

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA AND ANALYSIS

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses several findings in relation to first language influence among Form 1 Malay students in the learning of English. 40 Malay respondents from four classes with those obtaining high overall proficiency performance in their Primary School Assessment Test or Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah (UPSR) in Form 1M followed by Forms 1J, 1K and lastly 1H for those obtaining the lowest overall proficiency performance. There were 7 Malay respondents each from Forms 1M and 1H (the first and last classes respectively) and 13 each from Forms 1J and 1K (the second and third classes respectively). In making this study as comprehensive as possible, a qualitative approach was used first followed by a quantitative approach to analyse the data.

Frequency and percentage scores were used for descriptive analysis while mean, standard deviation and t-test were also used for the inferential analysis. The analysis of data was in the following order; namely on the respondents' academic and family background (Section A) followed by their attitudes towards the language in general (Section B), then their abilities to understand and respond to the teaching and learning activities in English (Section C) and finally, the strategies used to overcome problems in learning English Language (Section D).

4.1 ANALYSIS OF RESPONDENTS' ACADEMIC AND FAMILY

BACKGROUND

In Section A of the questionnaire, Question 1 was to elicit information regarding the type of primary schools the Malay respondents were from. 33 of the 40 respondents studied in National Schools in Melaka, 2 each from 2 different National schools in Selangor and Perak and one in Johor while the remaining 2 were from two different National-type Chinese Schools in Melaka. (See Table 3.5, p. 47)

The above data led to Question 2 which saw the two respondents who studied in the National-type Chinese Schools studying in the Remove Class for a year before going to Form 1. This was due to the fact that they did not meet the minimal requirement for automatic promotion to Form 1 with a Grade C for Bahasa Melayu in their Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah (UPSR) or Primary School Assessment Test. Both respondents reported scoring Grade E for this subject during the informal interview.

The data for Question 3 of the questionnaire pertaining to the results of the 40 Malay respondents' UPSR results for English Language showed 5 respondents (12.5%) scored B, 9 respondents (22.5%) scored C, 12 respondents (30%) scored D and 14 respondents (47.5%) scored E. The results pointed to the fact that the respondents were weak in the English Language since a majority achieved a D or an E grade. The grades obtained by the respondents were considered during their placement in Form 1 classes with those obtaining Grade A being placed in Form 1M and those with lower grades in the subsequent classes. Table 4.1 on the next page shows the breakdown of the respondents' achievement according to classes.

Table 4.1 Grades obtained for English Language in the UPSR

Form	Grade A		Grade B		Grade C		Grade D		Grade E	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1M			3	42.9	4	57.1				
1J			1	7.7	4	30.8	8	61.5		
1K			1	7.7	1	7.7	3	20.1	8	61.5
1H							1	14.3	6	85.7
Total			5	12.5	9	22.5	12	30	19	47.5

In Question 4, the respondents reported the grades they hoped to obtain for their English Language in their next public examination, that is, the Lower Certificate of Education or Penilaian Menengah Rendah (PMR) which they would be sitting for in the year 2003. Their responses were presented in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2 Projected Grades for English Language in the PMR in 2003

Form	Grade A		Grade B		Grade C		Grade D		Grade E	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1M	7	100								
1J	7	53.8	5	38.5	1	7.7				
1K	5	38.5	3	23	5	38.5				
1H	3	42.8	2	28.6	2	28.6				
Total	22	55	10	25	8	20				

Table 4.2 showed that a majority of the respondents were very positive and hoped to obtain Grade A. All the 7 respondents in Form 1M, the high proficiency group, aim to score Grade A as compared to 7 respondents (53.8 %) from Form 1J. 5 respondents (38.5%) from Form 1K and 3 respondents (42.8%) from Form 1H, the low proficiency group, also aimed for a Grade A. The other respondents were more realistic in their aims, hoping to achieve Grades B or C since they were aware of their own linguistic capabilities in the language concerned.

As a whole, these respondents were weak not only in English Language, but also in their own mother tongue, that is Bahasa Melayu (between Grades B-E) as shown in Tables 4.3a and 4.3b on the next page. This conclusion was drawn from the Form 1

Final Year results for both languages for the four classes. The grading system for this school is shown as below:

Grade A : 85% - 100%

Grade D : 40% - 54%

Grade B : 70% - 84%

Grade E : 0% - 39%

Grade C : 55% - 69%

Table 4.3a Form 1 Respondents' Final Year Bahasa Melayu Grades

Grade Class	Grade A		Grade B		Grade C		Grade D		Grade E	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1M			6	85.7	1	14.3				
1J			6	46.2	7	53.8				
1K			1	7.7	3	23.1	9	69.2		
1H					1	14.3	5	71.4	1	14.3
Total			13	32.5	12	30	14	35	1	2.5

Table 4.3b Form 1 Respondents' Final Year English Language Grades

Grade Class	Grade A		Grade B		Grade C		Grade D		Grade E	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1M			2	28.6	4	57.1	1	14.3		
1J					2	15.4	7	53.8	4	30.8
1K					2	15.4	4	30.8	7	53.8
1H							1	14.3	6	85.7
Total			2	5	8	20	13	32.5	17	42.5

The two respondents in Form 1K from National-type Chinese Schools (See Table 3.5) were among the 9 who obtained Grade D for Bahasa Melayu (See Table 4.3a) and among the 7 who obtained Grade E for English (See Table 4.3b). This meant that their grades were the same as the six respondents in Form 1H from the National Schools who also scored Grade E for English. This data thus provided the answer to research question number 1, "Will an increase in the contact hours for English in National-type Primary Schools improve the Malay students' proficiency in the language?" Therefore, the data above showed that an increase in the contact hours for English among respondents in the National Primary Schools would not necessarily mean a higher proficiency in the language compared to those in the National-type Primary Schools. (See Tables 3.3a and 3.3b)

A further analysis of the respondents' academic performance is seen in Section 4.1.1 on page 64.

With regard to Question 5 of the questionnaire regarding the number of siblings each respondent had and their age groups, the findings were as follows. 2 respondents reported being the only child in their family, one from Form 1M, the high proficiency group and the other from Form 1H, the low proficiency group. For the other respondents in Forms 1J and 1K, all of them had at least a sibling. The remaining 38 respondents had at least 2 siblings each and there were a total of 89 siblings among them. From this total, 25 (28.1%) of the siblings were studying in secondary schools while 28 (31.5%) were studying in primary schools. There were 15 (16.9%) of the siblings who had not reached school-going age, 9 (10.1%) had completed their education or were working, 10 (11.2%) were in the nurseries / kindergartens and the remaining 2 (2.2%) were either in colleges or universities. The breakdown of the respondents' siblings according to their age groups is shown in Table 4.4 below.

Table 4.4 Age groups of Respondents' Siblings

Form	Not Schooling		Nursery/ Kindergarten		Primary School		Secondary School		College/ University		Working	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1M	2	15.4	2	15.4	4	30.8	4	30.8			1	7.7
1J	4	16	2	8	6	24	8	32			5	20
1K	6	18.2	2	6.1	12	36.4	9	27.3	2	6.1	2	6.1
1H	3	16.7	4	22.2	6	33.3	4	22.2			1	5.6
Total	15	16.9	10	11.2	28	31.5	25	28.1	2	2.2	9	10.1

When the respondents were asked regarding the language they used to communicate with their parents (Question 6) and with their siblings (Question 7), all of them reported using Bahasa Melayu with both their parents and siblings. One respondent, an only child from Form 1M, the high proficiency group reported using both languages, that is English and Bahasa Melayu with his parents (his father was a

businessman and his mother an assistant accountant). However, the other only child from Form 1H, the low proficiency group used only Bahasa Melayu with his parents (his father was a driver and his mother a housewife). Another respondent from Form 1K, the average proficiency group reported that he used both languages with his siblings (as they were either in college or working) but not with his parents. This meant that most of the respondents did not have the opportunity to use the English Language at home with their parents or siblings. This also showed that parents' occupations and the age of the siblings do play an integral part in the choice of languages of respondents at home. If the respondents' parents held average income occupations, there was a greater chance of the respondents using English beside Bahasa Melayu at home. If their siblings were in their late teens or early twenties and attending college or already working, there was a greater chance for them to use English at home too. The responses for those two questions are shown in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 Language(s) used with Parents and Siblings

Form	Language(s) used with Parents		Language(s) used with Siblings	
	Bahasa Melayu	English Language	Bahasa Melayu	English Language
1M	7	1	6	
1J	13		13	
1K	13		13	1
1H	7		6	
Total	40	1	38	1

Table 4.5 showed all the respondents used Bahasa Melayu with their parents and siblings. Even though Bahasa Melayu was their L1, their grades for Bahasa Melayu during their Final Year Examination was not outstanding as seen in Tables 4.3a and 4.3b. Both tables showed that all the respondents' grades for Bahasa Melayu were slightly better (Grades C and D) as compared to Grades D and E for their English Language. The findings above provided the answers to research question number 2,

“Does the L1 of Malay students of all proficiency levels influence the learning of English Language?”

