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A STUDY ON STUDENTS’ READING PREFERENCE BETWEEN SCREEN TEXT AND PRINTED TEXT AMONG FOURTH YEAR UNDERGRADUATES TESL IN UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MALAYSIA

SYAZWANI BINTI SIDEK

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Bachelor of Science with Education (TESL)

Faculty of Education
Universiti Teknologi Malaysia

MAY 2011
I declare that this thesis entitled “A STUDY ON STUDENTS’ READING PREFERENCE BETWEEN SCREEN TEXT AND PRINTED TEXT AMONG FOURTH YEAR UNDERGRADUATES TESL IN UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MALAYSIA” 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.

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Name      : SYAZWANI BINTI SIDEK
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I dedicate this thesis to my beloved parents..

Ayah, Sidek bin Ali
Mak, Timah binti Ali
My beloved brother..
Mohd. Fakaruddin bin Sidek
Not forgetting..
To all my family members
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ABSTRACT

Choosing the best reading materials for the students has become an issue in educational field. As the prediction in the future, the text could be mainly read through the digital or electronic devices. So, this issue should make the teachers be aware of the reading preferences among their students. Thus, teacher needs to be able to understand the differences of students’ reading preferences in order to develop more effective and meaningful teaching and learning materials for the lesson. Therefore, this study was set up to investigate students’ reading preference between screen text and printed text among fourth year undergraduate TESL students in UTM. Data for this study was gathered using a survey on 27 fourth year TESL students in UTM and 10 respondents from the group were randomly selected to be interviewed. The result of this study has revealed that most students preferred to read on printed text rather than reading on the screen. The students prefer reading on printed text because it is easier for making notes, highlight and underlines the important ideas. Apart from that, they also can easily skim the text as a whole. The researcher also had identified some common problems that the students encountered while reading on screen. Majority of the students stated that they got headaches, straining on the eyes and dizziness. The findings and conclusions from this study may serve for implication and suggestion for the teachers to choose the best reading materials that suit for students’ reading preferences. It is also help the teachers to make the decision whether or not to integrate the technology and multimedia tools in teaching and learning process.
ABSTRAK

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

UTM - Universiti Teknologi Malaysia
TESL - Teaching English as the Secondary Language
CALL - Computer Assisted Learning
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses on the background of the study, statement of the problem and the purpose of the study. Besides that, this chapter will also present the objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, scope of the study and terms of definition.

1.1 Background of the Study

Written material is one of the most fundamentals of teaching while books have been the essential tool used in teaching and learning process in university and even also in educational field generally. Written text or book is a simple material for students to
gain knowledge whereas for teachers or lecturers, it is used as a means to pass and share their knowledge to the students.

With the development of new technologies, the computer; particularly e-mail and the Internet, could now be used to facilitate the distribution of written materials. Instead of using books, students and lecturers nowadays have the choice to use electronic documents as the resources for the academic purposes. The use of electronics has proven to be much easier and convenient for many purposes. Kress (2003) proposes that with the emergence of multimedia technology, it creates new dimensions between the reader and the text. He believes that the screen could be used as visual medium where the text could be accompanied by interesting images and graphics on the screen. It could be seen that texts is no longer the main tool in imparting information because the text comes after the image of the screen. The full version of text which is the printed text or book seems no longer become the primary source for the references in the academic field.

Besides that, the introduction of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) also exposes the students to the use of technology in language education. CALL provides an interactive way of learning using multimedia technology, thus creating a new dimension of reading and learning where students could read off the computer screen rather than in printed module.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

With Wi-Fi and broadband easily available, it is now very convenient for all people to get connected to the Internet anywhere as in present time, wireless technology
is ubiquitous. Thus, it promotes and encourages the use of Internet and the term ‘online’ becomes more popular. The rapid transition of the traditional text-based reading to screen text reading seems bring a lot of changes in teaching and learning process. Hence, the tendency of students to read from the screen becomes more frequent.

Students in tertiary level (university or college) particularly UTM students are extensively exposed to online documents. For example, many of the course outlines and the course notes prepared by the lectures need to be uploaded to e-learning. The printed document is no longer widely used as has been done the past few years ago. However, even though there is rapid emergence of the online documents or electronic documents, the students need wisely consider and choose their reference as some of the information provided might be misleading or invalid and could affect their understanding on the subject matter.

Different student has different preference on the type of text. There are some students who can directly read the text online or from the screen without the need to print out the text on the paper. Besides, the reasons for choosing the types of reading medium (online or printed on paper) may vary among the students. Nonetheless, reading online text and printed text give both advantages and disadvantages depending on the individual’s perspective.

Due to this matter, there may be a little conflict in the preference between reading on-screen text and printed text among the students. Teachers or educators might face difficulty to choose the best reading materials between the two types to be integrated or implemented in the classroom. Thus, the main purpose of this study is to find out whether the students prefer online text or printed text as their main reading material. Besides that, this study is also set up to identify the reasons and explanations for their preferred type of text. Lastly, it is also conducted to discover the common
problems that may come across when reading online text and printed text and some ways to overcome the problem.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

Due to the emerging of the screen text or electronic document and the wide use of the Internet access service available through wireless, Wi-Fi and broadband, lecturers nowadays no longer provide printed notes to the students. Many of the lecturers prefer to give away the learning materials by uploading all exercises and detailed instructions for the assignments through the e-learning, e-mail or online forum site. Therefore, the students will have to download all the reading materials by themselves. The students then will choose whether to directly read them on the screen or whether to print out the materials. Besides that, students will have to search for a lot of reading materials as the resources for the assignments given. Students may go to the library to find the books or simply search for the materials via the Internet.

From this study, various factors and reasons that influence the students’ choice on their preferred type of text can be identified. Thus, from the identified factors and reasons, several ways and strategies in reading can be introduced. On the other hand, problems that might occur from online and printed also can be recognized. Consequently, better understanding on both types of texts can be achieved and weaknesses can be improved.
1.4 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:
1. To investigate students’ reading preference between screen and printed text.
2. To find out students’ reasons on the particular preferred type of text.
3. To identify the common problems (if there are any) that students’ encounter when reading screen and printed text.

1.5 Research Questions

The research questions for this study are:
1. What is the students’ reading preference between screen and printed text?
2. What are students’ reasons on the particular preferred type of text medium?
3. What are the common problems (if there are any) that students’ encounter when reading screen and printed text?