



**Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human  
Development**

**THE USE OF LITERATURE TO PROMOTE LANGUAGE, CULTURE AND  
PERSONAL GROWTH DEVELOPMENT: A SURVEY ON TESL AND ESL  
UNDERGRADUATES IN UNIMAS**

**KUEH YIEN EE  
(12162)**

**Bachelor of Education with Honours  
(Teaching English as a Second Language)  
Universiti Malaysia Sarawak**

**April 2008**

Universiti Malaysia Sarawak  
Kota Samarahan

FSKPM

**BORANG PENYERAHAN TESIS**

Judul: THE USE OF LITERATURE TO PROMOTE LANGUAGE, CULTURE AND PERSONAL  
GROWTH DEVELOPMENT: A SURVEY ON TESL AND ESL UNDERGRADUATES IN  
UNIMAS

**SESI PENGAJIAN: 2004 – 2008**

Saya **KUEH YIEN EE**  
**(HURUF BESAR)**

mengakui membenarkan laporan projek ini disimpan di Pusat Khidmat Maklumat Akademik, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak dengan syarat-syarat seperti berikut:

1. Hakmilik kertas projek adalah di bawah nama penulis melainkan penulisan sebagai projek bersama dan dibiayai oleh UNIMAS, hakmiliknya adalah kepunyaan UNIMAS.
2. Naskhah salinan di dalam bentuk kertas atau mikro hanya boleh dibuat dengan kebenaran bertulis daripada penulis.
3. Pusat Khidmat Maklumat Akademik, UNIMAS dibenarkan membuat salinan untuk pengajian mereka.
4. Kertas projek hanya boleh diterbitkan dengan kebenaran penulis. Bayaran royalti adalah mengikut kadar yang dipersetujui kelak.
5. \* Saya membenarkan/tidak membenarkan Perpustakaan membuat salinan kertas projek ini sebagai bahan pertukaran di antara institusi pengajian tinggi.
6. \*\* Sila tandakan (√)

SULIT (Mengandungi maklumat yang berdarjah keselamatan atau kepentingan Malaysia seperti yang termaktub di dalam AKTA RAHSIA RASMI 1972).

TERHAD (Mengandungi maklumat TERHAD yang telah ditentukan oleh organisasi/ badan di mana penyelidikan dijalankan).

TIDAK TERHAD

Disahkan oleh

\_\_\_\_\_  
(TANDATANGAN PENULIS)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(TANDATANGAN PENYELIA)

Alamat tetap:  
9D, LORONG 2, JALAN MATU,  
96000 SIBU,  
SARAWAK.

PN ROSNAH MUSTAFA  
(Nama Penyelia)

Tarikh: \_\_\_\_\_

Tarikh: \_\_\_\_\_

CATATAN \* Potong yang tidak berkenaan.  
\*\* Jika Kertas Projek ini SULIT atau TERHAD, sila lampirkan surat daripada pihak berkuasa/ organisasi berkenaan dengan menyertakan sekali tempoh kertas projek. Ini perlu dikelaskan sebagai SULIT atau TERHAD.



**THE USE OF LITERATURE TO PROMOTE LANGUAGE, CULTURE AND  
PERSONAL GROWTH DEVELOPMENT: A SURVEY ON TESL AND ESL  
UNDERGRADUATES IN UNIMAS**

**KUEH YIEN EE**

This project is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a  
Bachelor of Education with Honours  
(Teaching English as a Second Language)

Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development  
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK  
2008

The project entitled **The Use of Literature to Promote Language, Culture and Personal Growth Development: A Survey on TESL and ESL undergraduates in UNIMAS** was prepared by Kueh Yien Ee and submitted to the Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Bachelor of Education with Honours (Teaching English as a Second Language).