The responses for Question 8 on the occupation of the respondents' fathers/guardians showed that a majority of them were blue-collar workers, putting them in the low and average income group. From Table 4.6a, half of the respondents (50%) reported that their fathers/guardians worked as labourers as compared to 2 (5%) who were businessmen. The 18 remaining fathers/guardians also held blue-collar jobs like as policeman, clerk, guard, soldier, driver, hawker, mechanic, hospital attendant or trishaw peddler.

Table 4.6a Occupation held by the Respondents' Fathers/Guardians

FORM	BUSINESSMAN		CLERK		HAWKER		MECHANIC		GUARD		POLICEMAN		LABOURER		DRIVER		HOSPITAL ATTENDANT		TRISHAW PEDDLER		SOLDIER	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1M	2	28.6	2	28.6					2	28.6			1	14.3								
1J			2	15.4					1	7.7	1	7.7	5	46.1	1	7.7	1	7.7	1	7.7	1	7.7
1K					1	7.7	1	7.7			2	15.4	8	61.5	1	7.7						
1H													6	85.7	1	14.3						
TOTAL	2	5	4	10	1	2.5	1	2.5	3	7.5	3	7.5	20	50	3	7.5	1	2.5	1	2.5	1	2.5

The data obtained from Question 9 saw the bulk of the responses regarding the occupation of the respondents' mothers as housewives with 37 responses (92.5%). There were two mothers (5%) who worked as canteen helpers and one mother (2.5%) who worked as an assistant accountant. The data regarding the occupation of the respondents' mothers are shown in Table 4.6b.

Table 4.6b Occupation held by the Respondents' Mothers

FORM	Housewife		Canteen Helper		Assistant Accountant	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
1M	6	85.7			1	14.3
1J	12	92.3	1	7.7		
1K	12	92.3	1	7.7		
1H	7	100				
TOTAL	37	92.5	2	5	1	2.5

The data from Tables 4.6a and 4.6b showed that a majority of the respondents had working fathers/guardians who did not hold high-income jobs and mothers who were housewives. These jobs held by the respondents' parents could probably be shaped by their parents' highest level of education, which is the next question of the questionnaire.

In Question 10 regarding the highest level of education possessed by the respondents' fathers/guardians, 16 respondents' fathers/guardians (40%) had only a primary level education followed by 11 (27.5%) with a lower secondary education. There were 11 fathers/guardians (27.5%) with an upper secondary school education, while only 1 (2.5%) had a college education and another (2.5%) did not receive any formal education at all. This meant that the majority of the respondents' fathers/guardians (16 out of the 40) had received a minimum of six years of formal education. The findings are shown in Table 4.7a below.

Table 4.7a Respondents' Fathers/Guardians Highest Level of Education

FORM	COLLEGE		UPPER SEC. SCH.		LOWER SEC. SCH.		PRIMARY SCH.		AGAMA SCH.		NO EDU.	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1M			4	57.1	1	14.3	2	28.6				
1J			6	46.2	2	15.4	4	30.8			1	7.7
1K	1	7.7	1	7.7	5	38.5	6	46.2				
1H					3	42.9	4	57.1				
TOTAL	1	2.5	11	27.5	11	27.5	16	40			1	2.5

The level of education of the respondents' fathers/guardians was also a determining factor in the nature of the jobs they hold now, that is, mostly blue-collar jobs (See Table 4.7a). With a low level education, the number of good-paying job opportunities are limited and the availability would be in the field that demands skilled, semi-skilled and labour-intensive jobs that commensurate a low income. This low remuneration would also affect their families, as there was usually little money for additional educational materials or for extra classes like tuition after school hours. This state of low socio-economic status had a direct impetus on the standard and living conditions of the families. This status would have a demoralising effect on the respondents' social and emotional being and would contribute to their dismal performance in school.

The data obtained about the respondents' mothers' highest level of education (See Table 4.7b) showed that 17 mothers (42.5%) had a primary school education, 9 (22.5%) had an upper secondary school education, 6 (15%) had a lower secondary school education, 6 (15%) did not have any education at all, 1 (2.5%) had a college education and another (2.5%) studied in the agama/ religious school. This finding in Table 4.7b below showed 17 mothers (42.5%) had a minimum of six years of formal education.

Table 4.7b Respondents' Mothers Highest Level of Education

FORM	COLLEGE		UPPER SEC. SCH.		LOWER SEC. SCH.		PRIMARY SCH.		AGAMA SCH.		NO EDU.	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1M	1	14.3	1	14.3	3	42.9	2	28.6				
1J			3	23.4	2	15.4	4	30.8	1	7.7	3	23.1
1K			5	38.5	1	7.7	6	46.2			1	7.7
1H							5	71.4			2	28.6
TOTAL	1	2.5	9	22.5	6	15	17	42.5	1	2.5	6	15

In response to research question number 3, "How does the socio-economic background of Malay students affect their learning of English in school?" Tables 4.6a, 4.6b, 4.7a and 4.7b showed that the respondents were mostly from medium to low-income families due to their parents' educational background where 23 of the 40 respondents' fathers/guardians and 16 of the 40 respondents' mothers had a minimum of six years of formal education. Since a majority of the respondents' parents were mostly holding blue-collar jobs (See Tables 4.7a and 4.7b) and work long hours, they usually lacked parental support and guidance with regards to education. This together with the fact that their parents and siblings used Bahasa Melayu with them (See Table 4.5) had adversely affected their learning of English in school since they did not have the opportunity to practise or use English outside the school hours.

Questions 11- 12 were on the respondents' use of language in the school. Question 11 was to determine the respondents' use of English with their friends of various races, namely, Malays, Chinese and Indians. Only a few respondents in Form 1M reported using English with their friends of various races while all the other respondents (Forms 1J-1H) reported not using English with their friends from the other ethnic groups. Those respondents also gave the following reasons for not using English.

The data in Table 4.8a showed that the Form 1M respondents seldom interacted in English with their friends of different races. The main reason was their friends' weakness in English with a frequency of 12 times followed by respondents' inability to speak well in English (3 times) and once each for shyness and lack of interaction with his friend.

Table 4.8a Responses and Reasons from Form 1M Respondents on their Interaction with Friends in English

Class	Race	Yes			No		
		He uses English	We're comfortable in English	I'm asked to use English	He's weak in English	I can't speak English well	We seldom talk
1M	Malays		1	1	4	1	
	Chinese	1			3	1	1
	Indians	1			5	1	
	Total	2	1		12	3	1

Table 4.8b Responses and Reasons from Form 1J, 1K and 1H Respondents on their Interaction with Friends in English

Class	Race	Yes	No				
			He wants to use Bahasa Melayu	We're happy with Bahasa Melayu	He's weak in English	I can't speak English well	We seldom talk
1J	Malays		3		6	4	
	Chinese		2		6	4	1
	Indians		1		7	4	1
	Total	0	6		19	12	2
1K	Malays		2		1	10	
	Chinese		2		1	10	
	Indians		2		1	10	
	Total	0	6		3	30	
1H	Malays		1	5		1	
	Chinese		1	5		1	
	Indians		1	4		2	
	Total	0	3	14		4	

Table 4.8b showed that all the respondents in Forms 1J, 1K and 1H reported not using English with their friends. The reasons given by respondents from Form 1J were because of their friends' weakness in English (19 times) followed by the respondents' inability to speak well in English (12 times), their friends' preference of Bahasa Melayu (6 times) and lastly a lack of interaction with their friends (2 times). In Form 1K, the reasons given for not interacting in English were the respondents' inability to speak well in English (30 times) followed by their friends' preference of Bahasa Melayu (6 times) and their friends' weakness in the language (3 times). Finally, in Form 1H, the main reason given for not interacting in English was that the respondents and their friends felt

more happy interacting in Bahasa Melayu (14 times) followed by respondents' inability to speak well in English (4 times) and their friends' weakness in English (3 times).

