard to accuracy.

Student interviewees' own assessment of their competencies was sought during the interviews in order to explore subject with regard to question 9:

'What competencies do student interviewees possess in their own assessment? How do these competencies relate to the English competencies that are needed in the workplace?'

Student interviewees' own assessment of their competencies

Please refer to Appendix 8a. iii for a summary of student interviewees' competencies.

The next section attempts to take up question 6:

'What are the problems associated with teaching learning in this school and how are they being addressed?'

The description given below concerns the class and not the whole school.

Problems of teaching learning

The teacher's tendency to concentrate on the weaker students is prejudicial to the interests of the more able group who do not seem to be adequately challenged. The teacher, perceiving her class as weak, has a tendency to set discrete point practice and grammar practice, together with reading comprehension with multiple-choice questions, as a staple diet. Unfortunately, the need to adhere to the scheme which focuses on exams (refer to Mrs. Indran's feedback in case study 2 on this) has led to less developmental work to build up fluency, such as discussion activities, role-play and other communicative activities of CLT.

The school's strong point is its culture. During the two week attachment the school held three English language activities - a district level choral reading competition, a drama competition, and a debating workshop. It was reported that there are several such activities throughout the year and obviously they help promote interest and performance in English in the school.

11.4 Conclusion

The main problem in the case study above was the teacher's own admission that what was observed was not normal practice. The most powerful influence on the teaching seems to be the need to prepare students adequately for the national exams to the extent that the school has infused the exam component into the scheme of work.

The school's culture and tradition with regard to English is a positive influence on students' proficiency in the language. The effect of background factors on students' achievement cannot be determined conclusively due to the absence of high achievers among the interviewees in the sample. Students' achievement in English does show a degree of correlation with general success in learning, as judged from performance in other subjects on term tests (Table 11.1); the more able students performing well in English and the less able students performing less well in the subject.

Chapter 12

School Case Study Two

4 Arts 4

Summary Information

The teacher	- Mrs Indran
The form	- 4 Arts 4, Lembah Tua Girls School, School A
The students interviewed	- May Lan Goh Bee Haliza

Since a full account of all four case studies is not possible within the confines of the word limit imposed on this thesis, this chapter attempts a somewhat compressed account of the case study for 4 Arts 4. Further details of the case are given in Appendix 8b. As stated earlier, the sequence of presentation with regard to the research questions is similar to the case study in the preceding chapter.

12.1 The Teacher

The teacher's philosophy and teaching approach

Mrs. Indran has a comfortable relationship with the girls in the class mainly because her liberal but firm handling of them seems to be what is needed for this group who are mostly very confident, vocal and spirited. Students' feelings of apprehension with the presence of the researcher disappeared on the second day but the teacher admitted to setting more oral activities during the observation period. The effect on the girls was that they tended to talk more than usual: "... everybody wanted to be on the tape, so they talked more."

Mrs. Indran had a sound grounding in CLT techniques, having been inducted in them in her pre-service training:

"It should be communicative ... You should allow the students to talk ... it was like getting the students involved and enjoying themselves while learning English"

During the two week observation, Mrs. Indran was observed to be practising holistic integrative teaching employing a facilitative approach, an approach that she thinks suitable for an

advanced class. Unfortunately, the researcher was informed that this was not her customary routine. Under normal conditions, Mrs. Indran sees her main role as preparing students for the exam, spending "Half, three-quarters" of the time on exam work.

"I think main thing for the English teacher is to prepare them for the exams."

There is again the need to adhere to the mandatory scheme of work which has infused aspects of language tested in the exam.

"I'm confined by syllabus and scheme of work, you know."

"In a week - this is the scheme of work - you have to give at least two exercises on 'cloze passages', or 'forms and functions' - one of those. Then there should be at least one essay practice per week"

Students entering Form Four are immediately oriented to exam-type questions which are: " ... 'cloze passage', 'identification of errors', 'word omission' ... forms and functions ..."; then, towards the middle of the year "you've lots of exercises, exams"; and towards the end, practice for the oral exam, revision work and reinforcement of weak areas. She too, believes in the efficacy of written work for non-fluent students:

"... in the weaker classes, ... I give more exercises compared to the other classes, where it is more oral and less written work - because their written is okay - not too bad - not very good either."

Mrs. Indran does not set additional grammar work, apart from the grammar-related exam questions, but she tries to integrate grammar with other integrative activities.. She is a believer in formal instruction of grammar, and thinks that the integrative and incidental way grammar is treated under KBSM is detrimental to students' internalisation of the grammar of the language:"... the elements of language itself, what's a noun or verb, at form four, they don't know."

Mrs. Indran was able to outline what her normal classroom activities constituted of in the interviews:

- Written exercises of exam type questions
- Reading comprehension - written
- Sentence construction (forms) showing functions, e.g. greetings
- Language games - mainly vocabulary games
- Group projects

Although the intended curriculum places equal emphasis on all language skills - listening, speaking, reading and writing - with implicit and incidental language work, in reality, the

operational curriculum has a defined *written focus* incorporating *explicit discrete-point language work* and guided writing which relates to the types of questions asked in the exam.

Mrs Indran uses the textbook (Yunus and Spykerman, 1990) very occasionally, "I do go back to the textbook when there is a poem or whatever ..." since students find the book heavy-going and dull. What is common practice with her is the use of the set of materials acquired by the school, consisting of teachers' guides, students' workbooks, discontinued textbooks, exam guides, and a collection of past exam questions and model answers: "We have a set of past years' questions, and we have certain exercises in the old books."

The school has a tradition of academic excellence including high pass rates in English every year. Teachers rely on the workbooks because textbooks, which are based on the teaching syllabus do not contain practice in exam questions: "... that's why we depend on the workbooks so much."

Mrs. Indran does not feel that what she does in class prepares students adequately for English use after school, such as for academic reading for higher studies. "We don't really prepare them for the future." She feels, however, that the KBSM syllabus is adequate with regard to the provision of general English proficiency. Moreover, Mrs Indran has stressed the importance of English to the students.

"You should be able to communicate effectively at all levels, especially if you want to go into the private sector. ... it's for your reference when you enter into higher learning ... it's important if you want a good job."

12.2 The lessons

The tables containing details of the lessons are given in Appendix 8b.i. An outline of the primary focus of lessons in the two weeks is given below:

Lesson 1	Give opinions: e.g. 'Crank Calls', 'Homosexuality' Individual spontaneous presentation
Lesson 2 & 3	Give opinions 'Teenage runaways' Group Discussion
Lesson 4	Continuation of 'Teenage runaways' Group discussion

Lesson 5	As above, 'Teenage runaways' Give presentation
Lesson 6	Language game Word game
Lesson 7 & 8	Give opinions 'Teenagers should be given more freedom' Group Discussion
Lesson 9	Administrative (Distribution of class readers)
Lesson 10	Literature- Poetry 'A march of the women' Individual: Reading and critical appreciation

The main focus of all the lessons in the first week was 'Giving opinions on current issues'. The main activity was discussion in small groups for most of the week, culminating in the giving of formal prepared presentations in front of the class.

Students also had to practise their listening skills when listening to each others' group presentations and were given the opportunity to comment on other groups' ideas and opinions, i.e. practice in rebutting and argumentative skills. Indeed, the lessons of the first week were student-centred and encouraged students' active verbal participation in small groups as well as providing the opportunity to make formal presentations in front of the whole class. Refer to Appendix 8b.iv. for transcripts of students' presentations.

'Giving opinions' carried on into Lessons 7 and 8 in the second week, and apart from the language game, which was a more discrete level activity, nearly all the lessons integrated all four skills. Lesson 10 on poetry reading was less accessible for the students, and the question here is whether to stretch the students so that they will be able to enjoy poetry or to utilise materials that are more accessible.

12.2.1 Students' involvement and participation

Below is given an extract of teacher-student interaction within a whole class organisation. In terms of language use, the interaction was quite sophisticated.

(i). An extract of a spontaneous presentation

- Kim Mee Umm ... I'd like to talk about umm (laughs) ... 'animal abuse' (laughs)
- Mrs Indran Okay, 'animal abuse'. That is something different.
- Kim Mee I mean ... because to me, I think that animals have feelings too, just like any other human being and umm ... they have to be treated as one. ... I mean, nicely, and I think that if a person wants to keep a pet, for instance, a cat or a dog, they should treat them properly, right? And take full responsibility of it and shouldn't like, beat up their dog or cat whenever they like or when they are not in a good mood, and then ... because there are so many stray animals, and ... it shows how people treat the animals.
- Mrs Indran (interrupting) Talking about stray animals - sometimes we have a cat or dog ... (inaudible) ... many kittens. We can't keep all of them. What can we do about them?
- Kim Mee Spay the animals
- Mrs Indran It's already too late. It's already born.
- Student Give them away
- Mrs Indran Give them away. To whom?
- Student SPCA
- (Mutterings from the floor)
- Mrs Indran You can give it to someone you know, or you can give it to SPCA. That we are talking about the tame animals. What about the wild animals? Are we abusing them as well?
- Students
(chorus) Yes!
- Mrs Indran So, what do we do about it?
- Student Send them back to the jungle. (Laughter)
- Mrs Indran They *are* there!

Student No, no. Give them to a secure home ... (inaudible) ... chopping up the trees.

(Several voices in the background)

They are not wild, but people are taking over their house.

Student Give them to national parks.

Mrs Indran So, here we are clearing forests and destroying nature - their traditional habitat. Okay, as the future generation you have to do something ... we have to do something about it. Okay, we have the WWF - not the World Wrestling Federation.

(Laughter)

Students World ... World Wildlife ... Foundation.

Mrs Indran Okay, ... that is trying to *do* something about this problem. We can help in our own ways. What are the ways?

Students ... (inaudible)
Start at home
Stop destroying nature.

From the above we can see fluent and spontaneous interaction occurring between the teacher and the students and ideas expressed in good language.

Below is an excerpt of a group discussion. By this time the group was halfway through the discussion of the topic 'Teenage runaways'.

(ii). Extract from a group discussion

Bee Chan And usually people at this age ... they are more sensitive ...

Betty Not matured enough

Julie They are not matured enough

Bee Chan And usually people at this age ... they are more sensitive ...

Julie And they are more sensitive

Bee Chan	They are not matured enough and they are more sensitive
Pek Ling	Between adult and childhood
Bee Chan	And they need more love and care from their parents. So, when they do not get the attention of their parents they think ...
Julie	They think negatively
Bee Chan	Ah, they think negatively that their parents do not love them, so, that's why they run away.

Again, good ideas are expressed in language of an advanced level.

The full text in Appendix 8b. iv, (Group 4) that was presented was quite substantial . By contrast, discussion by a predominantly Malay group of girls resorted to more frequent code-switching. Refer to Appendix 8b. ii. An excerpt from a group discussion showing students giving attention to accuracy is given in Appendix 8b.iii.

Indeed, in the two weeks observed, it appeared that students experienced a great deal of enjoyment during their English lessons. They were able to talk freely, and to express their opinions. They participated, they were heard, and they made their wishes felt, such as suggesting a change in the topic for discussion, the choice of game to be played, etc.. The transcripts and the observation showed them engaged on task, producing substantial extended texts, and enjoying themselves tremendously. Topics such as 'Teenage runaways' and 'Teenagers should be given more freedom' were very pertinent to them, hence the high level of interest and enthusiasm in the discussions that ensued. Indeed, it emerged from the observation that the lessons were meaningful and enormously motivating to the majority of the students. The problem is that this type of activity, it was reported, does not happen often. In the researcher's opinion, this is the class that enjoyed their lessons the most, when compared to the other three in the sample. Strangely enough, no exam-related activity was observed, contrary to Mrs Indran's claim regarding her teaching focus. Conceivably this was another effect of researcher presence.

Summary of language skills and topics dealt with in the two weeks

Topics:

Teenage runaways

Teenagers should be given more freedom

Competencies

Discussion skills

Argumentative and rebuttal skills

Writing out an extended text for presentation
Edit written draft
Give formal prepared presentations
Make words from letters
Comprehend literary genre and analyse poetry

12.3 The Students

To recall, the three students who were interviewed were May Lan, Goh Bee and Haliza. All the interviews were conducted in English and procedures followed as with the preceding case study. According to Mrs. Indran, almost the whole class are fluent speakers and have attained a basic level of proficiency in the language, or higher. Indeed, Mrs. Indran claimed that out of the whole class, there are only three students who would not be able to handle jobs such as that of a receptionist when they leave school.

Students' Backgrounds

(For a summary of students' backgrounds and their competencies in English, refer to Appendix 8b.vi)

May Lan

May Lan is the highest achieving student in class, according to the teacher, for most subjects including English. Her two brothers and two sisters are working and living at home. One manages a boutique, another is a PR officer, one is a sales representative and one works in a securities company. The family speaks 'a bit of everything' i.e. English, Cantonese and Malay and subscribes to English newspapers.

May Lan is contemplating a career in either psychology, political science or economics. She works hard at Mathematics, especially Additional Mathematics, as she judges it to be extremely important for her future. She disclosed that as a child, she acquired her proficiency in English through interacting with a close friend of her father who is a native speaker and frequently visits them at home. Her siblings have often recounted their experiences with English in their jobs and this has made her realise the importance of English in one's career.

"If I were to continue my studies abroad, it will be very, very important, and in Malaysia too when I come out to work. That's what my brothers and sisters say - that, if you come out to work, they don't care so much about your *Bahasa* result, but they do care whether you are conversant in English or not."

Goh Bee

Goh Bee, is one of the three underachievers identified by Mrs. Indran. Goh Bee's parents operate a food stall in a hawker complex. She speaks mainly Chinese at home. Both parents have a smattering of English through interacting with the tourists who frequent

their stall. Her English is fluent although non-standard, and she speaks all three languages to interact with friends at school. Goh Bee feels that there are other languages equally important in one's future apart from English and perhaps this has led to the effect of her not being focused on English.

"I think English and Mandarin also very important."

"But if you learn a bit of Japanese also good."

Haliza

The third student interviewee, Haliza, appeared confident and sophisticated, and it was rather surprising when her results show that she is an 'average' student in her other subjects. Haliza's father is an accountant, her mother a telephonist. Haliza's English is fluent and quite standard and she uses English with her family. She admits to being inspired to do well in English because of a favourite cousin who is studying medicine in the UK. She reads fiction regularly and the family subscribes to English newspapers.

With regard to background, there would seem to be factors in the two students' (May Lan and Haliza) backgrounds that have predisposed them to acquire English. May Lan had opportunities to use English from an early age as a result of her father's friendship with a native speaker and there is the additional exposure from the working siblings. Factors in Haliza's background that would predispose her to acquire English are her parents who use English at work and at home and her cousin who she regards as a role model. On the other hand, Goh Bee's parents are themselves not fluent speakers compared to the parents of both her classmates.

Therefore, unlike the interviewees of 4 Sc 3 in which background does not explain students' proficiency adequately, with reference to the interviewees from this class, there seems to be a correlation between the factors in interviewees' backgrounds, such as association with native speakers, role models and use of English with one's own family members that correlates with students' proficiency.

Awareness of the importance of English

Mrs. Indran feels almost all the students are serious about English, and she recounted an anecdote about one of the low achievers who spoke out strongly on the importance of English:

"... I just called at random - 'number 20 of the register - get up and say something'.
So, she said - 'I've realised how important English is, and I'm taking tuition'."

She herself would remind the students occasionally to take the subject seriously:

"... I tell them it's for your reference when you enter into higher learning. Second, for you to communicate and that's important if you want a good job. If you want to go into business ..."

The high achievers are motivated to learn English mainly for their future careers.

"... they learn it because it is part of the exam subjects, and ... to do well in business. ... those who want to study, they need to do reference ... when they are in varsity. That's what the objective is."

For the underachievers, it is not lack of interest so much as a lack of confidence in their own ability.

"They want to participate. Once you get the class going, they are interested, but before that they are very apprehensive, like - it's a foreign language."

There are those who have ambivalent attitudes towards the language arising from three different outlooks. Firstly, English loses out to Malay: "... they think it's not important; they are not interested to learn - 'I don't have to pass English in the exam ... Bahasa Malaysia is more important.'" Secondly, the arrogant attitude of the good students: "Or sometimes you have a good class, and they think they are very good, so - 'I'm good, I don't need you to come and teach me anything ...'" Thirdly, English loses out to 'more important' subjects: "I've got 9 other subjects to do as well. Where are my priorities? ... am I going to read enough so I can be better at this (English) paper or am I going to spend my time on my Maths which is also important."

However, these attitudes are less prevalent in the class under study. Indeed, the majority in 4 Arts 4 are committed to English.

According to Mrs. Indran, low proficiency students desperately want to be able to engage in spontaneous speech.

"They want to be able to speak to others. They don't want to be caught (speechless) when foreigners talk to them in English."

Encounters with foreigners are quite frequent as explained in the first case study, since the school is at the centre of a shopping and hotel district frequented by tourists. However, even low achievers are conscientious about written work, although in interactive group activities, they have a tendency to allow the fluent speakers to dominate.

"They are a bit shy when it comes to talking - they feel they are not good enough."

"I'm weak, so what do I do about it? Better keep quiet, you know, better not talk, you know, the rest are going to laugh at me. That kind of attitude."

The next section takes up the question of whether weak students suffer from lack of achievement in all subjects, or face a specific problem in connection with English alone.

The students' assessment results

Students	Exam	Malay	Eng lish	Mor al/Isl Rel	Eng Lit	Hist ory	Math	Add Mat	Gen Sc	Acc ount	Eco n	Total	Averag e	Position
May Lan	Test 1	66 C4	abs	abs	abs	abs	66 C5	74 C3	88 A2	abs	85 A2	-	-	-
	Test 2	abs	abs	abs	abs	abs	abs	abs	abs	abs	ab	-	-	-
	Test 3	52 P7	72 C3	69 C4	72 C4	abs	90 A1	64 C5	92 A1	97 A1	91 A1	-	-	-
Goh Bee	Test 1	47 P8	abs	abs	abs	abs	76 C3	46 P7	88 A2	abs	94 A1	-	-	-
	Test 2	37 F9	48 P8	46 P8	32 F9	49 P8	68 C4	60 C5	53 P7	67 C6	-	461	55.22	26/28
	Test 3	45 P8	32 F9	63 C5	38 F9	66 C4	74 C3	35 F9	60 C5	96 A1	73 C4	583	58.35	12/30
Haliza	Test 1	abs	abs	abs	abs	abs	52 P7	18 F9	36 F9	abs	62 C6	-	-	-
	Test 2	abs	abs	35 F9	abs	abs	26 F9	abs	abs	48 P8	-	-	-	-
	Test 3	55 C6	59 C6	47 P8	25 F9	53 P7	28 F9	5 F9	48 P8	44 F9	55 P7	421	42.1	23/30

Table 12.1: Assessment results of 4 Arts 4 student interviewees

May Lan’s is the case of a high flyer in all subjects, including English, suggesting an intelligence factor as the reason for success. Haliza’s case suggests a correlation between background and exposure as having contributed to her English proficiency, since she is average in other subjects.

In Goh Bee’s case, the results show her as being weak in Malay, English, English Literature and Additional Mathematics, i.e. mainly languages, but somewhat better in Elementary Mathematics, General Science and Economics. Her lack of achievement seems to indicate a general problem with verbal ability encompassing both Malay and English.

Factors in students’ background form a fascinating subject for study, with each student having his/her individual advantages, constraints and strengths that have bearing on their rate of success. It is unfortunate that this study can only touch briefly on this aspect of learner variables and its effect on learning.

The next section attempts to delve into the question of whether students find their learning experience motivating.

Students' opinion of the teaching

All three student interviewees, including the teacher herself, reveal that normal classroom activity comprises individual written work, and essay writing. They find such activities tedious, but enjoy oral activities, such as those carried out in the two weeks. They enjoyed working on a project earlier in the year, in which each group was instructed to design and construct garments out of old newspapers and to model these creations and describe them verbally to the class. Since it was largely make-believe with students having to visualise the old newspapers as exotic haute couture, they found the activity entertaining. These and discussion activities however, are few and far between. According to the interviewees, the majority of English lessons, interspersed occasionally by discussions and projects, are quite dull. As commented by Haliza: "... every time we come to class, - 'Okay, open your book, write this, copy this, answer the questions ...' and all that."

Students' competencies

For a full account of student competencies, refer to Appendix 8b.v. (for the whole class as assessed by the teacher); and 8b.vi. (with regard to interviewees as assessed by them).

CONCLUSION

Every year three out of about three hundred students of this school fail English in the SPM (Table 5.3). Since 4 Arts 4 is the highest achieving arts class, and Goh Bee considered to be one of the three who are weak in English, it could be predicted that in the next year, if the failure rate remains the same, that no student from 4 Arts 4 will fail. Students have the right attitude towards the language even if they do not find routine classroom procedures interesting. It is this factor, as well as the high concentration on exam work, that has produced the excellent results that are obtained by the school every year. In 4 Arts 4, most students are autonomous language users, and Goh Bee's proficiency compares favourably with the high achievers of school B, as we shall see shortly. The school culture is the major influence on the high rate of success for this school.

Chapter 13

SCHOOL B

Kampung Inai Secondary School (co-ed)

School Case Study Three

4 Science 1

Summary information

The teacher	- Mr Jegan
The class	- 4 Science 1, Kampung Inai Secondary School (co-ed)
The students interviewed	- Julina - Rustam - Sabrata - Rosie - Azrai

Part of the description on this case study is reported in Appendix 8c. However, significant aspects of teaching learning and learner variables are compressed in this chapter, as they are pertinent to the discussion chapter and conclusions drawn from the school case studies overall.

13.1 The Teacher

The Teacher's philosophy and teaching approach

Mr. Jegan's classroom practice is not significantly derived from any linguistic or pedagogical theories, but rather, is influenced by what students can cope with, the administrative guidelines of the school and the demands of the national exam, SPM.

Mr. Jegan showed an inclination towards traditional class teaching with individual written work for reinforcement, rather than group activities, although during the period of observation, group work was also observed.

"I believe in group work because it allows the student to participate, really participate, but the only sad thing is that, you would expect them to use English; no one uses English in class - so group work that allows the students to use Bahasa defeats the purpose of it."

The District Education Authority and the School Principal exert a lot of pressure on low achieving rural schools particularly, to achieve a satisfactory level of performance in the SPM.

"... what matters is the exam. That is what we are told to do; that is, bring up the pass rate."

Mr. Jegan's reason for not providing adequate communicative practice stems from this need for exam preparation. Moreover, since students lack even basic language resources, this in itself eliminates much of the activities that would involve students' spontaneous participation. Mr. Jegan believes that for low proficiency students, all activities will have to be in a written mode and strictly guided, and the first language used as instructional language.

"The first problem is vocabulary. When you give them a question, you first have to explain the question to them, and you have to do it in Malay."

The demand to produce exam results for students with inadequate entry behaviours at Form Four has forced the teacher to utilise exam questions from workbooks provided by the school. It is felt by those in authority that this is the quickest way to obtain results in the exam.

"I favour the old approach, where you teach grammar ... because what it comes down to is that in the end what the student is tested on is grammar - he's asked to identify errors in sentences, which is essentially grammar ... There is no holistic evaluation. There is only evaluation based on a piece of paper. And ... considering the limitations of a paper based examination, can only test the grammar and vocabulary" (refer to exam paper, Appendix 3a and 3b).

Written activities take precedence over oral activities. The school in turn exerts its own supervisory control by demanding that teachers show written work.

"... right now, I have to show written work,. I have to show proof of my work by showing exercise books to my Head of Department - 'Look, I've done so much'. ... So, I think my time is wasted, *asking students who don't understand what they write, to write.*"

In fact, the daily diet of the classroom is discrete point written work on points of grammar, specifically of the types that appear in the examination.

As is the case with the other teachers, Mr. Jegan finds the prescribed textbook laborious.

"the Suraya Sulayman book is *very, very difficult*. And teacher has to pick and choose the various exercises there that can be done."

In addition, materials that can benefit low achievers at the adolescent stage, especially simple readers, are lacking.

Mr. Jegan believes that the hours of exposure in school are not adequate to enhance students' skills in English.

"I think (it takes) more than teaching. I believe that language is not something you can teach with a set number of hours in class. The KBSM syllabus is not like that. ... You need to extend beyond school - into reading, into leisure. In school, it just doesn't take place."

Mr. Jegan believes that the KBSM syllabus does prepare students for the workplace to some extent and his views are quoted below:

"One thing about the syllabus, it does teach some practical skills. I'm talking about 'processes', 'giving opinions', it does help them. But, I don't know how far."

"Indirectly, it has a lot to do with the workplace, but directly, if I have to rate ... I would say 40 to 50 percent. Meaning letters, expressing opinions, all these will help. But describing processes and procedures indirectly in that sense."

Students who are seldom called upon to handle a global/integrated task on their own, will predictably have difficulty in coping with English independently.

"If they didn't do group work ... if they were to do it alone, they won't be able to do it. So, I don't know how they would perform in their jobs."

13.2 The Lessons

The researcher succeeded in acquiring the scheme of work of school B (Appendix 9). Mr. Jegan's lessons seemed to cover Weeks 5-6, i.e. Letters of enquiry and complaints, and Weeks 7-9, i.e. Opinions on current issues such as unemployment (Semester 11 (a)).

Please refer to the tables in the Appendix 8c.i for details of the lessons.

There were *two discussion activities* which took place during the double periods one of which culminated in a presentation and the other in a written exercise (L3&4 and L8&9). There were *two lessons on reading*, one of which is tied to literature (L5 and L10). There were two lesson devoted to exam questions, *forms and functions and text completion* or cloze (L6 and L7). In spite of the presence of the researcher, Mr. Jegan carried on doing exam practice during the observation period. Of the four case studies, his lessons are more representative of the type of activities teachers engage in under normal conditions.

Outline of lessons observed

Lesson 3 & 4	Give opinions on current issues: 'Unemployment' Discussion
Lesson 5	Reading comprehension 'Advice to a son' Reading aloud followed by written exercise
Lesson 6	Forms and functions
Lesson 7	Text completion 'How tea is made' 'Bats'
Lesson 8&9	Give opinions on current issues 'TV programmes' Discussion and presentation
Lesson 10	Reading comprehension 'God will help' Individual silent reading and comprehension questions

On balance, therefore, there seems to be a fair distribution between discrete type and integrative activities, and somewhat more productive than receptive skills practice. Apart from the group discussions, which are not normally carried out, the lessons are formal, predictable, and rather uninspiring, much like lessons in 4 Science 3 of school A.

Students' involvement and participation

The extract below represents an excerpt from the discussion of a group engaged in the task of writing out a talk on the current issue topic of 'Unemployment'. All the students made an effort to speak in English. The high achiever in English, Julina, is in the group.

An extract from a group discussion

- Fatimah Why do you think unemployment exist (pronounced *egi:s*)?
- Julina I think unemployment occur (*oki:ɔr*) because some people do not take, do not takes whatever job opportunities ...
- Fatimah Do not take *lah*
- Julina Do not take ... T - A - K - E, take, take, *ambil* ... Do not take whatever job opportunities afford (offered) to ... which come their way
- Fatimah Occur *ke* 'accuse'? (students are unsure about the word and pronunciation)
- Julina Occur (*oki:ɔr*)

The finished product of the group that was delivered to the class is produced below. It was delivered by Julina. Apart from the delivery, Julina managed to respond to the teacher's questions on the presentation exceedingly well, even though she had some problems with accuracy.

A group presentation

Why do you think unemployment occurs? I think unemployment occurs because of some people do not take whatever job opportunities which comes their ways. Second, in our opinion, we think some companies only employ an experience people, so the people who don't have any experience won't available to get any jobs. In our view that unemployment occurs out of the town. Some of the villages do not have any information about any jobs at all. If they do have any information, they do not have experience to ... (inaudible) about the job. Can unemployment be eradicated? Yes! But, but we think that it cannot all eradicated because if only one part ... one side take part, one side did not, so it cannot eradicated at all.

Refer to the original written piece (Appendix 10a. (i)).

Although the excerpts above cannot be used to show definitively that the students' learning experience was meaningful and motivating to them, they are useful in showing engagement and

involvement on task. Certainly, group work is something that guarantees involvement and participation for most students.

The product produced below is an example of the effort of an 'all-boys' group. The original photo copy is appended (Appendix 10a. (iii)). An excerpt from their discussion is given in Appendix 8c.iv.

Dear Tok Mat,

Recently, I was watching televisyen and I noticed that there were too much sports program and talk shows and entertainment and so on. So I feel that we viewers are not getting our fair share like many other viewers. I think that there are not enough documentary shows.

Documentary shows are programs on like, live, nature, science, history and anything that has to do with our human race, which bring more knowledge for the people especially students and also makes us more understanding about our purpose of life. Shows like entertainment shows, adventure series, comedy sitcoms should not be given more air time. It is because these shows are not knowledgeal shows so what's the purpose of watching these program? I think these programmes should be given less of these kinds of programmes. Therefore I think you the director should take some action. I tell that more documentary program should be screen on televisyen.

This text is slightly longer than the one previously presented. There is still the problem of grammar and spelling (e.g. 'knowledgeal'), and incorrect use of vocabulary such as 'tell' for 'suggest' or 'propose'. However, it is similarly quite comprehensible, and again shows potential that could be exploited, given the right encouragement and consistent sustained nurturing.

The transcripts of discussions in progress (Appendix 8c. ii to v) show students engaged on task and producing completed texts. Indeed, the English lessons can be said to be quite successful where these integrative tasks performed in groups are concerned for the groups that were taped, discounting some of the imperfections, such as use of the first language and the inaccuracies of the final written text.

Summary of language skills and topics given treatment in the two weeks

Topics

Current affairs:

Unemployment
TV programmes

Competencies

Discussion skills

Presentation skills

Writing out an extended text for presentation

Edit written draft

Write a letter of complaint

Read and understand comprehension passage

Read and understand a short story from a simplified reader

Answer comprehension questions

Identify forms and functions

Complete a cloze passage

13.3 The students

Space does not permit detailed discussion of two of the five students interviewed; they are Rosie and Azrai. However, information on them is presented in Appendix 8c. vi. Of the five, Julina and Rustam were selected by the teacher to represent the able English student; Sabrata the average English student; and Rosie and Azrai the low achiever.

Rustam can speak English quite well and he attributes this to an early introduction to English in kindergarten. The teacher claimed that he is quite fluent, although he has little opportunity to practise his spoken skills since the people he interacts with at home and school use Malay with him.

Julina has a very strong personality and according to Mr. Jegan is something of a leader in the class. She has a fierce determination to succeed in English, as will be seen later. She speaks fluent English and has a wide vocabulary, although her speech is non-standard. From the interview it appeared that she is largely self-taught, and has acquired English mainly through recreational reading. Julina reads copiously at home, especially romantic fiction, and goes to English movies which she understands and enjoys.

