

EFFECTS OF INTEGRATED SOUND WORD METHOD IN  
TEACHING EARLY READING TO ESL PRESCHOOLERS

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FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
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2020

EFFECTS OF INTEGRATED SOUND WORD METHOD IN TEACHING EARLY  
READING TO ESL PRESCHOOLERS

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DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
THE DEGREE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA  
KUALA LUMPUR

2020

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## ABSTRACT

This research study serves to examine effects of Integrated Sound Word Method in teaching early reading to ESL preschoolers. Its purpose is to fill the gaps of the English language deficiency among Malaysian students where strong influence of mother tongue language, students' social and emotional state as well as lack of conducive learning environment affect the Second Language acquisition. A quasi-experimental research was conducted in two preschools in the district of Kuala Lumpur. A purposive sampling method is chosen for this study to identify 60 government preschoolers who are weak in the English language proficiency. The preschoolers are equally divided into a control group and an intervention group. The findings have shown the Integrated Sound Word Method elicited significant effects in reducing the numbers of early reading errors, improving the early English reading proficiency and retaining the early reading knowledge among ESL preschoolers. This study able to provide an alternative for teaching early reading to ESL in preschools, however it is hoped that future researchers could further explore the Integrated Sound Word Method in teaching the English language in other fields. Acknowledging the importance of the English language in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, educators should well equip with effective teaching instructions to prepare students face challenges in the world without boundaries.

## **ABSTRAK**

### **KESAN KAEDAH GABUNGAN BUNYI KATA DALAM PENGAJARAN AWAL MEMBACA BAGI KANAK-KANAK PRASEKOLAH ESL**

*Kajian penyelidikan ini bertujuum untuk mengkaji kesan Kaedah Gabungan Bunyi Kata dalam pengajaran awal membaca bagi kanak-kanak prasekolah ESL. Tujuannya adalah untuk mengisi ruang kekurangan kajian bagi murid-murid Malaysia yang lemah dalam Bahasa Inggeris di mana ia dipengaruhi oleh kekuatan Bahasa ibunda, keadaan social dan emosi murid serta kurangnya persekitaran pembelajaran yang kondusif boleh mempengaruhi penguasaan Bahasa kedua. Kajian kuasi eksperimen ini dijalankan di dua buah prasekolah di Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur. Kaedah pensampelan terpilih digunakan untuk kajian ini bagi mengenalpasti 60 murid-murid prasekolah kerajaan yang lemah dalam penguasaan Bahasa Inggeris. Murid-murid prasekolah yang telah dipilih dibahagikan kepada kumpulan kawalan dan kumpulan intervensi. Penemuan kajian telah menunjukkan Kaedah Gabungan Bunyi Kata memberi kesan signifikan dalam mengurangkan kesilapan awal membaca, meningkatkan kecekapan awal membaca Bahasa Inggeris dan mengekalkan kecekapan awal membaca Bahasa Inggeris dikalangan kanak-kanak prasekolah ESL. Kajian ini boleh dijadikan pendekatan alternatif untuk pengajaran awal membaca Bahasa Inggeris kepada kanak-kanak ESL, namun demikian diharapkan para penyelidik masa depan dapat menerokai Kaedah Gabungan Bunyi Kata dalam pengajaran Bahasa Inggeris di bidang lain. Mengakui kepentingan Bahasa Inggeris pada abad ke-21, para pendidik perlu dilengkapi dengan metodologi pengajaran yang berkesan untuk mempersiapkan murid-muird menghadapi cabaran di dunia tanpa sempadan.*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

From the bottom of my heart, there are many people around me who I owed them the greatest gratitude. Without continuous support from these people, I may not be able to complete this thesis. It was a rocky journey, but they were there to pave my way to the end.

The first person who I would like to express my sincere gratitude is my supervisor, Dr. Mohd Nazri bin Abdul Rahman. He has not given up on me but led me with patience and shared valuable knowledge throughout the process of writing and producing this research work. Thank you Dr. Nazri for leading me by examples.

I also wanted to express my thank you to the school principal of Sekolah Kebangsaan Tiara Permai and Sekolah Kebangsaan Batu Muda, the preschool teachers, and the preschoolers who participated in this research study. I am greatly appreciating their involvement, support and time that they have sacrificed to make this experimental research a success.