Question 12 elicited data on the occasions they used English in school. For this question, the respondents had to choose the responses that applied to them from the eight responses given. The respondents could tick more than one response because during the pilot stage they had reported using English in schools on different occasions. In this questionnaire, the maximum number of responses chosen by one respondent was 6.

The highest frequency recorded in terms of responses chosen by the respondents using English in school was during the English lessons (31 times). This was followed by using English only when they had to answer questions during the English lessons (29 times), when interacting with their English teacher (20 times) and using English all the time for oral practice (10 times). A total of 8 times was recorded during interaction with friends of other races and 6 times (mostly from the average to low proficiency levels) was for not using English at all. On the other hand some respondents reported using English in school with every teacher with a frequency of 5 times, but none reported using the language with all their friends. The outcome of the study is shown in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9 When Respondents use English in School

Form	With all my friends	With friends of other races	With every teacher	Only with my Eng. teacher	Only during Eng. lessons	All the time for oral practise	Only when called to answer questions	Don't use Eng. at all
1M		2		2	4	3	6	
1J			1	4	8	3	10	2
1K		3	3	7	9	4	7	1
1H		3	1	7	10		6	3
Total	0	8	5	20	31	10	29	6

The parts played by the English Language teacher as role models during the English lessons; in getting students to respond to the questions and the interaction with the teachers (both English Language and other teachers) are shown by the frequency of 85 times (from these responses: 31, 29, 20 and 5) helped respondents use the language in school. This was in contrast to 8 times where the respondents used the language on their own initiative or with their friends. In an interview with the six respondents who reported not using English at all, they reported their lack of confidence to use the language since they felt they were weak in the language and did not want their classmates to laugh at their mistakes. They concluded that they felt more secure using Bahasa Melayu since it was understood by most of their classmates and more so because it was the national language.

4.1.1 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS RESULTS

Table 4.10 Comparison between Form One English Language and Bahasa Melayu Final Year Results

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
BMFYR	40	15.00	82.00	58.1750	15.82579	250.456
BIFYR	40	8.00	75.00	40.7750	16.94560	287.153
Valid N (listwise)	40					

It can be observed from Table 4.10 above that the mean of Bahasa Melayu Final Year Results (BMFYR) is 58.18 while that of English Language Final Year Results (BIFYR) is 40.78. This clearly illustrates that since the mean for Bahasa Melayu Final Year Results is larger than English Language then there exists a significant difference between these two variables. Thus the researcher concludes that the respondents in the current study scored better in Bahasa Melayu than in English Language.

Furthermore, the data of BMFYR are more homogeneous than the data of BIFYR as the Standard Deviation values indicate in the table above.

It may be assumed that the variations between BMFYR and BIFYR variables are caused by the mother tongue of the respondents which had greatly influenced the performance of Bahasa Melayu and conversely affected the performance of the second language, English.

The research findings showed that the mother tongue has had an influence in the acquisition of the second language, English Language. This argument had been confirmed by studies conducted by Chomsky (1965); McNeill (1970); Miller (1981) that it is widely believed that people are born with many of the underpinnings that permit them to quickly understand speech as one of the earliest skills in language learning as reported in Section 2.1 p.12.

Table 4.11 Comparison between Form One Final Year Results with projected Form Three / PMR Examination Results

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
BIFYR	40	8.00	75.00	40.7750	16.94560	287.153
BIPMR	40	15.00	98.00	76.8000	22.20441	493.036
Valid N (listwise)	40					

In Table 4.11, the mean for BIFYR is 40.78 while the mean for English Language Penilaian Menengah Rendah (BIPMR), which is a projected expected performance in two years' time, is 76.80. The big difference with positive improvement in English Language between the two constructs can be attributed to personal, social and other developmental factors.

There is an increase in the minimum score of the respondents from 8.00 to 15.00 for BIFYR and BIPMR which shows that the respondents' maturity would have increased given the time factor; they would have gained more information; they would be more knowledgeable; they would have accumulated more contact hours in the school; their attitude towards the second language may have changed for the better; their teachers would be more experienced after a number of years teaching; their teachers would be using improved methodology like technological softwares instead of books and newer approaches in second language teaching; their parents' socio-economic status would have improved with the recovery of the country's economy; and their standard of living would have gone up correspondingly. Likewise, there is also an increase in the maximum score for both the BIFYR and BIPMR from 75.00 to 98.00 to show that the respondents would have gained knowledge after another two years of studies in the school.

The researcher associated her conclusion to one of the study evidence by Cooper (1989) that language planning is the deliberate effort of the language planners to influence the behaviour of others with respect to acquisition and structure of functional allocation of their language codes. In addition to this, the location of the school where the study was carried out which is in an urban area would further lend credibility to the above assumptions. Although this is an urban school, majority of its students (including the Malay respondents) live in communities where there is no need for them to use English for communication (Refer to the third reason on page 42) and from the information provided by the administrators and other teachers regarding the respondents' background (Refer to the first reason on page 42 and Section 3.2 on page 47).

Table 4.12 t-Test Comparison between English Language and Bahasa Melayu

Test Value =0		df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
t					Lower	Upper
BMFYR	23.249	39	.000	58.1750	53.1137	63.2363
BIFYR	15.218	39	.000	40.7750	35.3555	46.1945

Table 4.12 above compares the performance between BMFYR and BIFYR. By using t-Test to compare the performance of BMFYR and BIFYR, it can be gleaned that the t-value for the two subjects are 23.25 and 15.22 with p-value of 0.000 and 0.000 respectively at significant alpha value 0.05. Since the p-values for the two variables are less than their t-values as indicated in the table above then there are significant differences between the performances of the two variables (subjects) in the current study.

The reasons for the differences in the performance could be attributed to the following assumptions cited and inferred by Nik Safiah (1987) in her study that:

1. Bahasa Melayu is the student's first language.
2. They listen, think, feel, speak, read and write more in their mother tongue.
3. Their home environment favours and supports the use and development of the first language.
4. They have more subjects taught in Bahasa Melayu than in English Language.
5. They read more books in the first language.
6. They converse with their peers in Bahasa Melayu.

7. Being the official language of the country, Bahasa Melayu exerts more influence and provides more opportunities, purposes and causes for the extensive use of the first language.

Thus, the growth and development of the second language, English Language, is constantly stifled, retarded and subsequently relegated to a position as an unimportant subject in the school curriculum and grossly underused in their immediate and extended environment.

Table 4.13 t - Test for Form One Final Year and Form Three / PMR Examination Results

Test Value = 0		df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
t					Lower	Upper
BIFYR	15.222	39	.000	40.7750	35.3555	46.1945
BIPMR	21.875	39	.000	76.8000	69.6987	83.9013

In Table 4.13, the t-value for BIFYR is 15.22 and that for BMFYR is 21.88. Both the values indicate that they are greater than the p-value of 0.000 and 0.000 respectively.

Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between the performance of BIFYR and BMFYR at the alpha value of 0.05.

From the SPSS output, an increase in the minimum score (Table 4.11); a t-value which is greater than the p-value of more than 0.000 (Table 4.12); another two years of education coupled with support from parents, friends, peers and teachers could increase the respondents' performance in their Penilaian Menengah Rendah (Lower Certificate of Education) in 2003.

The results of the current study are in tandem with the observation made in the study conducted by Wong-Fillmore (1976) for a 9-month period of five Mexican children (aged 5-7) attending an English-speaking school in California. She paired them with Native American children. She found that the children's English language proficiency developed greatly after the nine-month programme.

Table 4.14 showed the mean value of performance for Bahasa Melayu (BMFYR) and English Language (BIFYR) are not the same. That is, 58.18 for BMFYR and 40.78 for BIFYR respectively, and this is quite different from the mean value for BIPMR which is 76.80. The higher mean score for BIPMR as compared to BIFYR shows that the respondents projected an increase in their command of the language.

