

THE EVALUATION OF SUPPLEMENTARY BOOKS USED IN THE  
TEACHING AND LEARNING OF ENGLISH LITERATURE  
IN LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN JOHOR BAHRU

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JUDUL: THE EVALUATION OF SUPPLEMENTARY BOOKS USED IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF ENGLISH LITERATURE IN LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN JOHOR BAHRU

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Specially dedicated to my mother  
Thanks for your love and support

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## ABSTRACT

The study of literature component was integrated into the KBSM English Language syllabus and had been included in the PMR English Language Paper since year 2002. As a result, numerous literature supplementary books were produced by various publishers to fulfil the needs of the market. Therefore, it is hard to assure that all literature materials are good, or beneficial to students for the purpose of learning English literature and its content. Hence, this study is to find out what are the teachers' perspectives and students' perspectives based on the two literature supplementary books which are *Baby Steps In Understanding Literature Component* and *Exploring Literature in the Language Classroom* used as teaching and learning materials in schools. Besides that, this study seeks to find out whether or not these two supplementary books reflect the KBSM English Language syllabus. The data were obtained by distributing questionnaires to 10 English teachers and 150 students in 5 secondary schools around Johor Bahru. The findings indicate that these two supplementary books reflect the KBSM requirements by achieving most of the specifications of the syllabus, and the content serve for different groups of students' level of proficiency. In short, *Baby Steps* is suitable for students with low proficiency level with the captivating pictorial presentations whereas *Exploring Literature* is appropriate for students with high level of proficiency as it contains more challenging and interesting activities.

## ABSTRAK

Pengajian sastera yang disatukan ke dalam Huraian Sukatan Pelajaran KBSM Bahasa Inggeris dan telah dimasukkan ke dalam kertas Peperiksaan Menengah Rendah (PMR) Bahasa Inggeris sejak tahun 2002. Oleh yang demikian, pelbagai buku-buku tambahan sastera Bahasa Inggeris telah dihasilkan oleh pelbagai penerbit untuk menampung keinginan di pasaran. Jadi, ia memang susah untuk meyakinkan bahawa buku-buku tambahan adalah berkesan dan berguna kepada pengguna untuk membolehkan pelajar memahami tujuan mempelajari sastera Inggeris. Oleh itu, kajian ini bertujuan untuk meninjau pandangan di kalangan guru-guru dan pelajar-pelajar terhadap dua buah buku yang digunakan di sekolah iaitu *Baby Steps In Understanding Literature Component* dan *Exploring Literature in the Language Classroom*. Selain daripada itu, tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk melihat sama ada dua buah buku tambahan sastera ini selari dengan Huraian Sukatan Pelajaran KBSM. Data-data kajian ini diperolehi melalui pengedaran boring soal selidik kepada 10 orang guru Bahasa Inggeris dan 150 orang pelajar di 5 buah sekolah menengah sekitar Johor Bahru. Hasil kajian mendapati bahawa kedua-dua buku ini selari dengan permintaan KBSM dengan menepati ciri-ciri Huraian Sukatan Pelajaran KBSM. Selain daripada itu, kandungan bagi kedua-dua buku ini digunakan untuk kumpulan pelajar yang berlainan tahap penguasaan bahasa. Sebagai kesimpulan, *Baby Steps* sesuai untuk pelajar dengan tahap penguasaan bahasa yang rendah dengan persembahan gambar yang cantik, manakala *Exploring Literature* sesuai untuk pelajar dengan tahap penguasaan bahasa yang tinggi di mana ia mengandungi banyak aktiviti yang mencabar dan menarik.



