AN INVESTIGATION ON APPROACHES USED TO TEACH LITERATURE IN THE ESL CLASSROOM: A CASE STUDY OF SEKOLAH MENENGAH KEBANGSAAN TAMAN DESA SKUDAI, JOHOR BAHRU

SHARIFAH NADIA BT SYED NASHARUDIN

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MALAYSIA
DEVELOPMENT OF THESIS / UNDERGRADUATE PROJECT PAPER AND COPYRIGHT

Author's full name: SHARIFAH NADIA BINTI SYED NASHRUDIN
Date of birth: 17th JUNE 1985
Title: AN INVESTIGATION ON APPROACHES USED TO TEACH LITERATURE IN THE ESL CLASSROOM: A CASE STUDY OF SEKOLAH MENENGAH KEBANGSAAN TAMAN DESA SKUDAI, JOHOR BAHRU

Academic Session: 2007/2008

I declare that this thesis is classified as:

☐ CONFIDENTIAL (Contains confidential information under the Official Secret Act 1972)*
☐ RESTRICTED (Contains restricted information as specified by the organisation where research was done)*
☐ OPEN ACCESS I agree that my thesis to be published as online open access (full text)

I acknowledged that Universiti Teknologi Malaysia reserves the right as follows:

1. The thesis is the property of Universiti Teknologi Malaysia.
2. The Library of Universiti Teknologi Malaysia has the right to make copies for the purpose of research only.
3. The Library has the right to make copies of the thesis for academic exchange.

Certified by:

Signature

850617-14-5850 (NEW IC NO. /PASSPORT NO.)

Date: 28 APRIL 2008

NOTES: * If the thesis is CONFIDENTIAL or RESTRICTED, please attach with the letter from the organisation with period and reasons for confidentiality or restriction.
"I hereby declare that I have read this thesis and in my opinion this thesis is sufficient in terms of scope and quality for the award of the degree of Science with Education (TESL)"

Signature: ............................................
Name of Supervisor: PN. MARZILAH BT A. AZIZ
Date: 28 APRIL 2008
AN INVESTIGATION ON APPROACHES USED TO TEACH LITERATURE IN THE ESL CLASSROOM: A CASE STUDY OF SEKOLAH MENENGAH KEBANGSAAN TAMAN DESA SKUDAI, JOHOR BAHRU

SHARIFAH NADIA BINTI SYED NASHARUDIN

A report submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Bachelor of Science with Education (TESL)

Faculty of Education
Universiti Teknologi Malaysia

APRIL 2008
I declare that this thesis entitled "An Investigation on Approaches Used To Teach Literature in the ESL Classroom: A Case Study of Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Taman Desa Skudai, Johor Bahru" is the result of my own research except as cited in the references. The thesis has not been accepted for any degree and is not concurrently submitted in candidature of any other degree.

Signature: ..........................................................
Name: SHARIFAH NADIA BINTI SYED NASARUDIN
Date: 28 APRIL 2008
“To the special people in my heart,

My beloved mom and dad
Syed Nasharudin Syed Idris & Rahimah Othman

My dearest siblings
Sharifah Salwa, Syed Mohd Aizat & Syed Muhammad Farez

and my precious Megat Khidir…

Thank you for your unconditional love”
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“The price of wisdom is above rubies”

First and foremost, I would like to thank Allah the Almighty for his blessing and inspiration for me to complete this report.

To Puan Marzilah A. Aziz; my supervisor and Puan Hanim Abd Samat; my former supervisor, I would like to thank them from the bottom of my heart for all the encouragement, critics, guidance and concerns I received along the preparation of this report. Not forgetting, all the TESL lecturers for their support.

Special thanks to my father; Syed Nasharudin Syed Idris, my mother; Rahimah Othman and my family for their support and spirit throughout my four years of study in UTM. I would also like to convey my best gratitude to my dearest Megat Khidir. Thank you for always being there for me all the way through good and bad times.