Table 4.14 Descriptive Statistics for BMFYR, BIFYR, AND BIPMR

			Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
N						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
BMFYR	1.00	7	73.0000	5.41603	2.04707	67.9910	78.0090	64.00	82.00
	2.00	13	67.9231	6.65159	1.84482	63.9036	71.9426	53.00	78.00
	3.00	13	51.6154	10.92046	3.02879	45.0162	58.2146	41.00	77.00
	4.00	7	37.4286	14.62711	5.52853	23.9007	50.9564	15.00	57.00
	Total	40	58.1750	15.82579	2.50228	53.1137	63.2363	15.00	82.00
BIFYR	1.00	7	62.5714	9.64118	3.64402	53.6548	71.4880	50.00	75.00
	2.00	13	45.0000	8.08290	2.24179	40.1156	49.8844	31.00	58.00
	3.00	13	37.1538	12.66127	3.51160	29.5027	44.8050	19.00	60.00
	4.00	7	17.8571	9.38844	3.54850	9.1743	26.5400	8.00	34.00
	Total	40	40.7750	16.94560	2.67933	35.3555	46.1945	8.00	75.00
BIPMR	1.00	7	89.7143	4.23140	1.59932	85.8009	93.6277	85.00	98.00
	2.00	13	84.1538	8.13271	2.25561	79.2393	89.0684	69.00	95.00
	3.00	13	77.2308	16.91229	4.69063	67.0108	87.4508	55.00	98.00
	4.00	7	49.4286	36.00397	13.60822	16.1305	82.7267	15.00	93.00
	Total	40	76.8000	22.20441	3.51083	69.6987	83.9013	15.00	98.00

*The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

* 1.00, 2.00, 3.00 and 4.00 represent Forms 1M, 1J, 1K and 1H respectively.

In this study, Bonferroni Correction (a statistical adjustment for the multiple-comparison correction) with an alpha level usually set at 0.05, the chance taken by researchers to incorrectly declare a difference to be true is used to show whether there is any significant difference in the respondents' language performance in BMFYR, BIFYR and BIPMR. It is found that there is a significant difference in the language performance for the three groups (BMFYR, BIFYR, and BIPMR) at an alpha level of less than 0.05.

This means that with a positive attitude, the respondents can obtain higher grades in two years' time. Likewise, for each class, there is an increase in their mean score, for example, 62.57 to 89.71 for Form 1M, 45.00 to 84.15 for Form 1J, 37.15 to 77.23 for Form 1K and 17.85 to 49.42 for Form 1H. Although the mean for the fourth class is the lowest, nonetheless there is an increase and this shows that a positive attitude of the respondents even from this class in the English Language could increase their proficiency level for the language. These differences in mean values are represented in the three different mean graphs, namely: Figures 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3 respectively.

Table 4.15 ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
BMFYR	Between Groups	6346.061	3	2115.354	22.256	.000
	Within Groups	3421.714	36	95.048		
	Total	9767.775	39			
BIFYR	Between Groups	7404.711	3	2468.237	23.419	.000
	Within Groups	3794.264	36	105.396		
	Total	11198.975	39			
BIPMR	Between Groups	7117.257	3	2372.419	7.052	.001
	Within Groups	12111.143	36	336.421		
	Total	19228.400	39			

Since the observed significant values for BMFYR, BIFYR, and BIPMR are .000, .000, and .001 which are less than the alpha value of .05 then there is a significant difference in the mean performance between BMFYR, BIFYR, and BIPMR.

Means Plots

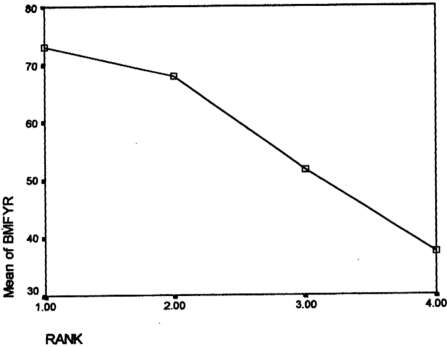


Figure 4.1 mean of Bahasa Melayu Final Year results of four classes

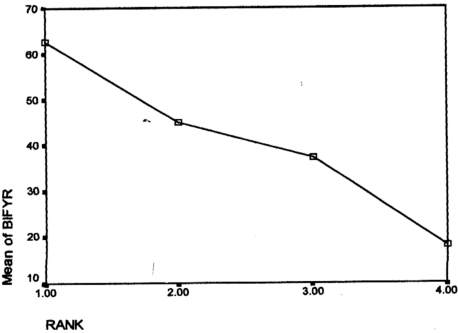


Figure 4.2 mean of English Language Final Year results of four classes

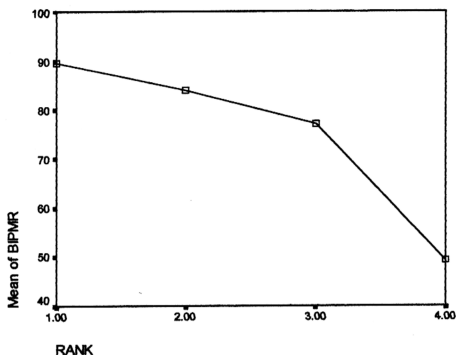


Figure 4.3 mean for English Language in Penilaian Menengah Rendah (PMR)

With an equally motivated pool of teachers who are committed and understand the dilemma faced by the respondents in the study, it is not too late to plan and execute a 'rescue' programme for them. All signs point to a bright prospect of an improvement in the acquisition of the second language in view of the fine performance of the first language. There is no insurmountable obstacles in the path of any learner should a concerted effort be made by all interested parties, including the respondents themselves, to improve.

The situation deserves the immediate attention of educators and researchers alike to undertake further studies to determine a course of action to uplift the second language from the current doldrums so as to equip the respondents and others in similar predicaments the skills necessary for them to master this important international language. With the onslaught of information in this era and the demand for k-workers the importance of English cannot be denied.

4.2 ANALYSIS OF RESPONDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS ENGLISH

In Part I of Section B, respondents were asked regarding their attitude towards English. Question 1 was aimed at eliciting information on whether the respondents received any English tuition. If the response was positive, they had to state when they started attending English tuition. Table 4.16 showed that a majority of the total respondents, that is, 29 respondents (72.5%) reported not receiving any English tuition right from Year 1 till Form 1 as compared to 11 respondents (27.5%) who gave positive responses. 9 respondents (22.5%) reported starting their English tuition when they were in Year 6 in order to help them prepare for their UPSR examination that year. One respondent (2.5%) in Form 1H started his English tuition when he was in the lower standard, that is, in Years 1 - 3 and another (2.5%) from Form 1J started when he was in Year 4. All these respondents attended English tuition, which was part of the "package-type" tuition offered by the tuition centres.

Many tuition centres in towns offered different types of tuition packages covering examination subjects for students taking major public examinations like UPSR during their Year 6 in the primary schools while those in the secondary schools the PMR (Form 3), SPM (Form 5) and STPM (Upper Six). Usually these tuition packages are offered at a discounted price if compared to the total price of the individual subjects. These tuition packages are either preparatory or intensive types, which are between nine to ten months aimed at meeting the demands of the students and their parents for good grades in these major examinations. The preparatory type tuition package is for students who will take a major examination the following year while the intensive type is for those taking a major examination in the current year. The cost of the

preparatory type tuition package was also lower than that of the intensive type and thus met the budget of the parents in the low-income bracket.

11 respondents in this study who were preparing for their UPSR, attended tuition for the four main examination subjects, that is, Bahasa Melayu, English Language, Mathematics and Science. 1 respondent reported starting tuition for three subjects in Phase 1 of his primary education and the other respondent started tuition for the 4 main subjects while he was in Phase 2. 6 out of the 9 respondents attended the intensive type tuition package in Year 6 while the other 3 had tuition for English only but 29 respondents did not have any form of tuition. The distribution of the number of respondents and when they started their tuition class are tabulated in Table 4.16a below.

Table 4.16a Respondents' Starting point for English tuition

Form	Yes										No	
	Years 1-3		Year 4		Year 5		Year 6		Form 1			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1M							6	85.7			1	14.3
1J			1	7.7			1	7.7			11	84.6
1K							2	15.4			11	84.6
1H	1	14.3									6	85.7
Total	1	2.5	1	2.5			9	22.5			29	72.5

In response to Question 2 on the duration of the tuition per week, 6 respondents who started tuition in Year 6 attended the intensive type tuition package, which lasted 2 hours per week, the duration for each subject under this tuition package. The remaining 5 respondents had received home tuition for single subjects at home ranging from 4 – 6 hours per week taught by tutors. Table 4.16b on the next page showed the number of hours for English tuition per week.