Received for examination by:

-----  
**(Madam Rosnah Mustafa)**

Date:

-----

Grade
-------

## **ABSTRACT**

### **THE USE OF LITERATURE TO PROMOTE LANGUAGE, CULTURE AND PERSONAL GROWTH DEVELOPMENT: A SURVEY ON TESL AND ESL UNDERGRADUATES IN UNIMAS**

**Kueh Yien Ee**

This study aimed to investigate TESL and ESL undergraduates' personal views towards literature and the benefits of studying literature subjects in UNIMAS. These benefits were based on Carter and Long's model (1991), namely language, cultural and personal growth development. 150 full-time TESL and ESL undergraduates who had taken literature courses for at least two years in their educational programmes were chosen as the participants for this study. Data were collected through 5-point Likert scale questionnaire and semi-structured interview. After the exposure to literature in UNIMAS, the participants developed a gradual liking towards literature as visual tools such as movies and drama were used to help them in comprehending the literary texts. In terms of language development, the participants' vocabulary repertoire was enriched and they were trained to make prediction and interpretation based on contextual clues. Culturally, the TESL and ESL undergraduates were enriched with cultural knowledge from local and foreign countries which led to an appreciation and tolerance with the cultural differences between people. Furthermore, the participants were personally engaged with the literary texts as they were able to relate the literary texts with their personal experiences and developed greater sensitivity towards other people's feelings especially during interaction.

## **ABSTRAK**

### **PENGGUNAAN SASTERA UNTUK MEMPROMOSIKAN PERKEMBANGAN BAHASA, BUDAYA DAN PERKEMBANGAN KENDIRI: SATU SURVEI ATAS MAHASISWA TESL DAN ESL DI UNIMAS**

***Kueh Yien Ee***

*Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengenalpasti perspesi mahasiswa TESL and ESL terhadap kesusasteraan dalam Bahasa Inggeris dan kebaikan mempelajarinya. Berdasarkan modul Carter and Long (1991), kebaikan ini termasuk kebaikan dari segi bahasa, budaya dan perkembangan diri. Seramai 150 orang mahasiswa TESL dan ESL sepenuh masa yang telah mengambil subjek sastera sekurang-kurangnya dua tahun dalam program pendidikan Bahasa Inggeris diambil sebagai responden untuk kajian ini. Data dikumpul melalui borang soal selidik “5-point Likert scale” dan semi-struktur sesi temuduga. Selepas responden mempelajari kesusasteraan dalam Bahasa Inggeris di UNIMAS, responden mula menyukainya kerana alat visual seperti filem dan drama digunakan untuk membantu responden memahami teks kesusasteraan. Dari segi pembangunan bahasa, tatabahasa responden dapat diperkayakan dan responden dilatih membuat ramalan berdasarkan konteks. Dari segi budaya, pengetahuan kebudayaan mahasiswa TESL dan ESL dapat diperluaskan di mana respondens menghargai perbezaan budaya diantara pelbagai bangsa. Di samping itu, responden dapat mengkaitkan teks kesusasteraan dengan pengalaman peribadi dan responden lebih peka terhadap perasaan orang lain terutamanya semasa interaksi berlaku.*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to devote my sincere thanks to God for giving me the strength, passion and determination throughout the process of completing the project.

My sincere thanks and gratitude to my supervisor, **Pn. Rosnah Mustafa** for her most careful guidance, great patience and valuable advice throughout the production and completion of this project.

Last but not least, I would also like to thank my parents, siblings and friends for constantly giving me moral support and motivation throughout the whole process of completing this project.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	iii
<b>ABSTRAK</b>	iv
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	v
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	vi
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	x
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</b>	xi
<b>CHAPTER</b>	
<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.0 Chapter Overview	1
1.1 Background of the research problem	2
1.2 Statement of the problem	4
1.3 Aim of the study	5
1.4 Research questions	5
1.5 Significance of study	6
1.6 Operational definition of terms	6
1.6.1 Literature	6
1.6.2 UNIMAS TESL and ESL undergraduates programmes	7
1.6.3 View	8
1.6.4 Language development	9
1.6.5 Cultural enrichment	9
1.6.6 Personal growth development	9
1.7 Scope of study	10
1.8 Chapter review	10
<b>2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE</b>	<b>12</b>
2.0 Chapter overview	12
2.1 The English language in Malaysia: A Brief Background	12

2.2 Literature in foreign or second language learning: a global overview	14
2.3 Literature in Malaysia: a brief background	16
2.4 Perception and attitude towards literature	17
2.4.1 Teachers' perception and attitude towards literature	18
2.4.2 Students' perception and attitude towards literature	19
2.5 Benefits of using literature in foreign or second language classrooms	20
2.6 Carter and Long model (1991)	21
2.6.1 Language model	21
2.6.2 Culture model	23
2.6.3 Personal growth model	24
2.7 Chapter summary	26
<b>3 METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>28</b>
3.0 Chapter overview	28
3.1 Research design	28
3.2 Participants	29
3.3 Research instruments	30
3.3.1 Questionnaire	32
3.3.2 Interview	35
3.4 Pilot testing of instruments	38
3.5 Data collection procedures	39
3.6 Data analysis	41
3.6.1 Questionnaire	41
3.6.2 Interview	44
3.7 Limitations of study	46
3.8 Chapter review	47