Sabrata comes from a nearby kampong and his father is a lorry driver. He is able to engage in a conversation in English although his school work in English is average. He is the first boy in the class and his mathematics teacher told the researcher that he is a brilliant mathematician. In spite of his blue collar background, he is a promising student and aims to study medicine in India.

Julina represents a fascinating and unusual case of the exceptional successful learner who has succeeded despite the disadvantages of her environment. Clearly, the people she mixes with in school and at home do not use much English, however, she is determined to perform well.

She reported: "I asked my eldest sister to speak English with me. She taught me to speak in English, how to use right grammar. She buy books for me to read." When questioned about how she acquired her English, Julina was not able to explain at first: "Sometimes I cannot understand why I good at it."

But on reflection, she attributed it to sibling rivalry. She disclosed that her sister, who is one year older than she, is good at everything she does. She confessed to being very jealous of her.

"So, I think, if I very good in English, I can beat her."

"Because ... I don't have any other speciality. If my English is good, that my speciality."

Here we see the presence of a very strong drive and motivation to learn English.

Students' attitudes

Speaking about their attitude towards English, Mr. Jegan said:

"They are interested, but it is such a monumental task to them that they can't even begin to think that they'll be proficient. But once you come to form 5, and you can't even master the basic structures, it becomes very discouraging, I believe."

"... learning English is too much; it's beyond them ... you know, they vaguely feel English is important, but it is not translated into concrete terms - in terms of exams."

"Having the interest is one thing, and acting on it is another. Because I think it's too much of an effort. It's easier just to ... let the problem ride."

Three of the students Sabrata, Azrai and Rosie regard English as instrumentally (Gardner, 1979) important to their career goals. Sabrata knows he needs English because he has plans to study medicine in India. He intends to take the overseas English paper 1119, and would be taking tuition for it in the near future. At the moment Sabrata cannot spare the time, so English has had to take a back seat to more important subjects, such as the science disciplines and Mathematics. Furthermore, he reveals in frustration, that even if he wishes to work on his English he does not know how to go about it: "I want to do something, but I don't know what to do" and also disclosing: "I have no time because of my tuition."

In contrast to this, Julina disclosed that her interest in English was not motivated by any career aspirations. At the moment she does not see her ambition to be a manager as directly related to English. To quote her:

"No, I don't think about it (English). I want to be manager in million company - just like that." (multi-million dollar company)

Similarly, Rustam, although aware that English would be important in terms of higher studies overseas, appears to be more integratively motivated rather than instrumentally motivated to learn English.

It is apparent why at least two out of the five students i.e. Rosie and Azrai (refer Appendix 8c.vi. for information about them) are not achieving in English. Both they and Sabrata reported that *most of the time they cannot follow what is being taught*. Only Rustam and Julina report being able to follow the lessons. Yet, Rosie seems to retain interest in spite of this.

Sabrata thinks that group discussion is a waste of time:

"Group discussion ... I don't like to take part. I don't like that because it's only *buang masa* (waste of time). Because I not *menumpukan perhatian* (pay attention) so much."

Both Julina and Rustam enjoy reading books magazines, as well as music and films in English. To quote Julina:

"When I read English story books, it's part of me. Sometimes I be the heroine; sometimes I recall what she said to the hero. I recall it. ... I not interested to read in BM (Malay), especially when I read their romance story in BM. It cannot attract me to read it. I don't like to read Malay newspaper either, only the entertainment section."

This dichotomy is interesting in the sense that Julina and Rustam tend to dissociate the English which is used as a medium through which you do things you enjoy outside of school, and English as something you learn in the classroom in formal conditions as a compulsory exam subject, which is a chore, as borne out by Rustam, who explicitly states that he likes English, but find the lessons (except for the occasional discussion activity) boring.

The students' assessment results

	Eng	Malay	Rel/m oral	Histor y	Math	Add Math	Physi	Chem	Biol	Total mark	Perce nt %	Positi on
Julina	79 A2	60 C4	73 C3	70 C3	70 C3	44 P8	43 P8	63 C4	65 C3	567	63.0	3/25
Rustam	78 A2	61 C4	59 C5	58 C5	40 P8	30 F9	47 P8	43 P8	45 P7	461	51.2	16/25
Sabrata	66 C3	53 C6	65 C3	83 A2	92 A1	89 A1	83 A2	88 A1	69 C3	758	75.8	1/25
Azrai	48 P7	47 P7	49 P7	54 C6	57 C5	50 C6	25 F9	42 P8	40 P8	492	49.2	21/25
Rosie	47 P7	50 C6	60 C4	60 C4	42 P8	02 F9	43 P8	41 P8	55 C5	405	45.0	22/25

Table 13.1: Assessment results of 4 Sc 1 student interviewees

Julina is an able student in all subjects, and a high achiever in English. Sabrata is a high achiever in most subjects, but average in English. Rustam is average in most subjects, but a high achiever in English. The last category of student is a low achiever in all subjects including English, as represented by Rosie and Azrai.

In Mr. Jegan's opinion, students of the third category, i.e. Sabrata's category, for whom English is a specific problem, *make up 25% of the students* in most classes in the school, especially the good classes - the science classes. To quote him:

"... you will find that in the science classes and the better classes of sastera (arts), there are a lot of students who are good in other subjects but not good in English. So, *English is a specific problem to 25% of the students*. The rest are also not good in the other subjects."

If students who are good in English and in their other subjects make up 25% of the class, and students who are weak in English but good overall make up another 25%, that would leave us with 50% who had overriding problems with learning as a whole and for whom learning is not a problem specific to English. While our aim would be to improve students' English as a whole, at the present time *it would appear that if we are talking of an 'English problem', it unquestionably would be these 25% who are succeeding with other subjects but failing in English*. This situation represents a waste of potential and is not a problem that can be solved through change in English teaching alone, rather the problem must be looked at from the perspective of the whole curriculum. In present conditions, students appear to have little time to spend on recreational reading in English that is important in enhancing their development in the language. The problem is particularly acute for science students who have a heavier workload than arts students.

Students' competencies

Student competencies are viewed from several perspectives.

For the teacher's account of the competencies of the whole class with regard to the four skills, please refer to Appendix 8c. vii

For the teacher's assessment of the whole class with regard to their vocational potential as it pertains to their English proficiency, please refer to Appendix 8c.viii.

For an account of the competencies of the student interviewees, as reported by them, refer to Appendix 8c.ix

For a summary of student interviewees' background and their competencies, refer to Appendix 8.c.x

Conclusion

The researcher wishes to highlight a number of significant trends in this case study. One is the lack of suitable materials, in particular simple readers, dealing with teenage themes. Then, there is the problem of heavy use of the first language and of translation in the teaching-learning. Furthermore, there is a need to help *the 25% promising students represented by Sabrata* with their learning of the target language, since to allow them to fail would mean a waste of potential.

There is also need to draw attention to *the exceptional learner*, such as Julina who has succeeded when most of her peers have not. There would seem to be a need to study students' motivations comprehensively, as this is an area of which little is known, especially with regards to Malaysian school children. If we understand what motivates students such as Julina to focus on English, or whatever unique motivations each individual learner has, conditions could perhaps be arranged to enable teachers to exploit and capitalise on these motivations in the classroom. This understanding of learners is crucial to the promotion of L2 acquisition in the classroom.

Chapter 14

School Case Study Four

4 Arts 1

Summary information

The teacher	- Mrs Halim
The class	- 4 Arts 1, Kampung Inai Secondary School
The students interviewed	- Ziana Aida Fauzun Mat

4 Arts 1 was the weaker of the two classes that were observed in school B, Kampung Inai.

14.1 The Teacher

14.1.1 The teacher and her teaching philosophy

Mrs. Halim has a degree in business studies and an MBA from the State University of New York. She resigned from the post of Financial Comptroller in a finance company after starting a family, and trained for the Diploma of Education in TESL at a local university.

Mrs. Halim is in her early thirties and has a very self-assured and confident demeanour. She is warm and rather maternal towards the students but can get rather exasperated when students show lack of comprehension or fail to respond.

Mrs. Halim admits that her spoken English is often non-standard, which may pose a problem if she were teaching in a elite school, but was acceptable in Kampung Inai. To quote her,

"I think I make mistakes a lot when I speak to my Head of Department, but she knows I am not a TESL student."

"... what I feel is, for ... these students ... we don't need very high proficiency. ... We need patience."

14.1.2 Researcher effect

The teacher claimed that the presence of the researcher had little effect on her classroom behaviour, and in fact, after the first few days she sometimes forgot the researcher was present. However, she admitted taking greater care to prepare her lessons while in normal circumstances

she would decide what to teach upon entering the class. Furthermore, she concentrated on oral activities in groups whereas her normal practice showed an inclination towards class teaching and *written work*. However, researcher presence did have a noticeable effect on the students. Mrs Halim reported that the students *used more English*, made greater effort to answer the teacher's questions, and were better behaved.

"They try to get the answer, to come up with something."

"... they did try to answer in English. When you are not there, they'll just simply give me Malay answers."

14.1.3 Teaching approach

Mrs. Halim's teaching is influenced by practical considerations rather than any language or learning theories. Having been recently trained in TESL (1990) she would have had the advantage of being exposed to the latest techniques in communicative language teaching methodology (CLT), yet, she appeared to be a traditionalist in her teaching approach, believing in written grammar exercises and corrections.

Her reason for adopting a traditionalist approach stemmed from her belief that grammar teaching benefit low proficiency learners. She failed to see how communicative techniques could work for these students, or that group discussion could be effectively carried out with big classes. Another factor that she attributed to her lack of commitment to CLT was the inadequate foundation she received in communicative techniques during her pre-service training:

"In terms of methods of teaching, I did not benefit at all. In other words, I can say, without going through the Diploma of Education, I would do the same thing right now."

She was rather disillusioned with the training, a good part of which was devoted to the upgrading of trainees' language proficiency.

"No matter if you speak it right or wrong, you can speak English, so they'll train us."

This sounds alarming as it appeared that it is becoming increasingly difficult to recruit trainees for English who are proficient. Mrs. Halim was recruited on the strength of her having been trained in America, even though in a different discipline.

She felt that CLT techniques presupposed that students had the ability to interact in English.

"I think this KBSM does not work for my students because of the size of class, and also background."

"To conduct a group discussion for 40 students is not easy. Because we need to hear from every group, and we don't want large groups, *kan?* So, it's not easy to carry out, unless you have a smaller class ..."

Nevertheless, in the two week observation period there was a significant amount of discussion activities in small groups of four students, undoubtedly the effect of researcher presence, as was disclosed.

As is the case with the other teachers, Mrs. Halim was obligated to accede to the demands laid down in scheme of work and the demands of the examination, the contents of which required separate treatment.

"Paper 1, language forms and functions - that one also don't follow KBSM ... that's why it's hard, you know. We have to come up with our own questions ... So, right now, we cannot follow the syllabus hundred percent."

To adhere strictly to the syllabus would mean not preparing the students to familiarise themselves with the exam construct and the type of questions that are likely to be set. Even if a student's English was of a high proficiency, according to Mrs. Halim, s/he would not be able to cope with the 'forms and functions' question because it involved understanding of concepts and use of terminology such as greetings, condolences, etc. that would have to be learnt formally. Moreover, not all types of exam questions (refer to Appendix 3a and 3b) can be taught.

"Language forms and functions' we can drill them, but not on 'text completion', 'word omission', we cannot."

Mrs. Halim devotes every other week to grammar exercises and exam practice, which means half of class time is taken up with exam preparation.

"If you see our record book (Form Five), we follow the syllabus *lah*. But, actual thing, we don't."

Regarding coverage of the obligatory scheme of work for the year, she commented:

"One third of the class can do it, the other two thirds, they don't know what is happening. Very hard for me. Example, if I want to set revision questions, it will be too easy for half of the class and half of the class cannot do it."

Her solution is to organise the teaching at a level below that of the required standard, but the problem is compounded because the low achievers are at the level of attainment of primary students.

"Students come up to form 4 as though they come up to standard 5 or standard 6. So, we cannot follow the syllabus."

The wording of the skill that is documented in the record book can be quite deceptive. A recorded statement such as 'to give talks on current issues' might be exercises in reorganising a prior prepared text, i.e. students would be provided with sample sentences that they either resequenced (such as sentence strips) or rewrote following a structured format or set of questions. Students are seldom asked to produce an original or individual piece of work. They are not able to attempt a simple task, such as role play a phone conversation, without close teacher guidance, as vocabulary, ideas and structures would have to be provided. Furthermore, Mrs. Halim asserts that there are certain skills in the syllabus that are totally beyond their ability range, such as recording the minutes of meetings in progress. In such cases, this skill might be dealt with as a fill-in-the blank type of exercise of a ready text.

Mrs. Halim does not practice a wide repertoire of activities. However, she reported that students enjoy language games involving competition between groups.

"They like games. When it comes to conventional teaching, they don't like ... I find that they are not interested and they will forget. But if I put it in activities, I think that they are interested. So, even in teaching simple grammar, they like it to be put in games."

Regarding additional activities that the researcher was unable to observe during the attachment, Mrs. Halim reported that she would occasionally arrange for a few students to give a prepared presentation in class, such as to tell a story, or to recount a piece of news in the newspapers, or an incident that has happened to them.

"What I do is, beforehand, I ask them to read magazine, newspapers. Come to class, tell your friends what you have read. Some of them memorise; that means they speak *lah*. That's all I can do."

The reason for this activity is to ensure that during the year everyone would have a chance to talk and to present his/her own individual piece of work.

Mrs. Halim reveals her lack of inclination towards oral work since the students are not able to cope with it: "Oral work doesn't have any effect on them."

The techniques she finds suitable are those that do not put heavy demands on the students and these are written work comprising guided exercises from workbooks.

"For two-thirds of the class ...must do written work, and do corrections many times."

Her conviction is that what students need most is formal teaching of remedial grammar. She tends to give a lot of practice on the simple present tense and past tense, articles and connectors and uses grammar revision books, which are plentiful on the market, although the official use of these books is not encouraged.

"What I have to do here is, teach them basic English. Grammar especially - articles, determiners, and all that they don't know. And vocabulary also they don't have."

When asked what programme would suit the class she is teaching, she advocates a grammar and reading approach:

"Teach them the basic grammar. And ask them to read the children story books for the vocabulary. Like the kindergarten, 'Cinderella', and all that. Make them read so that they can understand basic English."

Her methods do not emphasize vocabulary building, instead she chooses to deal with vocabulary that arises incidentally with whatever exercise is given in the textbook or workbook. During the observation period she carried out a vocabulary activity involving a crossword puzzle using words taken from a previous listening comprehension exercise on health care. The words were related to traditional medicine.

Materials

As with the other teachers, availability of suitable materials is also a problem with Mrs. Halim. In Mrs. Halim's assessment, the textbook provided by the ministry, (Sulayman and Annamalay, 1990) is unsuitable, and to remedy the situation the school has acquired a second set by Yunus and Spykerman (1990). (This is ironic, because the Lembah Tua teachers, who use this textbook, find it unsuitable). To further assist teachers, the school has acquired several sets of revision courses and workbooks intended to prepare students for the exam, including a set of bilingual dictionaries. These dictionaries are brought into class for students' use during every English period.

"I use one workbook by Nor Azlina Yunus ... it has filling-in-the-blanks, structured questions. But if I ask them to do essay, they can't"

Her opinion of the Suraya Sulayman's textbook is produced below:

"... lack of exercises ... (lack of) objective questions ... The exam format is not in the book ... grammar exercises are very limited."

"when we teach the topic, you know, we cannot find it (in the book)"

"... sixty-five percent of the exam - Paper 2, consist of making responses (forms and functions), cloze passage, word omission. They don't have this in the textbook."

Even so, Mrs. Halim finds that even with an additional textbook and other materials, there are still areas of the syllabus for which no suitable teaching material can be found. The Yunus and Spykerman book is better in the sense that it deals with each syllabus area more comprehensively and incrementally. The Sulayman and Annamalay book is inadequate, because it does not give comprehensive treatment to each syllabus area, and results in the students being unable to obtain adequate practice for a particular skill. Furthermore, the practice exercises in the book are reported to be mediocre in quality.

The English department's collection of materials for the school consists mainly of sample questions for the exam, but they are also limited and inappropriate for low achievers. Mrs. Halim wished adequate support materials were readily available, particularly those for the disadvantaged group, and these should include simplified readers.

Mrs. Halim does not think that KBSM English prepares the students adequately for future English use at work, mainly because its coverage of topics is quite limited, and students would not have the vocabulary to deal with topics they have not been exposed to in school, since they seldom read in English. Nonetheless, she believes strongly that students should be equipped with a basic proficiency when they leave school.

"... it's important for them to know the basic English because when they go out, at least they know how to write a simple letter for job application."

"I think English is very important. Even though you know very little English, you present yourself better, and in public when you go out to work."

14.2 The Lessons

14.2.1 Outline of lessons

An outline of the lessons for the two week duration is given below. For more details of these lessons, please refer to Appendix 8d.i.

Mrs. Halim is at semester 11 (b), Weeks 1-4 of the scheme of work (Appendix 9) dealing with the topic 'Talks on current issues such as consumerism and health care'

- 1&2 Give opinion on current issues
 'Health care'
 Discussion and presentation
- L3 Listening comprehension 'Health care'
 Classify statements on the above into categories
- L4 Punctuation
- L5 Listening comprehension on 'Traditional
 medicine'
 Vocabulary game on words learnt above
- 6&7 Book report
 Sequencing exercise of a book report on 'The war
 of the worlds'
- L 8. Fill-in-the-blanks exercise on vocabulary
 connected with writing a book report
 Students do report on 'War of the worlds'
 (simplified reader) in groups
- L10 Listening comprehension
 2 passages, one about a monkey, the other about
 a goat

Students found the extended writing activity in Lesson 1 difficult to perform, even though it was a group activity. The majority of the presentations made were unintelligible to the researcher. Lesson 3 was a listening comprehension lesson in which students were required to classify sentences in a passage read aloud by the teacher on 'Health Care' into categories, such as 'mental health', 'hygiene', 'physical fitness', 'nutrition' and 'substance abuse'. As a few of the concepts were rather abstract and difficult to retain from oral input alone, students were not able to supply the correct responses.

In Lesson 4, the whole class performed satisfactorily on the task of naming the functions of full stops, commas, etc. as it was a revision exercise and they could refer to notes in their exercise books. Nevertheless, formal study of the functions of punctuation marks did not seem to be what these students needed in order to enhance their fluency.

In Lesson 5, a text on traditional medicine was read out. The text was to form the basis for a vocabulary game. The class was subsequently divided into four teams and a crossword puzzle was put up on the board; the teacher read out clues for the teams to respond to. The words they were expected to produce included 'turmeric', 'ginger', 'spices' etc. There was a high level of student interest in the lesson because of its competitive element. This confirmed Mrs. Halim's report about students' predilection towards games.

The second week began with Lesson 6 and 7 and introduced a new syllabus area i.e. book reports. The teacher first gave an example of a book report on 'The War of the Worlds' by writing jumbled sentences on the blackboard with regard to various aspects of the book, such as setting, plot and characters. Students were asked to resequence the sentences in their groups.

In lesson 8, a fill-in-the-blank exercise was given where the words to be solicited were those used in writing the book report earlier, such as 'plot', 'character', etc. Students discussed the possible answers with group members before giving their answers as a class. The teacher then distributed a second simplified reader, 'The Three Musketeers' and students were expected to write a book report in groups using the same concepts as plot, setting, characters, etc. An outline in the form of a list of questions was given. Students had considerable difficulty over concepts such as theme, plot, setting and characters when they were involved in the discussion. In the earlier lesson, the teacher had explained the concepts mainly through the use of direct translation. Students found this lesson incomprehensible and they were unable to even cope with the fill-in-the-blank vocabulary exercise set prior to the book report.

Students found the listening comprehension for lesson 10 quite manageable. The activity consisted of the teacher reading aloud two newspaper reports on the theme of mascots. Students were required to classify certain statements delivered orally as belonging to passage 1 about a monkey, or 2 about a goat, or to both passages.

14.2.2 Students' involvement and participation

Below is an example of student interaction in small groups as they prepare a text for presentation. This is Lesson 1&2, and the topic is 'Health Care'.

(i). An extract from a group discussion

	student talk	translation/explanation
Lisa	If we eat <i>exercise</i>	excessive
Swee Koon	No, <i>jika kita berlebihan</i> ...	if we are in excess
Lisa	Food	
Nur	<i>Ini menghindarkan</i> ...	This will prevent
Swee Koon	<i>Apa?</i>	What?
Nur	Less, err ...	
Lisa	<i>Ah, berlebihan</i> ... How to spell?	Ah, excessive
Swee Koon	Less L-E-S-S	
Lisa	Less! L-E-S-S	
Nur	If we less ... <i>apa tu ... macam ni?</i>	what's that ... like this?
Lisa	Ah, more eating ...	
Swee Koon	<i>Nanti kejap, less ... berkurangan ya?</i>	Wait, ... decrease ...
Nur	<i>Berkurangan apa pula?</i>	Less of what then?
Lisa	<i>Nak berlebihan!</i>	Want to have excess of ...
Nur	<i>Ah, berlebihan!</i>	Ah, excess!
Swee Koon	Avoid excessive processed foods	
Lisa	Processing too much ... tinned food	
Nur	Junk food!	
Swee Koon	Junk <i>tu makanan ringan</i>	Junk food means light snacks
Lisa	The meaning of avoid excessive processed foods is ... take too much of ...	
Nur	Drink, ye?	

Although the students were engaged on task, they nevertheless had problems over both sentence construction and vocabulary. What seems to be happening in the discussion is that the group is thinking in Malay, translating Malay words into English and superimposing them onto Malay structures. A sentence like 'If we less more eating ...' actually means 'if we eat less food ...'.

The final (oral) product of the group is produced below:

I am Lisa Jumali from 4 Sastera (Arts) 1. First the meaning of avoid exercise (excessive) processed food is take too much food or drink. Let me begin by saying that the tinned food or junk food warning to all (p r i : 2 3 : n) It give a great (p l i : 5 u : 3 :) to speak to all on 'Healthy Care'.

The group confused the word 'excessive' for 'exercise' showing confusion over vocabulary, and mispronounced 'present' and 'pleasure'. Both the interaction as produced in the excerpt and the group product above, serves to illustrate that the task given was quite daunting for the students, and although they did their best to come up with a completed text, it was a struggle (although from the recording the discussion was not totally devoid of enjoyment). This clearly illustrates the unsuitability of the task set for these low achievers.

(ii). An example of a presentation

Another illustration of an oral presentation on the same topic by another group is given below:

Good morning to all present. The most important to avoid the over-eating is doing a lot of exercise. If we don't do a lot of exercise, we cannot lacking the overweight. Then you get the hypertension. So you must don't eat the salt. So over-eating can make a person in heart-diseases.

The above shows students' difficulties with structures and pronunciation although this time the presentation was more comprehensible. The best group presentation from Ziana's group, is given below:

To ensure our personal clin-liness, firstly we must have a good habits, such as brush our teeths at least twice a day, then take our baths three times a day, wear a clean and good clothes so we can look smart and beautiful to ensure our clinliness our personal items and don't eat a bad food like this (holds up picture of a cake). It's too many sugar and too many salts. This item is very important because if we careless of our clinliness, we can get disease, like fever, lazy habit and so on. Then we need a regular dental check-up at least once or twice a year. Next, we also need to check our healths once every two years to ensure our health better. In conclusion, health is very important to us because it is important to ensure our health and our life forever. With a good health and a good smell our friend never left us behind. And they like to make friends with us.

After the presentation, students were instructed to copy out their group product into their exercise books. This mechanical copying activity at this stage in the learning process could not be very meaningful for the students. Certainly students would benefit more, if instructed to write their own accounts, based on what they could remember of the text produced by the group, to the extent of their ability.

Below is produced an extract of the discussion of a group attempting to write the book report (Lesson 8). This group tried to use English throughout. The excerpt shows the confusion over certain concepts involved as stated above.

(iii). An extract from a group discussion that uses English mainly

	student talk	translation/explanation
Suzi	Come on, come on! Main characters, main characters - what the meaning of main characters?	
Lina	Don't know, don't know	
Nur	I think I know	
Suzi	What the meaning of main character?	
Lina	H.G. Wells <i>lah!</i>	
Nur	The characters in the story.	
Suzi	Ah, characters! <i>Watak! Watak!</i> I like the most ... I like the most are ... the character in the story ... I like the most are ...	
Nur	Why? Who? Who?	
Lina	What means 'the most'?	
Suzi	<i>Palinglah!</i>	
Nur	Ah, ploat! What is mean 'pload'?	(referring to the dictionary)

Students made several pronunciation mistakes, such as 'pload' for 'plot'. There also seemed to be some confusion over 'author' and 'character', but in spite of their confusion and lack of language, they were able to accomplish the task set.

Judging from the lessons above, there would seem to be a satisfactory treatment of the four skills, as well as other aspects of language such as vocabulary and punctuation. Oral discussion is present as is reading (the book report) and listening comprehension. There seemed to be a

variety of activities, skills and topics that should be capable of stimulating the students. Unfortunately, most students are unable to cope, and during group discussions there is heavy reliance on the student who is the most proficient to do the bulk of the work. It would seem that for this school, different strategies should be employed, other than those practised in school A. The effectiveness of having a common syllabus and a similar approach to teaching for two quite heterogeneous schools is in question.

For more examples of excerpts of classroom transcripts please refer to Appendix 8d.ii.

14.2.3 Summary of language skills and topics given treatment in the two weeks

Topics

- Health care
- Traditional medicine

Skills

- Discussion skills
- Give formal prepared presentations
- Listen for specific details from passage read aloud
- Classify statements into categories
- Sequence sentences
- Fill-in-blanks with chosen words
- Vocabulary
- Punctuation
- Copy out group product

14.3 The Students

All the students were interviewed in Malay as they expressed a desire to be interviewed in that language; the less able students could not speak any English. Of the four, Mat and Fauzun were identified as non-achievers by the teacher as they have never been known to hand in written work.

14.3.1 Students' backgrounds

a. Ziana

Ziana is the highest achieving student in English in the class. She is petite and delicate with a forceful personality and a mature attitude towards life.. Her parents work as chefs with the Malaysian airlines, MAS where they use English occasionally, though they do not use it at home. Ziana's parents are supportive of her attempts to learn English. Her father has bought a Linguaphone package for himself, which Ziana has used. The family buys an English paper on Sundays, but not on weekdays. She reads story books in English regularly, the most recent being 'Peter Pan and the Pirates' and 'Fine Things'.

Ziana disclosed that she started to acquire English when in standard 4 in a modern suburban school. There was a boy called Dennis who used to help her with her work. When her parents moved to the present locality, she had the benefit of help from a neighbour who helped her with her English homework and loaned her story books. Like Fauzun, her father has also taken on a second wife, but, her stepmother is a positive influence since she is a secretary in a private firm, and handles English well, and gives her a lot of encouragement to speak English. The existence of these persons at various points in her life has helped promote her English and sustained her interest.

When she entered this school in Form 1, she was made aware that she was the most successful student in English in the class and this realisation had the effect of increasing her motivation to learn the L2. Ziana claims that English is important because it is an international language not only within the country such as when interacting with tourists, but also when a person travels abroad.

b. Aida

Aida's father is an engineer, and her mother works as a pharmaceutical assistant at the district hospital in Kampung Inai. She was in fact born in England and hence has a positive association with the English language. The family came back to Malaysia when she was two years old. She

speaks some English at home. The family subscribes to both English and Malay papers daily. She reads story books regularly, the most recent books being 'Moby Dick', 'The Lost Island' and 'Mystery Garden'. Like the book Ziana reads, these are mostly simplified readers. Aida listens to English pop songs and commits to memory the lyrics of the songs, especially songs by Richard Marx.

Aida is interested in learning English as she thinks it would be important for her future career.

"Saya bercita-cita nak pergi luar negeri, jadi saya fikir kalau saya pergi luar negeri ... Bahasa Inggeris very important." (My dream is to go overseas ...)

"I want to be a successful business woman. (In business) kalau kita bertutur dalam Bahasa Inggeris, lebih senang dan sophisticated." (It is better and more sophisticated to speak English if you are in business)

c. Fauzun

Fauzun revealed to the researcher his troubled home-life; his unemployed father and invalid mother have frequent rows at home over his father's second wife. The interview with him was terminated early mainly because he was not forthcoming with regard to the information sought, and it was clear he possessed minimal proficiency in English.. Apart from an unsettled home-life and financial problems, he is responsible for much of the housework and cooking and consequently there is little time for schoolwork. In Fauzun's estimation, the best he could hope for with regard to his future was to go into some kind of petty trading.

d. Mat

Mat exhibits a nonchalant attitude towards school on the whole. His parents are old and tend to leave him to his own devices and do not supervise his school work. Mat feels quite frustrated with English. He says that even though he has studied English for a long time, he is not able to follow the lessons. There are only one or two words that he knows. He goes on to say that even when he pays attention in class, he is not able to complete his homework because he cannot comprehend the task given. He could never answer the teacher's questions in class and his response always provoked laughter from others.

14.3.2 Teacher's perception of students' attitude towards English

When asked to comment on students' attitudes, the teacher became quite emotional and inferred that students' attitude was the predominant factor responsible for their underachievement.

"... I had always been interested in teaching. But when I was posted to this school, for three years, because of the attitude of the students here, sometimes it change my mind about teaching, *lah*. Because if you see, if you are here for two weeks, you will see the attitude of the students, they are not interested to learn. Especially English! Because it is not important to them at all!"

"English is an alien language to them. The weakest class - you ask the form 5 student one simple vocabulary, they don't know."

Furthermore, students' attitude manifested itself in making fun of those who try to speak it.

"... if a friend, coming from the same village or town try to speak English, they will make fun of him or her ..."

According to Mrs. Halim, it is mainly the boys who behave in that manner. They act as though speaking English is an unusual way for someone to behave.

"If I speak English to them all the time, they will smile. ... something wrong with me. Speaking English is not a normal thing to them."

Mrs. Halim claims that it is the girls who make the effort to speak English with her and demonstrates a willingness to speak it. For the boys, to speak in English is almost like pretending to be something you are not, like trying to assume a different identity.

Mrs. Halim believes that students are aware of the importance of English for their future careers but that this awareness comes late in the student's school career, i.e. when they are in form 4 or form 5, and by that time, it may be too late.

"I think they realise the importance, but, may be it's too late for them ... they cannot do much about it."

14.3.3 The students' assessment results

Below are the marks for English and other subjects of the four students interviewed, for the only test results available up to the time of the study.