Table 4.16b Number of hours for English tuition per week

Form	2hr/wk		3hr/wk		4hr/wk		5hr/wk		6hr/wk	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1M	2	33.3			2	33.3	1	16.7	1	16.7
1J	1	50			1	50				
1K	2	100								
1H	1	100								
Total	6	54.5			3	27.3	1	9.1	1	9.1

The data showed that respondents who had English tuition fared better than their peers who did not attend tuition. This was especially so in the case of the respondents in the first class who obtained at least a Grade C (85.7%) in their Form 1 Final Year English Language Examination as compared to 15.4% only in the other two classes but non in the fourth class. (See Table 4.3b, p. 55) Besides that, the number of hours per week for their English tuition was also instrumental in determining their performance in the language during their examinations. This was reflected by the two respondents in Form 1M who attended 5 to 6 hours of tuition per week and obtained Grade B (a score of 75%) for their English papers.

Table 4.17a Do respondents read English newspapers in school?

Form	Yes									
			Do not understand English		Lazy / No interest		No time		No English newspaper in school	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1M	6	85.7					1	14.3		
1J	6	46.2	6	46.2					1	7.7
1K	7	53.8	4	30.8			1	7.7	1	7.7
1H	3	42.8	2	28.6	2	28.6				
Total	22	55	12	30	2	5	2	5	2	5

For Question 3, the respondents were asked whether they read English newspapers in school. Table 4.17a show a favourable response with 22 respondents (55%) replying in the affirmative. Those who gave negative responses were asked to give their reasons for not reading the newspapers. The main reason given by 12 respondents (30%) was their inability to understand English. The other reasons cited by 2

respondents (5%) each were due to laziness or lack of interest, lack of time and no English newspapers in school.

For Question 4 on whether the respondents read English newspapers at home, Table 4.17b showed only 8 respondents (20%) who responded positively. 32 respondents (80%) gave various reasons for not reading the English newspapers at home. The main reason given by 16 respondents (40%) was that there was no English newspapers at home. 11 respondents (27.5%) reported they were not proficient in English, 3 respondents (7.5%) reported laziness or lack of interest while one respondent (2.5%) reported that his parents did not read the English newspaper and another (2.5%) reported a lack of time as he had a lot of homework. From the informal interviews with some of the respondents, the researcher found that a majority of the respondents' parents did not place much emphasis on the English Language as they felt that they could get along with only Bahasa Melayu, the national language. The 16 respondents who reported not having English newspapers at home said their parents did not even purchase Bahasa Melayu newspapers. When questioned further, they also reported not having other reading materials like books and magazines in Bahasa Melayu at home. For updates on current events and information, their parents mostly listened to the radio or watched television. This showed that the parents at home did not inculcate the reading habit so they were not good role models.

Table 4.17b Do respondents read English newspapers at home?

Form	Yes		No									
			Lots of homework		Not proficient in the language		Lazy / No interest		Parents do not read English newspaper		No English newspaper at home	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1M	3	42.9									4	57.1
1J	1	7.7			4	30.8			1	7.7	7	53.8
1K	4	30.8			5	38.5					4	30.8
1H			1	14.3	2	28.6	3	42.8			1	14.3
Total	8	20	1	2.5	11	27.5	3	7.5	1	2.5	16	40

For Question 5 regarding the number of books in English read in a month, the data showed a lack of reading interest among the respondents. This was despite the fact that each of the respondents from Forms 1M, 1J and 1K were exposed to at least a reading material once a fortnight through 'Program Nilam', a reading programme for all students in the schools in Melaka. This 'Program Nilam' was a programme organised by the Malacca Education Department and the Malacca State Library to encourage the reading habit among all primary and secondary schools students in Bahasa Melayu and English Language using books in both languages. In the pilot school, only Forms One and Two students took part in this programme. They were encouraged to read Bahasa Melayu and English books on alternate weeks. Their teachers brought the students to the library on alternate weeks during one of their Bahasa Melayu or English lessons. During a stipulated Bahasa Melayu lesson, they had to read Bahasa Melayu storybooks and write book reports for each book read in a special logbook. The same was done during a stipulated English lesson the following week. This was done fortnightly for both the Bahasa Melayu and English Language lesson. For the book report, the students had to fill in the sections giving information like date, title, author, number of pages, a brief synopsis and the lessons learnt from the book. At the end of the year, the librarian would record the number of books each student had read and the results were scored according to the given four levels, that is, 'nilam', gold, silver and bronze. Students who achieved the highest record for each level were presented with certificates for their effort.

However, the respondents from Form 1H, the low proficiency class (based on their UPSR results) did not take part in this program since they were in the special or 'remedial class' as they had not acquired the basic skills or 3Rs, that is, Reading, Writing and Arithmetic. The respondents reported having problems reading in English

and this claim was backed by their UPSR English Language results where 6 out of the 7 respondents scored Grade E while 1 obtained a Grade D (See Table 4.1, p. 54).

Table 4.18 showed a total of 14 respondents (35%) reporting not reading a book at all in a week due to their inability to understand English. They had also failed in their UPSR English and Form 1 Final Year English. For those who read, 19 respondents (47.5%) reported reading only 1 to 2 books a week through sheer determination to try while another 7 respondents (17.5%) read 3 to 4 books a week. Those respondents were also motivated by the rewards of 'Program Nilam'. Even though Form 1H respondents did not take part in the 'Program Nilam', 2 (28.6%) reported reading 1 - 2 books per week during their recess time when they followed their librarian friends who had duties in the library. This showed that peer influence played a part in the respondents' reading habit.

Table 4.18 Do respondents read English books in a month?

Form	No		Yes			
	Did not read due to lack of time		1 - 2 books		3 - 4 books	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
1M			6	85.7	1	14.3
1J	6	46.2	3	23.1	4	30.8
1K	3	23.1	8	61.5	2	15.4
1H	5	71.4	2	28.6		
Total	14	35	19	47.5	7	17.5

The result of the study showed that nearly half of the respondents, that is, 19 respondents (47.5%) did attempt to read English books under the 'Program Nilam' while 7 others (17.5%) read more than 2 books in a month. Those who read more than 2 books per month did so during their recess time when they followed their friends who were librarians to the library and some did so after school while waiting for their society or club meetings to begin. They preferred to read in school, as they did not have the chance to do so at home due to the dire lack of reading materials.

The respondents also felt that they could gain more knowledge by asking their friends for clarification and using the dictionaries available in the library to check the meanings of the difficult words they encountered in their reading since their parents did not understand English. Besides that they would have difficulties consulting their peers since their peers were usually not proficient in English and they lived far from each other. Many of the respondents reported that they did not possess dictionaries (including Bahasa Melayu dictionaries) at home.

All these showed that a positive attitude among the respondents did help them in their learning. These results answer the researcher's research question 4, that is, "Does a positive attitude of the Malay students help them in learning the language?"

In Part II of Section B, respondents were given ten statements and they had to choose the most suitable response for each question. The responses were on a scale of 5, ranging from **totally agree** to **agree**, **not bothered / did not know**, **disagree** and **totally disagree**. A table was tabulated for each statement in this section with the respondents' responses according to their classes as shown below.

Table AS 1 - I am not interested in learning English because it is difficult

Form	Totally agree	Agree	Not bothered /did not know	Disagree	Totally disagree
1M	3	4			
1J	3	4	4	1	1
1K	1	7	3	2	
1H	4	1	1	1	
Total	11 (27.5%)	16 (40%)	8 (20%)	4 (10%)	1 (2.5%)

For the first statement, 16 respondents (40%) agreed that they were not interested in learning English since they found it to be a difficult language. 11 respondents (27.5%) totally agreed that English was a difficult language while 8 respondents (20%) reported that they did not know why they were not interested in learning

English. It was a surprise to see all the respondents from Form 1M, with high proficiency level either agreeing or totally agreeing to this statement. On the other hand, 4 respondents (10%) disagreed with the statement and all of them obtained lower than a Grade C for English in their Final Year Examination. This could be due to the respondents having a poor command of the language and not disinterest since they were of average to low proficient level academically. To overcome this problem, it would be better if they are exposed to activities that are simpler and which may help them advance at their own pace.