To my friends in TESL group especially the 8 Charmed Ones; Aida, Wani, Ana, Hanim, Fareza, Hawa and Afiqah, thank you for a beautiful friendship. We have gone through everything together and all the bittersweet memories will always remain in my heart.

Finally, I am especially indebted and grateful to all people who participate and contribute directly or indirectly in completing this report.

Thank you very much.
ABSTRACT

Literature of English has become part of the KBSM syllabus in Malaysian education system. The mode of delivering the content can be done in various ways. However, not all teachers are aware of the possible best ways of teaching literature. This study was carried out to investigate the approaches used to teach literature in the ESL classroom in Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Taman Desa Skudai, Johor Bahru. An investigation was conducted involving 60 form four students which were divided into two groups equally. They were taught literature using two different approaches and given sets of questionnaire to be answered at the end of the lesson. An interview was also done with the teacher to reinforce the findings. The overall findings of the study signify that most of the students prefer a language-based approach lesson more than the integrated approach. This study also reveals that there were weaknesses and strengths found in both approaches. In conclusion, it can be said that the language-based approach is the most preferred approach by the students in this group. However, it depends on how teacher manipulate the situation to suit students’ needs. Finally, it is suggested that teachers need to improve their method and approach of teaching so as to promote an effective teaching environment in literature class.
# TABLE OF CONTENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DECLARATION</td>
<td></td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEDICATION</td>
<td></td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</td>
<td></td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td></td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRAK</td>
<td></td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE OF CONTENT</td>
<td></td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td></td>
<td>xii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</td>
<td></td>
<td>xiii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF APPENDICES</td>
<td></td>
<td>xiv</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1  INTRODUCTION  1

1.1 Background of the study  1
1.2 Statement of Problem     5
1.3 Purpose of the study     6
1.4 Objectives of the study  6
1.5 Research Questions      7
1.6 Significance of the study 8
1.7 Scope of the study        9
1.8 Definitions of terms   9
2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

2.2 What is Literature?

2.3 Literature and Language Teaching

2.4 Literature in ESL classroom
  2.4.1 Role of literature in ESL
  2.4.2 Rationale for using literature in ESL Classroom
  2.4.3 Objective for teaching literature in ESL classroom

2.5 The teaching of literature in Malaysian classroom

2.6 Approaches to teaching literature
  2.6.1 The Cultural Model
  2.6.2 The Language Model
  2.6.3 The Personal Growth Model
  2.6.4 Integrated Approach to Teaching Literature

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Research Instrument
  3.2.1 Qualitative data
  3.2.2 Quantitative data

3.3 Respondents of the study

3.4 Research Procedure
  3.4.1 Piloting and improvement of instruments
  3.4.2 Actual research

3.5 Data Analysis
4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS 42

4.1 Introduction 42

4.2 Data Analysis
   4.2.1 Divisions of respondents 43
   4.2.2 General background 45
   4.2.3 Students’ reaction in relation to the approaches used
      4.2.3.1 Integrated approach 49
      4.2.3.2 Language-based approach 52
   4.2.4 Strengths and weaknesses 57