	Eng	Malay	Relig	Hist	Geog	Scien	Math	Econ	Art	Total
Ziana	69	56	76	70	47	59	67	61	58	563/900
Aida	61	54	75	73	64	60	56	77	60	580/900
Fauzun	28	36	51	50	26	43	14	30	63	341/900
Mat	22	43	48	30	40	40	29	40	49	341/900

Table 14.1: Assessment results of 4 Art 1 student interviewees

It is to be noted that the two girls who are able in English are also perform satisfactorily in their other subjects, achieving a total of 580 marks and 563 marks out of nine subjects, indicating in this case, that an overall cognitive ability correlates with achievement. In the case of the two boys who achieve low across all subjects, their learning difficulties seem to be part of a general learning deficit, and it is therefore not a problem specific to English.

Gardner (1979) distinguishes four variables, i.e. intelligence, language aptitude, motivation and situational anxiety as influencing second language acquisition. The variables of aptitude, situational anxiety and intelligence do not feature in this study. Perhaps intelligence can be extrapolated as an influence from the overall results of the students in their other subjects. It may well be that the two girls who are able in English and in their other subjects, have a higher mental capacity than the two boys.

Gardner (1979: 197) defines motivation as:

... those affective characteristics which orient the student to try to acquire elements of the second language, and includes the desire the student has for achieving a goal, and the amount of effort he expands in this direction.

Mat and Fauzun do not have very high goals in life. They do not aspire to a vocation where English is used; both are only aiming to be petty traders, for which no qualification is needed. Ziana and Aida, on the other hand, participate actively in class, and speak English whenever they get the chance, with their family, friends, the teacher and with each other. They do their homework, read English books, watch English movies and listen to English songs. These are signs that demonstrate their motivation in English, and indeed show them as valuing the target culture for which they have an affective relationship. Furthermore, their goals of aiming for higher studies would seem to indicate the awareness of the need for English in their future vocation.

14.3.4 Students' competencies

The comments below are based on teacher's expert subjective judgement, not on a quantitative measure.

(i). The teacher's assessment of students' competencies as a class

Mrs. Halim reported that only a third of the students can carry on a simple conversation. Students are poorest in speaking, "Speaking is worst^{lah}"; next comes writing, "Writing is out for

them. They cannot write at all"; and then listening. The students perform better on reading comprehension out of all the four skills, "Reading and comprehension is okay."

According to Mrs. Halim, all can understand simple instructions, but only a quarter of the students will be able to understand detailed and complex instructions.

As for students who would be able to take 'A' levels in English: "... *only Ziana and Aida. Aida is not that good. Ziana is better.*"

(ii). Students' vocational potential

Clerical and receptionist jobs

According to Mrs. Halim, only a third will be able to undertake clerical jobs, and these would be the girls, not the boys, except for non-Malay boys like Robert and Rahul. From the teacher's feedback, it appears that girls are better at learning a foreign language than the boys apart from the non-Malay boys who have a wider exposure to the language.

Mrs. Halim believes that the majority of her students will not be able work as telephone operators and receptionists because it might involve more spontaneous use of the language. If the job involves queries from the public, there will be problems because they will not be able to cope with non-routine or unexpected language use. As for students who would be able to work comfortably in English: "*For this class, I can see may be four students ... Mariana, Susilawati, Ziana and Aida. Only four of them can work comfortably in English, but the rest no.*" She may have missed out Robert and Rahul, who were earlier said to be proficient.

Mrs. Halim claims that students would find it difficult even to undertake factory work. For example, they are not able to distinguish between right, left, beside and behind, and in factory work the ability to understand directions is important.

Except for Ziana, Aida, Robert and Rahul, Mariana and Susilawati, the majority of these students are not ready for the workplace, except perhaps for factory jobs where English use is limited and predictable. They would not be able to undertake jobs where spontaneous English use is required. A third may be able to work as clerks in organisations where English is used, but they would need to pick up the proficiency required for the job in the initial months and confine their L2 use to the routine and predictable.

For a full summarised account of student interviewees' backgrounds and English competencies refer to Appendix 8d.iii.

14.3.5 Problems of teaching-learning

The main problem for this class appears to be the lack of match between students' entry level behaviours and the level targetted by the syllabus and exam. Teaching content and some of the classroom strategies observed and reported are totally at variance with students' needs and capabilities. Students are unlikely to benefit from the teaching unless a more accessible remedial programme is organised for them. The strategy adopted by the school to address the problem of underachievement, by giving practice to enable students to pass the examinations will not resolve it, although it may have some limited and short term benefit in increasing the pass rate. It does not prepare students for their various needs after school.

14. 4 CONCLUSION

The teacher follows a traditional approach believing in written exercises, and grammar work. The teaching is rather ineffective for the majority of the students in the class. The student interviewees of which two were high achievers (by the standards of the school) and two underachievers, manifest different abilities and motivations. Their achievement in the L2 seems to correlate with their overall performance in their other subjects suggesting a cognitive factor at work. To compound the problem of the underachievers, the school, with all its good intentions and effort cannot compensate for non-supportive home environments, in the form of ineffective parents, unemployed parents, invalid parents, or homes with marital problems.

This case study also demonstrates how learner variables can have a tremendous influence over achievement. Peer influence in Ziana's case has contributed to her achievement and the influence of an affective factor (born in England), in Aida's case has contributed significantly to her success.

Chapter 15

Discussion and conclusion:

The match between students' performance levels and the identified perceived demands for English at work, including the identification of gaps in school practice

In this concluding chapter, an attempt is made to match the perceived competence levels of the students in schools A and B, with the English language competencies that have been extrapolated as important in the workplace. The match is made in order to explore research questions no. 11 and 12 on page 35, and reproduced below.

How do student competencies relate to the perceived English competencies that are needed in the workplace?

How effective is school practice in realising the perceived needs for English use in the workplace?

15.1.1 Criteria for the selection of competencies

In moving from data presented in previous chapters to the tables that follow, an analysis is made of significant trends and patterns of concurrence in the data. This was executed as explained below:

1. Competencies frequently occurring are prioritised, i.e. those competencies that emerge more than once are taken as being representative and valid.
2. In the case of competencies that emerge from the data only once, but are considered to be pertinent to a particular job category, e.g. simplifying manuals into easy work procedures for the technician, it would be considered unique to the occupation, and is included in the list of workplace criteria, as there would be a significant number of students who would be going into technical jobs.
3. General descriptions, such as 'good spoken and written English', or basic proficiency in English are utilised, because general skills such as these are useful starting points from which to branch into specialised uses.
4. Related skills are clustered into one for reasons of brevity.

Each skill/competency is listed in table form and is accompanied by comments and conclusions relating to the aspects that warrant attention in promoting the consonance between school practice and workplace demands.

The point has been made in chapter 2 (page 15) that what is prioritised in the selection are competencies relating to general English proficiency, and therefore specific vocationally-oriented English needs are not included in the classification.

Following this argument, it is maintained that if the school experience shows the fulfilment of the broader goals of general education in preparing students with the essential competencies in English for their adult working lives, then it is deemed to have met the needs for English for the workplace. The conclusions reached concerning school practice are predicated on the premise of *whether effective English teaching is being realised*, rather than whether the criteria for vocational English is being met. The complexity and interrelatedness of behaviours called upon in operating in English are assumed to be transferable to real life situations and in the acquisition of specific work related skills.

The competencies below have been extrapolated and summarised from the results of advertisement analysis (page 65) and the questionnaire survey (page 75). They are useful in describing English needs in a succinct and encompassing though not specific fashion.

From advertisement analysis	From questionnaire survey
Excellent/effective communication skills	Good and <i>standard</i> spoken English
Fluent in spoken English; good command of English	Presentation skills (business and technical)
Presentation skills	Presentation skills at meetings and conferences
Report writing skills	Discussion skills
Distinction/credit/good grade in English	Good and accurate written English
Good spoken and written English	Report writing
Basic English	Technical report writing
Ability to speak simple English; conversant in English	Business Correspondence
Communicate in English	Syntax, tenses, expressive ability
Handle correspondence in English	Speak without code switching
Some knowledge of work-related English	Eliminate the need for translation
Good telephone manners	

The above listing, together with the case studies listing (Appendix 5f), are summarised to yield generalised core descriptions of competencies required in the workplace. These are

listed below and in the tables that follow and comparisons are made with data from school practice.

15.1.2 List of workplace competencies as criteria to compare with students' competencies

(i). SPOKEN COMPETENCIES

Higher order spoken competencies

At the managerial and professional levels, more sophisticated spoken competencies are required as listed below.

Managerial, Professional, Administrative

a. Negotiation skills

Discussion skills

Presentation skills

Promoting a product or idea

Express one's ideas well in speaking; ability to get the point across

Answer queries about one's operations

Answer questions when making presentations

The first cluster above is concerned with negotiating and discussing matters such as a contract, a purchase, or a sale. They may be associated with the presentation skills needed in selling a product or idea. Related to them are the queries and questions that have to be responded to when presenting, negotiating or discussing.

b. Use language to establish good social and interpersonal relations with co-workers and subordinates

The second cluster above is concerned with using language to manage and motivate staff and establish good relations with clients and partners. This has to do with socio-cultural, interpersonal and emotive uses of language.

c. Cope with English in travel situations and in first language environments

Participate in international seminars

The third cluster above is concerned with coping in English in a first language situation when on business trips overseas or attending seminars and conferences and business meetings, sales, product launching and trade fairs (refer to questionnaire survey, no.7.4 (ii).Table 7.7, and no. 3 on page 72.).

d. Give verbal briefings to subordinates to relay information, etc. from upper management **Conduct training**

Make announcements

The fourth cluster above is concerned with use of English for administrative and more 'public' address purposes, mainly intra-department communication involving all staff rather than one-to-one interaction. Addressing a group demands a different style from addressing a single person in the privacy of the office room.

Secretarial, administrative and Clerical

e. Deal with phone calls

Take phone messages from overseas callers and relay messages

Use business English

Communicate on the electronic mail

Handle numeracy

Conduct job interviews for potential recruits

The fifth cluster of spoken competencies above which concerns secretarial and administrative duties is mainly concerned with correspondence and phone calls. A primary responsibility is to answer phone calls, take messages and generally act as an intermediary. Tact and diplomacy are required in addition to linguistic ability.

Technicians

f. Give technical briefings and training

Translate from English to Malay

An important domain of English use in industries is the technical domain. This involves the training and familiarisation of production operators with the mechanical operations of the machinery they work with. What is highlighted here is specialised work-related terminology. While it is not advocated that the school programme incorporate technical language, nevertheless, students should be made aware that such registers exist and may play a role in their future working lives. They should have the adaptability to cope with different registers in varying work environments.

Production operators

g. Interact with native speakers and non-native English speaking visitors/expatriate staff in social and simple work related English

Understand/use technical language associated with job operations

Semi-skilled - Guards, Drivers, etc.

h. Answer overseas calls and take messages

Give directions to visitors

Translate from Malay to English

The seventh cluster above is concerned with non-professional groups such as production operators, security guards, etc. A basic proficiency in spoken English is an advantage, but, should this be absent, the ability to understand specialised terminology to cope with working operations is invaluable. Even a production operator or security guard may at times find themselves having to conduct a simple work-related conversation with English speaking superiors and visitors. For those involved in the production of high technology goods, familiarity with technical terms to do with everyday work operations is essential.

ii). WRITTEN COMPETENCIES

Managerial, Professional, Administrative

i). Write concise weekly and monthly reports to a set format

Write for presentations using graphical illustrations

Write technical reports with statistics

Write technical papers

Write covering letters to submit reports

Send memos through the electronic mail

Translate materials to disseminate through briefings or notices on notice board

The ability to write a technical report concisely and clearly is of the utmost importance at the higher levels of the organisation. Generally these are in the nature of status reporting, to outline progress and problems in executing the tasks within a division. The second most important writing is writing for presentations such as when a proposal is being made for an innovation, or a review of operations is called for to assess the need for change. This latter genre calls for argumentative reasoning in written form and is a higher order competency.

Accounts

j). Plan the budget

Deal with banking procedures

Make application for loans, etc.

Handle bookkeeping

Handle computer software

Writing in accounts is routine and technical, and does not call for manipulative language ability but does call for an understanding of the concepts underlying the terminology used.

Technicians

k. Translate and simplify work-related materials

This presupposes the ability to comprehend technical material and to summarise material into a simplified form.

Secretarial, administrative, clerical

l) Handle correspondence

Compose letters from rough notes with some technical content

Type letters with technical content from hand-written drafts and be familiar with technical terms

Deal with faxes

Use computer software

Write routine letters to a set format e.g. acceptance/rejection letters

Prepare payroll

Fill in forms in relation to workers' benefits, banking procedures etc.

One of the main duties of a secretary is to deal with correspondence, and this has to be performed with the appropriate business style and register. Proper usage of conventions and courteousness are important.

Production operators

m). Record work completed on set matrix

This involves routine recording, but the responsibility of being accurate is important.

Semi-skilled, e.g. Security guards

n). Write daily reports on security situation

This involves mainly routine reporting, although at times incidences of breaches of safety might require new and unpredictable uses of language.

iii). READING COMPETENCIES

Managerial, Professional, Administrative

o). Read technical literature

Technicians

p). Read technical literature

Read technical drawings

Production operator

q). Read machine specifications

Understand technical work related terminology

Read work specifications and execute them

Follow up on records of work completed

Understand signs and written warnings

Workplace reading is by its very nature specialised and related to the company's business. A professional who has been trained in his field will have mastered the discipline, and presumably will have little difficulty with technical reading, a lot of which involves drawings.

Sociolinguistic requirement

The worker should speak in a dialect as close as possible to standard Malaysian English, with his/her intonation pattern and pronunciation easily understandable to English speaking (native and non-native) foreigners
Speak without code switching

Speaking standardised English seems to be a serious problem with quite a few of the workplace interviewees. It is also a problem with the student interviewees. Yet this skill is important in making oneself understood to other English speakers outside the country.

The sections below will make the match between expected workplace competencies and students' competencies. *Not all the competencies summarised above are commented on*, as space does not permit this. Throughout the narrative and tables that follow, it is reiterated that *statements about the proficiency of students are based on teachers' assessment, supported by observational evidence. No measure of students' proficiency was carried out for the study* although monthly test results were also used in the case of the student interviewees. As such, statements made are based on approximations, not on exact measures.

15.1.3 Institutional needs for English and the current English language situation

In attempting the match in terms of the broader expectations for English teaching in the country, the goals for English are recapitulated below. These have been drawn from several policy statements such as those found in the various Malaysia Plans and the CCR (1979) in addition to what is gauged to be societal and parental expectations. The researcher has given her own interpretation of these needs below.

Institutional/societal needs

- That students exiting from the school system have the level of proficiency stated in the syllabus that will equip him/her to use English in his/her chosen vocation.
- That teachers should teach a syllabus that is capable of serving the varied standards of schools that exist in the country
- That the school system is capable of delivering teaching that is effective in promoting students' language development in particular and varied environments

Comments that are made and conclusions drawn are based on the case study schools and do not concern the general population. Generally speaking, the case study data reveals that the majority of students in school A have the desired proficiency level for their post-school needs; unfortunately this is not the case with school B, in which only a handful of students have attained a basic proficiency. With regard to the syllabus in use, the case study teachers in school A find it appropriate and manageable; however, the teachers in school B find it pitched too high for most of their students, hence there is a need to look into the possibility of having a suitable remedial programme drawn up for these low achieving students. With regard to teaching-learning in the schools, it would appear that there has to be major procedural changes in classroom practice in the rural school for students to be able to reap the benefits of their classroom experience.

As further evidence, student attainments in school B (Table 5.4, page 56) can be compared with the national results for English (Table 5.2 on page 55) which for 1990 and 1992, has fallen below the national average of 57% in 1990 and 54.4% in 1991; whereas for school A the pass rate is well above the national average with an almost perfect attainment of 99%.

Year	National results	School A	School B
1990	57.0	99.01	48.49
1991	54.4	99.0	50.0

Percentage of passes of schools A & B in comparison to national average

From personal experience working in the CDC, it is the researcher's assertion that the truly *proficient* school leavers are those obtaining *credits and above*, in which case, if the details of the case study schools' results were to be examined, (pages 55 and 56) work out to approximately 93% for school A and just under 20% for school B. This means that about a fifth of the students of school B have the basic English qualifications for the workplace, for the posts of secretaries, clerks and above, and more than nine tenths of students for school A. The disparity between the two is rather high, and needs to be closed and the most significant variable at work here appears to be location, i.e. urban and rural. This in fact brings us to question the wisdom of having a common syllabus for a heterogeneous population, and this issue will be taken up when discussing teaching-learning.

The question of the effectiveness of teaching-learning, i.e. *process needs*, is taken up later, when, in making the match with regard to outcomes i.e. students' performance, the classroom experience is assessed in terms of whether the competency in question is being promoted effectively.

15.2 Matching Workplace Competencies with Competencies Possessed by Students

Outcome needs

This is seen in terms of broad outcomes especially those cited in the job advertisements and questionnaire survey. These broad outcomes are closely related to the various levels in the organisational hierarchy. The implication of this for both programme developers and teachers is to stimulate awareness that students will qualify to enter the organisational hierarchy at a level that is partly dependent on their English language ability. Teachers should treat these broad classifications in the light of the different levels in the organisational hierarchy that students aspire to or qualify for and efforts should be exerted towards elevating the position of students at the lower rungs to occupy the higher rungs of this hierarchy.

i). General outcomes

	English proficiency required	Jobs	Students' competency in both school A and school B
1.	Excellent/effective communication skills	Professional and managerial posts	At least half of the students in each class in school A possess extremely good communication skills, the only drawback being the tendency to use the Malaysian dialect. Only one or two students in each class in school B can manipulate the language in complex and indirect ways. Obviously, group discussions when they are carried out will promote students' fluency, however, teachers in school A should pay more attention to building up standardised speech and improving accuracy among the students. Where school B is concerned, effort should be put into building up students' language corpus, and the confidence to use the language first of all.
2.	Fluent in spoken English; good command of English	Jobs at school certificate entry level; Secretaries	At least two thirds of both classes in school A, and a fifth in both classes in school B. The problem in school A is the less fluent students, e.g. the Malay girls for which interventionist treatment is in order. On the other hand, it is unlikely that the majority of students in school B will be able to master the competencies within the short time they have left i.e. slightly over a year, to exit the school system. Again, fluency activities and vocabulary building in the classroom is the short-term solution, but obviously, more intensive measures taken at earlier stages of schooling are needed.

3.	Distinction/credit/ good grade in English	Jobs at school certificate entry level	This is similar to the above, but, it is placed lower because a good exam grade does not always ensure ability to speak fluently. Three-quarters in both classes in school A and a fifth in the arts class for school B; a fourth in the science class. Where teaching-learning is concerned, the above statements hold
4.	Good spoken and written English	Mainly for secretarial posts and some clerical and admini- strative posts	Basically, as above.
5.	Basic English	Some clerical posts; jobs with predictable language use; Unskilled jobs	Both classes in school A; half in each class in school B. At the very least, school B should aim for this level of proficiency, and this can probably be achieved with a programme of comprehensible and rich language input through reading and listening activities as well as frequent and sustained language communication activities. Teachers' belief that a diet of discrete point exam work and grammar exercises will build up basic proficiency is anomalous since as demonstrated in school B, the results are not forthcoming.
6.	Able to speak simple English; conversant in English; Communicate in English	Receptio- nists, telephonists, Unskilled jobs such as drivers and security guards	As above. Interestingly, oral activities of a functional nature are not carried out often. Students should receive practice in using the language in simulated real life situations, to make up for the absence of their exposure to English outside of school. Students need to build up their confidence to speak the language. Spoken activities should be structured such that students are given opportunities to speak successfully to ensure positive reinforcement.
7.	Some knowledge of work related English	Chamber- maids, waitresses, salespersons, stallkeepers (selling food)	All in school A; nearly all in school B will be able to manage this kind of work demand, but obviously the schools would need to aim higher than this

Table 15.1: General outcome needs from job advertisement analysis in relation to student competencies and school practice

Class enrolment	4 Science 3	- 33	- School A	4 Science 1	- 25	- School B
	4 Arts 4	- 30		4 Arts 1	- ab. 30	

With regard to numbers 5, and 6 above, the researcher feels that teachers are misled into thinking that students are learning when they cope well with a written exercise. This may not be the case. Students' performance on discrete-point language work means that the work is simple enough, and perhaps mechanical enough or it contains clues and redundancies to allow the student to complete it successfully. Being successful with this type of written work does not necessarily mean that students are acquiring the appropriate skills to use the language in communicative situations.

It is to be recalled that at the school certificate and diploma level, English is required at productive level, i.e. a good command of English; whereas, at lower, unskilled levels, receptive ability and simple expression are adequate. It should therefore be expected that the school system should be able to achieve a reasonable proficiency for secondary school graduates to undertake clerical positions and above. There is also an understanding that, should these school leavers go on to study for diplomas and degrees, their abilities are further honed by the ESP demands of the subject to incorporate more sophisticated abilities in the language, and the ability to shape and manipulate the language for his/her communicative ends, whether this is related to managing staff, dealing with the technical demands of the job or relating to overseas business partners. It is to be reiterated that it is the right of every student to be equipped with an adequate proficiency in the language for him/her to realise life/career goals and it is the obligation of the school to fulfil this right.

ii). Outcome needs, specific

a. Outcomes for spoken skills

	Oral language competencies	School A	School B
1.	Negotiation skills	A few students show potential in being able to execute this, especially in the more able class, the arts class. During the period of observation, these skills were not observed to be practised. More students should be stretched to acquire these skills by structuring activities where they are forced to negotiate such as with simulation or problem solving activities.	At the most, only one or two in the science class, the more able class, show the potential of being able to do this, and perhaps none in the arts class. The students have room for improvement in terms of acquiring an adequate corpus of vocabulary and structures before they will have the language sophistication to utilise such a skill.
2.	Discussion skills	Although there were a lot of discussion activities during the period of observation, it was reported by both teachers and students that this was not the normal practice. From the taped transcripts most of the students showed they were able to sustain discussion .	Again, it was reported that discussion activities are rarely carried out. Students have a tendency to discuss in Malay. Ideas are first expressed in Malay and then translated to produce the final text in English. Perhaps it is too early for this kind of activity for low proficiency students. Clearly, students will not talk if they are not ready. They need practice in less demanding spoken activities before they can move on to discussion.

3.	Presentation skills; making use of non-linear text, i.e. graphs etc. to illustrate content	A lot of presentations were observed during the attachment period although it was reported that this was not normal practice. There were no problems with <i>prepared</i> presentations which almost every student in school A could cope with, and about half in the arts class and a third in the science class could also manage <i>spontaneous</i> speech. Teachers should incorporate individually prepared presentations, and use of graphs, statistics, etc. as needed in workplace, as production of this style of text was not discerned during the period of observation. It is to be noted that students' speech was quite standard during <i>formal</i> presentations, but had dialectal variations in <i>informal</i> spontaneous spoken interactions such as during the interviews. Table 10.4 on page 122 shows both 4Sc3 and 4A4 having a high incidence of both spontaneous and prepared presentations.	Presentations are not often carried out according to both teachers and students. Although almost any student is capable of reading out a prepared text on a non-specialised subject, much of the delivery was incomprehensible because of poor pronunciation and intonation as well as grammatical inaccuracies in the text. There was no work done on pronunciation during the period of observation, and during delivery teachers did not correct, which was good in terms of protecting students' sensitivity but not so good in developing accuracy. Obviously, a lot of work needs to be done to improve vocabulary and syntax and expressive ability before students will be able to perform this skill effectively.
4.	Able to promote product or idea	Quite a few of the students are confident and assertive enough to be able to handle this i.e. ten or more in each class. The students who could not, need to be stretched to be able to do this. With practice there is no reason why the majority of the students should not be able to master this skill. The main constraint is time.	Most do not have this skill except perhaps one or two in each class. At this stage it is too early to expect students to be able to promote ideas since they would need to acquire a basic proficiency before they can begin to manipulate the language
5.	Able to put a point across and be understood	Three quarters can make themselves understood quite well at their level.	The majority of students have problem making themselves understood, especially when they are operating in an interlanguage at this stage
6.	Argumentative, rebutting skills	A few students did exhibit these skills, although they themselves claimed not to be good at it. In this school students have an outlet in the form of the school's Literary and Debating Society in which to practice these skills. Table 10.3 page 121, shows 4A4 having the highest incidence of rebutting skills.	Students do not have these skills, and at this stage students' abilities are not developed sufficiently to be argumentative. Perhaps for the few proficient students, the practice could be provided as part of the extra-mural activities of the school.

7.	Give verbal reports of weekly/monthly progress	About three-quarters of the arts class and half of science class show potential in these skills. Note taking is related to this, and it was observed that students are unable to take notes, preferring full sentences instead, which is something that needs to be improved. With guidance it should not be a problem with these competent students.	Only one or two students from both classes show this potential. Again, students do not have the skills of note taking. Since this is the case, to practise this skill, students could be allowed to compose reports in full sentences initially.
8.	Give verbal reports to relay information, etc. from upper management	This is actually the skill of relaying messages, although with more extended and more substantial content. Again, note taking is important and in addition, the spontaneous expansion of notes for spoken delivery.	About half of students in both classes could perhaps relay short messages in groups, perhaps making use of translation to clarify the meaning to themselves. Writing and relaying short messages is a useful exercise towards building up the skill of relaying more extended messages
9.	Make announcements	All from both classes	Not more than ten from each class will be able to make announcements and only if there is advanced preparation. This is a useful bridging exercise towards delivery of speeches or presentations.
10.	Interview skills to recruit staff	About a third of the students in the arts class and a quarter in the science class will be able to assume both the role of interviewer and interviewee. Related to this is the skill of formulating precise and clear questions as well as the ability to respond spontaneously and appropriately.	Only one or two from the arts class and perhaps about five from the science class will be able to do this. Students would be able to cope well if questions are prepared in groups, however it would be easier for students to assume the role of interviewer rather than interviewee since it is the interviewee who would have to devise spontaneous responses.
11.	Function in English in travel situations in English speaking countries as well as non English speaking countries	This competency implies the ability to function in everyday situations aside from functioning at airports, hotels, with immigration personnel, at restaurants, etc. At least half to three-quarters of the students will be able to do this from each class. Students have to be attuned to regional dialects and be prepared to modify their own speech when speaking to both foreign native and non native speakers of English. Students should be aware of cultural differences between countries in the way meanings are expressed. These are sophisticated uses of language which the able students should not have many problems with when making the necessary adaptations.	Only three or four students from the arts class and about six or seven from the science class show potential of being able to do this to some degree of fluency at this point in time. Again overall improvement in proficiency is needed first.

12.	Deliver papers at international conferences	Seven to ten students in each class already show good potential in speaking in front of an audience and responding to questions	At the most, two students in the arts class and three or four in the science class have the potential at this point of time to perform this skill
13.	Participate in professional and technical discussions at international conferences	About a third of the students in the arts class and a quarter in the science class already show the potential to be able to perform this skill. However group activities in the practice of this skill would benefit the poorer students.	Only Julina, Jaspal and Rustam in the science class are at the moment showing potential in being able to engage in spontaneous discussion, but none from the arts class. At this stage it is too early in students' language development to be discussing this skill.
14.	Take phone messages and relay messages; good telephone manners (telephonists & receptionists)	All from both classes would have no difficulty in performing this skill.	Building up a mastery of routines and patterns as is involved in conversation on the phone is something that the students in school B will be able to manage with training, but presently most do not have this competency. Not more than five in the arts class, and seven in the science class will be able to handle writing sentences independently without reference to the bilingual dictionary. Teachers will have to break away from word level fill-in-the-blank exercises and <i>encourage more expressive writing</i> to develop this skill. This skill represents a good way of practising sentence level expressive work, as well as the construction of short paragraphs. Since the content of messages is given, it is a matter of inculcating skills in manipulating syntax for these students.
15.	Use social and simple work-related language	All from both classes. Degree of dialectal variation will differ between the good and poorer students. The poorer the student, the more non-standard the speech. There is need for consciousness raising towards more standardised speech.	Ten from the science class and slightly less than that in the arts class. At this point of time, most of the students are too shy to speak English, because they do not want to make mistakes. Ability to engage in simple social speech is a main priority since it was discovered to be needed even at unskilled job levels.
16.	Understand and use routine technical language associated with work operations	All in both classes will be able to manage this with initiation.	Two-thirds of students in both classes or more will be able to cope with this if they undergo an initiation programme at the workplace. Obviously, technical language is too specialised to be taught in schools, but again an overall basic proficiency will facilitate the acquisition of technical language.