Table AS 2 – I do not need to learn English because I know Bahasa Melayu

Form	Totally agree	Agree	Not bothered /did not know	Disagree	Totally disagree
1M	3	4			
1J	3	8	1	1	
1K	2	7	1	2	1
1H	4	1		1	1
Total	12 (30%)	20 (50%)	2 (5%)	4 (10%)	2 (5%)

For the second statement, it was disappointing to note that 12 respondents (30%) totally agreed and half of the total number of respondents (50%) who agreed that they did not need to learn English because they were proficient in Bahasa Melayu, their mother tongue. This showed that these respondents had a negative attitude towards English as they felt that there was no necessity to learn a second language since they had already acquired Bahasa Melayu, their mother tongue. What was surprising was that the respondents from the average to low proficiency levels were the ones who made up the small percentage (20%) who felt the need to learn English besides Bahasa Melayu as seen in Table AS 2 above.

Table AS 3 – People that I usually meet know how to speak my mother tongue

Form	Totally agree	Agree	Not bothered /did not know	Disagree	Totally disagree
1M			6	1	
1J		2	2	6	3
1K		2		7	4
1H		1	1	5	
Total		5 (12.5%)	9 (22.5%)	19 (47.5%)	7 (17.5%)

Although nearly half of the respondents answered that they do not need to learn English as reported in statement 2, only 5 respondents (12.5%) reported that people they usually met could speak their mother tongue when they answered the third statement as seen in Table AS 3 above. On the other hand, 19 respondents (47.5%) found that not everyone whom they met were able to speak their mother tongue. This meant that some people in Malaysia might not have mastered the respondents' mother tongue, Bahasa Melayu, which is the national language. Another 9 respondents (22.5%) reported that they did not know or were not bothered if the people they usually met could converse in their mother tongue. Finally, 7 respondents (17.5%) totally disagreed that people they usually met could converse in their mother tongue.

Table AS 4 – If I speak in English with my friends, I will be called a 'show off'

Form	Totally agree	Agree	Not bothered /did not know	Disagree	Totally disagree
1M	1	3	1	2	
1J	3	5	3		2
1K	4	5	1	3	
1H		3	1	2	1
Total	8 (20%)	16 (40%)	6 (15%)	7 (17.5%)	3 (7.5%)

Based on Table AS 4, what was surprising was the attitude of the respondents on the importance of English. For the fourth statement, 16 respondents (40%) reported that they were not keen in using English with their friends for fear of being labelled as trying to show off. The researcher had on a number of occasions heard some students using unkind remarks like "Trying to show off" or "Want to be teacher's pet" on their

fellow students who attempted to speak English with their peers or to the English Language teachers. These remarks usually caused the brave souls to shy away from the language for fear of being ridiculed and treated as an outcast. This appeared to be the root to their weakness in the language especially in their spoken skill.

Table AS 5 – I feel it is sufficient if I can communicate in English

Form	Totally agree	Agree	Not bothered /did not know	Disagree	Totally disagree
1M		1	1	3	2
1J		1	1	6	5
1K	2	2	1	5	3
1H	1	1		1	4
Total	3 (7.5%)	5 (12.5%)	3 (7.5%)	15 (37.5%)	14 (35%)

For the fifth statement, another surprising finding was obtained from the respondents' responses (Table AS5) with 14 respondents (35%) totally disagreeing and another 15 respondents (37.5%) disagreeing that they felt it was sufficient if they could communicate in English. These respondents were aware of the importance of the language but were hampered by their own inability to communicate in English. This awareness played a role in their response to the next statement.

Table AS 6 – I do not need English as my examinations are in Bahasa Melayu

Form	Totally agree	Agree	Not bothered /did not know	Disagree	Totally disagree
1M	4	2			1
1J	5	4	1	1	2
1K	4	5	1	3	
1H	3	4			
Total	16 (40%)	15 (37.5%)	2 (5%)	4 (10%)	3 (7.5%)

In the sixth statement, 16 respondents (40%) totally agreed while 15 respondents (37.5%) agreed that there was no need for English since their examinations would be in Bahasa Melayu. Although all their subjects in school except English Language were taught and tested in Bahasa Melayu, 7 respondents (17.5%) still felt there was a

need for English due to the fact that English Language is a lingua franca in many countries all over the world so it would be important for their future especially when they had the intention of furthering their studies or joining the work force. This data could be seen in Table AS 6 on the previous page.

Table AS 7 – People who want to further their studies overseas need to be proficient in English

Form	Totally agree	Agree	Not bothered /did not know	Disagree	Totally disagree
1M	2	3			2
1J	2	7		3	1
1K	2	2	4	2	3
1H	3	2	1	1	
Total	9 (22.5%)	14 (35%)	5 (12.5%)	6 (15%)	6 (15%)

When responding to the seventh statement, 14 respondents (35%) agreed that for those who wished to further their studies overseas, there was a need for them to be proficient in English. Another 9 respondents (22.5%) totally agreed with the necessity of being proficient in the language. All the 23 respondents (57.5%) who either totally agreed or agreed with the statement when interviewed said they had no intention of pursuing their studies overseas but were aware of the importance of a proficiency in English for anyone who wished to do so. The other 17 respondents (42.5%) either said that they were not aware of the importance of a proficiency in English or that they could survive overseas by only interacting with fellow Malaysian who spoke the Malay language as seen in Table AS 7 above.

Table AS 8 – I think that ability to speak and read in English is important

Form	Totally agree	Agree	Not bothered /did not know	Disagree	Totally disagree
1M				2	5
1J				6	7
1K	2	2	1	6	2
1H			1	1	5
Total	2 (5%)	2 (5%)	2 (5%)	15 (37.5%)	19 (47.5%)

The finding in Table AS 8 on the previous page was rather unexpected, as the researcher had expected the opposite outcome. On the other hand, 19 respondents (47.5%) totally disagreed with the importance of the ability to speak and read in English and 15 respondents (37.5%) disagreed with this statement. These respondents' replies during the interview as to why they disagreed to the statement were mostly that there were now reading materials like newspapers and books in or translated into Bahasa Melayu from English so reading was easier for them. These respondents were the ones who also reported finding English a difficult language (statement 1), felt that there was no need for them to learn English since they knew Bahasa Melayu (statement 2) and also because their examination was in Bahasa Melayu (statement 6). This showed that these respondents still did not see the importance of English Language as a lingua franca or they might have a negative attitude towards the language.

Table AS 9 – I will surely obtain more knowledge if I can read in English

Form	Totally agree	Agree	Not bothered /did not know	Disagree	Totally disagree
1M			1	2	4
1J				7	6
1K	1	1	2	5	4
1H			1		6
Total	1 (2.5%)	1 (2.5%)	4 (10%)	14 (35%)	20 (50%)

Table AS 9 for the ninth statement saw half of the respondents, that is 20 respondents (50%) totally disagreed with the fact that they would obtain more knowledge if they could read in English and a further 14 respondents (35%) disagreed to the statement. When interviewed about this choice of response all of their responses were that there were now many reading materials either written or translated in Bahasa Melayu for knowledge. Therefore they did not have to waste time trying to understand materials in English and end up feeling frustrated for not having understood what they had read.

Table AS 10 – I like to learn English because it is important for my future

Form	Totally agree	Agree	Not bothered /did not know	Disagree	Totally disagree
1M				1	6
1J			2	5	6
1K	1	1		6	5
1H	1		1	1	4
Total	2 (5%)	1 (2.5%)	3 (7.5%)	13 (32.5%)	21 (52.5%)

In the last statement, most of the respondents felt English was not important for their future with 21 respondents (52.5%) totally disagreeing and another 13 respondents (32.5%) disagreeing with the statement. This was a contrast to 2 respondents (5%) who totally agreed and one (2.5%) who agreed to the importance of English for their future. Since all of the respondents did not intend to further their studies overseas, they felt that there was no need for them to learn the language. Their responses when interviewed were their wish to continue studying locally and since English was not a prerequisite to pass their examinations, it did not have an important role in their future as compared to Bahasa Melayu, their mother tongue.