4.3 Interview 60

4.4 Discussions 64

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 66

5.1 Introduction 66

5.2 Conclusion 66

5.3 Limitations 68

5.4 Pedagogical implications of research 68

5.5 Recommendations
   5.5.1 Recommendations based on findings 69
   5.5.2 Recommendations for future research 70

REFERENCES 71

Appendices A-J 75-89
## LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE NO.</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Curriculum specifications for literature in KBSM English program</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Likert Scale used in the questionnaire</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Distribution of activity in the lesson using the Integrated Approach</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Distribution of activity in the lesson using Language-Based approach</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Division of respondents according to proficiency level in group A</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Division of respondents according to proficiency level in group B</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Percentage of students’ response in group A on general background</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Percentage of students’ response in group B on general background</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Students’ feedback to Integrated approach: level of interest on the lesson</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>Students’ feedback to Integrated Approach: level of comprehension</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>Students’ feedback to Integrated Approach: perception on teacher’s teaching technique</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>Students’ feedback to Integrated Approach: perception towards literature class</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>Students’ feedback to Language-Based Approach: level of interest on the lesson</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>Students’ feedback to Language-Based Approach: level of comprehension</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>Students’ feedback to Language-Based Approach: perception on teacher’s teaching technique</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>Students’ feedback to Language-Based Approach: perception towards literature class</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>Percentage of strengths and weaknesses of Integrated and Language-Based Approach</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>Strengths and weaknesses of Integrated and Language-Based Approach</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>Strengths and weaknesses of the Language-Based and Personal Growth Approach</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIGURE NO.</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Correlation of language-based tasks</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Literature as input in the language classroom</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Theoretical framework of research</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Divisions of respondents in group A &amp; group B</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Comparison on students’ background between group A and group B</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Comparison of students’ reaction between Integrated Approach and Language-Based Approach</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Strengths and weaknesses of Integrated and Language-Based Approach</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CDC</td>
<td>Curriculum Development Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>English as a Second Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KBSM</td>
<td>Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MELTA</td>
<td>Malaysian English Language Teaching Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TESL</td>
<td>Teaching English as a Second Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX</td>
<td>TITLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Interview Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Questionnaires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Lesson Plan (Integrated approach)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Lesson Plan (Language-Based approach)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Handout 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Handout 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Handout 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Work Schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Letter of approval from KPM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>Letter of approval from JPNJ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.1 Background of the Study

In today’s educational world, the development of curriculum has made it possible for us to teach literature in the teaching and learning of languages. At secondary level, literature in English has become one of the compulsory components in Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah (KBSM). It has been included in the English language syllabus as part of the content that should be learned by students in form one to form five since the year 2001. In the English language curriculum specifications, the literature component is specifically put under the ‘language for aesthetic use’ learning outcome. The Ministry of Education has explains the reason of putting the literature component in the syllabus specification as follows:

“Language for aesthetic purposes enables learners to enjoy literary texts at a level suited to their language proficiency and develops in them the ability to express themselves creatively”.

(KBSM English language Curriculum Specifications, 2003)
Hence, it is clear that placing literature component in the syllabus gives the chance to students to improve their language proficiency as well as develop their creative thinking in expressing thoughts and opinions.

Reported recently, it is believed that it makes sense to expose students to a wide range of themes, as the survey suggests. Such an exposure can help to inculcate a love of reading in our students, and encourage them to enjoy literature the way it should be enjoyed. (StarEducation, 20th May 2007). This has proven that literature has become important in the teaching and learning process.

Talking about literature, it can be said that literature works are not a new issue to be put into polemic. Long ago, Kesusasteraan Melayu was also learned by people regardless of the way they learn it; either formal or non-formal. In today’s world, literature is learned in a more formal way and it is also included in the English language syllabus. Students have to learn literature component in the ESL classrooms at school. It is taught formally as part of the teaching and learning content.