Table 15.2 : Specific outcome needs, specific in relation to students' competencies and school practice

Spoken activities of a functional nature, such as handling telephone conversations, or giving verbal directions, etc., cannot be discerned at the time of observation. More oral

activities involving everyday functional language use should be carried out and closely monitored by the teachers. For the fluent students this can provide the opportunity for them to receive feedback on aspects of standard speech, for example. Teachers should move away from word-level written activity if they want to promote verbal communication skills in the students.

b. Outcomes for *writing* skills

	Writing competencies	School A Lembah Tua	School B Kampung Inai
1.	Write for presentations using charts, graphs, tables and statistics	At least a third of the arts class and a quarter of the science class. Most written products, however, are the result of group collaboration, although the third of the arts students and the remaining quarter of the science class would have no problem working independently. Teachers may need to structure and control the activity to ensure that it is within the reach of the low achievers. Table 10.11, page 124 shows school A having a high incidence of higher order writing skills.	Only two from the arts class and three to five from the science class show that they would have the potential to do this. Most of the students would not be able to perform this skill even as part of a group collaboration. Teachers would need to provide practice in this in a guided and structured manner as well as allow the students to work in groups.
2.	Write concise weekly, monthly and yearly report following a set format	Three quarters of the arts class would have the potential to execute this competency independently and half of the science class. Teachers have to familiarise students with the reporting genre and writing to provide factual information. At present the syllabus does not emphasise business report writing or indeed any kind of progress reporting, although this can be easily carried out through employing a simulated case study method.	Five from the arts class and seven from the science class can perform this competency independently. The kind of exam practice and word level grammar activities often set by teachers will not help to develop this skill. Writing to supply information about progress or the status quo lends itself to guided writing in the sense that the content can be provided. Various simulated role plays can be employed such as the setting of a board meeting as a precursor to practising this skill.
3.	Write technical papers for international/ local conferences	Between five to ten students from the arts class and less than that from the science class exhibit the potential as technical language is involved. Although this could be left to post-school training, a project integrated with science can be arranged to be carried out in groups.	At this point in time all the students do not possess this skill; perhaps with the better achievers, this would only come about with post-school training. Judging from the students' overall ability, it is perhaps too early to introduce this kind of activity for this school.
4.	Write proposals	Same as above	As above

	a. extended writing	Writing in the exam takes the form of guided essays, and teachers are fond of setting such essays. Free composition should be set occasionally.	A similar situation exists in school B. Both teachers are fond of setting work that are either exam type questions or grammar exercises that students can cope with and which can be corrected fast in class.
	b. extended writing executed individually	A number of the students are capable of individual work for extended writing. Students report that their main difficulty with essay writing in general is grammar, especially tenses, and syntax.	The majority of the students are not capable of independent work. Even discrete point exercises are completed with the support of a group. Teachers should find ways of stretching students to acquire the independence to do individual work. Group work that renders students incapable of coping on their own is counter-productive.
5.	Send memos through the e mail	Half of the arts class and a third of the science class. This school has a computer room, which can be utilised to carry out this activity. It is something that is likely to excite these exuberant students.	Two from the arts class and five from the science class. The school does have one or two computers for staff use, and teachers should arrange for groups to use them to simulate this activity.
6.	Write letters with high technical content	It is difficult to tell at this point. The problem would be the technical language, not the conventions of letter writing. However, if the teacher wants to carry out an activity associated with this skill, it can be integrated with the Living Skills subject or Science.	At this point in time it seems unlikely that any of the students will be able to do this, and is too early in their English language development for this competency to be introduced to the students. However, this type of activity can stimulate a student such as Sabrata.
7.	Handle routine correspondence following a familiar model	All from both classes with instruction. Teachers can exploit this kind of controlled writing for the weaker students as an intermediate step to free writing.	A third from the arts class and slightly more from the science class could perhaps manage this after some coaching from the teacher.
8.	Compose letters from rough notes, with technical content	Slightly less than half from the arts class and slightly less than a third from the science class will be able to attempt this skill independently. With practice, however, there is no reason why most of the students should not be able to master the skill. Teachers can exploit an area from Science or Living Skills for this skill.	Apart from the two students in the arts class and five from the science class, most of the students are only capable of contributing to a group product and preparing it with the help of a bilingual dictionary. As a substitute, students can compose an essay from rough notes on a non-technical subject.
9.	Type letters with technical content and be familiar with spelling of technical terms	All the students from both classes would be able to copy and check spelling from a dictionary at this point in time.	All would be able to copy, but there would be mistakes because of lack of familiarity with even basic vocabulary

10.	Translate technical work instructions	Technical English is not part of the school programme, but given training, four-fifths of the students in the arts class, and three-quarters from the science class will be able to handle technical language. There is no reason why teachers should not deal with technical register occasionally, as there is reason to believe the majority of the students will find it a welcome change.	Most of the students employed translation to produce with their written products although this did not involve technical language. However, only the two students from the arts class and five from the science show potential in being able to handle more than basic English. In fact, students should not be burdened with specialised registers until they are able to handle a basic corpus.
11.	Keep routine records of work completed using ticks on form	All	Nearly all with initiation. Even students like Fauzun and Mat who have generalised learning difficulties will be able to manage with training. Skills such as this can be part of a wider integrated group project.
12.	Keep accounts in English	Given training all will be able to keep accounts in English	Given training half from the arts class and perhaps more from the science class since figures rather than language is involved. The problem could become one of mathematical skills as well as language since there is reason to believe the poorer students are also poor in maths.
13.	Prepare payroll in English	All	Nearly all except perhaps one or two students since very little verbal skills are used
14.	Write proficiently without grammatical mistakes	These proficient students need to improve their grammatical accuracy. They might benefit from knowing rules at this stage.	The grammar exercises frequently set by teachers who believe that this is the way to build up proficiency seem not to be effective. More frequent practice in expressive writing is needed.
15.	Exercise good choice of words in writing	The proficient students should be helped in extending their already quite wide vocabulary, so as to increase their sophistication in using the language. The vocabulary game (appendix 8b) observed in the arts class was mechanical and too rapid to foster vocabulary growth. Newer approaches to vocabulary teaching should be explored by these teachers.	Students revealed in the interviews that what they really want is to understand the meanings of the words they encounter, especially in reading. Students lack even basic vocabulary, and teachers have a fondness for introducing new and esoteric vocabulary instead of introducing and reinforcing a basic corpus. Most of the students revealed during the interviews that the only reading materials they understand are the simple readers for very young children, such as 'The boy who cried wolf'. The school should make available readers that are accessible to the students, preferably those with themes more in tune with the interests of 16 year olds.
16.	Handle correspondence in English	With some guidance from the teacher, at least three quarters of the students in school A.	A fifth in both classes for school B. Letters of application for jobs in English are given importance in both schools. The need is to expand into other types of letter writing, perhaps following a familiar model or a set format or working with form letters (as in the workplace).

Table 15.3: Writing needs in relation to students' competencies and school practice

Much of the written work which is given, i.e. exam practice and grammar exercises is not integrated and does not form part of a holistic, cohesive plan for language development although it may be part of a systematic plan in working towards examinations. In addition, vocationally speaking, skills in filling-in-the blanks are not the kind of writing performed in the workplace. A person needs to be able to cope with his work, much of which may be new, independently. The worker, in all probability, will not have the assistance of a group when he has to write a report. Students would benefit from more independent writing assignments and also more expressive and extended writing in the advanced classes. Students in the weaker classes should also be trained in this, but perhaps working with shorter paragraphs first on simple task-based topics.

The incidence of free discussion activities integrated with some form of writing including expressive writing are as follows: six out of eight lessons in 4 Science 3; four out of seven lessons in 4 Arts 4; two out of six lessons in 4 Science 1; and only one out of eight lessons in 4 Arts 1. It would appear that teachers have a tendency to give more expressive activities to the more advanced classes. Moreover, the question of the quality of activities and discussion needs to be studied more closely. The discussions are not serving the weaker students nor the timid. A way must be found to structure discussion activities so that everyone is given an opportunity to participate, perhaps by assigning roles that have to be played out in order to complete the task.

It was also evidently clear during the observation that the teachers are not stretching the students in the advantaged school. Firstly, the teachers are fond of giving outlines or setting parameters of what should or should not go in the text to be produced. This can be constraining for high achievers. More creative expression and individual work should be explored in school A, as the majority of the students are perfectly capable of producing them.

c. Outcomes for *reading skills*

	Reading competencies	School A Lembah Tua	School B Kampung Inai
1.	Read signs, written warnings	All	Perhaps all, with initiation
2.	Read and execute specifications for machine operations in English	All, with initiation.	With training, nearly all including the one or two with general learning difficulties.

3.	Read and write out simplified technical instructions from manuals (i.e. summarise)	About three quarters of the arts class will have the basic proficiency to undergo technical training, and a similar number from the science class. At this point in time, summary writing is not well mastered by the majority of students.	Not more than a third from both classes will be ready for technical training in English. Only one or two from both classes would be able to attempt summary writing.
4.	Refer to technical manuals to service and maintain machinery	At this point of time, students are not exposed to technical writing.	A similar situation exists.
5.	Handle computer language	All, with training.	Only a handful if operating totally in English, but perhaps half would be able to handle computer instructions if the product worked on is handled in Malay
6.	Read technical drawings	Three-quarters of the students, with training	A quarter of the science class, with training. Students would be able to draw on their knowledge of the scientific discipline to execute the task.
7.	Read professional literature	A good reading proficiency is possessed by at least half of the students and this is a good foundation for students to undertake professional reading in their later working lives. Reading is much emphasised in this school and many of the students engage in leisure reading at home of popular fiction and romances. In addition, the one period a week literature period will help to further enhance students' abilities.	At this stage only a handful of the students have the readiness for academic reading. Most of the students do not engage in leisure reading at home, in any language. The teachers bring readers into the class about once a week or so, and have nearly exhausted the collection of readers available in the school. Simple and accessible reading materials on more adult themes should be made more available for this school, and students should be encouraged to take books home to read.

Table 15.4: Reading needs in relation to students' competencies and school practice

iii). Students' subjective needs

The following table presents feedback on students' subjective needs that were obtained mainly from students' accounts during the interviews. However, there is reason to believe that teachers are not aware of some of these needs, such as number 1 and number 4 below. Both parties are agreed with regard to some others, such as number 3, but in the main, teachers seem to be quite unaware of student needs. For example, teachers do not realise that students object most strongly to the profusion of discrete-point exam work that they are given, or that students are not fond of working from textbooks.

	Students' needs	School A Lembah Tua	School B Kampung Inai
1.	The lessons	Students want the lessons to be more interesting, e.g. field trips	Low achievers want to be able to follow the lesson. Students do not want to operate at a frustration level.
2.	Reading	Students reading level is quite satisfactory; they understand non-specialised topics in the newspaper, but find political and foreign affairs news rather incomprehensible	Students want to be able to understand what they read, even simple material. Students do not want to be looking up the meanings of words in materials read at every line.
3.	Activities	Students prefer group and activity based teaching. Students want varied activities	A similar situation exists.
4.	Written activities	Students do not mind extended writing in groups but object to discrete-point workbook exercises <i>on a daily basis</i> because they are boring	Students want to be able to do the exercises and the homework set. They want to bring home homework that they can complete.
5.	Speaking	Students are fond of group discussion and presentations	Students would like to conduct group discussions wholly in English if they could. Students want to be able to speak spontaneously, especially simple social conversation.
6.	Group versus individual product	Quite a few of the students are able to produce individual products as easily as group ones but students enjoy collaborative efforts.	Students find it difficult to work on their own without group collaboration. Students like the security of being in a group.
7.	The exam	Students want to get a good grade in the exam, although they do not enjoy doing exam-type work in class	Same. Students want at least a pass in English.
8.	Weak areas that need improving	Those students who have the fluency want to improve their essay writing and their grammar.	Beginning level students want to be able to understand what they read or hear. Students want to learn vocabulary rather than grammar.
10.	Learning strategy	Some students rely on revision courses and exam guides to practice for tests.	Most students are confused as to what learning strategy to employ since the whole endeavour seems doomed to failure. Teachers' attitude that it is too late for them is damaging.

Table 15.5: Students' own needs in relation to their achievement and school practice

The teacher of 4 Arts 1 in school B believes strongly that students are neither interested in English nor motivated to learn it. That is not the impression the researcher obtained from the interviews. All the students interviewed seem genuinely to want to be able to have a good command of English, but are at a loss as to how to go about doing this. The desire exists, but the will to put that desire to work is absent as attested to by Mr. Jegan. Failure breeds low morale. The question is whether learners are motivated because they are successful - certainly the case with Julina who can pinpoint the exact time the motivation was born, and Rustam who came to the learning experience already having the proficiency - or whether successful learners are successful because they are highly motivated, perhaps as is the case with Ziana, who does not have the family support that

both Julina and Rustam have. Clearly, this issue cannot be resolved within the constraints of this study, but it is one that needs to be investigated.

15.3 Discussion

Perhaps the most significant finding of this study is that KBSM or the communicative methodology recommended by KBSM has not failed. What has emerged distinctively is that recommended techniques associated with KBSM *are not being implemented* because of teachers' tendency to teach to the exam. As long as this practice prevails, the hope of raising the standards of rural students sufficiently to achieve the competencies required for the workplace will not be realised. It is unfortunate that assessment is allowed to dominate the system and in the end it is the learner who is penalised.

(i). Tension between syllabus and examinations in classroom practice

The main point to be made regarding teaching-learning is the incongruency between syllabus demands and exam demands. Teachers are not free agents, and whatever views they may have about the best strategy for developmental work with the students are being stifled by what they have been instructed to do and to accomplish, with success being measured in terms of exam grades. Most teachers are constrained by the following: adherence to a common scheme of work for the year; not having a choice in the textbook to be selected for the school; having to show certain types and a certain amount of written (exam) exercise every week. In terms of teachers' philosophy and approach, teachers' classroom practice does not seem to rest firmly on particular linguistic theories, and furthermore, they do not have the luxury of time nor the curiosity to incorporate developments in linguistic theory into their teaching. Most of all they are reluctant to move away from the security of their traditional practice and belief that grammar teaching forms the basis for all language teaching in beginning stages. Teachers need to assume the role of the professionals for which they have been trained. Their professionalism needs to be nurtured by the relevant authorities through constant exposure, encouragement and support and these authorities need to have faith in teachers' innate and professional good judgement and to give them a measure of empowerment. The role of central authorities will have to change from one of being an institution that prescribes to one that supports, encourages and empathises with the professional. There is a clear need for teachers to change their classroom procedures in the advanced classes

in order to promote accuracy and sophistication, and in the less able classes to improve fluency as the main priority.

(ii). Exam construct incompatible with syllabus construct

The relevant authorities should be working towards building an exam construct that is in line with the syllabus construct. Until this is accomplished, teachers will be working at cross purposes, trying to reconcile syllabus and exam demands, and with the constraint of time, exam demands will be a priority. Teachers should see their teaching role in terms of developing students, and not in satisfying some administrative requirement, or executing a given plan designed by an outside agency, or following a syllabus that clearly needs adapting to local conditions. Teachers should target teaching at developing behaviours that have broad applications for life after school. Fill-in-the-blank exercises is not likely to achieve this.

(iii). Wide disparity in attainments between urban and rural school

Students want to understand the language they are dealing with. The student interviewees in school B professed to want to possess some vocabulary so that they can understand the tasks given, and from this, to learn how to speak. The students in school B have to be approached as 'false beginners' since they have acquired very little of the language.

School A, on the other hand, is an extremely advanced school. Any assistance available from parties concerned should therefore concentrate on school B. An encouraging point is that there were positive and encouraging trends in school B that have emerged from the study and which show potential. For example, students are capable of discussing and producing a written piece in English, regardless of the methods employed to produce this written piece, i.e. use of the first language, the bilingual dictionary (not necessarily a bad thing), and team work. Students show evidence, and in fact admitted during the interviews, that they enjoy discussion. This kind of interest can be exploited, and if begun early in the school career, over time, can be developed into more independent activities.

Students in the case studies are in their tenth year of learning English for five forty minute periods a week. But their levels of achievement differ. Taking what the students revealed from all the interviews it was evident that the desire to learn English emerged differently between groups of different levels of proficiency.

1. The weakest students want to comprehend the language - the most frustrated and alienated students are those for whom everything is confusion, i.e. they cannot follow the teachers' teaching, nor comprehend what they read on their own, nor complete the homework set independently.
2. The second group has wide receptive ability, i.e. they can understand most of what is happening, but they have difficulty producing in the language; these students want to be able to speak and respond spontaneously.
3. The third group at the other end of the spectrum are students who can understand and can express themselves spontaneously, although perhaps not in standard English. These students desire to improve their grammatical accuracy, especially in the written form.

Most of the students in school A belong to the third group. Most students in school B belong to the first two groups.

(iv). Textbook and support materials

All teachers interviewed professed to find the textbook selected by the school unsuitable. The general comment by all teachers is that the textbooks concerned are too difficult for the students, even in the advantaged school. Another complaint was that the skills concerned were not developed satisfactorily, and that the exam tests additional functions than are not contained in the textbooks. Teachers want easy access to good teaching materials, and exercises, and teachers in both schools have tended to rely on workbooks acquired by the schools for practice exercises, especially in exam questions.

Classes should be exposed to an abundance of books at a suitable reading level, but based on teenage interests and themes. At the moment there are very few suitable, simple readers for the age level 15 to 17. The simplified readers in school B are intended for the kindergarten age group, and it is commendable to see some of the students reading these books. However, the few sets that are available in the library have all been exhausted by the more avid readers among the students. Libraries in rural schools should be well stocked with suitable reading materials because unlike the students of school A, these students of school B do not go home to a library full of books, or have bookshops in the village or even have the financial means with which to buy books and magazines. Students go home to an environment that has many deprivations and limitations (consider Fauzun and his unsettling home life). One good development captured from the

interviews are students' accounts of using the mobile as well as permanent libraries recently established in the village which are part of a national plan to develop a reading habit among the young. However, whether those libraries stock a suitable quantity of English books will have to be reviewed by the relevant authority.

(v). Emphasise process in classroom practice

Teachers show a tendency to be product-oriented. This has arisen partly because teachers in the two schools have to produce written work. Therefore, any classroom activity is aimed towards the production of a written piece of work. Since learning is process-oriented, students may be asked to produce written work mechanically and perhaps prematurely (consider Krashen's, 1981, views on the silent period).

Receptive language is favoured with false beginners. Most classroom activities consist of the teacher asking questions and students answering, when in fact learners should be exposed to abundant language input without being forced into production too early in the internalisation stage, when they are prone to making mistakes and failing, which could have negative effects on their attitude towards learning the language. In fact, correction inevitably comes with written work, which is detrimental to building up a positive attitude. Teachers are fond of directing questions at students who obviously cannot answer (as claimed by Mat) as a way of keeping slow learners attentive, and this practice may have more harmful effects than positive.

(vi). Organised and systematic controlled exposure for 'false beginners'

Furthermore, language input is organised randomly, with the result that students do not receive the systematic and sustained exposure that they need in aspect of, not only vocabulary, but also grammar and skills. As a consequence, what is introduced is disparate and unconnected since the syllabus for the year assumes certain entry behaviours. Teachers are overly anxious to cover content and a situation has resulted where students are not getting the cumulative developmental reinforcement that is important to acquisition. Compelled to complete all areas of the syllabus due to outside pressures, teachers disregard how much or how little students have gained from instruction before moving on. Teachers do not seem to understand that teaching a foreign language is not the same as covering a content area subject, such as science or history - in the first language. This seem to be the main weakness of school practice, that teachers adhere to administrative procedures and policy regulations and are not committed to students' pace of learning and students' real needs. The centralised nature

of the programme is allowed to dictate the day-to-day planning of lessons when it should be the students' performance that should take priority. Teachers, therefore follow the yearly scheme strictly in order to show a suitable amount of written work, regardless of whether students are benefiting from the instruction or the exercises that are set.

(vii) Students should be encouraged to have a learning strategy

The student interviewees are successful or less successful due to a multiplicity of factors, such as home background, cognitive ability, personality, etc. Teachers often do not attempt to find out more about the students, and work from his/her strengths and weaknesses to assist him/her in developing a suitable learning strategy. Students can also be made more responsible for their learning. As contact hours are limited, students will have to spend time outside the classroom reinforcing and retaining what has been learnt in class. It is futile and idealistic to expect students to acquire English merely from classroom experience since personal contact with the teacher is minimal and exposure limited to the English lesson. There would have to be quite conscious and deliberate efforts at studying the language outside of school hours for acquisition to take place. This can be done by finding out how the students' background can reinforce his/her learning, and if that is not possible to arrange, an after-school programme should be instituted, for example, that can overcome the limitations in the students' background.

The low achievers' own strategy seems to be a version of the grammar-translation method. Rather than criticise these students use of Malay to learn English, it is perhaps prudent to capitalise on this, and allow them to acquire the language in whatever way gives them a sense of security and comfort, especially *in the initial stages*. After all, if it results in acquisition, what is considered an unsuitable strategy is definitely better than none.

(viii). Need for vocabulary building

Teachers in school B find it expedient to operate in a translation mode for instructions and explanations, and most of all to *give the meanings of new words*. This indicates a crying need for vocabulary building. It has been said that group discussion to produce a written text is a matter of translating ideas from Malay into English. It may very well be that after these students have acquired a significant corpus of syntax and vocabulary they would begin to operate wholly in the L2 and dispense with the use of the dictionary.

15.4 Conclusion

There are several conclusions to be drawn from the school programme. Firstly, students need to be made aware that certain occupational levels and categories would require a sound knowledge of English. Secondly, certain fields, especially technical and commercial as well as international arenas would require English. Students should also be made aware that a lack of knowledge of English is a definite disadvantage, and would possibly endanger their chances for promotion to managerial levels. Without English, therefore, their choice of careers would be confined to low paying jobs.

Students who are interested in a particular occupation should find out whether that occupation would require English and what level of proficiency would be expected. For example, a student aspiring to be a manager will have a more sophisticated level of need than a student aspiring to be a clerk or a mechanic. A secretary will have different needs from a technician, but they will operate from the same basic proficiency upon leaving school. Similarly, a student entering into a small local business may not need English proficiency as much as one who will be working with a multi-national company. Whatever students' aptitude or preference, it should be made clear that a good level of proficiency would guide them towards more lucrative professions.

With regard to curriculum and assessment, a graded objectives curriculum would be suitable for the heterogeneity of abilities exhibited by students and this need was clearly evident when comparing the two case study schools. While it may be unrealistic to expect rural schools to equal the standard of urban schools, nevertheless, it would be realistic and possible to improve the standard of English of rural students to enable them to achieve a higher level of proficiency and increase their chances of getting a good job. Currently, it would seem that of the urban school, at least four-fifths of the arts class and three-quarters of the science class will have the proficiency to achieve their career aims, in terms of the English required for vocational or professional training, whereas in the rural school, only about two or three from the arts class and about four or five from the science class fulfil the criteria to be able to undertake higher education overseas, or win study awards to make this possible.

The most significant part of this experience for the researcher is the realisation that students are complex creatures and unique and individual in the way they approach learning. The potential for improvement lies not so much in having the best programme or facilities, but in understanding students' needs and circumstance. For example, the teacher was not aware of Fauzun's acute home problems, and to her he was a non-

achiever as she did not appreciate the situation that had caused the under-achievement. In contrast is the case of Julina, who has managed to triumph over the school culture due to the extent of her personal drive and motivation. There is a need for more investigation into student variables in learning. A mistake is to think that there is a new and better syllabus or methodology waiting to be discovered that is the answer to all problems of teaching-learning. This is not certainly the case. Unless we understand our students better, whatever English or other curricular innovations are introduced into schools in rural areas are bound to have their shortfalls and meet with failure. To follow on Richterich's (1983) concept of needs, we need to bring the learner and his needs into the teaching-learning process, and use the feedback from him/her to transform the programme continuously until it meets the needs of the client i.e. the student.

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APPENDIX 1: The KBSM Upper Secondary English Syllabus1987

INTRODUCTION

English is taught in both the primary and secondary schools in Malaysia. Its position is that of a second language.

English is a means of communication in certain everyday activities and certain job situations. It is an important language to enable Malaysia to engage meaningfully in local and international trade and commerce. It also provides an additional means of access to academic, professional, and recreational materials. The English language programme thus aims to provide the basis for these post secondary school needs.

The English Language Syllabus is planned in accordance with the goals of the Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah which are aimed at the intellectual, emotional, spiritual and physical development of the individual.

The contents of the syllabus, its structure, scope and sequence take into consideration the position and role of the English Language in the country, and the needs for it, at both the national and international levels.

The syllabus is organised in terms of aims, objectives, focus and syllabus contents.

The aims of the syllabus are presented in global terms and take into consideration the roles and needs of English in the country.

The objectives draw upon the aims and are stated under the four language skills, namely, listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

The focus outlines the teaching of the four language skills and language contents. In addition, it specifies the scope for the selection of topics and moral values to be taught for each year of the secondary school.

The syllabus contents state what the students will be able to do at the end of the secondary school in the four language skills. The contents also list the sound system, the grammar, and the vocabulary to be taught.

The syllabus is to be taught using the Malaysian setting as a base. The teaching should emphasize the principles of good citizenship, moral values, and the Malaysian way of life.

AIMS

The syllabus aims to build upon and extend the proficiency of the students from the primary schools, so as to equip them with the skills and knowledge of English to communicate in certain everyday activities and certain job situations; and also to provide points of take-off for various post secondary school needs.

OBJECTIVES

At the end of the secondary school English Language Programme the students should be able to

- * listen to and understand spoken English in the school and in real life situations;
- * speak effectively on a variety of topics;
- * read and understand prose and poetry for information and enjoyment; and
- * write effectively for different purposes.

FOCUS

The Secondary School English Language programme emphasizes the teaching of both the oracy (listening and speaking) and the literacy (reading and writing) skills. The sound system, grammar, and vocabulary form the language contents required to teach these skills. The skills are taught through topics. The scope for selection of topics is specified. The topics selected for the secondary school programme in Form I are those of the home and school; in Form II, the community, town, and village; in Form III, the state and country; and in the upper secondary, the ASEAN region and the world. In addition the moral values for each form are stipulated. The moral values selected for Form I are courage, honesty, charity and unity; for Form II they are kindness, cooperation, friendship and selflessness; for Form III, they are patriotism, neighbourliness and gratitude; and in the upper secondary the values selected are self-reliance, moderation, justice, diligence, public-spiritedness and rationality.

SYLLABUS CONTENTS

The contents indicate the minimum to be achieved by the students at the end of the secondary school. Teachers should extend upon the contents if their students have the capabilities to handle them.

The contents list the four language skills, namely, listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and the sound system, the grammar, and the vocabulary to be taught. Teachers should use the Malaysian setting as a base to teach the contents. They should emphasize the principles of good citizenship, moral values, and the Malaysian way of life.

*The following skills are to be taught together with all the other skills.

1.0 Listening and Speaking

- *1.1 Listen to and understand meanings of words, phrases, and sentences;
- *1.2 Ask for and give meanings of words, phrases, and sentences; and
- *1.3 Speak using correct pronunciation, and with correct intonation, word stress, and sentence rhythm.

2.0 Reading

- *2.1 Read using correct pronunciation, and with correct intonation, word stress, and sentence rhythm;
- *2.2 Use dictionaries to get the appropriate meanings of words and how these words are used; and
- *2.3 Read and understand meanings of words, phrases, and sentences.

3.0 Writing

- *3.1 Write sentences in correct sequence to make paragraphs and use correct punctuation; and
- *3.2 Take dictation.

*Refer to paragraph 2 on Page 3.

1.0 Listening and Speaking

At the end of the English language programme for secondary

schools the students should be able to

- *1.1 Listen to and understand meanings of words, phrases, and sentences;
- *1.2 Ask for and give meanings of words, phrases, and sentences;
- *1.3 Speak using correct pronunciation, and with correct intonation, word stress, and sentence rhythm;
- 1.4 Listen to and understand instructions, directions, messages, information, descriptions, letters, stories, poems, plays, talks, reports, and opinions;
- 1.5 Ask for and give main ideas, details, and conclusions;
- 1.6 Ask for and give instructions, directions, and messages;
- 1.7 Ask for and give information about people, places, jobs, and things;
- 1.8 Ask for and give information contained in pictures, maps, charts, diagrams, manuals, timetables, guides, letters, forms, articles, talks and reports;
- 1.9 Describe people, occupations, transport, places, and things;
- 1.10 Describe scenes and events;
- 1.11 Describe simple processes and procedures;
- 1.12 Tell stories;
- 1.13 Hold a conversation on a variety of topics;
- 1.14 Hold a discussion on topics of common interest; and
- 1.15 Perform a variety of language functions in context.

2.0 Reading

At the end of the English language programme for secondary

schools the students should be able to

- *2.1 Read using correct pronunciation, and with correct intonation, word stress, and sentence rhythm;
- *2.2 Use dictionaries;
- *2.3 Read and understand meanings of words, phrases, and sentences;

•Refer to paragraph 2 on Page 3.

- 2.4 Read and locate main and supporting ideas, and details in stories, letters, articles, and reports;
- 2.5 Read and locate information in pictures, maps, charts, diagrams, manuals, timetables, guides, stories, letters, and forms;
- 2.6 Read and follow sequence of events and ideas in labelled pictures, stories, letters, articles, and reports;
- 2.7 Read and predict outcomes from given information;
- 2.8 Read and find proof to support statements in stories, letters, articles, and reports;
- 2.9 Read and locate cause and effect relationships in given information;
- 2.10 Read and draw conclusions from given information;
- 2.11 Read and understand instructions, directions, messages, information, stories, letters, articles, reports and opinions;
- 2.12 Read and understand descriptions of people, occupations, transport, places, and things;
- 2.13 Read and understand descriptions of scenes and events;
- 2.14 Read and understand descriptions of simple processes and procedures; and
- 2.15 Read and enjoy prose, poems, and plays.

3.0 Writing

At the end of the English Language Programme for secondary schools the students should be able to

- *3.1 Write sentences in correct sequence to make paragraphs, and use correct punctuation;
- *3.2 Take dictation;
- 3.3 Fill in forms;
- 3.4 Present in the graphic form information heard or read;
- 3.5 Write instructions, directions, messages, and reports;
- 3.6 Write informal letters;
- 3.7 Write formal letters;
- 3.8 Write true and imaginary stories;
- 3.9 Describe people, occupations, transport, places and things;

•Refer to paragraph 2 on Page 3.

- 3.10 Describe scenes and events;
- 3.11 Describe simple processes and procedures;
- 3.12 Make notes on messages, stories, talks, articles, and reports heard or read;
- 3.13 Expand notes on messages, stories, talks, articles, and reports heard or read;
- 3.14 Write a short summary of stories, talks, articles, and reports heard or read; and
- 3.15 Write dialogues, poems, and plays.

4.0 Sound System

The sound system forms part of the language contents in the syllabus. The items listed below are to be taught over five years. Examples of words chosen to teach the sounds selected for each of the items should, as far as possible, be appropriate to the contexts and the topics determined for each of the five years.

- 4.1 Consonants, vowels, and diphthongs of English;
- 4.2 Consonant clusters in different combinations;
- 4.3 Past tense and plural forms;
- 4.4 Stresses in two, three and four syllable words;
- 4.5 Stresses in compound words;
- 4.6 Sentence stress and intonation;
- 4.7 Homonyms;
- 4.8 Contractions;
- 4.9 Words borrowed from other languages.

5.0 Grammar

The grammar forms part of the language contents in the syllabus. The grammar items listed below are to be taught over five years. These items need to be taught in context and in a meaningful way. This can be done through a selection of the items required to teach the listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. The grammar items should not be taught in isolation or as discrete items as far as possible.

5.1.0 Word Order

- 5.1.1 Positive and negative statements.
- 5.1.2 Positive and negative questions and responses.
- 5.1.3 WH questions and responses.
- 5.1.4 Questions with tags and responses.

- 5.1.5 Requests, imperatives, commands, and responses.
- 5.1.6 Position of modifiers.
- 5.1.7 Sentence patterns.

5.2.0 Phrases and Clauses

- 5.2.1 Adjective phrases and clauses.
- 5.2.2 Adverb phrases and clauses.
- 5.2.3 Noun phrases and clauses.

5.3.0 Connectors

- 5.3.1 Conjunctions.
- 5.3.2 Logical connectors.
- 5.3.3 Sequence connectors.

5.4.0 Verbs

- 5.4.1 Simple present tense.
- 5.4.2 Simple past tense.
- 5.4.3 Simple future tense.
- 5.4.4 Present continuous tense.
- 5.4.5 Past continuous tense.
- 5.4.6 Future continuous tense.
- 5.4.7 Present perfect tense.
- 5.4.8 Present perfect continuous tense.
- 5.4.9 Past perfect tense.
- 5.4.10 Past perfect continuous tense.
- 5.4.11 Passive construction.
- 5.4.12 Modals.
- 5.4.13 Subject and verb agreement.