From the ten statements above, it could be concluded that many of the respondents were aware of their lack of proficiency in English and they had formed their own opinions about the importance of the target language in their future. Since Bahasa Melayu is the national language and a prerequisite in passing their examinations, they felt it held a more important place in the education system than the English Language, one of the subjects they had to learn in school. Besides that, there were many people of other races who could speak Bahasa Melayu, their mother tongue so there would be no problem for them when communicating. Reading materials either in Bahasa Melayu or translated from English (or other languages) into Bahasa Melayu are easily available in the market now so the respondents could choose reading materials in the language that they felt good or comfortable in which in this case is Bahasa Melayu.

All these responses showed the respondents' negative attitude towards English Language, the second language in both the primary and secondary schools in Malaysia. These respondents seemed to reflect what our Prime Minister had said in a press statement concerning Malaysian diplomats. There was a poor command of the English Language among young Malaysian diplomats who had failed to rise to the occasion once too often and there was a need to address this problem as the students today would be future leaders of tomorrow (New Straits Times, 21/8/94). (See Chapter 2, page 22).

4.3. ANALYSIS OF RESPONDENTS' ABILITY TO UNDERSTAND AND RESPOND TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE TASKS

In Section C of the questionnaire, three questions were asked based on the respondents' ability to understand and respond to the English Language tasks given. The responses from Question 1 on the respondents' ability to understand the English Language tasks given by their English Language teachers (Table 4.19 on the next page) showed that 19 respondents (47.5%) mostly from Forms 1M and 1K reported an ability to understand the tasks given. However, 9 out of the 13 respondents (69.2%) from Form 1J reported their inability to understand the tasks given by their English Language teacher who was an Indian with a strong Indian accent. When the researcher asked about their primary school English teachers, they said that their teachers were either Malays or Chinese. A few respondents reported having Indian teachers teaching them Science in the primary schools but he or she had used Bahasa Melayu and they had no problem understanding their teachers. For Form 1H, the low proficiency class, 5 out of the 7 respondents (71.4%) reported their inability to understand due to their poor command of the language. (See Table 4.3b, p. 55)

Table 4.19 Ability to understand and carry out tasks given in English

Form	Ability to understand English Language tasks				Ability to carry out English Language tasks			
	Yes		No		Yes		No	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1M	5	71.4	2	28.6	4	57.1	3	42.9
1J	4	30.8	9	69.2	1	7.7	12	92.3
1K	8	61.5	5	38.5	6	46.2	7	53.8
1H	2	28.6	5	71.4	2	28.6	5	71.4
Total	19	47.5	21	52.5	13	32.5	27	67.5

Question 2 asked about the respondents' ability to successfully carry out the English Language tasks given by the English Language teacher. The data in Table 4.19 above showed that 13 out of the 40 respondents (32.5%) reported they could successfully carry out the tasks as compared to 27 respondents (67.5%) who could not. The core of these respondents who could not successfully carry out the tasks, that is, 12 out of the 27 respondents were from Form 1J, the average proficiency group as shown in their grades - Grades C, D and E in their English Language Final Year Examination (See Table 4.3b, p. 55). The respondents when asked to explain further said that they were not proficient in English and would be able to perform if the instructions were in Bahasa Melayu.

The researcher had hypothesized that some respondents would not understand the English Language tasks, thus the next question. Question 3 was on what the English Language teachers should do so that the respondents would understand the tasks given. The respondents were given a choice of 8 options to choose from, namely

- Teach English in Bahasa Melayu all the time
- Translate from English into Bahasa Melayu when teaching
- Explain any difficult words or concepts in Bahasa Melayu
- Give instructions in Bahasa Melayu
- Explain in simpler English
- Ask students to use the dictionary
- Ask students to guess the meaning first
- Give examples only in English

Each respondent was allowed to choose more than one choice from the choice of 8 options given by ticking in the space provided.

The findings showed the respondents requesting for the English teachers to provide the translation in Bahasa Melayu with a frequency of 35 times as they felt more comfortable in that language, which was also their mother tongue. Asking for the explanation of difficult words or concepts in Bahasa Melayu (25 times) closely followed this. There was a frequency of 17 times reported on the use of the dictionary since the respondents realised that was as a way for the students to be more independent and to take charge of their own learning. 16 times were recorded whereby the teachers gave the instructions in Bahasa Melayu to ascertain that the students fully understood the tasks given. The frequency of choice by the respondents on the various ways is shown in Table 4.20 below.

Table 4.20 What English Language teachers should do so that respondents understand the tasks given

Form	Teach English in BM all the time	Translate in BM when teaching	Explain difficult words or concepts in BM	Give instructions in BM	Explain in simpler English	Ask students to use the dictionary	Ask students to guess meaning first	Give example only in English
1M		7	5	1	3	2		
1J	3	11	8	5	4	1	1	
1K	1	10	8	5	4	8	4	2
1H	3	7	4	5	2	6	2	3
Total	7	35	25	16	13	17	7	5

The high frequency of responses above reaffirm the researcher’s belief that the Malay students would understand and carry out the tasks in English more effectively if instructions were in Bahasa Melayu.

4.4 STRATEGIES USED BY RESPONDENTS WHEN LEARNING ENGLISH

In view of the problems faced by the respondents, they were then asked the strategies that they usually resorted to when learning English from the choice of the 16 strategies given. They could choose more than one strategy depending on the tasks given by the teachers. Respondents in Forms 1M and 1J (from the high and above average proficiency levels) answered this section on their own but the researcher assisted the respondents from Forms 1K and 1H (those below average and low proficiency levels) to ensure that they understood the question as mentioned in Chapter 3 Section 3.2.3. The result of the finding would be shown on the following pages. The 16 strategies that the respondents chose from were as follows:-

- 1 Ask my teacher to explain using simpler English
- 2 Ask my teacher to explain in Bahasa Melayu
- 3 Ask my friends quickly
- 4 Ask my friends after the lesson
- 5 Guess the meaning with the help of other known words
- 6 Ignore my teacher's instruction
- 7 Check with my friends on the accuracy of my interpretation of my teacher's activity
- 8 Ask my parents
- 9 Ask my siblings
- 10 Ask my English tuition teacher
- 11 Copy my friend's work
- 12 Ask others to do my work
- 13 Find excuses for not doing the exercise given to me
- 14 Confirm my understanding of my teacher's instructions with my friends
- 15 Confirm my understanding of my teacher's instructions with my teacher
- 16 Look in the dictionary

Table SQ 1 – What would you do if you do not understand the oral instructions given by your English Language teacher?

Form	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1M	4	2	2	4			2	2						2		2
1J	6	9	8	4	3	1	2	1	4	1			2	3	2	5
1K	5	10	8	4		1		3	1	2	3			1	4	6
1H	6	6	6	2		1	2	2	3	1			1		2	2
Total	21	27	24	14	3	3	6	8	8	4	3	0	3	6	8	15

In answer to the first strategy question on what the respondents would do if they did not understand the oral instructions given by their English Language teacher, they chose 15 out of the 16 strategies given. From Table SQ1 on the previous page, the five strategies that they frequently employed, namely, "Ask my teacher to explain in Bahasa Melayu" (27 times); "Ask my friends quickly" (24 times); "Ask my teacher to explain using simpler English" (21 times); "Look in the dictionary" (15 times) and "Ask my friends after the lesson" (14 times). All these responses showed the respondents managing their learning by using the sub-category of social strategies under the Indirect Strategy according to Oxford (1990) as stated in Chapter 2 Section 2.5 where the respondents sought "outside" help from their teachers, friends or the dictionary. . The respondents also used a sub-category of the Direct Strategy, that is, the compensation strategies like "Guess the meaning with the help of other known words", "Ignore my teacher's instruction", "Copy my friend's work" and "Find excuses for not doing the exercise given to me" with a frequency of three times each. (See Table SQ1). Here the researcher would like to categorise these strategies as "positive" and "negative compensation strategies". The "positive compensation strategy" was the positive use of strategy by the respondents who were keen in their own learning while "negative compensation strategies" was a negative use of strategy by the respondents in their learning.

The "positive compensation strategy" used by the respondents was guessing with the help of other known words while the "negative compensation strategies" were like ignoring the teacher's instruction, copying other's work or finding excuses for not doing the work. It was noted that only a handful of the respondents who were from the low proficiency level resorted to the "negative compensation strategies". These "negative compensation strategies" should not be encouraged among learners from all

levels as it could become a habit that would be difficult to overcome. The "negative compensation strategies" could hinder their creative thinking skills and cause them to be dependent on others in thinking and learning. This would hamper the aim of the curriculum in producing students who possessed creative and critical thinking skills.