Literature components in English have been introduced to Malaysian curriculum since the year 2001. Since then, a lot of poems and short stories have become the item of learning literature especially in secondary schools. Stories such as ‘Looking for the Rain God’ by Bessie Head, ‘The Pearl’ by John Steinback and Shakespeare’s work such as the poem ‘Sonnet 18’ have become well-known to students. The following table shows poems and short stories learned by secondary schools students in Malaysia.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Genre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| I    | Life’s Brief Candle  
The Dead Crow  
The Lake Isle of Innisfree  
The Pencil  
How Dalat Got Its Name  
Of Bunga Telur and Bally Shoes | William Shakespeare  
A. Samad Said  
W. B. Yeats.  
Ali Majod  
Heidi Munan  
Che Husna Azhari | Poems  
Short stories |
| II   | Robinson Crusoe or  
Potato People or  
Phantom of The Opera | Danie Defoe  
Angela Wright  
Gaston Leroux | Novels |
| III  | The Prisoner of Zenda or  
Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde | Antony Hope  
R.L.Stevenson | Novels |
| IV   | If  
Sonnet 18  
Si Tenggang’s Homecoming  
Monsoon History  
The Road Not Taken  
There’s been a death in the opposite house  
The Necklace  
The Lotus Eater  
The Drover’s Wife  
The Sound Machine  
Looking for a Rain God | Rudyard Kipling  
William Shakespeare  
Muhd. Hj.Salleh  
Shirley Lim  
Robert Frost  
Emily Dickinson  
Guy de Maupassant  
Somerset Maugham  
Henry Lawson  
Roald Dahl  
Bessie Head | Poems  
Short stories |
| V    | Jungle of Hope or  
The Return or  
The Pearl | Keris Mas  
K.S. Maniam  
John Steinback | Novels |
However, written in Malaysian English Language Teacher Association (MELTA) forum on the website; www.melta.org.com, some teachers feel that teaching literature is a difficult task to accomplish. This is probably due to lack of knowledge in teaching literature. They also regard literature as inappropriate in language classroom because they do not think learning literature helps in improving students’ proficiency of English. For them, literature should be taught only to those who are good in English. Savvidou (2001) believes these views reflect the historic separation between the study of language and the study of literature, which has led to the limited role of literature in the language classroom. This could be one of the reasons why literature component in the ESL classroom has always been neglected and put aside.

In order to teach literature to students, there are several ways to deliver the content of literature and to ensure the students understand what literature is all about. Since literature is quite new to Malaysian educational system, not much techniques and approaches can be applied by teachers in classrooms to teach literature. From my opinion, this is because teachers lack of exposure to literature teaching techniques. As stated in the Malaysian English Language Teaching Association (MELTA) discussion on the web, www.melta.org.com (2007), teachers are known to have applied their fundamental knowledge of teaching and sometimes improvise them in order to teach literature in ESL classroom. However, they only use the explanation and answering comprehension questions techniques which are rather boring for students. Similarly, some other teachers only manage to teach their students by using the traditional method, by giving focus only on the literary texts for pronunciation and vocabulary when teaching literature.

The questions that arise here are how far does the approach used by the teacher help students in understanding literature and what is the best approach to be used to teach literature in ESL classrooms?
1.2 Statement of Problem

The literature component is now part of the KBSM English language syllabus. However, experience and observation show that students do not fully understand what they have learned and they do not know how to appreciate literature accordingly. Most of the students do not know how to appreciate the culture in the poem or short story and interpret the social, political, literary and historical perspective of a specific text. They only see literature as an ordinary reading text and do not really discover the underlying principle of learning literature.

The teachers’ teaching might be one of the reasons why students do not have any interest in learning literature. Teachers only focus on the language part of the literature i.e. grammar, vocabulary and skills while neglecting the other aspect of it which is the appreciation of the literature works. Teachers should on the other hand treat literature differently. With the introduction of literature component in the English language syllabus, the literature component has created a new dimension for teachers to come up with new teaching styles. For example, using literature texts, teachers can involve students with lots of interesting and enjoyable activities such as role plays, dramas, quizzes and choral speaking. Moreover, since students nowadays have been exposed widely to science and computer technology, teachers can use the advantages in creating creative activities that link to students’ interest.