5.5.0 Verbals

- 5.5.1 Gerunds as subjects of verbs.
- 5.5.2 Gerunds as objects of verbs.
- 5.5.3 Gerunds as complements of verb "to be".
- 5.5.4 Gerunds as objects of prepositions.
- 5.5.5 Infinitives as objects of verbs.
- 5.5.6 Infinitives as complements.
- 5.5.7 Infinitives and participles following complements or objects.

- 5.6.0 Articles
 - 5.6.1 Articles with singular and plural countable nouns.
 - 5.6.2 Articles with non-countable nouns.
 - 5.6.3 Articles with proper nouns.
- 5.7.0 Prepositions
 - 5.7.1 Prepositions of place or position.
 - 5.7.2 Prepositions of direction.
 - 5.7.3 Prepositions of time.
 - 5.7.4 Prepositions of manner.
 - 5.7.5 Prepositions of agent.
 - 5.7.6 Prepositions of accompaniment.
 - 5.7.7 Prepositions of purpose.
 - 5.7.8 Prepositions of association.
 - 5.7.9 Prepositions of measure.
 - 5.7.10 Prepositions of similarity.
 - 5.7.11 Preposition (as).
 - 5.7.12 Verb and preposition combinations.
 - 5.7.13 Adjective and preposition combinations.
- 5.8.0 Nouns and Pronouns
 - 5.8.1 Noun forms.
 - 5.8.2 Pronoun forms.
 - 5.8.3 Gender – masculine, feminine, common, neuter.
- 5.9.0 Modifiers
 - 5.9.1 Adjectives and adverbs.
 - 5.9.2 Comparative and superlative forms of adjectives and adverbs.
 - 5.9.3 Constructions of comparison.
- 5.10.0 Punctuation
 - 5.10.1 Capital letters.
 - 5.10.2 Full stop.
 - 5.10.3 Question mark.
 - 5.10.4 Exclamation mark.
 - 5.10.5 Comma.
 - 5.10.6 Semi colon.
 - 5.10.7 Colon.
 - 5.10.8 Quotation marks.

- 5.10.9 Underlining.
- 5.10.10 Apostrophe.
- 5.10.11 Brackets.
- 5.10.12 Hyphen.
- 5.10.13 Dash.
- 5.10.14 Symbols.

6.10 Word List

The word list forms part of the language contents in the syllabus. The Suggested Vocabulary List found in the Guide Books for Year 1 to Year 6 of the Primary School English Language Programme form the base for the Word List for the Secondary School English Language Programme. The words in the list for the primary school are listed under the different parts of speech and topics. By the end of Year 6 the students will have been introduced to the words.

In addition to the Suggested Vocabulary List for the Primary School, are the word lists specially selected for each year of the secondary school. These words form the minimum core of words for the language activities and skills and they indicate to the teachers the words students should learn.

Date & Time:

Topic/Skill:

Appendix 2: The initial systematic classroom observation schedule used in the pilot study

Should there be no change in activity after 3 minutes, shift to a three-minute, time-based recording. Multiple coding is allowed. Prominent activities are to be circled. Teacher talk and student talk to be coded: 'd' - dominant; 'i' - intermittent; and 'b' - balanced.

[illegible]

SULIT
322/1
Bahasa
Inggeris
Kertas 1
Okta/Nov.
1992
1½ jam

322/1

LEMBAGA PEPERIKSAAN
KEMENTERIAN PENDIDIKAN MALAYSIA
SIJIL PELAJARAN MALAYSIA 1992

Appendix 3a: The School Leaving Certificate (SPM)
Examination Paper - Paper 1

BAHASA INGERIS
Kertas 1
Satu jam tiga puluh minit

JANGAN BUKA BUKU SOALAN INI SEHINGGA DIBERITA
Ujian ini mengandungi 50 soalan

Kertas Soalan ini mengandungi 14 halaman bercetak dan 3 halaman tidak bercetak

322/1

Lihat sebelah
SULIT

Each question in this paper is followed by four the correct or best answer and on the answer you have chosen.

Questions 1-7

Read Passage I, and answer the questions that follow.

Passage I

Dear Mario,

How are you getting on? I am fine here.

Yes it's exam time again! *The days seem to fly by*; hours are getting shorter. Now it is just books, revision notes and panic-attacks.

You would think that I should have been used to exams by now. The truth is, I am still afraid of them. I may be in my eleventh year in school; however, each time an exam is around, I am filled with *dread*.

I dislike exams for a number of reasons. I hate finding out how stupid I am. I can lead a perfectly happy *existence* without knowing my weaknesses. Exams certainly show my ignorance. Phew! You should see the red-ink marks in my report card.

Living in a residential school definitely adds to the tension. In my primary school days it wasn't so bad because I lived at home. I was not reminded of exams all the time. Now I can't even sleep at 1.00 a.m. My roommates are still at their books.

Yet my entire future depends on good results.

You can always tell when exams are near. Just look at my friends—uncombed hair, mismatched socks and mumbling some definitions.

To make matters worse, if I don't do well, I may be asked to leave the school. And after all that hard work, facts will be forgotten as soon as the exam is over.

It is now almost midnight. Study lights are on in practically every dormitory. Oh well, time to hit those books again.

Anyway, Mario, I am just letting out steam. I am still the same. Well, I love life. It is just exams I hate.

Regards,

Amir

- 1 The expression *The days seem to fly by* refers to the period when
A examinations make everyone self-conscious
B examinations decide a student's future
C examinations are just around the corner
D examinations reveal the writer's weaknesses
- 2 In the letter the word *dread* can best be replaced with
A disappointment
B failure
C fear
D pain
- 3 Amir preferred his primary school days because
A he did not have any roommates
B he did not have to leave home
C he was not worried about his report card
D he was not under constant pressure to study
- 4 Amir dislikes examinations because of the following reasons except
A his ignorance may be exposed
B he may not have a bright future
C he may be asked to leave school
D his schoolmates do not help him
- 5 The writer is
A less than eleven years old
B more than eleven years old
C exactly eleven years old
D about eleven years old
- 6 In the letter the word *existence* means
A life
B future
C livelihood
D relationship
- 7 The letter is mainly about
A a student's life in a residential school
B a student's future after examinations
C a student's love for life
D a student's view on examinations

Questions 8–15

Read Passage II, and answer the questions that follow.

Passage II

Pros for Exercise

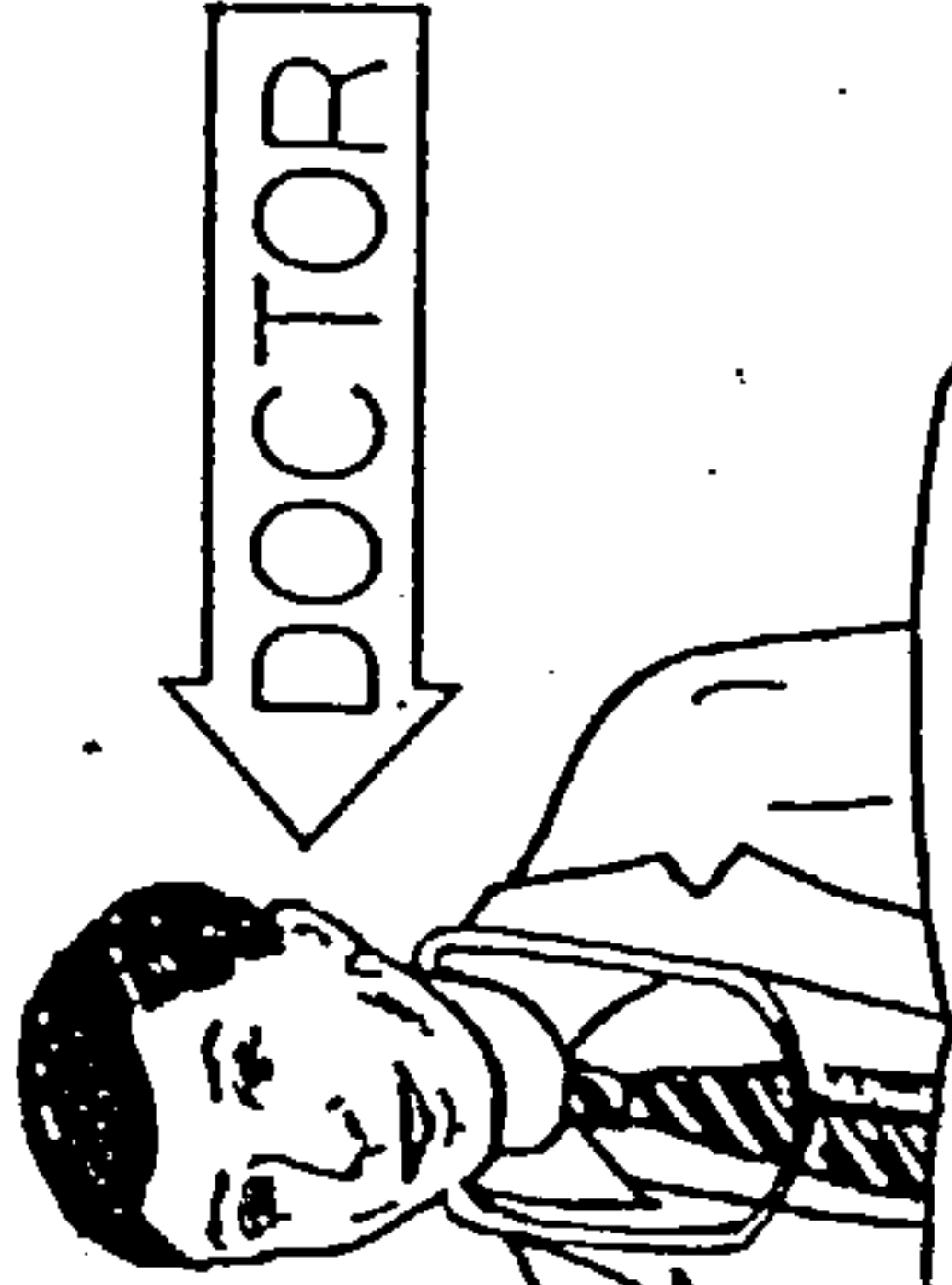
Everyone would agree that exercise is important. Nowhere is the saying “*The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak*” more obvious than when people sign up for keep-fit classes. The main issue here is turning up on a regular basis. Many people come regularly for the first few days or weeks before making excuses for not turning up later on.

The benefits cited by people who exercise regularly are the following:

- higher energy level
- greater self-confidence
- better resistance to fatigue and minor ailments
- better relaxation
- good sleep
- less anxiety and depression

When a person does not exercise regularly he risks having fatty deposits forming along the sides of the inner walls of the blood vessels feeding the heart. As the fat deposits increase, an artery can become blocked or a blood clot may form. This can lead to a heart attack.

Exercise helps *eliminate* high blood pressure and builds resistance to diabetes by decreasing insulin dependence, controls weight and reduces cigarette addiction.



Take things easy, *you are not in a contest* and more so if you are just starting. Drink lots of water to prevent heat stroke. The symptoms are dizziness, headache, nausea, thirst and muscle cramps. Your sweating stops and body temperature gets dangerously high.

And since we are at it, we might as well shatter one popular myth which says exercise drains you flat out. Actually it gives you energy.

(Adapted from *Wings of Gold*, July 1991)

8 In the passage, the saying “*The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak*” means

- A we want to be healthy but we do not control our diet
- B people like to exercise but lack the will power
- C one becomes lazy when one feels tired
- D the spirit and flesh are not related

9 In the passage the word *eliminate* means

- A reduce to
- B prevent from
- C get rid of
- D fight against

10 All the following are effects of a lack of exercise except

- A one tends to be sleepy
- B one is likely to get a heart attack
- C it increases our resistance to diabetes
- D it increases the fatty deposits on the artery walls

11 Why does the writer encourage regular exercise?

- A It gives a person a general sense of wellbeing.
- B It makes a person over-confident.
- C It reduces appetite.
- D It drains your energy.

12 When the doctor said *you are not in a contest*, he probably meant that you should

- A exercise on your own
- B exercise whenever you want to
- C exercise at your own pace
- D exercise at your own convenience

13 Which of the following is not true about exercise?

- A It makes us more relaxed
- B It makes us healthier
- C It makes us stronger
- D It makes us younger

14 According to the writer, heat stroke is due to

- A excessive heat
- B excessive thirst
- C lack of water
- D lack of oxygen

15 This passage teaches us

- A not to be depressed
- B not to be overactive
- C to do things in moderation
- D to do things on our own

Questions 16-22

Read Passage III, and answer the questions that follow.

Passage III

Guests are unaware that some of the dishes offered at the Sri Bayu Beach Resort in Pasir Bogak, Pangkor Island, are cooked by the general manager himself. Dishes like crab soup, "ikan cencaru sumbat", are prepared by Encik Dzulkarnain Mohd. Nordin. He is fully involved in the preparation of kampong style meals to give the resort a village-like *atmosphere*. He has also composed a song for the resort entitled "Sri Bayu." The song is usually sung as a farewell to those staying at the resort.

Sri Bayu guests stay in beautifully-designed timber chalets connected to one another and to the buildings by paths lined by flowering plants. The rooms have marble floors, the upholstery and furnishings are done in floral designs of bright, cheerful colour, creating a refreshing and homely atmosphere. It has a swimming pool, a man-made waterfall, a wading pool and an open air stage for cultural shows. Other facilities include the Limau Purut Restaurant which serves Thai food, the Coral Bar, the Piano Lounge, Sagor Terrace Coffeehouse and Maharajalela Ballroom. The last two are named after Malay warriors in the history of Perak.

Sea sports facilities such as sailing, canoeing, wind surfing, boating and snorkelling are also available. Guests wishing to explore the island on their own can hire bicycles from the hotel. One can go horse-riding in the Pangkor Leisure Valley just across the road which runs in front of the resort. Trips by boat to other parts of the island can be arranged through the resort. A unique item in this hotel is the Ladies' Day whereby on a particular day of the week, women will receive roses and cakes, and either a free breakfast or dinner.

To get to the resort, you can take a boat from Lumut to Pangkor town. The boat service is provided by the Puteri Perak Express and Pangkor Ferry Express. The journey is only fifteen minutes in the cool comfort of the air-conditioned ferry. Departure from Lumut is hourly and the return fare is \$4.00 per person. From Pangkor town, you can take the taxi or mini bus to the resort. It takes less than five minutes.

(Adapted from *The New Straits Times*, July 16, 1991)

16 In the passage, the word *atmosphere* means

- A weather
- B setting
- C beauty
- D gathering

17 Encik Dzulkarnain Mohd Nordin may be considered special because

- A he sees to the comfort of the guests at the resort
- B he cooks certain dishes for the resort
- C he is the general manager of the resort
- D he resides at the resort

18 Why do you think there is a wading pool in the resort?

- A It is one of the expected facilities in any hotel
- B To enable young children to enjoy themselves
- C To enable elderly guests to relax by the pool
- D Most of the activities offered are for adults

19 The journey from Lumut to the resort takes

- A less than 5 minutes
- B only 15 minutes
- C about 20 minutes
- D exactly 60 minutes

20 To explore the island, all the following forms of transport can be used except

- A ferry
- B horse
- C bicycle
- D boat

21 What will lady guests at the resort enjoy the most?

- A Horse riding
- B Sports facilities
- C Being surrounded by flowers
- D Being given a special treatment

22 Which of the following is associated with the history of Perak?

- A The Coral Bar
- B The Ballroom
- C The Piano Lounge
- D The Thai Food Restaurant

Questions 23–30

Read **Passage IV**, and answer the questions that follow.

Passage IV

**NATIONAL YOUTH
PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION
1992**

Have you taken a photograph?

If you have taken a photograph that stirs the imagination or illuminates the workings of the world around us, you should consider entering it for the National Youth Photographic Competition 1992.

Prizes will be awarded for the following three categories:

The Natural World

This covers plants, animals and human subjects. You can use ideas and subjects from biology, chemistry, ecology and other relevant fields.

History

You are invited to submit photographs of famous people, historical sites and artefacts. Photographs depicting the lifestyles of the past and inventions may also be submitted.

Young People At Work

The emphasis here is on the bright promise of youth as the future of our country. Entries should highlight qualities of diligence, dedication and enthusiasm at work.

Photographs will be judged on their educational significance and photographic quality.

First-prize winners will each receive \$4,000. The second prize is \$3,000 and the third prize is \$1,000. There will be ten consolation prizes in the form of photographers' manual for each category. All participants will receive certificates. The best photographs from each category will be published in the December issue of "Youth" 1992. All the photographs will be exhibited at the Annual Meeting of the National Photographers' Association.

Eligibility

The contest is open to everyone below the age of 21 on 1 JANUARY 1992. The staff of the National Photographers' Association and their children are not eligible.

Entries

Entries must be your *original* work and should not have been published in any magazine or newspaper before June 1992. You may submit not more than five photographs. The photographs may be black-and-white or in colour. Entries must not be larger than 20 cm x 25 cm and they must bear your name and address. You must also state the category, subject and educational significance of each photograph. A stamped, self-addressed envelope should be enclosed if you wish to have your photographs returned. Each contestant must enclose a five-ringgit entry fee. Cheques should be made payable to the National Photographers' Association.

Rights and Responsibilities

The National Photographers' Association has the right to publish, exhibit, and use for promotional purposes any winning photograph. If selected, a nominal fee will be paid. Submission of an entry indicates acceptance of all the rules of the competition. The judges' decision is final.

Closing Date

21 JULY 1992

Send Entries To:

The National Youth Photographic Competition,
c/o National Photographers' Association,
2151, Jalan Menteri,
62000 Kuala Lumpur.

For more details contact Ms Chong at Tel: 2418263

(Adapted from *Science* 85, November 1985)

23 Every photograph submitted for the National Youth Photographic Competition should be

- A bright and colourful
- B inspiring and educative
- C of historical interest
- D of scientific significance

24 Which of the following photographs would not be a suitable entry?

- A A photograph depicting a hardworking young scientist
- B A personal photograph of the participant
- C A photograph depicting a helpful policeman
- D A colourful photograph of a bullock cart

25 The prize winners will each receive

- A only a cash prize
- B only a certificate
- C a cash prize and a certificate
- D a photographers' manual and a certificate

26 "Youth" is probably the name of

- A a magazine
- B an association
- C a daily newspaper
- D a television programme

27 Which person from the following categories may enter the competition?

- A A school-leaver aged 18 on 1 JANUARY 1992
- B A person aged 25 years old on 1 JANUARY 1992
- C A clerk with the National Photographers' Association
- D A child of an employee at the National Photographers' Association

28 In the passage the word *original* means that the photograph must be

- A outstanding in quality
- B the entrant's own work
- C of an interesting subject
- D of a specified dimension

29 An entry would be incomplete if it did not include

- A three photographs
- B the entrant's telephone number
- C a description of the photograph
- D a stamped, self-addressed envelope

30 Once a person submits an entry, this means that he/she

- A has the right to sell the photograph to others
- B abides by the rules of the competition
- C will be given a consolation prize
- D will be paid a nominal fee

Questions 31–32

For each underlined statement below, select either A, B, C or D to indicate its function.

31 Alan: Tomorrow is a holiday. Shall we go fishing?

Rama: I'd rather spend the day quietly at home.

- A To demand
- B To summarize
- C To express interest
- D To express preference

32 Lily: I'm going to Susan's house this afternoon.

Hasni: Be careful about that fierce dog she has.

- A To warn
- B To criticize
- C To threaten
- D To condemn

Questions 33–35

Read the following conversation and then select from A, B, C and D the correct function for each of the underlined statements.

Ruby: This is a beautiful island!(33)

The sea is so clear.

Kim Su: How I wish I had brought my camera!(34)

Ruby: Don't worry, we can always ask Rama to snap some photographs of us.(35)

33 This is a beautiful island!

- A To emphasize
- B To announce
- C To express admiration
- D To express satisfaction

34 How I wish I had brought my camera!

- A To convey sadness
- B To convey regret
- C To express admiration
- D To express disapproval

35 ... we can always ask Rama to snap some photographs of us.

- A To suggest
- B To instruct
- C To inform
- D To request

Questions 36–40

Each statement or conversation below is followed by a task and four suggested answers marked A, B, C and D. Select the answer that fits the task.

36 Salim: I'm going on a trip to the Cameron Highlands.

Angie:

Task: To urge

- A Can I go with you?
- B Could you buy me some souvenirs?
- C You must visit Pak Ali, my uncle.
- D You can visit the tea plantations there.

37 Teacher: You are making good progress. Keep it up.

Student:

Task: To express satisfaction

- A I should have done better.
- B I am pleased with my results.
- C Thank you for your compliment.
- D Thank you for your advice.

38 Doctor: You must keep still. I'm going to give you an injection. You'll feel a slight pain.

Pam:

Task: To request

- A It is expensive to have the tooth extracted.
- B Can't you have the tooth filled instead?
- C I think I would look better with dentures.
- D Can the tooth be saved?

39 Asmah: Why don't we eat in this shop?

Lilian:

Task: To criticize

- A That's a good idea!
- B This is not my favourite place.
- C Why don't we go to another restaurant?
- D What a filthy place!

40 Dr. Silva: The operation has been a success.

Miss. Mello:

Task: To express relief

- A Are you sure?
- B Thank goodness!
- C I don't believe you!
- D Thank you.

Questions 41–50

In each of the questions below, four parts are underlined and marked A, B, C and D. One of these parts contains an error. Decide whether it is A, B, C or D.

41 Eric, could you informed the games master that I am booking the hall for a badminton game this Friday at 3:00 p.m. and the game will probably end at 7:00 p.m.?
A B C D

42 One of the guests ask to be excused half way through the party as she has an urgent matter to attend to.
A B C D

43 Neither Mala nor Angeline is prepared to take the responsibility to leader the team.
A B C D

44 Beside being a good school athlete, he was also outstanding in his academic work.
A B C D

45 After looking at all the furnitures in the shop she decided not to buy a new set.
A B C D

46 The boy was enjoying himself playing in the rain when his father coming home.
A B C D

47 Malaria, a tropical disease, is caused by a virus called plasmodium falciparum which is C

transmitted by a anopheles mosquito.
D

48 Sani's application for the job was rejected because he do not have credits in Bahasa Melayu D
and English.

49 Every Sunday nights, Jalan Kayan is the site of the "Pasar Malam" or night fair where C
A
hundreds of traders set up their stalls.
D

50 Sate, skewered meat served with a spicy sauce, is one of the best known Malay dish.
A B C D

SULIT
322/2
Bahasa
Inggeris
Kertas 2
Okt./Nov.
1992
2½ jam

No. Kad PengenalanAngka Giliran

LEMBAGA PEPERIKSAAN
KEMENTERIAN PENDIDIKAN MALAYSIA

SIJIL PELAJARAN MALAYSIA 1992

Appendix 3b: The School Leaving Certificate (SPM)
Examination Paper — Paper 2

BAHASA INGGERIS

Kertas 2

Dua jam tiga puluh minit

JANGAN BUKA BUKU SOALAN INI
SEHINGGA DIBERITAHU

Ujian ini mengandungi 6 soalan.

Untuk Kegunaan Pemeriksa	
Soalan	Markah
Bahagian I 1	
2	
Bahagian II 3	
Bahagian III 4	
5	
6	
Jumlah Besar	+ 2
JUMLAH	

Kertas Soalan ini mengandungi 9 halaman bercetak dan 3 halaman tidak bercetak

Instructions to candidates:

ANSWER ALL THE QUESTIONS.

Answer Part I and Part II on the question paper itself.

Answer Part III on the answer sheets provided. Begin your answer to each question on a fresh sheet of paper.

Tie Parts I, II and III together.

Arahan kepada calon:

JAWAB SEMUA SOALAN.

Jawab Bahagian I dan Bahagian II pada kertas soalan ini juga.

Jawab Bahagian III pada kertas jawapan yang disediakan. Mulakan jawapan anda bagi tiap-tiap soalan pada helai kertas yang baru.

Ikutkan ketiga-tiga Bahagian I, II dan III sekali.

This paper is divided into three parts. You are advised to spend 30 minutes on Part I, 30 minutes on Part II, and 90 minutes on Part III.

TEXT COMPLETION

Part I

You are advised to spend 30 minutes on this part of the paper.

- 1 Read the following passage and then fill each of the numbered blanks with *one* suitable word. The first blank has been filled for you.

Sleep is important to all human beings. We need sleep because _____ (0) gives us a chance _____ (1) rest. When we are _____ (2), our bodies are not _____ (3) active as when we _____ (4) awake. With enough sleep, _____ (5) get up feeling fresh _____ (6) energetic. Then we will _____ (7) alert.

How much sleep _____ (8) a person need? Nobody _____ (9) determine that. An average _____ (10) eight hours' sleep a _____ (11) is generally quite sufficient _____ (12) some people while others _____ (13) not require so much _____ (14). Normally, when we do _____ (15) get enough sleep, it _____ (16) often very difficult for _____ (17) to have full concentration _____ (18) what we are doing. _____ (19) is true that people _____ (20) do not sleep well at night are often irritable and bad-tempered. In fact, going without sleep for a few days affects a person's health.

- 2 In the following passage, one word has been omitted from each line. Mark the place with a stroke (/) where you think the word has been omitted. Then write in the right-hand margin the word that has been omitted. The first missing word has been supplied.

Reading is very important and

children should be encouraged to / . This

can done by exposing them to books , newspapers

and other reading materials a very young age .

Both parents teachers play an important role in

choosing the right type reading materials for

them . Parents should ensure that young ones take

up reading a hobby . They should encourage their

children to start reading getting them good

picture books . This will motivate them like

books . Teachers can , in turn , create awareness

of importance of reading . The reading habit ,

once cultivated, will be a lifelong beneficial pastime.

WORD OMISSION

Part II

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You are advised to spend 30 minutes on this part of the paper.

- 3 Complete the following dialogues according to the underlined functions. Where there are words given in brackets, you must make use of the words in your answers, without changing the form of each of the words given in brackets.

Don speak.

SITUATION A: The inter-class debate is over and the monitor of Form 5 Tekun is talking to his class.

They didn't.

Monitor: I have sad news for you.

1. To announce

Our class
(lost ... debate)

Form 5 Yakin is the winner.

2. To express disappointment

Rozita: Oh dear! I thought
(team ... win)

Anis: I'm not surprised.

3. To criticize

Our speakers
(well-prepared)

They didn't take the debate seriously.

4. To disagree

Rozita: It
(true)

They have tried very hard.

Monitor:

The debate is already over.

5. To pacify

Let's
(argue)

I'm sure we'll do better next time.

FORMS AND FUNCTIONS

SITUATION B: Azlina and her friend, Rita, are looking at some blouses in a shop.

6. To inform

Rita: I want to buy a blouse for my sister.
It's
(present ... birthday)
Azlina: This blue one is lovely.
Rita:
(pink ... better)
7. To express preference

Azlina: Let's ask the salesgirl for its price.
Rita:
(much ... cost)
Salesgirl: Twenty ringgit.
Rita: Can you
(reduce)
Salesgirl: I'm sorry. Our prices are fixed.
Azlina: Rita, why
(go ... another shop)
We may find cheaper blouses there.

FORMS & FUNCTIONS

Part III

Answer all the three questions.

You are advised to spend 90 minutes on this part of the paper.

- 4 Your aunt is taking you for a holiday. She wants you to choose a suitable place. You have come across the following advertisement:

PERMAI RESORT

3 DAYS AND 2 NIGHTS
at only \$150.00 per person

- * Air-conditioned room
- * Breakfast provided
- * Free bicycle ride
- * Visit to crocodile farm
- * 10% discount at gift shop

For reservation, please phone: 09-141779

In order to obtain more information on the points given in the above advertisement, you telephone Permai Resort.

Write out the *telephone conversation* between you and the clerk at Permai Resort. You must elaborate on the above points.

- 5 You are the Chairman of the English Language Society in your school. You have been given permission to give a speech during the school assembly to encourage more students to join your society. You have the following notes to help you:

- (a) Fees payable: 50 sen per month
- (b) Society meetings: once a week only
- (c) Interesting activities: attractive prizes
- (d) Chance to improve English language
- (e) Chance to get more friends

Based on the notes above, write out your *speech*.

You must elaborate on the notes given.

- 6 You are the Head Prefect of your school. The prefects on duty at the school canteen have made the following notes about the canteen:

- (a) chairs and tables – not enough
- (b) food counter – only one
- (c) food – not covered
- (d) drinks – sold near drain
- (e) floor – dirty

You have to write a report to be given to the teacher on duty. Using the above notes, write a *report* on the condition of the canteen. Give your suggestions to improve the canteen. Your answer must include elaboration.

Routh's (1987) definitions of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers

Skilled manual workers

"... are craftsmen who have served their apprenticeship and have thereby acquired theoretical knowledge that backs up their ability to handle materials, instruments and machines ... or those who have acquired the necessary skills on-the-job or in government training centres ... (or) is achieved without formal apprenticeship but through experience and promotion ..." (p. 26).

Semi-skilled manual workers

"... perform tasks that can be learnt in months rather than years. They include machine operators or assemblers in the process of production, ticket collectors and conductors, vehicle drivers, postmen and sorters, telephone operators, domestic servants, shop assistants and agricultural workers" (pp. 26-27).

Unskilled manual workers

"... do jobs that can be learnt in hours rather than months. They include labourers in various industries who require strength and stamina rather than skill. Included are charwomen and office cleaners, door-keepers, porters and watchmen" (p. 27).

Routh, Guy (1987), Occupations of the People of Great Britain, London: Macmillan Press

Appendix 5a: Questionnaire used in workplace survey

SURVEY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE USE IN THE MALAYSIAN
WORKPLACE

This questionnaire is part of a study to explore English language use in the workplace in Malaysia. It is hoped that the findings of the study will be able to help educationists understand better the needs for English in the 'real' world and use the information to improve the English language programme in schools. Needless to say, accuracy of information is important for the study to be useful. All information will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Thank you for your participation in this study.

1. Company's name: _____
2. Company's address: _____
3. Company's business:
(products or services) _____
4. Number of employees: _____
5. Status of person filling
in questionnaire, : _____
6. and Name: _____

Please tick (_/) in the appropriate boxes

7. When recruiting new staff, which of the following statement is true?

English proficiency is a requirement for all at the time
they are recruited ☐

English proficiency is not a requirement for all at the
time they are recruited ☐

English is only a requirement for certain categories of
workers at the time they are recruited because:

i. it is not needed ☐

ii. training is provided ☐

2. Which of the following statements is true with regard to the upgrading of English language skills by staff once they are in the company.

Staff are expected to acquire or improve their English on the job on their own initiative

☐

Training is provided to upgrade staff's English proficiency

☐

Staff's English proficiency is adequate at the time of recruitment

☐

Not applicable

☐

3. Please denote the minimum level of English necessary for the following categories of staff. You can tick more than once for each category.