4	<b>RESULTS AND DISCUSSION</b>	48
	4.0 Chapter overview	48
	4.1 Results	50
	4.1.1 TESL undergraduates' personal views towards literature before and after taking literature subjects in UNIMAS	50
	4.1.2 The benefits of literature in terms of language development	57
	4.1.3 The benefits of literature in terms of cultural enrichment gained from the study of literature subjects	66
	4.1.4 The benefits of literature in terms of the personal growth development	74
	4.2 Discussion	80
	4.3 Summary	84
5	<b>SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	85
	5.0 Chapter overview	85
	5.1 Summary of the study	85
	5.1.1 Objective 1: TESL undergraduates' views towards literature before and after taking literature subjects in UNIMAS	87
	5.1.2 Objective 2: TESL undergraduates' views on the benefits of literature subjects towards their language development	88
	5.1.3 Objective 3: TESL undergraduates' views on cultural enrichment gained from the study of literature subjects	89
	5.1.4 Objective 4: TESL undergraduates' views on the personal growth development promoted through the study of literature subjects	90
	5.2 Implication of the study	91
	5.3 Recommendations for further research	92

5.4 Conclusions	93
<b>REFERENCES</b>	95
<b>APPENDICES</b>	98

## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table</b>		<b>Page</b>
1	Distribution of participants	30
2	Instruments used and research questions	31
3	Distributions of statements according to sections and types of literature models	34
4	Sample statements for Section A, B and C	34
5	Distribution of interview questions and research questions	35
6	Distribution of interview questions according to themes	45
7	Interview question 1	51
8	Interview question 2	52
9	Interview question 3	54
10	Statements for language model	59
11	Reading and writing skills	61
12	Statements for culture model	67
13	Statements for personal growth model	74

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
TESL	Teaching English as a Second Language
UNIMAS	Universiti Malaysia Sarawak

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.0 Chapter Overview**

This chapter will discuss the background of the study to provide a brief background information on the introduction of literature in the second or foreign language classrooms such as in TESL and ESL classrooms. The statement of the problem, aim of the study and research questions will inform about the purpose and focus of this study.

In addition, significance of the study highlights the usefulness of the findings of this study towards the interest group. This chapter will also describe the operational definition of key terms such as literature, UNIMAS TESL and ESL undergraduates' programmes, view, language development, cultural enrichment and personal growth development. Lastly, the boundaries of the areas covered in this study will be discussed under scope of the study.

## 1.1 Background of study

According to Hines (2005), literature is intellectually stimulating because it allows a reader to imagine worlds they are not familiar with through the use of descriptive language. However, literature has not been given much emphasis in the English as Foreign Language (EFL) or English as Second Language (ESL) classroom until recently (Hines, 2005).

Only until the emergence of the Communicative Approach to language teaching during 1980's did literature regain its place in the ESL or EFL classrooms (Sivakumar, 2006). Linguists and ELT (English Language Teaching) scholars argued not only for the value of teaching literature in the language classroom but also for the necessity as well as re-inventing a different pedagogical approach for non-native speakers of English (Widdowson, 1984; Brumfit, 1985; Long, 1986; Long and Carter, 1991, as cited in Zafeiriadou, 2001). Therefore, in recent years, the teaching of English language and the teaching of English literature have tended to coexist in many different ways, especially where the language is being studied by non-native speakers of English (Carter and Long, 1987).

According to Clandfield (n.d.), literature has been a subject of study in many countries at a secondary or tertiary level. Besides being offered in Teachers Training Colleges, literature subjects are also offered in public universities. For instance, in UNIMAS, nine literature subjects are offered under TESL undergraduates programme. A complete list of literature subjects offered by TESL and ESL programmes can be referred to in **Appendix A**.