Table SQ 2 – What would you do if you do not understand the written instructions in the exercises given by your English Language teacher?

Form	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1M		1	3	1	7			2	2					2	1	4
1J	3	5	6	3	1		1	4	4		2		1	4	6	6
1K	3	9	4	4	4		2	4	2		1		1	1	2	4
1H	4	5	4	4		2	1	3	4		1					2
Total	10	20	17	12	5	2	5	13	12	0	4	0	2	7	9	16

In answer to the second question regarding the strategies used in understanding the written instructions in their English exercises, the respondents chose 14 strategies. Table SQ 2 showed three strategies with the highest frequency were "Ask my teacher to explain in Bahasa Melayu" (20 times) followed by, "Ask my friends quickly" (17 times) and "Look in the dictionary" (16 times). Here, the respondents also used the sub-category of Oxford's (1990) Indirect Strategy. The researcher was quite surprised that no respondents chose the strategy "Ask my English tuition teacher". This was because the researcher had hypothesized that the respondents would ask their tuition teacher if they did not understand the written instructions given in a task. This was due to the feedback obtained by the researcher from a few students in this school prior to this research about how they did their written exercises. They reported seeking assistance from their English tuition teachers to explain the task that they were required to do. However, this group of respondents did not report using the strategy that some of their friends had used since they did not attend any English Language tuition in Form 1 (See Table 4.16a, p. 74). For those who had tuition, this strategy was not employed as they were mostly following the intensive type tuition package where

they had to move to another subject when the time for each subject ended. Hence there was no time to consult their tuition teacher.

Table SQ 3 – What would you do if you do not understand some or almost all of the English words that you read?

Form	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1M		3		4				2					1	1	1	3
1J	3	8	3	2	3		2	1	2			1	1	4	4	10
1K	2	8	1	5	2		2	2	3	1	1		1	3	3	7
1H	1	2	4	2	2	1	4	2		1	2		1	2	5	2
Total	6	21	8	13	7	1	8	7	5	2	3	1	4	9	13	19

When the respondents were asked the third question regarding the strategies they used if they did not understand some or almost all of the English words they had read, there were four strategies that they reported they frequently employed. Table SQ 3 saw the respondents choosing "Ask my teacher to explain in Bahasa Melayu" (21 times), "Look in the dictionary" (19 times), "Ask my friends after the lesson" (13 times) and "Confirm my understanding with my teacher" (13 times). Here the respondents also used the sub-category of social strategy by Oxford's (1990) Indirect Strategy. But for the fourth strategy, 13 respondents used the metacognitive strategy to evaluate their own learning by confirming their understanding with the teacher, a sign of the respondents co-ordinating their learning process.

Table SQ 4 – What would you do if you do not understand the exercises given by your English teacher?

Form	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1M		2	4	2			1	3						2		3
1J	3	5	5	7	1	1	2	4	6		1		1	2	5	5
1K	3	7	5	4		1	1	2	2		3	1	1	2	4	5
1H	2	6	2	1	6		1	1		3	2	1	1	1		5
Total	8	20	16	14	7	2	5	10	8	3	6	2	3	7	9	18

For the fourth question on the strategies they used if they did not understand the exercises given by their English teacher, the respondents listed 4 main strategies. (See

Table SQ 4). They were "Ask my teacher to explain in Bahasa Melayu" (20 times), "Look in the dictionary" (18 times), "Ask my friends quickly" (16 times) and "Ask my friends after the lesson" (14 times). Here the respondents also used the sub-category of social strategy by Oxford's (1990) Indirect Strategy.

The responses on the choice of strategies used provided the answer to research question 5, that is, "Do Malay students of different proficiency level of English employ different types of strategies in their learning of the language?" Data from the four questions above showed that the respondents resorted to the sub-category of social strategy by Oxford's (1990) Indirect Strategy to help them in their learning especially in the strategies for "Ask my teacher to explain in Bahasa Melayu" (88 times) and "Look in the dictionary" (68 times). The researcher had also noticed that some of the respondents had used the sub-category of the compensation strategy by Oxford's (1990) Direct Strategy that was categorised as "positive compensation strategy" and "negative compensation strategy". Only a handful of the respondents, mostly from the low proficiency level classes resorted to this "negative compensation strategy" as they found the other strategies too difficult for them. To these respondents, the product was more important than the process, which was a mammoth task to them. These respondents usually do not look forward to the language because they fear their inability to carry out the given task and face the consequences of their action. Thus, they usually resort to the negative compensation strategy to complete their tasks and to show both their teachers and parents that they had done their work.

4.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed the findings on the learning of English among Form 1 Malay students. The respondents in this study were of average to low proficiency level as ascertained by their UPSR English (Table 4.1) and Form 1 Final Year English Examination (Table 4.3b). Data obtained from Section C of the questionnaire showed that they resorted to Bahasa Melayu in order to learn and understand the English tasks given. Although some of these respondents went for tuition or read newspapers and story books in school and at home, not much difference was noted in their performance after one year. The respondents did not incorporate the knowledge from the newspapers or storybooks into their schoolwork as they saw this knowledge as separate entities. They could not link this knowledge (from newspapers or storybooks) to their schoolwork but only became aware of these links after they were pointed out to them. This was due to the respondents' lack in thinking skills and teachers not constantly drawing their attention to these links from young. Besides that, the respondents' family economic background (Tables 4.6a and 4.6b) had an effect on their lack of command in the language. They lacked opportunities to use English at home after school hours with their parents and siblings (Table 4.5) since their parents and siblings used Bahasa Melayu at home with them.

The attitude of some of the respondents towards English was encouraging as 19 respondents (47.5%) reported attempting to read 1 – 2 English books under the 'Program Nilam' while 7 others (17.5%) read more than 2 books in a month (Table 4.18). These respondents read during their recess time or after school while waiting for their society or club meetings to begin. An informal interview with the 26 respondents concerned found that these respondents knew of the importance of this

language for their future. The respondents also reported their choice of reading in school (Table 4.17a), as they lacked reading materials at home (Table 4.17b). Since the respondents could gain access to the reading materials (like storybooks, newspapers or dictionaries) in the school libraries or consult their peers, they felt that they could gain more knowledge in schools than back at home where they lacked these reading materials or assistance from their peers.

On the other hand, a majority of the respondents had negative attitudes towards English Language since they perceived it as an unimportant language despite their knowledge of the importance of this language for their future as mentioned in the previous paragraph. Their disinterest in the language was mainly due to its difficulty and their perception that there was no need for them to learn English since they already knew Bahasa Melayu, their mother tongue as seen in Tables AS 1 – 10. This was further supported by the fact that their examinations were in Bahasa Melayu (Table AS 6), people they met usually knew their mother tongue (Table AS 3) or they did not need it since they had no intention of furthering their studies overseas (Table AS 7). These respondents also reported that English was not important to them in their future (Table AS 10) since they intend to further their studies locally and due to the fact that it was not a prerequisite to pass their examination. In view of the lack of importance of English to them, the question of their ability to speak and read in English was therefore of no significance to them (Table AS 8). The abundance of reading material in their mother tongue was sufficient for them so they did not feel the need to waste their time in trying to read in another language.

The respondents who had to learn English since it was part of their syllabus reported using some strategies to assist them in overcoming any problems they might face in

the course of their studies. They also reported that the English teachers should use some of the strategies like translating or explaining difficult words or instructions in Bahasa Melayu (Table 4.20) so that the students would be better in English. This showed that many of the respondents wanted their English teachers to use Bahasa Melayu during English lessons so that they could understand the lessons or given tasks better and finally respond to the lessons well. This could be the key to the improvement of the respondents' achievement and that of the other students in English and the development of a positive attitude towards the language as a whole. The respondents from the high and average proficiency levels used the Oxford's (1990) sub-category of social strategies (Tables SQ 1 - 4) in order to understand the oral and written instructions given by their teachers while those from the low proficiency levels used Oxford's (1990) sub-category of compensation strategies. This showed that these respondents could take charge of their learning needs and be independent learners. Some respondents also reported using English during the lessons mostly with the teacher (Table 4.9) but they seldom used it with their friends of different races either because they or their friends were weak in English (Tables 4.8a - 4.8d).