	Fluent English	Inter- mediate	Basic English	Eng not required	Not applicable
Professionals (accountants, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Managerial & administrative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Secretarial	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sales/ purchasing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Technical staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clerical	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Semi-skilled (tel. operators, drivers, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unskilled (cleaners, gen. workers, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Can you roughly indicate what categories of staff can do the following in English? Tick as many boxes as needed for each category.

	Profes- sional/ managerial	Tech- nical staff	Sales staff	Secre- tarial	Cle- rical	Machine operators, drivers, etc.
Negotiate at top level	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Lead discussions and give presentations to:						
a) people inside the company	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
b) people outside the company	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Read & extract the gist of specialized literature fast	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Participate in discussions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Follow the gist at meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Use and understand specialized technical language (spoken & written)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Use and understand simple work-related language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Read & understand notices, written warnings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
English not necessary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

5. Are there other categories of staff who need English in the company? Is this at the advanced, intermediate or basic level?

6. What language is used to carry out the following? You can tick more than one box.

	English	Bahasa Malaysia	Bahasa Malaysia.. & English	Chinese
Phone calls	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Memos/letters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Minutes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reports & technical papers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spoken promotional activities (briefings, etc.) for products/services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Written publicity (company literature)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Entertaining	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Others, please specify	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. How often do your staff conduct business through the medium of English outside of Malaysia?

	Very frequently	More than three times a year	Less than once per year	Never
Professional	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Managerial & executive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personnel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public relations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Technical staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sales staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Secretarial	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clerical	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Others, please specify	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. What activities of an international nature are carried out by your organization? Please list a few typical examples.

9. Do you think that the staff who have contact with foreign nationals have adequate understanding of the following? Please tick (_/) at the appropriate point on the scale below.

	No under- standing	Inade- quate under- standing	Ade- quate under- standing	Good under- stan- ding
Appropriate cultural and social behaviour of:	(1)			(4)
a. native speaking British				
b. native speaking Americans				
c. native speaking Australians				
d. non-native English speakers (e.g. Japanese, Europeans)				

Business norms and
behaviour of:

a. native speaking British			
b. native speaking Americans			
c. native speaking Australians			
d. non-native English speakers (e.g. Japanese)			

10. Name the job/jobs in your organization for which ability in English is not necessary.

11. Name the job/jobs for which ability in English is essential.

12. a. Is your organization satisfied with the English language abilities of the staff on the whole?

Yes

☐

No

☐

Not sure

☐

b. What English language skills could be improved?

13. Has any member of staff been held back (in terms of promotion for example) in the last 3 - 5 years because his/her ability in English was inadequate?

Yes, more
than one

☐

Yes, but
not more
than one

☐

None

☐

Don't
know

☐

14. Has any problems arisen through staff's use of Malaysian English with its distinctive accent and grammatical constructions, in dealings with native and non-native English speaking foreigners?

Yes, it has caused quite serious problems

☐

Yes, but it has NOT caused serious problems

☐

No, none at all

☐

15. Have you detected any anxiety among your staff members over their ability in English?

Yes, among quite a few staff members

☐

No, only among new recruits

☐

No, none at all

☐

16. How do staff who have difficulties with English get around their difficulties?

Their work is corrected by their immediate boss (or their secretaries) ☐

They usually get help from their more proficient peers (informally) ☐

There is a mechanism/procedure that checks the quality of English ☐

Quality of English is a problem with some workers that sometimes letters/materials go out with mistakes in them ☐

17. Are there any other aspects of English-language use in your organization that you wish to draw attention to; so that they can be catered for in the school programme?

18. Can you give a rough estimate of the percentage of the company's activities that are conducted through the medium of English?

- 90% - 100%
- 75% - 89%
- 50% - 74%
- 25% - 49%
- 0% - 24%

Rohani Abdul Hamid
171-2 Sri Wangsaria
Jalan Ara, Bangsar Baru
59100 Kuala Lumpur

Dear Sir,

Re: Questionnaire to survey English language
use in the Malaysian workplace

As your organization represents a dynamic Malaysian company within the Malaysian industrial sector and confident that the management would be interested in playing its part in forging closer ties between industry and schools as well as contribute to helping to improve the quality of the Malaysian English school curriculum, I take great pleasure in approaching you for your assistance in the research project I am doing on English language needs in the workplace in Malaysia as part of the requirement for the degree of PH.D in TESL at the University of Southampton.

The main aim of my research is to determine whether there is a good match between the secondary English language curriculum and the needs of the workplace with regard to English; in other words, whether the school programme is relevant to the needs of Malaysian industry or otherwise. This topic I feel is of interest to both industry and educationists.

It is my fervent hope that the results of this study will be able to give educationists, such as myself, working in the Ministry of Education Malaysia, certain insights and directions when planning and developing English language programmes for schools.

Therefore, I would be very grateful if you could fill in the questionnaire enclosed and send it back to me at your earliest possible convenience, using the sae that is enclosed.

Thank you in anticipation of your cooperation.

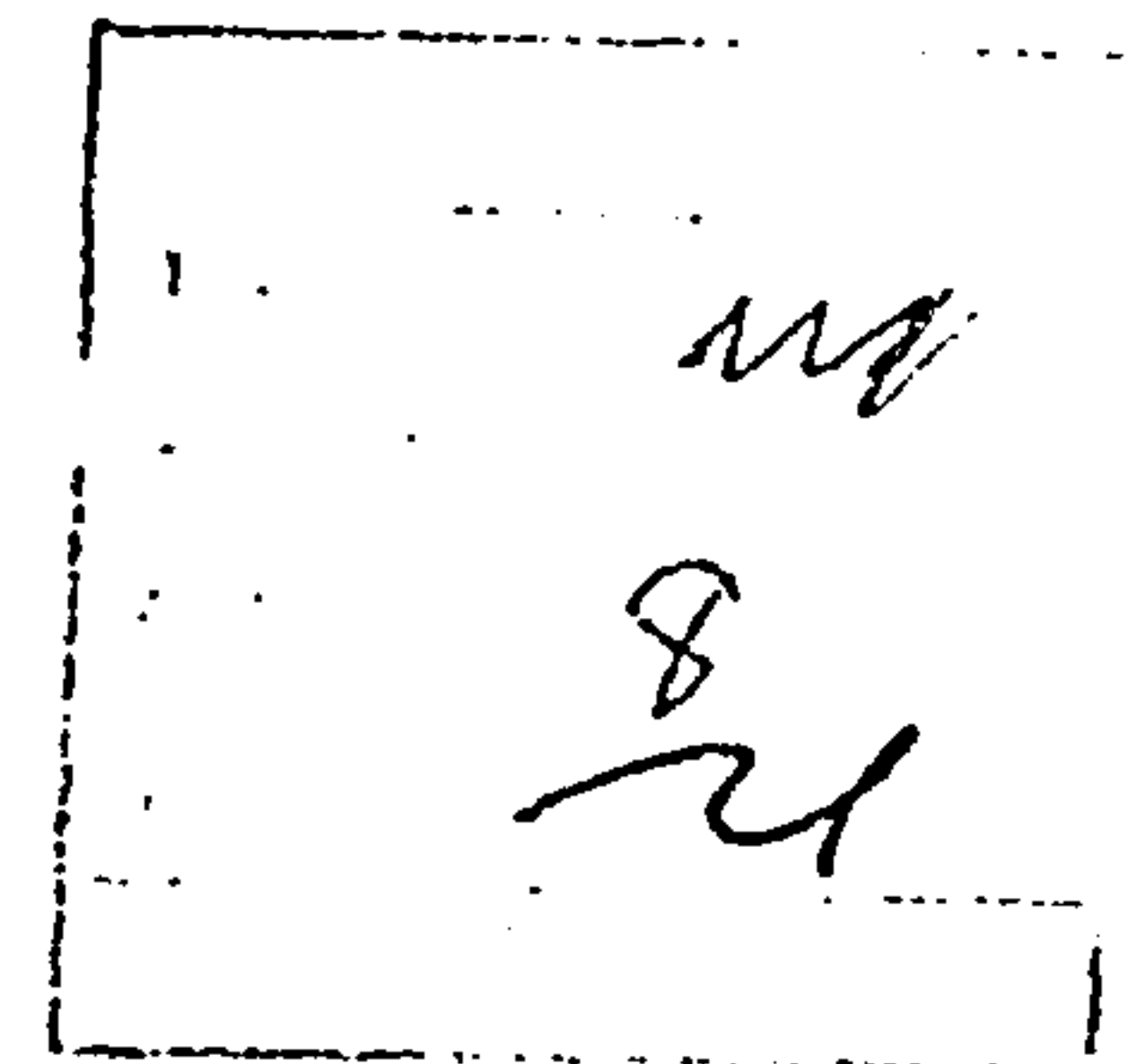
Yours sincerely,

Rohani Abdul Hamid

Appendix 5c: Sample of letter obtained
from Yau of Malaysiafarm

19th November 1990

M/s. Yoon Fatt Industries (M) Sdn Bhd
14 & 16, Jalan Bangau (Happy Valley)
86000 Kluang
JOHORE



Dear Sirs,

Re: Our Purchase Order No: 12459

We have received the parts as stated in our Purchase Order, however, 3 pcs of nut were found broken under part No: AS 415 piston c/w nut.

Could you please replace the said soonest possible.

We noticed that you did not attach the Delivery Order to the parts that were dispatched us. It is very troublesome for our Store personnel to

1. identify the supplier
2. to tally the quantity supplied

We would appreciate it very much if you could include your Delivery Order whenever your supply the parts to us.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'O. bin ...'.

Asst Admin officer

APPENDIX 5d.

The table that follows attempts to take up the question below:

'What are the competencies required for the occupations of the selected interviewees in terms of verbal communication, writing tasks, and the reading demands of the occupations?'

Job functions In English of some of the respondents in Omegatronics

Laili	Kamil	Fazrina	Danker	Ng	Shariffah	Norida
Staff Manager, Side Services (e.g. purchasing, shipping)	Senior Engineer, Testing Department	Senior Engineer Environment and Safety	Human Resource Executive	Technician, Production Dept	Specialist Clerk, Staffing and Recruitment, Human Resource Dept	Production Operator
Staff of 60 External, international communication in English Internally, ability to relate to staff effectively is important therefore uses English or Malay as situation befits it esp. with regard to non technical matters; however, English use is still predominant With suppliers: Negotiation skills Discussion skills Ability to convince	8 Junior Engineers Memos on e-mail, . internal - intra- dept. junior engineers, supervisors inter- dept. . external, in-country - vendors . external, outside country - foreign counterparts	2 Junior Engineers Responsible for Health and Safety of Direct Labour & pollution control Give training/ briefings on health & safety measures	Interact with other companies within Malaysia to keep up-to-date with their workers benefit structure Monitor workers' welfare	Supervisors & Line Leaders Give training mainly in English to line leaders, operators on line operations Solve day-to-day problems of line operations	Interact with Human Resource Manager & Production Operators (Direct Labour)	Engage in simple interaction related to work (sometimes with expatriates) Understand briefings (partly in English)

	<p>Speaking: . informal presentations to subordinates to pass down management information</p> <p>. deliver status reports to management</p> <p>. technical presentation at seminars & symposiums</p>	<p>Phone calls to Headquarters & sister companies to consult & report on health and safety measures</p> <p>Liaise with government bodies e.g. Dept. of Environment, Atomic Energy Licensing Board (Malay); with non-government bodies e.g. NSERCH (English)</p> <p>(English use in discussion with govt. bodies above, but Malay in official documents)</p>	<p>Make announcements regarding new benefits, e.g. holidays</p> <p>Conduct training on the utilisation of appraisal system</p>	<p>Interact with operators and line leaders regarding work and associated problems</p>	<p>Speaking: Answer phone calls, queries about vacancies, etc.</p> <p>Give orientation courses about workers benefits, etc. (in Malay mainly, but English also used)</p> <p>Assist in interviews for direct labour (Malay and English)</p>	<p>Participate in quality control circle, contribute ideas and give presentations</p>
<p>Reading: Heavy demand esp. company materials - new products, management practice, etc.</p>	<p>Reading: Read technical materials to up-date knowledge</p>	<p>Reading: Materials on safety & environment from Headquarters</p>	<p>No information: Presumably read other companies' appraisal system</p>	<p>Reading: Read technical manual - for machine repair and maintenance</p>	<p>Reading: Mainly memos</p>	<p>Reading: Read signs, written warnings</p> <p>Read work specifications in English and execute operations</p>

Writing:	Writing:	Writing:	Writing:	Writing:	Writing:	Writing:
Weekly report to set format	Weekly report - accomplishments, red flags, problems	Translate materials on health & safety & disseminate through briefings or notices on notice board Reports to Headquarters on status of health and safety	Conduct surveys of appraisal system of other companies	Summarise and simplify machine operations into easy steps (specifications) for operators when innovation/change is introduced	Letters: Routine and following a set model	Keep records of work completed on set matrix
Operations review report - use of charts, graphs, more than narrative	anticipated - in point form & with figures	Letters/memos - e mail	Prepare appraisal system		Filling in forms, e.g. register workers for pension fund, open bank accounts	
Write proposals for change e.g. in piece part used	Report to corporate office (jointly with other depts.)	Cover letters for handing in reports predominate (both Malay & English)	Write proposals on changes in benefit structure		Process inter-dept requests for additional staff	
Conciseness and clarity of expression important	Technical writing to deliver at local and international seminars				Assist in advertising for staff in English and Malay dailies	
Mainly general English with basic knowledge of technical language: use of Malay also necessary with certain workers	Mainly technical language	Both general and technical language	Mainly general English	Mainly technical language, therefore predominant use of English	Mainly general English	Understand technical language related to work operations especially technical terms, e.g. 'die bonging', 'wafer' etc.

Table 8.2: Job functions in English of some of the respondents in Omegatronics

APPENDIX 5e.

Below is given in table form the job description of the interviewees in term of English use to answer the question:
 'What are the competencies required for the occupations of the selected interviewees in terms of verbal communication, writing tasks, and the reading demands of the occupations?'

9.12 Job functions in English of some of the respondents in Malaysianfarm

Tan	Lee	Goh	Leo	Yau	Nancy	Kamala
Plantation Manager B Agri Science UM	Administrative Manager, B Econs UM	Assistant Plantation Manager, Fuel, Water, Buildings B Engineering	Accountant Accountancy Certificate	Purchasing Officer School Certificate, Chinese School	Secretary to Senior Managers School Certificate (English medium) Secretarial Certifi- cate	Accounts Clerk School Certificate Malay medium
Overall running of the farm from planting the cane to bringing it to harvest Give technical briefings to visitors to the plantation Interact with GM, agricultural engineers, other agronomists, admin manager, accountant, secretary	Handle administrative, non technical matters in the running of the plantation	Supervise daily field operations related to the above Handle technical matters related to fuel, water & buildings Liaise with field staff and admin staff regarding supplies related to field operations	Deal with financial matters, e.g. application for loans, prepare invoices, etc. Arrange transport and forwarding agents for purchase of machinery overseas		Execute secretarial duties with assistance of clerks and typists Handle faxes Handle filing	Issue cheques. bank in cheques, check official receipts Assist in preparing payroll, e.g. prepare deductions Assist with budgeting and keeping accounts

Negotiate for purchase of machinery overseas	Phone calls to corporate office or overseas suppliers		Phone calls to suppliers, to banks, etc.	Phone calls to negotiate for purchase of materials for field and workshop operations, followed by formal letter	Good command of both spoken and written English essential for this job	
Participate in international seminars on cane growing Interact with other specialist cane growers on technical matters relating to cane	Attend meetings at corporate office Negotiate purchase of supplies, e.g. fuel, fertiliser, etc. Interact with GM, Plantation Manager, engineers, agronomists, admin staff, e.g. accountant, personnel	Handle budgeting for field operations as it relates to the above	Interact with auditors who come to check the books once a year	Negotiate with suppliers over pricing, terms of agreement	Interact with all levels of staff and act as liaison person Handle phone calls and messages for senior managers esp. when they are in the field Main language tasks letters	
Travel overseas as cane consultant Travel overseas (Indonesia) to study feasibility of setting up cane plantations				Act on requests for supplies from other depts	Handle travel arrangements for senior managers - tickets, hotel bookings, itinerary, etc.	

Write technical letters Write technical proposals, feasibility studies, occasionally	Write letters Produce company report for corporate office - more statistics rather than narrative prose	Write concise formatted reports on field operations as it relates to transport, fuel, water	Write letters, e.g. reminders to those who owe money Keep records of accounts using the computer	Write routine letters - ordering supplies, complaints about delays, etc.	Writing: Routine letters and memos Write letters from notes or rough drafts, with some technical content	
Read professional literature	Reading: Economics journals	Monitor record keeping of tasks completed/uncompleted by field staff	Reading: routine letters & memos	Reading: routine letters and memos	Reading: Mainly confined to letters and memos	
Specialised technical English use as a specialist cane grower General English use when attending meetings at corporate office to report on status	Although less technical (agriculture) English use in administering all non technical matters such as finance, personnel, purchasing, secretarial and other support services, still some specialised English use as it pertains to management and finance	Technical use of the language and physical labour is involved in this type of work	General English sufficient with some familiarity with technical terminology Computer literacy is also essential	Predictable, routinised language use on familiar routine matters, more statistical form than narrative prose	Does not use much English, but does routine paperwork on set format	Routine specialised language use with knowledge of certain accounting terminology

Table 9.2: Job functions in English of some of the respondents in Malaysianfarm

APPENDIX 5f

Summary of Competencies needed in the Workplace

Below is summarised in table form the language skills that are extrapolated from the workplace data.

Managerial	Professional	Executive, Technical	Secretarial, Admin. Assistant	Clerical , Security Officer	Production workers, Telephone Operator
Negotiation skills Discussion skills Presentation skills Promoting a product or idea Use language to establish good interpersonal relations with co-workers and subordinates Express one's ideas well in speaking Answer queries well Answer questions when making presentations Cope with English in travel situations and in first language environments	Presentation skills Promoting a product or idea Pass down management communication to subordinates Give training on health and safety requirements Cope with English in travel situations and in first language environments Communicate on the electronic mail	Presentation skills Promoting a product or idea Conduct briefings and training in both English and Malay on work related matters or technical materials Cope with English in travel situations and in first language environments Use business English Communicate on the electronic mail	Handle phone calls Order goods through the phone Use business English Handle numeracy Communicate on the electronic mail	Answer phone calls in the nature of inquiries about vacancies Interact with expatriate staff concerning visa renewals, etc. Answer overseas calls and take messages Give directions to visitors Translate from English to Malay and vice versa Handle numeracy	Interact in English regarding work-related matters Take part in TCS quality circle programme - contribute ideas and take turns to give presentations Handle numeracy

Write weekly and monthly reports to a format in point form and graphical and statistical forms Write for presentations Send memos through the electronic mail Write concisely with precision and clarity Write with good choice of words Write without grammatical mistakes Use business English	Write weekly and monthly reports Write for presentations Write technical reports with figures Write technical papers Send memos through the electronic mail Plan the budget Handle banking procedures Translate materials on health and safety measures and disseminate through briefings or notices on notice board Write covering letters to submit reports Write for technical/professional presentations	Construct questionnaires for surveys Write reports of the results of surveys Write proposals for changes in benefit structure Send memos on the electronic mail Translate and simplify work-related materials	Handle correspondence Draft letters with some technical content Type letters with technical content Handle faxes Handle computer software	Write routine letters to a set format e.g. acceptance/rejection letters Assists in advertising for direct labour in English dailies Fill in forms in relation to workers' benefits Write daily reports on security situation Prepare payroll Handle bookkeeping Handle computer software	Record work completed on set matrix
Read technical literature	Read technical literature Read machine specifications Read technical drawings	Read technical literature Read technical drawings		Read memos especially those concerning requests for additional staff	Understand technical work related terminology Read work specifications and execute them Follow up on records of work completed Understand signs and written warnings

Summary of Language skills in relation to job categories

APPENDIX 5g

Varied proficiency levels requirement with regard to job categories in the two institutions

Level of proficiency	Omegatronics	Malaysianfarm
Sophisticated use, e.g. negotiation and discussion skills	Managers Professionals, e.g. engineers	Senior managers Professionals, e.g. agronomists and engineers
High level of technical language	Managers with professional background Professionals	Managers with professional background Professionals
High level of proficiency of formal English	Executives, e.g. Danker	Administrative Manager, Lee
Good general proficiency, spoken and written with some knowledge of technical language	Secretaries	Secretaries Personnel officer, Marzuki Purchasing officer, Yau
High level of technical language	Technicians, Ng	Workshop technicians in engineering section
Basic proficiency	Clerks	Some clerks
Some proficiency in routine matters	Security guards Telephone operator	Some clerks
Knowledge of work-related English, e.g. technical terms	Production operators	Mechanics
Simple work-related English	Drivers, cafeteria staff	Telephone operator
Receptive proficiency only		Some clerks Office boy

TEACHER'S INTERVIEWS AIDE MEMOIRE

Teacher Interview: Number 1 - To be carried out before classroom observation commenced

1. Teacher's background

- qualification and TESL training - preservice and inservice
- working experience including schools taught in
- classes taught in present school, societies held, other subjects taught and other additional workload

2. Activities of the English language panel

- if any projects are going on or are being planned to improve the standard of English in the school

3. What the teacher sees as the major purpose of teaching English

A general question to probe teacher's awareness of curricular aims for English; a related question will be asked at the second or last interview in connection with teacher's views as to students' preparedness to undertake English use in the workplace on leaving school

4. What language/learning theory underlies and influences the way teacher teaches

Probe content of Teaching Diploma course and what aspects of the language teaching approach/approaches teacher believes in and practises, including exposure to inservice courses

5. Teacher's utilization of syllabus and other curriculum document and books on ELT/TESL (extension of above question)

Are you guided by any books, teacher guides, etc. in your teaching?

Teacher Interview: Number 2 - To be carried out halfway through the observation period

1. Whether the teacher has accomplished what she had set out to do at the beginning of the year
2. Teacher's perception of students' attitudes towards learning English and how this has affected their performance in the subject
3. What competencies in English do students possess at present, in terms of verbal ability, reading and writing
4. What gaps need to be addressed to bring students to the level of proficiency as required by the syllabus or for post-school vocational and training needs, if he/she feels English is needed at all

To probe teacher's opinion of students' needs

'Where do you think your students will get to at the end of the year? Is this sufficient do you think, for his after-school needs - for work or for further studies?'

5. Constraints the teacher faces at present in carrying out his/her responsibility as a teacher of English

Teacher Interview: Number 3 - To be carried out after some time has elapsed after the observation period

1. Whether observer's presence has affected the way teacher taught and how

Has my presence affected the way in which you normally teach? In what way is this?

2. Activities observer missed seeing because of the shortness of the observation period

What are some of the things you normally do that I have missed seeing since I have been here for only a short time?

3. Explain the purpose of the research and seek teacher's opinion as to whether the school has been successful in preparing students for the workplace. Ask why for both affirmative and non-affirmative responses
4. Teacher's views of the secondary English language curriculum, and what improvements can be suggested?

Teacher's Questionnaire

Name of school:

Name of teacher:

Academic and professional qualification:

Number of years teaching experience:

1. How often do you carry out the following activities in class?

	Most of the time	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Discussion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Language games	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Project work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Problem-solving activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drama techniques	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Debates	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poetry/drama/debate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Others, please name	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. How many of your students can do the following satisfactorily?

	Nearly all	Some	Very few	None
Understand verbal instructions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understand talks/lectures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Carry on social conversation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Engage in phone conversation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Read for gist	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Read for information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fill in forms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Take notes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write summaries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write formal letters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write reports	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make presentation/speech	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Argue/negotiate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Do you do the following language work with the students?

	Often and planned	Only when needed	Implicitly	Seldom or never
Grammar	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pronunciation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vocabulary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Punctuation/paragraphing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social expressions and cultural use of English	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Awareness of registers (e.g. technical English)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Awareness of standard/non- standard forms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Do you attempt to inculcate the following behaviours?

	Actively and planned	Indirectly	Seldom or never
Co-operative behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leadership skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Confidence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creativity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Please give your comments/suggestions regarding the secondary English language programme (KBSM).

1. What subjects are you taking now?
Do you find that you pay more attention to certain subjects?
Why is that?
2. Do you read books? What books have you read lately?
3. What English activities does the teacher do with you in the classroom? Which of these do you enjoy?
4. If you have an English test coming, how do you revise for it, i.e. if you do revise?
5. Would you say you are better at spoken English or written English?
Why is that?
6. How do you rate your overall English ability?
How does it compare with your friends?
Why is it (better or worse) than their English?
7. If English were an optional subject, would you still take it?
What would be your reasons for taking it?
8. What do you plan to do after you leave school?
9. Do you think that if your English was really excellent, it would make a difference to your plans for the future?

OR

Since your English is already good, do you feel you have an advantage when it comes to jobs and higher studies compared to other people?

10. Do your parents speak English? (try to probe parental attitudes).
11. Do you have close friends of another race? How do you communicate with him/her?
12. Also talk about English TV programmes, English pop songs, etc.
13. Also note way of dressing (e.g. the wearing of head covering for Muslim girls), and housing area; father's and mother's occupation to determine socio-economic background.

Appendix 8a. Year 3 Lesson 3

PARTY HAT.

The things you will need:-

- manila card or ~~other decorative papers~~.
- colour pencils or other decorative item.
- stapler
- hole puncher
- string.

What you have to do:-

- (1) Firstly, cut the manila card into a rectangular shape with a width of 30.5 cm by 23 cm.
- (2) Then fold it into half.
- (3) After that fold each top corner down.
- (4) Next take hold of the upper sheet at the bottom and fold it over on the turned-down corners.
- (5) Then turn the hat over and do the same thing on the other side.
- (6) Turn down the little tabs that are sticking out and staple them in place.
- (7) Next, punch a hole on each side of the hat.
- (8) Then, tie a piece of string in each hole to tie the hat on your head.
- (9) Finally, decorate your hat with colour pencils, crayons or any other decorative things. items.

if Sc 3 Lesson 3

How To Make A Banner

The things you will need:-

- Scissors
- pencil
- UHU glue
- Gold marker / silver marker
- Cardboard

What you have to do:-

Thm 1. Cut the cardboard into ~~different~~ different shapes

A. that that you like

Next 2. Write something ^{that interests you} ~~that you want~~ on the cardboard ^{with a pencil} such as your name, welcoming

next the visitors ~~and~~ etc. (etc etc)

After that 3. Put the UHU glue on the words that you write. Make sure that the glue ~~is~~ ^{is} ~~jutted out~~ sticks.

4. Dry the glue.

5. Colour ~~the~~ the surface of the cardboard with gold or silver markers.

6. Now your banner is ready and you can paste it on your door.

**Appendix 8a. (iii). Summary of information on student interviewees of 4
Science 3**

The table below gives in summarised form students' background, opinions and competencies in the language.

Mee Ling	Masliah	Teh	Chelvi
<p>Background: A Chinese girl. Speaks Chinese at home. Speaks non-standard English fluently. Father is a businessman. Parents exert pressure to do well in school generally</p> <p>Plans for higher studies: "Accountant may be ... fashion designer, architect and all."</p> <p>May go overseas for higher studies</p>	<p>(Interview was conducted in Malay). Speaks Malay at home. Father is a Customs Officer. Father thinks English is important and subscribes to three English newspapers.</p> <p>Aspires to be a commercial pilot, after training as an engineer. Would need English for these jobs.</p> <p>Speaks Malay with friends and neighbours</p> <p>Favourite subject is mathematics</p>	<p>(Interview was conducted in Malay) Lives in a hostel for rural students (as part of a programme to place rural students in good town schools). Her father is a factory supervisor; mother a village nurse. Father buys an English daily, but not on a regular basis.</p> <p>Aspires to be a doctor</p> <p>English has improved since coming to the school.</p>	<p>Speaks Tamil (Indian dialect) at home. Speaks non-standard English quite fluently. Father is a manager of a retail shop.</p> <p>Plans for the future: "I'm going to India ... to take medical."</p> <p>Importance of English: "if outsiders come to our country, we only know Malay, so we cannot speak to them."</p>
<p>Able to talk on the phone in English</p> <p>Able to do formal prepared speeches/ presentations, but not spontaneous ones</p>	<p>Can carry on social conversations</p> <p>Able to do formal prepared presentations, not spontaneous ones</p> <p>Claim to be unable to take part in debates</p> <p>Feels spoken English is better than written</p>	<p>Does not feel confident enough to speak English. Can only manage short and simple sentences. Code switches when speaking to non Malay friends</p> <p>Not confident about making presentations, even prepared ones</p>	<p>Able to make formal prepared presentations, not spontaneous ones</p> <p>Does not feel she can take part in debates</p>
<p>Proficiency in spoken and written English about equal</p>	<p>Able to write friendly letters; but formal ones only with guidance</p>	<p>Able to write friendly letters with guidance but will have difficulty with formal letters, even with guidance</p> <p>Able to do free essays on simple topics</p>	<p>Able to write both friendly and formal letters with close guidance</p> <p>Able to do free essays on simple topics</p> <p>Feels written English is better than spoken</p>

Reading: Romances and mysteries	Can understand English movies but sometimes has to rely on subtitles	Reads romances and English newspapers	Reads newspapers. Have no problems understanding most reading materials, but sometimes have to read it twice before understanding it well
Weakness: Essay writing and spoken English "My writing essay and conversation"	Weakness: Essay writing i.e. spelling, & vocabulary, grammar, syntax and tenses	Weakness: Tenses and spelling	Weakness: Spoken English; grammar, tenses
Did not comment on this aspect	Thinks English is important: <i>"universiti ... pergi overseas, pun, need English."</i>	English is important: <i>"untuk berkomunikasi tak perlulah ada penterjemah bahasa."</i> (for communication - we will not need an interpreter.)	
		Uses translation: <i>"Kadang-kadang, nak buat perkataan tu, tak tahu apa dalam Bahasa Inggeris, gunakanlah BM, lepas tu translatelah."</i> (If we don't know the word in English, we use Malay first, then we translate).	