Other than that, not all teachers are aware of the importance of literature in the teaching and learning process. Many of them teach literature for the purpose of examination, not understanding or appreciating. Their main concern is only to make sure the students know how to answer the exam questions. This is for the reason that Malaysian education system is more exam-oriented and everyone’s concern is to pass the exam and move on to the next level. This is so misleading because those teachers tend to speed their lessons causing them to become tedious, stereotype and confusing for the students.
Moreover, some teachers also are having problems with the approach to teach literature in ESL classrooms. They do not know what is the best approach to teach literature in order for students to gain both language and appreciation of the literature itself. A local newspaper once claimed that the newly graduated English teachers are using the national language (Malay) to teach English literature by translating or giving elaboration of the content of the text in the syllabus. (Utusan Malaysia, 2nd of July, 2001). Therefore, it seems that some of the English teachers lack ways to teach literature with the aim of making the students understand the lesson. By translating or explaining an English content using Malay language does not help the process of improving or developing English among students.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to investigate and examine the approaches used by teacher to teach literature in ESL classroom. It was not only conducted to find how the students react to the approaches used, but also to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each approach. Furthermore, this study was carried out to find out what is the best way to teach literature so that it can enhance the students’ learning process as well as to prepare the teachers in future teaching.

1.4 Objectives of the study

This study aims to investigate and examine the approaches used by teacher to teach literature in ESL classroom. It looked into two objectives as follows:

1.4.1 To investigate students’ reaction to the different approaches used to teach literature in the ESL classroom.
1.4.2 To identify the strengths and weaknesses of the approaches used by the teacher to teach literature in ESL classroom.

1.5 Research Questions

This study was conducted to investigate and examine students’ reaction on the approaches used to teach literature in ESL classrooms. It was attempted to seek answers to two research questions which are:

1.5.1 What are the students’ reactions to the different approaches used to teach literature in the ESL classroom?

1.5.2 What are the strengths and weaknesses of the approaches used by the teacher to teach literature in ESL classroom?

1.6 Significance of the study

Over the years, the development of curriculum has brought about a new dimension of education. With the change of the role of literature in language learning to a higher level, every party plays an important role to achieve the goals. In relation to this, the findings of this study benefits professionals who are in the education field especially to those who are seeking solution of the problems faced by the English teachers to teach literature in ESL classrooms. At the same time, curriculum designers can use the result of this study to improve the syllabus as well as prepare relevant reference for teachers to teach literature for future use.
The strengths and weaknesses of the approaches discussed can also be used by English teachers to help them to teach literature in a more effective manner. This can result in students gaining maximum benefit from the teaching and learning process.

Besides, the findings of this study also benefit the trainee teachers, especially the Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) undergraduates. They can use the knowledge gained from this study to prepare themselves for teaching in the real world later.

Furthermore, the result of the study also helps the Faculty of Education in its attempt to modify the course specifications. This effort will help to produce teachers who are more aware of the strengths and weaknesses of approaches used to teach literature in the future.

1.7 Scope of the study

This study was on the issue of approaches to teach literature in ESL classrooms which involved the participation of 60 form 4 students with different level of proficiency from SMK Taman Desa Skudai, Johor Bahru. The data was collected and analyzed based on the results from an experimental research, interview as well as questionnaires which were distributed to the respondents concerned.
1.8 Definition of Terms

1.8.1 Literature

Literature, in general can be defined as one of the valuable authentic material or the oldest written text available for the language teaching and learning purposes. This is based on Boomer (1985:169) which defines literature as “any text, verbal or visual that offers the possibility for aesthetic reading or viewing and listening”.

1.8.2 English as a Second Language (ESL)

One type of English used by speakers for whom English is not their mother-tongue. In this situation, English is used regularly and still considered as important.

1.8.3 Literature in ESL

“In the context of ESL, it is more appropriate to exploit literature as a resource rather than as an object of study. Apart from personal development and growth and other literary aims, the use of literature in ESL instruction is to foster a greater interest and involvement and also a more meaningful outcome in language learning activities and exercises” (Rosli Talif, 1995:8).
1.8.4 Approaches

Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (2001) defines approach as “a way of dealing with somebody or something/ a way of doing or thinking about something such as problem or task”. Approach can also be defined as method of doing or solving something. In the context of this study, approach is specifically defined as the manner or how teacher deliver the content of literature in ESL classroom.