There are many reasons to include the study of literature in ESL or EFL classrooms. Gurnam (n.d., as cited in Ganakumaran, 2003) highlights five reasons for the inclusion of literature in ESL or EFL classroom:

- a. literary texts are valuable complement to authentic materials which provide genuine and undistorted language that can be managed in the language classroom
- b. learners are exposed to abundant examples of the subtle and complex use of grammar and vocabulary in literary texts
- c. literature exposes learners to different writing styles from different authors which unconsciously helps learners to develop their own writing styles
- d. literature is a product of culture and contains a compendious store of information through which learners get insights into the culture, history, traditions and conventions of the target language
- e. literature is a mirror of life which addresses complex situations and dilemmas and encourages learners to think creatively and critically

(Gurnam, 2003: 89-90)

Carter and Long (1991) categorize the benefits of introducing literature in ESL or EFL contexts into three models namely the language model, the culture model and personal growth model. From the language aspect, ESL students come in touch with more subtle and creative uses of language through the study of literary texts. In addition, students are also culturally enriched as they come to an understanding and appreciation of other people's cultures and ideologies which are different from their own. Furthermore, the personal growth model cultivates the love towards the literary works of any genres and develops the students holistically in becoming better individuals in the community and society.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

In Malaysia, the use of literary works was encouraged in English language classrooms at the end of 1980's (Ahuja & Ahuja, 1991). This use of literary texts primarily aims to teach reading skills and also develops students' interest in reading (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 1989). In other words, literary works have been used as a means to develop students' reading skills. In addition, as a product of culture, literary texts also expose students to different culture and human values. This exposure would further develop aesthetic appreciation towards these diverse cultures among the students (Ahuja & Ahuja, 1991). These benefits of literature studying are further affirmed by Collie and Slater's (1987) claim that the use of literature not only provides valuable authentic materials but also promotes cultural enrichment, language enrichment and personal involvement.

The benefits of learning literature in second or foreign language context are further outlined through a study conducted by Department of Education Canada (2001). This study indicates that the use of different genres of literary texts such as poems, short stories, drama and novel in reading exposes second language learners to many cultures, themes and values. This study also suggests that these texts can be used to teach language more effectively because they reflect how different language features such as the vocabulary and grammar are effectively used.

The research done by Department of Education Canada (2001) only looks into the benefits of studying literature in terms of language and culture. However, Carter and Long (1991) claim that the incorporation of literature in English language classrooms benefits second language learners in terms of language, culture and personal growth development. Therefore, it arouses a need to find out which types of benefits second language learners would gain from studying literature in language classrooms at tertiary level. It also provokes a need for further investigation to look

into whether the benefits promoted through literature studying are only limited to the exposure level or are they applicable in helping the learners in their academic reading, writing and interaction with others.

### **1.3 Aim of the Study**

This study aims to find out TESL undergraduates' personal views of the literature subjects. These personal views include their change of attitude towards literature before and after the exposure to literature subjects in UNIMAS. Moreover, this study also aims to look into TESL undergraduates' views on the benefits of literature in terms of language, culture enrichment and personal growth.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

This study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What are the personal views of the TESL undergraduates' towards literature before and after taking the literature subjects in UNIMAS?
2. What are the TESL undergraduates' views on the benefits of literature subjects towards their language development?
3. What are the TESL undergraduates' views of cultural enrichment gained from their study of literature subjects?
4. What are the TESL undergraduates' views on personal growth development promoted through the study of literature subjects?

## **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This study aimed to find out the TESL undergraduates' personal views towards the benefits of studying literature in second language classrooms. The findings of this study will provide an insight of the learners' attitudes towards literature and also the language, culture and personal growth benefits they gain from studying literature.

In this study, the learners are inquired of their attitudes towards the literature subjects offered at the secondary school and also at the tertiary level. This insight is in terms of their liking or dislike towards literature subjects and also the reasons underlying their liking or dislike. Hence, this insight from the learners' perspective will be useful to the lecturers and school teachers who are currently or who are going to teach literature subjects in the future. Provided by the interviewed participants, these reasons will enlighten the lecturers concerning the liking or dislike which may be due to the selection of literary texts or the teaching techniques used.

## **1.6 Operational Definition of Terms.**

### **1.6.1 Literature**

According to Sivakumar (2006), literature refers to a body of written texts produced by a culture and highly valued within that culture over a period of time as part of its literary heritage. Literature consists of four different genres which are poem, short story, novel and play.

Literature not only includes literary works from Western English writers such as William Shakespeare or Emily Dickinson. Instead, literature

also encompasses literary works written in English and by writers from other countries such as Malaysia, Africa and Vietnam. In addition, translated literary works from other languages such as Bahasa Malaysia, into English language are also considered as literature.