APPENDIX 8b

4 Arts 4: Tables showing details of lessons for the two weeks; Transcripts of students' participation in group activities, transcripts of presentations and summary of student interviewees' backgrounds and competencies as assessed by them

8b.1 Details of lessons

Week 1

Syllabus area	Activity	Organisation	Skill/Language
<u>Lesson 1</u> Giving opinions on current issues Topic of students' choice 'Crank calls' 'Smoking among teenagers'	Spontaneous presentations Comments and questions from the floor Teacher sums up and conclude	Class (6 presenters) (37 min)	Give spontaneous verbal presentations Respond to questions
<u>Lesson 2&3</u> Giving opinions 'Teenage runaways'	Group discussion to prepare a text on the topic Teacher discusses each groups product, corrects and refines it before it's rewritten by the group - much like process writing	Group (5 groups of 6-7)	Discuss topic Contribute ideas Write out argumentative essay Group edits work based on teacher's comments
<u>Lesson 4</u> Giving opinions 'Teenage runaways'	Continuing discussion in groups and preparation of text for presentations Teacher goes around correcting students' work	Group (38 min) (Note: no time to do presentations as was planned)	Discuss topic Contribute ideas Write out argumentative essay, (1 1/2 pages of A4 is the exam requirement) Edit work
<u>Lesson 5</u> Giving opinions 'Teenage runaways'	Giving presentations of 3 - 4 minute duration (5 presentations in all) Teacher comments after each presentation Free discussion of the topic	Class (19 min) (8 min)	Make presentation Listen to presentations Comment on presentation

Week 2

Syllabus area	Activity	Organisa- tion	Skill/topic
<u>Lesson 6</u> Vocabulary	When teacher suggests language games, students chose their own Two girls conduct the game and explained the rules	Class (2 min)	Make words JUICE JUICY FISHY FAULT FALSE FLAMES INPUT IMAGE ITCHY INDIA SOUTH STYLE STAMP STORY COUNT COINS CONES

	Game: Make words from given letters and blank spaces e.g. QUEEN (introductory word) QU becomes QUEST QU becomes QUOTE	Class (35 min)	QUEEN QUEST QUOTE ONIONS OPENS OCEAN INTER INDEX SOLVE SHOVE STOVE HATCH HAUNT
			MAKES MELTS MINUS PLANT PAINT PAUSE LEVEL LIKES ENEMY EAGER HOUSE HENCE HINGE ROAST ROUSE

The language game was decided by students themselves illustrating Mrs. Indran's democratic style with the students..

Syllabus area	Activity	Organisation	Skill/topic
<u>Lesson 7&8</u> Giving opinions on current issues Teenagers should be given more freedom'	Teacher's instructions. Teacher suggests topic 'Inter-marriages should be encouraged'. Students did not like and suggests change. Teacher suggests two more: 'Education should be more exam oriented' and 'Teenagers should be given more freedom'. Students chose the second. Prepare speech for one speaker from each group to deliver Presentation by a speaker from proposing team Presentation by opposing team Members from the floor give their opinions	Class (6 min) Class divided into two big teams (one to propose the other to rebut) Team (25 min) Class (6 min) Class (3 min) Class (5 min)	Discuss Contribute ideas Construct sentences Write out speech Argue Rebuts
<u>Lesson 9</u> Distribution of class readers Margaret Shaw, 'A wider tomorrow'	Teacher gives out class reader Students do their own work	Class (37 min)	

Lesson 10 Poetry 'A march of the women' by Ethel Smyth	Teacher recites poem and explains it line by line	Class (12 min)	Listen to explanation
	Teacher tries to get students' reaction to the poem. Students chorused that they could not. So, teacher asks to read the poem by themselves first and understand it	Class (1 min)	
	Silent reading and comprehension of poetry	Individual (14 min)	Read and understand poetry
'Analyse the character of the grandmother'	Critical analysis of the poem (note: the grandmother was a woman suffragette)		Analyse poetry critically

8b. ii Students' participation in group activities which contains code-switching

- Aisha They need to realise that they are useful for the next generation
- Dian How about *habis masa*, may be *masyarakat* (wasting time ... society)
- Farah *Nak sedarkan dia orang. Bahawa dia pemimpin masyarakat.* (we must make them aware that they are the leaders of society)
- Dian How to solve?
- Aisha And their self. Not between the world and their self.
- Dian *Ala, macam ni.* This one, you put it here, *habis cerita* (end of story). New paragraph lah. Running away is not a good decision. Stop!
- Farah *Habis! Habis! Finish! Finish! (Habis - finish)*
- Dian Okay, conclusion, okay! Conclusion *apa nak cakap? Cakap perpatah* or something like that. (what shall we say in conclusion? we can end with a proverb)
- Aisha *Perpatah apa nak cakap tadi?* (what proverb shall we use?)
- Dian *Tunggak negara* (the pillar of society).
- Aisha *Aku cakap* last word, when there's a will, there's a way. That's the last word. (I'll provide the last word)

Farah How to spell?

Dian Hurry up *lah!*

Aisha So they'll end up. End up ... having a good everlasting relationship. So, they'll end up, ... everlasting with their parents.

8b. iii

Below is an excerpt to show students' attention to various aspects of language.

Bee Chan So, when they do not get enough attention and care, they think that their parents do not love them.

Julie Capital

Bee Chan They think their parents ... but actually it's the other round.

Pek Ling No need to say 'actually' *lah!* No need to write 'actually'.

Bee Chan Okay*lah*.

Julie This one *lah*, full stop here.

Betty Or you put a comma ...

Pek Ling At this stage ... they are more sensitive to the environment and this ...

May Lan How to say '*timbulkan*'? '*Timbulkan*' ... and ... and ... and ...
(*timbulkan* - gives rise to)

Julie This cause the ...

Bee Chan Teenagers usually keep^{to} themselves. And they usually do not tell their parents. Shall we err ... write inside?

8b. iv Two examples of group presentations of topic 'Teenage runaways' from 4 Arts 4 of School A taken from audio-transcripts

Group 3, a predominantly Malay group

(Haliza, one of the interviewees is giving the presentation)

Runaways: They are becoming a crucial problem nowadays. Most of the runaways ... (inaudible). This problem is caused mainly by external influence, family problems, peer pressure ... (pause) and, and ... (inaudible) ... for attention and a demanding system. Teenagers nowadays lack attention, so they try to create problems ... to gain attention. They also feel that their lives are ... (inaudible). They

don't have the freedom to do what they like. This is because they are always treated like a child. Parents don't ... parents don't see or understand that they are growing up into adulthood. Besides that, they also have problems with the pressure put on them by their parents.

For example, their parents have higher expectations of their children with regard to their studies. And, once their children fail to live up to these expectations, then there will be problems. Because of lack of attention at home, he or she goes out and is easily influenced by outsiders. He or she go out ... that they get at home and in school. They start acting wildly because ... (inaudible). They get influenced easily and they start by not going to school without their parents knowing. By roaming in town in their school uniforms during school hours they break the school rules. At last they get caught ... At this age, teenagers are very easy to be formed if they join the right group ... So, at this level of time ... parents ... (inaudible). They need the love and attention of their families in order to solve their problems. In conjunction with this matter, there are ways to overcome it. Teenagers can receive counselling from their friends and teachers ... anybody superior. Parents too can seek counselling ... get the advice to ... from family members ... (inaudible).

Group 4, a predominantly Chinese group - (An excerpt of the transcript of this group's discussion is given in chapter 12. Bee Chan is giving the presentation)

A runaway is a person who cannot control their own emotions. Rather than solve the problem, she runs away from it. In this materialist world, people usually work very hard to provide more money for their family and they are always rushing here and there. As a result of this, their children feel neglected and abandoned. From this, we learn that adolescents suffer the most because they are in the stage of growing up. At this stage they are more sensitive to the environment around them. So, when they do not get the love and attention from their parents, they think that their parents do not love them.

The teenagers ... this problem, they usually keep to themselves or turn to their friends for advice. This influence from friends is one of the factors that causes the child to run away. When they turn to the wrong person for advice, this will make the matter worse. In a number of ... (inaudible) may teach them to over-protect their child as they do not know the dangers of the outside world to themselves. But, from the child's point of view, they feel that their parents restrict them from, from their right to mix with other people. The environment these

teenagers live in does not help to solve this problem, but make it more complicated. With the existence of many entertaining centres like shopping malls, video arcades ... (inaudible).

Video arcades are places teenagers can hang out with their friends. These sort of places is known for ... (inaudible) from all walks of life. Thieves and gang members also favour these places as these places are the places they recruit people to join them.

Teenagers at this stage of life does not know how to differentiate the good from the bad. As a result of this, they are easily influenced. The school is where teenagers spend most of their time. The school system these days are very exam-oriented and because of this, students suffer a lot of pressure from their parents to do well. The parents of students want them to get at least ... (inaudible) in their Form. Teachers too can give a lot of pressure by giving them homework or project work. This is usually where the problem starts and students will suffer a lot of work pressure and the pressure of being the best. The person may have a personality change, for example, from a soft-spoken person to a bad rebellious person. But there are some who would resort to ... (inaudible). The situation is worse because the parents could not fulfil their parents' role. They sometimes use words like "You are stupid", "You are totally useless". These words may hurt the child's heart ... (inaudible) ... Child abuse is one of the reasons teenagers run away. Parents facing financial problems or work pressure ... (inaudible) ... Some students get abused by their parents simply because they do not do well in their exams. ... To solve these problems, the parents and child must foster a better relationship. They should be able to sit down and reason things out. This will make sure ... Doing things together will also help to improve the understanding between the parents and child ... These problems can also be solved in the religious way which is to love and respect for others. Counselling also play a big part in solving these problems. Moral support also can help a student to understand that their parent ... (inaudible). Campaigns to reduce runaways can also help reduce the problem. The government can also play a part in reducing the amount of runaways by changing the school system to a less exam oriented system and as a result of this reduce the pressures suffered by the student.

8b.v Students' Competencies

The teacher's assessment of the whole class

Mrs. Indran reported that with the exception of three girls almost all of the students are proficient in English. Mrs. Indran's responses to the teacher's questionnaire (Appendix 6b) with regard to student competencies, are as follows:

Nearly all	Some	Very few	None
Understand verbal instructions	Read for information	None	None
Understand talks/lectures	Make presentation/speech		
Carry on social conversation			
Engage in phone conversation			
Read for gist			
Fill in forms			
Take notes			
Write summaries			
Write formal letters			
Write reports			
Argue/negotiate			

Reading skills and higher studies

With regard to their capacity to undertake further studies in English, the teacher reported that all students but the three would be able to cope - some perhaps with a greater measure of difficulty than others - but everyone has the foundation skills to acquire a new set of behaviours in terms of study skills.

Exam skills

As Mrs. Indran perceives of student competencies in relation to what they are able to do in the exam, she reports that students generally find 'identification of errors' and the 'cloze passage' as well as 'word omission' difficult. However, about three-quarters of students can do 'error identification', although most cannot manage 'word omission'. The quarter who are not able to cope with the 'error identification' question are mainly the Malay girls.

Cloze passage: "... the kids are weakest there ... They give the correct answer, but it's wrong because the tense is wrong"

Word omission: "where the word is omitted ... you have to put a stroke and supply the correct answer. ... sometimes they get the right answer, but the stroke is in the wrong place, it's wrong!."

Students do not cope well with these exam formats because they do not read enough: "I think they don't read enough. ... I think if you read you'll know the word is supposed to be there, you know."

Students' vocational potential

Below is given in summarised form students' capabilities in English from the perspective of vocational potential, as assessed by the teacher:

Receptionists' and clerical work

There are only three students who are weak. As receptionists, "Yes"; as clerks, "I don't know. They are weak."

Students who do not talk have receptive abilities. *"I think they understand. It's just that they don't have the confidence to talk."*

Apart from the three weak students, the rest would be able to operate comfortably in English when they go out to work e.g. as clerks,

Salesman

As salesmen and receptionists: *"we do teach them all those skills where they have to ask for things."*

Letter writing: *"We do teach them all those skills."*

Grammar

Students are weak in grammar.

"They may be able to talk ...but ... the elements of language itself, what's a noun or verb, ... they don't know."

Summary of student interviewees' backgrounds and competencies as assessed by them

The table below summarises the three interviewees' background and competencies in English as related by the interviewees themselves:

May Lan	Haliza	Goh Bee
Highest achieving student. Speaks fluent and standard Malaysian English Father retired	Father an accountant. Mother a telephonist. Speaks fluent and standard Malaysian English.	One of the three weak girls of the class . Speaks a few Chinese dialects at home
Speaks <i>'a bit of everything at home'</i> - English, Cantonese, Malay, but mainly Cantonese Ambition: Psychologist or political scientist or economist. May study abroad if financial circumstances permit	Speaks mainly English at home Family subscribes to two English dailies Ambition: Plans to go overseas for higher studies like her cousin	Parents operate hawker stall and have smattering of English to deal with tourists <i>"sometimes got tourist come, like Japanese, Hong Kong, Taiwanese ... Then we have to speak in English."</i> Family subscribes to Chinese newspaper
Obtained an early start in English through interacting with a native English speaking friend of her father Works harder on Malay (<i>"the girls in our school do better in English than BM"</i>) than English, and buys more Malay magazines although does a fair amount of reading in English too; <i>"I read when I have the time."</i> Takes Literature		Does work on English in addition to maths

Speaking: Public speaking: <i>"if it's a light-hearted topic, it's very fun to talk in front of the class ... if it's a serious topic, you feel more serious and tense ... if it's a debate like yesterday, it's fun."</i>	Speaking: Speaks fluent and standardised English Can make prepared presentations and perhaps spontaneous ones as well	Can carry on a social conversation quite fluently in pidginized English Can make prepared presentations, not spontaneous ones; debates also a problem
Write: familiar with formal letter writing	Familiar with formal letter writing	Can manage a formal letter e.g. of application for jobs
Read: Newspapers: Family subscribes to Star, NST and Malay Mail <i>"I read the paper everyday." "If it's an article in 'Lifestyle', it's easier to understand it. If foreign news, sometimes you have to refer to dictionary."</i>	Reads a lot of English books	Reads romantic fiction
Weakness; <i>"we still need to learn a lot. ... we still ask (the teacher) a lot of questions, like how to spell the words."</i>	Weakness: essay writing, esp. grammar	Weakness: Spelling and grammar - essay writing
Importance of English: <i>"If I were to continue my studies abroad, and it will be very, very important. And in Malaysia too when I come out to work."</i>	<i>"if I'm looking for a job, ... I'm sure they are going to ask if I can speak in English."</i>	
	Thinks that written activities should be balanced with reading and spoken activities - <i>"every time we come to class, (it's) ... open your book, write this, copy this, answer the questions."</i> Thinks textbook is all right but it should be used in an interesting way.	Thinks the teaching is all right. Likes discussion and project work

Appendix 8c: 4 Science 1

8c.i. Details of Lessons

Mr. Jegan was absent for the first day, hence the first lesson was missed. The second period started early the second day, before the researcher had a chance to meet and talk to him, and therefore the decision was taken not to observe this period as well since he may not have been told of the impending observation, and would probably need some time to get used to the idea. Observations commenced with the third period.

Week 1			
Syllabus area	Activity	Organisation	Skill/Language
Lesson 3&4 Give opinion on current issues 'Unemployment'	1. Teacher's instructions and guidelines on the activity to follow (phrases are given)	Class (8 min)	Understand instructions
	2. Discussion on the topic given	Group (30 min)	Discussion skills
	3. Give prepared presentations	Class (15 min)	Presentation skills
	4. Teacher sums up ideas given in presentations	Class (3 min)	
	5. Teacher's instructions for the next activity and gives out bilingual dictionary	Class (2 min)	
	6. Silent reading of a comprehension passage	Individual (10 min)	Read and comprehend
	7. Administrative -giving out exercise books and collecting dictionaries		

Syllabus area	Activity	Organisation	Skill/Language
Lesson 5 Reading comprehension 'Advice to a son'	1. Teacher checks how much progress students have made with their reading of the passage given the day before and gives instructions for the activity to follow	Class (2 min)	
	2. Teacher reads the passage out loud and explains the ideas it and draws out ideas from the students	Class (9 min)	New vocabulary: barrel, conveyor belt, timekeeper, beef extract
	3. Students answer comprehension questions in their exercise books. (Students who finished the work the day before were free to do what they like.). Bilingual dictionaries were distributed	Individual (16 min)	Read and understand comprehension passage Answer comprehension questions

	4. Administrative: students told to complete work at home. Dictionaries collected	Class (2 min)	
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Week 2

Syllabus area	Activity	Organisation	Skill/Language
Lesson 6 'Forms and functions'	1. Teacher explains the different functions and writes them on the board e.g. condolence, sympathy, etc. (10 min)	(A set of workbooks bought by the school is used for this lesson)	Identify forms and functions
	2. Teacher refers to exercise in workbook and discusses it with the students	Class (10 min)	
	3. Students do the exercise on their own	Individual (8 min)	
	4. Teacher goes over the exercise the students have done	Class (7 min)	
	5. Administrative: collection of workbooks and bilingual dictionaries		

Syllabus area	Activity	Organisation	Skill/Language
Lesson 7 Text completion (cloze) - exam type question	1. Teacher goes over a sample question of a cloze exercise on 'How tea is made'	Class (5 min)	Complete a cloze passage
	2. Teacher gives instructions and some guidance on how to do a second cloze passage on 'Bats' - this includes giving some of the verbs needed to complete it	Class (12 min)	
	3. Students do the cloze passage in their books	Individual (16 min)	
	4. Teacher says he will give the answers the next day		

Syllabus area	Activity	Organisation	Skill/Language
Lesson 8&9	1. Teacher gives some explanation about the topic for the day 'TV programmes'	Class (5 min)	

<p>Give opinions on current issues 'TV Programmes'</p> <p>Letter of complaint</p>	<p>2. Teacher reads out letter of complaint in textbook about TV programmes and discusses the subject with the class</p>	<p>Class (7 min)</p>	
	<p>3. Teacher gives instructions on the task students are to do in groups, i.e. write a letter of complaint about TV programmes</p>	<p>Class (6 min)</p>	
	<p>4. Discussion on a letter of complaint to a TV station about their TV programmes</p>	<p>Group (44 min)</p>	<p>Write a letter of complaint about TV programmes</p>

Syllabus area	Activity	Organisation	Skill/Language
<p>Lesson 10 Literature Reading a short story from a simple reader, Helen Thomson (1989), 'Arab Folk Tales', Collins ELT: 'God will help'</p>	<p>1. Administrative: Teacher passes out reader and gives instructions to read a particular story.</p>	<p>Class (1 min)</p>	
	<p>2. Teacher writes down some comprehension questions on the passage and walks out of class, pleading work</p>	<p>Class (5 min)</p>	
	<p>3. Students read story and answer questions written on board</p>	<p>Individual (15 min)</p>	<p>Read story and answer comprehension questions</p>
	<p>4. Teacher comes back and discusses the more tricky questions with students, especially evaluative questions that entails the giving of opinions, i.e. 'Do you think Said is lazy?'</p>	<p>Class (9 min)</p>	<p>Evaluate character's action and give opinion</p>
	<p>5. Lesson ends without issue being resolved, and teacher says he will pick it up again in the next lesson</p>		

Below is produced the beginning of a discussion by a group of boys for lesson 8&9. Unlike the girls' group above, it can be seen that the boys use more Malay in their interaction:

8c.ii. An extract of a group discussion that uses Malay

Man	<i>Sekarang ni kita nak pilih subjek. Apa kita nak ambil</i>	translation/explanation We have to choose a subject. Which one?
Fadil	Talk show <i>lah</i>	Let's choose talk show
Man	<i>Fasal pelajaran tak ada. Talk show fasal pelajaran tak ada</i>	There are no talk shows on education
Fadil	Talk show?	
Din	<i>Cepatlah!</i>	Hurry!
Fadil	Umm ... there is ...	
Man	There is more talk shows about <i>ekonomi</i> , politics ...	
Fadil	There is more talk shows ... (writing it down)	
Man	Current issues ...	
Fadil	<i>Ekonomi dah ada kan?</i>	We have mentioned economics, haven't we?
Man	<i>Tu lah, fasal politik dan</i> current issues ...	That concerns politics and current issues

The students of this class seemed to have the general knowledge and ideas although they have problems with the language. This short extract, however, still serves to illustrate the use of translation to come up with the written product.

Mr. Jegan Are there talk shows on politics? Yes, there are. What about *wawancara*? That's a talk show on politics - daily affairs kind of thing.

(The students then carried on with their discussion.)

Fadil	'Forum'! 'Forum'! ' <i>Wawancara</i> ', 'Forum' - current show apa? ' <i>Sekapur sirih dan seulas pinang</i> ', ' <i>Majalah Tiga</i> '!	(Fadil is suggesting some of the popular talk shows on TV)
Man	<i>Dan end dah!</i>	We have come to the end.
Din	<i>Dah end dah, tak payah lah!</i>	We have come to the end, so, there's no need.
Man	<i>Boleh dikatakan ... boleh dikatakan. Apa Jaspal? Boleh dikatakan, uh?</i>	How do you translate '...', Jaspal?
Jaspal	'Can be said' (from far) (The teacher came around and the boys referred to the teacher).	
Mr. Jegan	Come again?	
Man	<i>Boleh dikatakan</i>	
Mr. Jegan	It can be said ...	

The group product is given below. The original handwritten copy is given in Appendix 10a.(ii).

Neglected Sports Programmes

Sports is my favourite television programme. But there is not enough sports programmes on television. Because sports programmes time compared to another programme like entertainment and adventures series. I think adventure programme and entertainment programme do not give benefit because this programmes is wasting time. Some people say that the sports programmes is enough but that is not true. There are only 5 hour a weeks. I hope TV 3 can add more time for sports programme from 5 hours to 10 hours a weeks.

The text produced above as a result of group collaboration is brief and to the point. There are some minor difficulties with grammar and spelling, but nothing that could not be put right with proper training. In fact it is only sentence number 3 that is rather incomprehensible, and other sentences are good. The ordering of ideas is also sound. The text coheres and the link between ideas is smooth.

8c.iii. An extract of a group discussion of a boy's group that uses more English

Ali	Life, nature, science, history and ...
Jaspal	And anything that has got to do with ...

Ali	Like this <i>sebab</i> ... and anything has, <i>apa</i> ?	<i>sebab</i> - because; <i>apa</i> - what
Jaspal	That has to do with ... err ... Sabrata, <i>apa, uh?</i> With the earth <i>lah</i> .	
Ali	(echoing Jaspal) ... with the earth, with our nature, with our life.	
Jaspal	Life <i>dah ada kan?</i> With earth <i>lah</i> . With our earth.	
Sabrata	<i>Untuk keseluruhannya.</i>	On the whole
Ali	<i>Keseluruhan semula jadikan?</i>	All, of nature?
Sabrata	Biology	
Jaspal	With nuclear power. Human race <i>lah</i> . Human race.	Add some more
Sabrata	<i>Sambung lagilah.</i> Which is more useless. Which is bring more ...	You cannot begin a sentence with 'which is', but you can use it to join it up
Jaspal	<i>Engkau nak sambung ya, ayat tadi? Mana boleh mula dengan 'which is'. Sambung okay lah</i> - which is ...	
Sabrata	Bring more ... bring more ...	
Ali	<i>Pengetahuan apa?</i>	How do you say <i>pengetahuan</i> ?
Jaspal	Knowledge	
Sabrata	<i>Eh, lebih baik engkau mula dengan perkataan ... ayat baru. Itu panjang tu.</i>	You'd better begin a new sentence. That is too long.
Ali	<i>Tak apalah.</i> Which bring ... more knowledge. <i>Macam mana eja</i> knowledge?	Never mind. How do you spell 'knowledge'?

8c. iv. An extract from a girl's group

Nora	Documentary must more be screened on television, isn't it? So, now ... <i>kita bangkang teruk-teruk pasal ni</i> . Looking at the television programme today, there are more adventure series where it is not suitable with us. Except for ...	we have to argue this point strongly
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Haslin	Document adult ...	What is 'adult'?
Sofia	Adult <i>tu apa? Mempengaruhi ...</i>	
Siti	Err ... I think <i>pengaruh</i> is influence, yes, influence!	
Nora	Okay, looking at the television programmes today, there are more entertainment and adventure series where is not suitable which is not given ... except for adults. The series always ...	
Haslin	The series always <i>tonjolkan</i> ...	
Nora	Always <i>tonjol ... menonjolkan ... bukan menampilkan ...</i>	highlight 'highlight' not 'put forward'
Haslin	<i>Ah, menampilkanlah ... menampilkan tu apa?</i>	what is ...
Nora	<i>Cari kejap</i> (referring to dictionary)	look it up

8c.v. The other two student interviewees, Rosie and Azrai

Rosie

Rosie lives on an orchard in another small nearby kampong and her father operates a small business as a building contractor. Her mother does not work and she is the oldest child in her family. She is average in English, and does not feel confident enough to carry on a conversation in the language.

Azrai

Azrai also lives in a nearby kampong. His father is a Supervisor in a public

Rosie who has aspirations to take up medicine, said that English is important for her higher studies, in particular because reference books are in English and it would also be important for her to interact with fellow doctors once she starts working. Both low achievers say that they would feel socially inadequate if they do not know English.

8c. vi. Student competencies for the whole class as reported by the teacher

Nearly all	Some	Very few
Understand verbal instructions Fill in forms	Carry on social conversation Engage in phone conversation Understand talks/lectures Read for gist Read for information Write formal letters	Take notes Write summaries Write reports Make presentation/speech Argue/negotiate

a. Spoken skills

Talking about the skill of carrying on a phone conversation, Mr. Jegan does not feel that the majority have the skill, barring the 25%, although they would be able to carry on a social conversation.

"There are two reasons for this. One is they may know, but they don't want to speak it (they would be accused of) '*lagak*', putting on airs. Another one, basically, their vocabulary is very limited. *Basic conversation*, yes, but they can't do more than that."

In Mr. Jegan's assessment, conversation that involve routine formulaic language is within most students' capability, but once students have to come up with answers to non-routine enquiries, they will not have the vocabulary and structures to sustain the conversation.

With regard to more complex needs such as participating in meetings, Mr. Jegan asserts:

"Discuss, I don't think so, except for very few - about a quarter of them. The rest will not be able to."

b. Writing skills

However, Mr. Jegan says that students could manage a formal letter as a group activity, although the letter "will be full of mistakes." As to report writing, Mr. Jegan does not think any of them would be able to manage it since their writing is generally quite poor.

c. Reading skills

As to reading skills, Mr. Jegan's assessment is produced below:

"I suppose they can understand, may be not the whole sentence, but the important parts of the sentence, ... and therefore, they can make a response. They can make a response in Malay, but not in English. They have the receptive skills, not the productive ones."

"To construct something of their own is difficult, just like in speaking. I think reading and listening is okay."

8c. vii. Teacher's assessment of students' competencies with regard to their vocational potential

Clerical jobs

When asked about the students' likely potential to perform clerical jobs in English, Mr. Jegan's assessment is as follows:

"Fill in forms, I think everyone can do that."

"Letter writing, they will have a problem. ... may be about a quarter of them can do."

"A formal letter ... it will be full of mistakes. No one can write a good letter without any mistakes. What the boss wants, they won't be able to do that. No one."

"They would understand (a written memo)."

Receptionists

As to talking on the phone and answering the phone, relevant also to jobs as receptionist, Mr. Jegan's opinion is:

"I think they all will be able to do that. Not very good English, but they will be able to understand, and they will be able to make the other person understand." At another time he had the opposite view - *"They cannot engage in a phone conversation. ... basically, their vocabulary is very limited."*

With regard to whether they would be able to undertake 'A' levels in English, because large numbers of Malaysians normally go to the U.K. for higher studies, Mr. Jegan comments:

"If they go for 'A' levels, I don't think they can do it, because everything is in English."

Participate in meetings: *"Discuss, I don't think so, except for very few."*

Report writing - *"for sure (no)."*

Essay writing (guided): *"very bad, bad structure. There is never an essay without at least 29 to 30 grammar mistakes."* Group essays work better because the teacher goes around the groups correcting their mistakes before they copy it into their books.

Grammar: *"One doesn't know where to start addressing the grammar problem."*

Reading: *"what they read they can understand."*

TV programmes: *"they have passive understanding."*

"To construct something of their own is difficult, just like speaking. ... reading and listening is okay."

"they may understand not the whole sentence, but the important parts of the sentence, and therefore they can make a response ... in Malay, not in English."

Interest: *"They are interested, but it is such a monumental task to them ... once you come to form 5, and you can't even master basic structures, it becomes very discouraging, I believe."*

"They vaguely feel that English is important, but it is not translated into concrete terms - in terms of exams."

(meaning a subject is important in as much as you need to get a good grade in it in order

to pass the exam). *"make the need for English immediate ... make it compulsory (to pass)."*

"there are a lot of students (about 25%) who are good in other subjects, but not good in English. So, English is a specific problem to about 25% of the students. The rest (who are not good in English) are also not good in other subjects."

Factory work: *"They'll probably learn on the job because the need is immediate."*

As clerks: *"the syllabus ... does teach some practical skills. ... 'processes', 'giving opinions' ... but ... vocabulary is bad." "take dictation, no; fill in forms - everyone can do it, paysheets. Letter writing, they will have a problem; may be about a quarter of them can do - but it will be full of mistakes"*

Memos: *"very few, the rest won't be able to understand. ... to write legible memos ... it will be a problem."*

Higher studies in English (A levels): *"if they are given three years to do it, then I think they will be able to get through (the good ones i.e. e.g. Julina and Rustam)."*

1119 exam paper: *"Jaspal, Rustam and Julina".*

Poetry: *"I tried doing poetry a couple of times ... they cannot get into it."*

8c. viii. Competencies of student interviewees as assessed by they themselves

a. Julina

Julina can manage social conversations easily, as well as give prepared and spontaneous presentations. She is able to write in English without resorting to the bilingual dictionary. It is unusual for a student of this school, for her to assess her spoken English as being better than her written English. She reads copiously at home, especially romantic fiction, and goes to English movies which she can follow well. She has problems with grammar when she writes, but she is able to write formal letters, with some guidance from the teacher.

b. Rustam

Rustam can manage a social conversation easily, and even to give formal prepared presentations. He reads well in English, and tends to read the defence magazines his father subscribes to as well as English newspapers. He can write formal letters with some guidance. In fact, I was told that he is quite fluent, although he does not have much opportunity to practise his skills. Therefore he is mostly only able to express himself through the written medium.

c. Sabrata

Sabrata can carry on a social conversation, as the interview was conducted in English. He reads the newspapers which he finds " Okay, but sometimes too many difficult words. Dictionary not always give the right meaning of a word." Sabrata's family does not buy papers, however so he reads in school whenever he gets the chance. He feels his written English is poor, especially when writing compositions.

d. Rosie

Rosie claimed to be able to carry on a social conversation, although she did not speak English during the interview. She is rather keen on English, but the only materials she finds accessible are the simple readers in the library. She feels her written English is better than her spoken English, and does not find writing friendly letters a problem. With formal letters, she needs some guidance. Since she aspires to a profession, she knows English is important for her future.

e. Azrai

Azrai claimed not to be able to carry on a social conversation well because he feels that his speech is ungrammatical. He said that most of the time he could not follow what is going on in class. He claimed that written English is more difficult to cope with than spoken English. The only materials he finds accessible are the simple readers in the library.