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**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

KBSM	Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah
ELRP	English Language Reading Programme
CRP	Class Readers Programme
PMR	Peperiksaan Menengah Rendah
SPM	Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia

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**SECTION ONE**  
**INTRODUCTION**

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Introduction

Literature plays a significant role in students' life whether they are aware of it or not. Since childhood, a person often encounters stories that are related to literature. Depending on the nationalities, folklores such as *Pak Pandir* or *Cinderella* where the former is purely Malay in nature while the latter is purely Western in nature that always entertained the children. Most of the children are acquainted with the literature aspects in this local and foreign literature. This acquaintance, in one way or another influences these children either to imitate what is 'good' and 'virtue' or to hate 'bad' and 'vices'. It can be concluded that most literatures are equally effective in teaching students the value of righteousness, honesty and other virtues in comparison with expository texts which teach merely facts.

In this sense, the resurgence of literature in English has for the past two decades become a vital component in English Language teaching. Many linguists have voiced out the value of literary works as a focus for language teaching. This follows up with the compulsory introduction of literature materials to be used in Form one to Form five. Such move is considered proper and accurate because the ultimate aim of the Secondary School English Language programme is that students will be able to read, understand and enjoy literary and non-literary materials. The literature in English programme in the Integrated Curriculum for Secondary Schools is thus concerned with enabling students to appreciate both the linguistic and literary components of a carefully selected and to cultivate an awareness and sensitivity to universal human issues and values.

## **1.2 Background of Study**

Short (1988) stated that in order to master a certain language, a study of its literature is imperative. It goes without saying that literature represents the peak of a language usage since it is not restricted to factual data or confined to a certain domain of exposure. Literature will serve as an instrument which shift and magnify common language to beautify its description on something. A consistent habit of reading literature will improve mind sensitivity, aside from improving grammar and vocabulary application in writing and conversation. It also assists in personal advancement and growth (Carter & Long, 1991).

Meanwhile, the study of literature must come after the study of language itself because literature utilizes the 'decorated' form of language and is quite descriptive in nature. Therefore, students who lack of linguistic skills may find themselves not

enjoying reading literature when browsing through the texts because they have difficulties in understanding literary texts. However, point to be noted, the study of literature and the study of language can work hand in hand to complement each other. For example, a particular student who is interested in learning English and mastering the language's subtle details can attempt to study normal expository texts and literary texts at the same time. Nevertheless, guidance from qualified teacher is necessary. In this way, an interesting literature may fill the boredom caused by expository texts.

Despite this, last time English has been taught without stressing on literature. This kind of pessimistic method is soon abandoned when the introduction of literature in secondary schools a few years back mark the initial recognition of the proper place of literature and its importance in shaping not merely linguistic strength, but also behaviour, personality, and most importantly, in cultivating a habit of empathy (Soter, 1999).

The study of literature besides being the study of the plot, theme, characters, style and setting is also 'a study of language in use' (Widdowson, 1985). Since literature studies how writers use language to express their feelings, ideas and thoughts, it cannot be seen as an activity separate from language learning. Widdowson (1985) further stresses that literature can enable the language learners to master the vocabulary and grammar of the target language as well as the four language skills. He also claims that reading comprehension can be promoted and reading habits among students can be developed by studying literature. Thus, literature helps students to grow as individuals and also to realize their roles and responsibilities in society (Carter & Long, 1991)

Researchers have found that readers respond to literature in a variety of ways, i.e. by retelling, summarizing, analysing and generalizing (Carter and Long, 1987). Prior to this, students should equip themselves with the basic knowledge of literature

and they are encouraged to consider local viewpoints and attitudes in their reading of literary text. Literature is a resource for promoting language learning. The integration of language and literature in the classroom has mutual benefits and it helps students to increase their language awareness and proficiency in English. Language awareness can be raised as students are encouraged to draw on their knowledge of familiar grammatical, lexical or discourse categories.

The literature in English programme in the Malaysian Integrated Curriculum for Secondary Schools is thus concerned with developing in students a love for reading literary works and an understanding of human concerns and values. Hence the literature seeks to develop in students an appreciation and a deeper understanding of human concerns and relationships towards enhancing an understanding of themselves and their relationship with others. Besides that, literature is concerned with developing in students an awareness of the value and pleasure of reading literary works and an ability to express their response to these texts.