Hence, for the purpose of this study, the term of literature encompasses all the four genres. In addition, literature also covers literary works written in English, either by English writers or translated literary works from other languages.

### **1.6.2 UNIMAS TESL and ESL undergraduates programmes**

TESL is the acronym for Teaching English as a Second Language and ESL is the acronym for English as a Second Language. According to Buku Panduan FSKPM (2004), both programmes are first degree programmes offered by UNIMAS under the educational programmes of Faculty of Cognitive Science and Human Development (FSKPM).

However, there are some slight differences between TESL and ESL programmes. TESL programmes are offered to Form Six and matriculation students, while ESL programmes are only offered to in-service teachers who wish to obtain a first degree certificate. Besides that, both programmes also differ in terms of numbers of years of study. TESL programme is a four years programme while ESL programme is a three years programme. In addition, ESL programme undergraduates receive their first year lectures at Maktab Perguruan and the last two years of their study in UNIMAS. Dissimilar from ESL programme, the undergraduates for TESL programme receive their entire four years of studies in UNIMAS.

The objective of TESL and ESL programmes is to “generate expertise and develop idea in language study field” (Buku Panduan Program TESL, 2002, p. 15). In line with the objective, the university has included literature subjects in TESL and ESL programs in order to generate language teachers who are “knowledgeable and capable of teaching literature components at secondary school level” (Buku Panduan Program TESL, 2002, p. 15). Therefore, these two English educational programmes not only aim to produce quality English language teachers, but also English teachers who are capable to teach the literature components at schools.

For the purpose of this study, the term ‘TESL undergraduates’ will encompass both the TESL and ESL undergraduates.

### **1.6.3 View**

According to The New Thesaurus (1995), view is something believed or accepted as true by a person. Therefore, view is interrelated with belief, conviction, feeling, idea, mind, notion, opinion, persuasion, position, position, and sentiment. On the other hand, The American Heritage (2007) defines view as an individual’s personal perception, judgment, or interpretation. Being stated as synonymous with opinion, view is unique to individuals because it is the way an individual thinks about a certain issue.

For this study, the researcher aims to find out the opinion which is personal and unique to each participant. This opinion concerns what each participant thinks are the types of benefits they gain from studying literature in TESL and ESL programme in UNIMAS.

#### **1.6.4 Language development**

From the perspective of the language model proposed by Carter and Long (1991), literature is taught to promote vocabulary, structure or language manipulation. Since literature uses language as literary medium, it enriches and develops students' language input as the literary texts offer contact with some of the more subtle and varied creative uses of the language.

#### **1.6.5 Cultural enrichment**

Based on Carter and Long's model (1991), Collie and Slater (1987) define cultural enrichment as an understanding of the way of life in the country where that language is spoken. Works of literature are the relics of culture and by studying these works, students learn to understand and appreciate cultures and ideologies different from their own in time and space.

#### **1.6.6 Personal growth development**

Personal growth model of literature studying helps students to achieve an engagement with the reading of literary texts to the extent that students carry with them an enjoyment and love for literature beyond the classroom context (Carter and Long, 1991). This engagement with literary works is hoped to continue throughout their life. In addition, through this model, students grow as an individual as well as in their relationship with people and institutions around them.

## **1.7 Scope of Study**

There are many contributing factors affecting the promotion of the language, cultural and personal growth benefits of literature. These factors include the literary text selection, the proficiency level of the TESL and ESL undergraduates and the teaching methods applied by lecturers in literature lessons. However, for the purpose of this study, the researcher only focuses on whether the students gain any benefits from learning literature. The benefits being highlighted in this study are based on Carter and Long's (1991) three models, which stress the benefits in terms of language, cultural and the personal growth aspects.

As supposedly, for a comprehensive study of the views towards the inclusion of literature in language classrooms, both the literature lecturers' and the undergraduates' personal views towards the benefits of literature should be taken into consideration. However, this study only looks into the TESL and ESL undergraduates' views towards the benefits they gained from the literature lessons. These personal views are gathered through questionnaires and interviews.

## **1.8 Chapter Review**

This chapter has discussed the background of the study which leads to the discussion of the need to conduct this study under "statement of problem". Research objectives, research questions as well as the significance and the scope of this study have also been discussed. Last but not least, the operational definitions of the key terms to be found in this study are also defined in detail.