A summary of students' backgrounds and competencies are given below:

8 c.ix. Summary of student interviewees' background and their competencies

Julina	Rustam	Sabrata	Azrai	Rosie
<p>Father a retired storekeeper, re employed as Manager of delivery company</p> <p>Speaks Malay at home but tries to practice English with older sister "I asked my eldest sister to speak in English with me. She taught me to speak English, how to use right grammar. She buy books for me to read."</p> <p>Has an integrative orientation towards English <i>"If my English is good, That my speciality."</i> Sibling rivalry plays a part - "(my youngest sister) is good in everything else. Only one thing I can beat her - English."</p>	<p>(Interview conducted in Malay)</p> <p>Father a captain in the army</p> <p>Speaks Malay at home</p> <p>Attributes good English to kindergarten years</p> <p>Family subscribes to Malay paper</p>	<p>Father a lorry driver</p> <p>A brilliant student, but rather average in English</p> <p>Plans to do medicine in India</p> <p><i>"English is my problem, most problem. I want to do (improve English), but I don't know how to go about it."</i></p> <p>Speaks Tamil at home</p>	<p>(Interview conducted in Malay)</p> <p>Father a supervisor in an investment company</p> <p>Older brothers and sisters can speak English, but only rarely speaks to them in English</p> <p>Family subscribes to Malay paper</p> <p>Wants to take up architecture, but perhaps in a local university</p>	<p>Father a small building contractor</p> <p>Plans to become a doctor</p> <p>Family subscribes to Malay papers</p>
<p>Speaks fluent but non-standard English; Feels spoken English is better than her written</p> <p>Can give prepared and spontaneous presentations that is quite easily understood by others</p> <p>Carries on social conversation with older sister</p>	<p>Speaks fluent and quite standard English, but did not speak much English during the interview</p> <p>Can give prepared presentations that is easily understood by others</p> <p>Can carry on social conversation, but has never done so in real life with anybody</p> <p>Does not think he can manage to take part in a debate</p>	<p>Can carry on social conversation</p> <p>Claimed not to be good at talking on the phone because <i>"my listening is not good."</i></p> <p>Speaks English at Math tuition</p> <p>Does not participate in group discussions but let the good ones speak <i>"if I do mistake, shame for me."</i></p>	<p>Can speak very poor and ungrammatical English</p>	<p>Can carry on simple social conversation</p>

Leads in group discussions and writes the group product almost solely. One of the few students who writes in English directly i.e. not using translation	Write essays - manages well can manage social and formal letters Written English better than spoken	Writing - poor	Written English is more difficult than spoken	Written English better than spoken because she has time to think about what to put down, whereas with speaking you have to respond on the spot Can write friendly and formal letters with guidance
Reading: Romantic fiction. "Some books I like, I read over and over until I know the words by heart." "When I read English story books, it's part of me. Sometimes I be the heroine; sometimes I recall what she said to the hero."	Reads books, newspapers and magazines, e.g. Asian Defence	Cannot understand English movies Cannot understand English newspapers well "but sometimes too many difficult words." Does not have too much time for reading because of other school work	Reading: Reads simple tales for children e.g. 'The boy who cried wolf.'	Reads simple children's books borrowed from the village library Also buys workbooks and revision courses and practice the exercises Tried reading an adult novel but it was too difficult and abandoned it halfway
Weakness - Essay writing - "When I write, I worry about whether the sentence is right or wrong."	Weakness: Grammar only; vocabulary is adequate	Weakness: Cannot tell Composition is difficult; form and function is easy	Problem: "Tak faham maksudnya" (can't follow what is going on)	Weakness: Lack of vocabulary Finds form and functions difficult.
	Understands the importance of English: "... belajar luar negeri kita ada kelebihan. Pejabat-pejabat swasta guna Bahasa Inggeris" (for further studies overseas and private business organisations use English).		Importance of English: "Kepentingannya macam emas ... kepentingan masa hadapan, untuk pekerjaan." "Memang rasa nak belajar, tapi rasa malaslah."	Realises English is important because reference books are in English

	Reports that friends did not like him using English; they would say <i>"Speak Malay lah. I don't understand."</i>			
<p><i>"I realise my English a little bit good from the others when I standard 6. ... The teacher ask me to make sentence of it from 'borrow' - so many student cannot make sentence. So, I stand up. I said, 'Teacher, may I borrow your pencil?' Teacher was surprised. ... Then teacher asked me to make sentence with 'lend'. I though 'lend' was 'tambah' (land). I asked her the meaning, and she said 'pinjamkan'. So, I said, 'Can you lend me your pencil?' From that time I realised I a little bit good in English."</i></p>				
	Likes discussion activities but does not like written work from textbooks.	Does not enjoy his English lessons. Discussions are a waste of time <i>"buang masa"</i> . But likes reading periods	Reports that the teacher is quite enthusiastic about the teaching Likes comprehension lessons	

Summary of student interviewees' background and their competencies

APPENDIX 8d: 4 Arts 1

8d. i. Details of lessons in the two weeks

Week 1

Syllabus area	Activity	Organisation	Skill/language
Lesson 1&2 Give talk on current affairs 'Health care'	1. Teacher's explanation and guidance - with outline of talk on blackboard, and organising students into groups	Class (25 min)	Listen to instruction/explanation
	2. Discussion and writing out a composition on 'Health Care'	Group (15 min)	Discussion skills (Note: students have tendency to discuss in Malay and translate text into English) Translation Find vocabulary in bilingual dictionary
	3. Presentation of prepared text (7 presenters)	Class (16 min)	Give formal prepared presentation
	4. Copy out text in individual exercise books	Individual	Copy out group product

Syllabus area	Activity	Organisation	Skill/language
Lesson 3 'Health care'	1. Teacher classifies health care under 'mental health', 'physical fitness', 'nutrition', etc.	Class (3 min)	
	2. Teacher writes down several sentences that students are to classify into the categories above	Class (5 min)	Classify statements into categories
	3. Students get into groups to do classification exercise	Group (9 min)	Discussion skills
	4. Students write down their answers on board - by groups	Class (10 min)	Provide answers to listening comprehension exercise (note: students got most answers incorrect)

Syllabus area	Activity	Organisation	Skill/language
Lesson 4 Punctuation	1. Teacher draws matrix on board and asks class to fill in all the spaces with punctuation marks	(2 min)	Identify punctuation marks
	2. Teacher writes down several unpunctuated sentences on the board, and students come up one by one to punctuate these sentences	Class (2 min)	Punctuate sentences.
	3. Name function of punctuation marks, and present functions to class	Group (32 min)	

Syllabus area	Activity	Organisation	Skill/language
Lesson 5 Vocabulary	1. Teacher explains topic of traditional medicine	Class (1 min)	Supply vocabulary related to traditional medicine, e.g. asthma, spice, turmeric, etc.
'Traditional medicine'	2. Four students stand up to read aloud passage on traditional medicine. Teacher explains as they read	Class (8 min)	
	3 Teacher puts up crossword puzzle on the blackboard and gives verbal instructions	Class (2 min)	
	4. Teacher reads out clues and students go up one by one to fill in the words in the puzzle (although students have difficulty over certain words, they managed the game satisfactorily with the teacher's assistance).	Class (17 min)	

Week 2

Syllabus area	Activity	Organisation	Skill/language
Lesson 6&7 Book report	1. Teacher explains from a written outline on how to write book reports	Class (5 min)	Understand instructions and explanation
	2. Students given a set of jumbled sentences describing the book 'The war of the worlds' . They are to arrange these sentences in sequence outlined on board, e.g. title, author, theme, setting, plot, how the story ends, and opinion (of the book).	Class	Sequence sentences
	3. Students get into groups to discuss the sequencing	Class (22 min)	
	4. Students give the right sequence to teacher	Class (8 min)	
	5. Students write out the sequenced report into their books	Individual (25 min)	Copy out text

Syllabus area	Activity	Organisation	Skill/Language
Lesson 8 Book report 'The three musketeers'	1. Teacher writes down fill-in-blank exercise and vocabulary on board	Class (5 min)	Select correct vocabulary for blank
	2. Students supply answers to the blanks	Group (5 min)	1. Sometimes the _____ of the story gives us a clue as to what the story is about. (title)

	(note: students got most of the answers wrong; most students show that they cannot handle the lesson)		2. _____ are people who appear in the story. (characters)
	3. Students discuss book report on 'The three musketeers' in groups	Class (22 min)	Write out a book report

Syllabus area	Activity	Organisation	Skill/Language
Lesson 10 Listening comprehension Newspaper reports: one about a monkey; one about a goat	1. Teacher reads out two passages to the class 2. Teacher reads out some statements which students have to classify statements as either belonging to passage A, or passage B or to both passages	Class (5 min)	Listen for specific details Retain ideas and information of material heard
	3. Students get into groups to do the exercise. Teacher reads out the passages again, and the statements 4. Students write down answers on the board	Group (9 min) Class (3 min)	
	5. Teacher discusses answers with students 6. Teacher introduces idiomatic expressions to students (students could not get the meaning)	Class (5 min) Class (3 min)	'When a dog bites a man it is not news. When a man bites a dog, that is news.' 'no news is good news'

8d. ii. Excerpts of classroom transcripts

An extract from a group discussion that uses Malay (Lesson 10)

	student talk	translation/explanation
Aida	Hey, <i>ini kan</i> , 'appear out of the blue', number one <i>tu kan</i> ?	it's number one, isn't it?
Mimi	Monkey <i>tu</i> ...	<i>tu</i> - that
Aida	<i>Nombor apa tu</i> ? 'A favourite with everyone' - <i>nombor berapa tu</i> ?	what number is that?

Lina	<i>Dua?</i> Five?	two?
Aida	'Latest recruit'? 'Latest recruit' <i>nombor dua kan?</i>	number two isn't it?
Lina	Mascot?	
Aida	'Mascot' number two.	

Another excerpt from a group discussion (Lesson 4)

	student talk	translation/explanation
Tina	Hey, bracket <i>nak macam mana, uh?</i>	what is a bracket?
Wee Kim	Ah, bracket to say the something	
Tina	Huh?	
Wee Kim	To say something to ...	
Tina	Bracket <i>apa benda? Cakaplah, kita nak ambil apa?</i>	what is a bracket? Which should we choose?
Wee Kim	<i>Ambil</i> punctuation	Let's take punctuation
Liza	<i>Mari kita ambil</i> line - underline	Let's take underline
Wee Kim	Ah, important word	
Tina	<i>Tulislah, tulis. Ambillah antara tiga atau empat</i>	Write, write. Let's take three or four (punctuation marks)
Wee Kim	Underline, <i>tu</i> , the important word	<i>tu</i> - that
Tina	<i>Untuk mengetahui ...</i>	To know
Wee Kim	To say, <i>apa</i> , important word, <i>memberitahu apa?</i>	to tell what?

Another excerpt from the same group is produced below. The group had settled down and interaction is less disjointed.

	student talk	translation/explanation
Liza	Capital?	
Wee Kim	Capital <i>dah ambil dah ... Buat</i> capital letter when we want to start sentence and for ...	We've done the capital letter

Liza	<i>Khas. Nama khas apa?</i>	What is a proper noun?
Tina	When we want to ... to ...	
Wee Kim	Start ...	
Tina	Start a sentence. When we want to start a sentence	
Liza	After full stop. And after full stop.	

8d.iii. Student Competencies

a. Student interviewees' own assessment of their competencies

Ziana

Ziana said that she could carry on a social conversation, although with limited spontaneity, and this includes talking on the phone. She professed to be able to read the newspaper, and is able to comprehend what she reads but having to refer to the dictionary occasionally. She can understand English movies. She is able to write social letters, but need help with formal letters. She has not had the experience of making a speech, but has told news/stories, prepared beforehand, in class. She has not taken part in a debate and doubts whether she would do it well. As for comprehending talks in English, she said that it would be difficult, and that she would have to listen very carefully.

Aida

Aida is capable of carrying on a social conversation, but admits feeling anxious when talking with people who are more fluent. She reads well, and can manage adult fiction, especially romantic fiction. Her competencies are similar to Ziana, but Ziana manages written work better, while Aida is more comfortable with speaking.

Mat

Mat has very little proficiency. He, however, can manage colloquial English from helping his brother deal with non-Malay customers when selling at night markets. However, this constitutes Krashen's (1980) idea of 'acquisition' in a natural environment and cannot be attributed to the influence of the school.

Fauzun

Fauzun has hardly any proficiency, from teacher's report and from the interview. To recall, he has not been known to hand in any written work.

8d. iv. Summary of students' background and their competencies

Ziana	Aida	Fauzun	Mat
(Interview conducted in both languages)	(Interview conducted in both languages)	(Interview conducted in Malay)	(Interview conducted in Malay)
Parents work in the kitchens of Malaysian Airlines (can speak a little) Does not speak English at home	Father an engineer, mother a pharmaceutical assistant Was born in England but came back when she was two years old.	Lives in a lonely village quite a distance from school. Finds it difficult to attend extra-mural activities because of transport problems	Comes from a problematical family as parents are always quarrelling and mother is an invalid
Buys Malay papers everyday, and English papers on Sundays and sometimes on weekdays Gets help in English from a boy next door	Family subscribes to both Malay and English papers Plans to be a businesswoman	Parents are old and father is retired, but used to be a rubber tapper Plans to be an itinerant trader	Does the housework and cooking when he gets home from school Has hardly any time to devote to school work
Can carry on social conversation in Malay and speak on the phone Can make prepared presentations	Can carry on a social conversation Speaks English on to Ziana at school Can manage prepared presentations	Cannot carry on a simple conversation Both spoken and written English difficult	Does not have any English proficiency. Cannot manage a simple conversation
Writing - average Not too good at writing formal letters	Can do formal letters Have no problems with writing, mainly with grammar exercises	Can hardly produce anything in English. Has never been able to do the homework set	Does not produce any written work in English
Does not understand the English papers much Can follow talks if listens attentively Reads a lot especially simple readers	Reads a lot and there are a lot of English books at home Reads the papers and understands quite well Also reads women's magazines	Cannot follow the lessons most of the time Cannot answer teacher's questions most of the time and gets laughed at Does not do any reading in English and hardly any reading in Malay too	Does not read anything in English
Weakness: Grammar, error identification Wants more practice in essay writing	Weakness: Grammar Studies grammar books for tests		
English is important because it is an international language; and important if one wants to go overseas	English is important for overseas studies	Vaguely realised English is important but not for what he wants to do	His problems are so overwhelming and the struggle to survive the day to-day takes all his energy
Likes English week and competitive activities e.g. games, quizzes, puzzles.	Likes grammar quizzes and vocabulary games Likes group discussions		Cannot say what activities he prefers

TOPIC	LISTENING & SPEAKING	READING	WRITING
Common Specifications	<p>1.1 Listen to and discriminate between: consonant clusters, diphthongs and homonyms.</p> <p>1.2 Listen to and understand, and ask for and give meanings of words, phrases and sentences.</p> <p>1.3 Speak with correct intonation, word stress and sentence rhythm.</p>	<p>2.1 Read using correct pronunciation, intonation, stress and rhythm.</p> <p>2.2 Read and understand meanings of words, phrases and sentences.</p> <p>2.3 Use a dictionary to locate meanings of words and learn how these words are used in different contexts.</p>	<p>3.1 Use correct punctuation: colon, hyphen, semi-colon, dash and brackets.</p> <p>3.2 Take dictation.</p>
<u>SEMESTER I (a)</u>			
Weeks 1 - 3			
Instructions on how to fix things such as a leaking tap.	<p>1.4 Listen to and understand, and ask for and give instructions on how to fix things.</p> <p>b. understanding sequence</p> <p>m. questioning</p>	<p>2.4 Read and understand instructions on how to fix things.</p> <p>k. relating content to own experiences</p>	<p>3.3 Write instructions on how to fix things.</p> <p>3.15 Write dialogues.</p> <p>b. recognizing and applying different forms and formats, correct usage rules such as agreement of verb and tenses, and point of view.</p>
Weeks 4 - 5			
Messages from the mass-media such as the radio and the television.	<p>1.5 Listen to and understand, and ask for and give and relay messages received through the mass-media.</p> <p>a. discerning main ideas</p> <p>l. using correct pronunciation</p>	<p>2.5 Read and understand messages through the mass-media.</p> <p>i. summarizing</p> <p>c. predicting</p>	<p>3.15 Write summaries</p> <p>#3.13 Expand notes on messages, article</p> <p>g. summary writing, paraphrasing, precise writing and outlining</p>
Weeks 6 - 8			
Descriptions of scenes such as tourist spots in the ASEAN region.	<p>1.11 Listen to and understand, ask for and give descriptions of scenes.</p> <p>c. noticing specific details</p> <p>e. comparing</p>	<p>2.10 Read and understand descriptions of scenes.</p> <p>a. comparing</p> <p>j. distinguishing fact and fiction</p>	<p>3.9 Write descriptions of scenes.</p> <p>3.6 Write informal letters.</p> <p>b. recognizing and applying different forms and formats</p> <p>c. using the dictionary, thesaurus and reference texts</p>

MORAL VALUEASPECTVOCABULARYTEACHING AIDS

politeness
consideration

4.1.9 e /ə/ emerald
4.1.10 u /ʌ/ umbrella
5.8 Present Perfect Tense
5.9 Past Perfect Tense
#5.6.0 Articles
Error Identification:
tenses - perfect
articles

6.7 Information in
informal letters in
the newspapers.
Forms and Functions:
expressing feelings

NAY p.50
Nagappan p.67
Sulymann p.33
FJL p.13
Rogers (a) p.38
Rogers (b) cl.1

sportsmanship
tolerance

4.1.4 x /ks/ flexible
4.1.5 x /z/ xylophone
5.1 Sentence patterns -
compound and complex
sentences
5.2 Adjective phrases
and clauses after nouns
Error Identification:
sentence construction -
clauses, phrases
pronouns

6.10 Descriptions of
events - SEA Games.
Forms and Functions:
expressing feelings

Nagappan p.77
EDJ p.74 Q 30
NAY p.57
Sulymann p.70
FJL p.49 p.152
p.235
Rogers (a) p.38

cleanliness
love the
environment

4.2.4 cl /kl/ cleave
4.2.5 cr /kr/ craft
4.4.2 Sentence stress
in questions
5.10 Passive - simple
and perfect tenses
Error Identification:
tenses - passive
redundancy/repetition

6.12 Description of
processes and
procedures - recycling
materials.
Forms and Functions:
influencing others'
actions

Nagappan p.147
LBL p.132
EDJ p.68 Q 18
EDJ p.57 Q 22
NAY p.70
Sulymann p.142
FJL p.192
Rogers (a) p.27

TEXT BOUND INTO THE SPINE

BEST COPY

AVAILABLE

Variable print quality

PIC

Weeks 9 - 11

Letters in newspapers

LISTENING & SPEAKING

- 1.10 Listen to and understand, ask for and give information contained in informal letters.
- a. discerning main ideas
 - c. supporting and clarifying

READING

- 2.9 Read and understand information contained in informal letters in the newspapers.
- d. determining relevance
 - e. using contextual clues

WRITING

- 3.6 Write informal letters for the reading column.
- h. processes in writing
 - f. using registers
 - g. using co

Week 12

Revision of topics covered.

Semester I (b)

Weeks 1 - 2

Descriptions of events, such as the SEA Games.

- 1.12 Listen to and understand, ask for and give descriptions of events.
- b. understanding sequence
 - n. paraphrasing

- 2.11 Read and understand descriptions of events.
- k. relating content to own experiences

- 3.10 Write descriptions of events.
- 3.15 Write summaries.
- a. improving spelling (rootwords, prefixes, syllabication)
 - b. recognizing and applying different forms and formats, correct usage rules such as agreement of verb and tense, and point of view (spectator/participant)

Weeks 3 - 5

Descriptions of processes and procedures, such as the recycling of materials.

- 1.15 Listen to and understand, ask for and give descriptions of processes and procedures.
- b. understanding sequence
 - m. questioning

- 2.13 Read and understand and follow sequence of events in descriptions of processes and procedures.
- m. interpreting tables, charts and graphs

- 3.11 Write and describe processes and procedures.
- 3.12 Expand notes on articles.
- e. developing coherence and cohesion

TOPIC

LISTENING & SPEAKING

READING

WRITING

Weeks 6 - 8

stories on
self-reliance,
diligence and
public-
spiritedness.

- 1.6 Listen to and understand and tell stories on moral values.
- c. noticing specific details
- d. inferring

- 2.6 Read and understand; locate main ideas and supporting details; follow sequence of events and ideas; predict outcomes; find proof to support statements; locate cause and effect relationships; and draw conclusions from stories on moral values.
- c. predicting
- f. inferring

- 3.4 Write stories on moral values.
- 3.14 Write dialogues for role-play.
- #3.6 Write informal letters.
- h. processes in writing

Week 9

First Semester Examination

Weeks 10 - 11

information in
charts, graphs
and manuals.

- 1.9 Listen to and understand, ask for and give information contained in charts, graphs and manuals.
- e. comparing
- o. supporting and clarifying

- 2.8 Read and understand information contained in charts, graphs and manuals.
- m. interpreting tables, charts and graphs.
- n. understanding and using study skills

- 3.8 Present information in graphic forms.
- #3.5 Write reports.
- d. understanding unity - topic sentence, relevance of details, singleness of purpose, maintenance of consistent point of view

Week 12

language ..
functions
expressing
displeasure and
regret, social
skills, such as
interrupting a
conversation
and joining in
and participating
in a
conversation.

- 1.16 Listen to and understand and express displeasure and regret.
- 1.17 Practise social skills such as interrupting a conversation, and joining in and participating in a conversation.
- 1. using correct pronunciation
- r. speaking

- 2.1 Read using correct pronunciation, intonation, stress and rhythm.
- 1. understanding different language registers

- 3.14 Writing dialogues for role-play.
- b. recognizing and applying different forms and formats, correct usage rules such as agreement of verb and tense, and point of view.

MORAL VALUEASPECTVOCABULARYTEACHING AIDS

diligence
self-reliance
public-
spiritedness

4.1.6 rr /r/ sorrow
5.4 Noun phrases and
clauses after verbs
5.3 Adverb phrases
and clauses after
verbs.
Error Identification:
noun phrases and
clauses
omission of words

6.3 Stories -
self-reliance, a
diligence, public
spiritedness.
Forms and Functions:
making responses

NAY p.87, p.186 p.23
HBL p.195
EDJ p.28-27.
EDJ p.31 Q9

Suljman p.12
p.44
p.191

FJI p.1, p.99
p.120

Rogers (a) p.18

accuracy

4.2.3 sl /sl/ sly
4.2.2 fl /fl/ stifle
4.4 Sentence stress and
intonation in statements
and questions.
5.6 Logical connectors
Error Identification:
logical connectors
omission of words

6.6 Information in
charts, graphs and
manuals.
Forms and Functions:
making responses

Nagappan p.226
NAY p.98

Suljman p.168

FJI p.221

Rogers (a) p.18

Rogers (b) Ch 6

courtesy
sincerity
sensitivity

4.6 Contractions
4.6.1 'd /aɪd/ I'd
4.6.2 'm /aɪm/ I'm
4.1.11 /əv/ phone
4.1.12 /3:/ herb
5.1.3 WH questions and
responses
5.1.4 Questions with
tags and responses
Error Identification:
question forms - word
order

6.13 Expressions of
regret /aɪd/ I'd
6.14 Social skills -
interrupting, joining
in and participating
in a conversation.
Forms and Functions:
meeting / leaving

NAY p.7

Suljman p.131
Rogers (a) p.18

MORAL VALUE

ASPECT

VOCABULARY

TEACHING AIDS

bravery

open-mindedness

4.2.1 bl /bl/ blunt
4.2.6 br /br/ brook
4.4.1 Sentence stress
in statements and
questions.
5.18 Prepositions of
time
5.19 Prepositions of
purpose
5.20 Prepositions of
association
5.21 Verb and
preposition combinations
Error Identification:
prepositions

6.5 Information in
newspaper reports
and book reports.
Forms and Functions:
revision
(Judging and
evaluating)

NAY p.263
NAY p.108
EDJ p.22 Q2
EDJ p.31 Q14
EDJ p.36 Q13
Sulymann p.94
FJJ p.124
Rogers (a) p.48
Rogers (b) Q.4

politeness

honesty

4.1.14 /wi/ wean
4.4 Sentence stress and
intonation
5.22 Adjective and
preposition combinations
5.23 Prepositions of
directions
5.5 Conjunctions
Error Identification:
conjunctions
misspelt words

6.8 Information in
formal letters
enquiry, complaint
Forms and Functions:
revision

NAY p.120
EDJ p.31 Q8
EDJ p.31 Q10
EDJ p.48 Q16,17
Sulymann p.81
FJJ p.112

rational

kindness

4.2.9 ai /a/ align
4.4 Sentence stress and
intonation
5.14 Gerunds as objects
of prepositions
5.13 Gerunds as
complements of verb
"to be"
5.15 Infinitives as
objects of verbs
5.16 Infinitives as
complements of verb
"to be"
Error Identification: 308
gerunds and participles
determiners

6.11 Opinions on
current issues
unemployment
Forms and Functions:
revision

Nagappan p.100
NAY p.161
Sulymann p.177
FJJ p.164

PIC

LISTENING & SPEAKINGREADINGWRITINGNESTER II (a)

Weeks 1 - 4

Information in reports, such as newspaper reports and book reports.

1.8 Listen to and understand, ask for and give information contained in reports.
a. discerning main ideas
p. summarizing
s. predicting

2.7 Read and understand, locate main ideas and supporting details; follow sequence of events and ideas; and find proof to support statements in reports.
n. understanding and using study skills
j. distinguishing fact and opinion

3.5 Write reports.
3.15 Write summaries.
h. processes in writing - planning, drafting, revising, editing.
e. developing coherence and cohesion

Weeks 5 - 6

Letters of enquiry and complaint.

1.10 Listen to and understand, ask for and give information contained in formal letters of enquiry and complaint.
m. questioning
o. supporting and clarifying

2.9 Read and understand information contained in formal letters.
k. relating content to own experiences
e. using contextual clues

3.7 Write formal letters of enquiry and complaint.
f. using registers.
h. processes in writing

Weeks 7 - 9

Opinions on current issues such as unemployment.

1.13 Listen to and understand, ask for and give opinions on current issues.
d. inferring
o. supporting and clarifying

2.12 Read and understand; follow sequence of ideas; and find proof to support statements in opinions on current issues.
c. predicting
g. differentiating fact and opinion

3.13 Present opinions on current issues.
3.15 Write summaries.
b. recognizing and applying different forms and formats, correct usage rules such as agreement of verb and tense, and point of view (spectator or participant role).

Peng. / Minggu	Tajuk	Objektif
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TOPIC

LISTENING & SPEAKING

READING

WRITING

SEMESTER II (b)

Weeks 1 - 4

Talks on current issues, such as consumerism and health care.

1.7 Listen to and understand, ask for and give information contained in talks on current issues.
a. discerning main ideas
e. comparing
i. differentiating fact and opinion

2.14 Read and understand, follow sequence of ideas and find proof to support statements in talks on current issues.
g. differentiating fact and opinion
i. summarizing

3.12 Make and expand notes of talks on current issues.
3.13 Present opinions on current issues.
3.15 Write summaries.
g. summary writing, paraphrasing, precis writing and outlining
c. using the dictionary, thesaurus and reference texts.

Weeks 5 - 6

Poems

1.14 Listen to and understand selected poems of writers from the ASEAN region.
n. paraphrasing

2.15 Read and enjoy poems of writers from the ASEAN region.
k. relating content to own experiences

3.16 Write poems..

Week 7

Revision of topics covered.

Weeks 8 - 9

Final Examination

READER'S

ARAB TALES

CAMPBELL'S KINGDOM 310

AN ANTHOLOGY OF POETRY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Aktiviti	Alatan Pandang Dengar	Penilaian / Catatan Am
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<u>MORAL VALUE</u>	<u>ASPECT</u>	<u>VOCABULARY</u>	<u>TEACHING AIDS</u>
cleanliness co-operation	4.7 Words borrowed from other languages 4.4 Sentence stress and intonation 5.24 Semi-colon 5.25 Underlining 5.26 Brackets 5.27 Hyphen 5.28 Symbols 5.29 Colon Error Identification: punctuation revision	6.4 Talks - consumerism and health care. Forms and Functions: judging	Nagappan p.204 NAY p.144 LEL p.12 EDJ p.56 Q19a EDJ p.57 Q21a Sulymun p.206 FJI p.206
respect self- confidence	4.4 Sentence stress and intonation 5.1 Sentence patterns - compound and complex sentences. Error Identification: revision	Forms and Functions: revision	poems Sulymun p.211 FJI p.85

Sh

1. Why do you think unemployment occurs?

(2)

- I think unemployment occurs because of some people don't take what ever job opportunities which come their way.
- In opinion our opinions that women company only employ in some experience people so the people that don't have any experience not available to get the job.
- In my view that unemployment occurs out of the town because some of the villagers do not have information about any jobs. If they do have they do not have any experience about the job.

2. Can unemployment be eradicated?

Yes, of course but I think it cannot all eradicated because if only one person has a job and another does not.

of the Open
Preserving opinions on current issues -

What do you think unemployment means?
We think it's about the kind of
work they want to do.
The thing does not have enough knowledge
about the work involved.

Foreign workers have filled
the jobs.
Can unemployment be eradicated?
Yes, but not completely.

How?
Firstly their way of thinking from being too
busy about the kind of jobs they want
to do.

Secondly
having courses where skills are taught
Thirdly
Fourthly

Change the way of thinking from being
too busy about the kind of jobs they
want to do.

and an experience

in education
having
taught

inherent program

Appendix 10a (i)

Neglected sports programmes

Sports is my favourite television programmes. But television programmes there is not enough sports programmes on television. Because sports programmes time compared to another compared to entertainment programmes like entertainment and adventure series and adventure series. I think adventure programme and entertainment programme do not give benefit because this programme is waste programme time. Some people say that the sports programmes is enough but that is not true. There are only 5 hour a weeks. I hope TV3 can add more time for sports programmes from 5 hours to 10 hours a week.

Kami

SMBB

Kumpulan

Ashor

Bhazman

Razman

Horizam

Dear Tok Mat,

Recently, I was watching television and I noticed that we have too much sports program and talk shows and entertainment and ~~from~~. So I feel that we viewers are not getting our fair share like many other viewers. I think that there are not enough documentary shows.

Documentary shows are programs on like, life, nature, science, history and anything that has to do with our human race, which bring more knowledge ~~from~~ the people especially students and also makes us more understanding about our purpose of life. Shows like entertainment shows, adventure series, comedy sitcoms should not be given more air time. It is because these shows are not knowledgeal shows so what's the purpose of watching these programs? I think these programmes should be seen given us of these ~~prog~~ kinds of programmes. Therefore, I think you the director should take some action. I tell that more documentary programmes ~~will~~ ~~be~~ ~~seen~~ on television.

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