### **1.3 Statement Of Problem**

The literature component had been included in the Peperiksaan Menengah Rendah (PMR) English Language Paper since year 2002. As a result, the book publishers start to produce numerous of literature supplementary books in the market seeing as the introduction towards literature teaching in lower and upper secondary schools. Literature is a wide field which includes components such as poems, short stories, novels, etc. Obviously, there are wide varieties of available literature books in the market nowadays. To opt for an appropriate one which is suitable for the students is a difficult and tedious task because not all literature materials are good, or at least

beneficial to students. Literature that puts too much emphasis on romanticism is of course outside the circle of good literature. Thus, the teachers have to make a good choice when choosing the book so that the supplementary book can be used effectively in terms of the teaching and learning materials.

#### **1.4 Objective Of The Study**

The objective of the study is to evaluate the supplementary books used for teaching and learning English literature in lower secondary forms. It will look into three major areas that are to:

1. Identify the teachers' perspectives on the supplementary books used in the teaching of English Literature.
2. Identify the students' perspectives on the supplementary books used in the learning of English Literature.
3. Find out whether or not these two supplementary books reflect the KBSM English Language syllabus.

#### **1.5 Research Questions**

The research questions are as follows:

1. What are the teachers' points of views when evaluating the books based on the criteria such as aims and objectives, design and organisation, language content, skills, topic, methodology, students' roles, teacher's role and practical considerations?

2. What do the students think when completing the exercise in a chapter?
3. Do the materials used in the English literature supplementary books for Form two students reflect the KBSM English Language syllabus?

### **1.6 Purpose Of The Study**

This study is to find out whether teachers follow the criteria set by Cunningsworth in selecting supplementary books which are available in the market.

### **1.7 Importance Of The Study**

This study attempts to provide some information to the teachers to choose a good and useful English literature supplementary book which can meet the students' need and fulfil the KBSM syllabus.

### **1.8 Scope Of The Study**

The scope covers two English literature supplementary books used by Form two students around Johor Bahru. These two supplementary books are chosen according to

the selection made by the English teachers and the books are produced by different publishers.

## **1.9 Limitation Of The Study**

Though there are many English literature supplementary books in the market, the choice of making these two books the supplementary books for Form two students is based on the teachers' choice. Hence it cannot be regarded as the best or the most standard book use for teaching and learning literature because there are a lot of others English literature supplementary books found in the current market.

## **1.10 Definition Of Key terms**

### **1.10.1 Literature**

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (1995), literature is defined as writings that are valued as works of art, especially fiction, drama and poetry (in contrast with technical books and newspapers, magazines and et cetera). In general, it can be defined as one of the valuable authentic material or written text available for the language teaching and learning purposes.

### **1.10.2 English Literature Supplementary Books**

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (1995), supplementary defined as additional or extra. Therefore, supplementary books mean the additional literature books used in teaching and learning literature besides the text book. In short, it can be described as reference book.

### **1.10.3 Checklist**

According to Cunningsworth (1995), checklist contains a list of the most important criteria for evaluation and selection purposes. So, for practical purposes a manageable list of the most important criteria will be needed. Besides that, Mohamad Najib (1999) describes a checklist has a list of matters which can be marked by the researcher during or after the study.

### **1.10.4 ELRP**

ELRP stands for English Language Reading Programme. The ELRP aims to achieve the level of reading competence as required by the English Language syllabus. It is also introduce elements of literature into language teaching.

### **1.10.5 CRP**

CRP stands for Class Readers Programme. The CRP implemented fully in 1990 for Form One students, is targeted to encompass all the secondary school students until Form Five in 1994. Thus the CRP signalled the return of literature in English at the lower secondary level and it is an intensive reading programme.

### **1.11 Conclusion**

Beginning 2002, the literature component is incorporated in the PMR English Language Paper. As a result, a lot of publishers start to produce a variety of English literature supplementary books for the needs of the teachers and students. Therefore, this study will compare two of the English literature supplementary books and do the evaluation on its teaching and learning materials in order to find out what each book offers