My heartfelt thanks send to Professor Emeritus Dato' Dr. Isahak Haron who kindly give permission to adopt and use his research instruments for this experimental research. I admire his dedication and commitment toward early reading and writing literacy.

Lastly but not least, I cherish the supports given by my family and friends who tolerate and motivate me throughout my course of this Master program. Creating this thesis was truly a collaborative effort, and I appreciate the time, energy and support that people had generously donated.

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## LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

$\alpha$	:	alpha-Cronbach
$\mu$	:	Mean of Normal Population
$\neq$	:	Not Equal To
$\pm$	:	Plus-Minus
$i$	:	One Stage
$i + 1$	:	Next Stage
2M	:	Reading and Writing
ANOVA	:	One-way analysis of variance
C	:	Control Group
CVC	:	Consonant-Vowel-Consonant
CVI	:	Content Validity Index
<i>DSPK</i>	:	<i>Dokumen Kurikulum Standard Prasekolah Kebangsaan</i>
ESL	:	English as a Second Language
$H_1$	:	Alternative Hypothesis
$H_0$	:	Null Hypothesis
ISESCO	:	Islamic, Scientific, Cultural and Education Organization
ISWM	:	Integrated Sound Word Method
<i>KEMAS</i>	:	<i>Kemajuan Masyarakat</i>
<i>KGBK</i>	:	<i>Kata Gabungan Bunyi Kata</i>
L1	:	Native Language
L2	:	English as a Second Language Learners
LINUS	:	Literacy and Numeracy Screening
M	:	Mean

<i>MBMMBI</i>	:	<i>Memartabatkan Bahasa Malaysia Memperkukuh Bahasa Inggeris</i>
MOE	:	Ministry of Education
NPSC	:	National Preschool-based Standard Curriculum
NRP	:	National Reading Panel
O	:	Observation
P	:	Participants
PA	:	Phonics Approach
SD	:	Standard Deviation
SLA	:	Second Language Acquisition
SPSS	:	IBM Statistical Packages for Social Science
UK	:	United Kingdom
VC	:	Vowel Consonant
WL	:	Whole Language Approach
X	:	Intervention Group
ZPD	:	Zone of Proximal Development

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Appendix A: Lesson Plans

Appendix B: Early Reading Diagnostic Test

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Introduction

Malaysia is a unique multi-cultural country. There are three main races in Malaysia which consist of 68.8% Bumiputera, 23.2% Chinese, 7% Indians and 1% other races (The Office of Chief Statistician Department of Statistics, 2017). These ethnic groups able to live in peace and harmony while preserving their own culture, language, and tradition. At the same time, they also learn to embrace the culture of others. Since the establishment of Malaysia in 1963, the Malaysian government has stipulated the Malay language to be used as the country official language to protect national unity and identity among Malaysians (How, Chan, & Ain Nadzimah, 2015). Although the Malay language has been emphasized in the Malaysian's constitution and education, the English language also gained its recognition to be used as the second language in many fields such as education, social and economic policies (Jantmary & Melor, 2014). The English language plays a significance role in this country as it helps Malaysia connects to the world in so many ways including but not limited to political, social, economic, education and technology. This leads to the English language proficiency has become one of the requirements to enter tertiary education and competitive workforce.

The focus of this study is to examine effects of teaching early reading to English as a Second Language (ESL) preschoolers in Malaysia. Generally, Malaysia encourages bilingualism and multilingualism in various types of schools. For example, both mother tongue language and the English language are often used in vernacular schools during teaching and learning instructions (How et al., 2015).

For the past 5 years, the preschoolers' enrolment in government schools have increased from 194,225 in 2014 to 198,574 in 2015 and 200,522 in 2016 (Ministry of Education, 2016b). In year 2017, there were 201,249 enrolment and year 2018 recorded a slight increase to 203,690. By the year 2019, the enrolment in government-funded preschools has reached 205,200. While there were 320,542 preschoolers in private kindergarten, and 292,705 preschoolers from other educational sub-government agencies for the same year (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2019). Preschoolers who enrolled to any preschools in Malaysia are required to start learning the English language. While many of the preschoolers also get their first exposure to the English language through formal education in preschools (Hazita, 2016). The preschoolers are learning about the knowledge of print, letter sounds, letter recognition and gradually become the English emergent readers. Since the English language is not their mother tongue language, a lot of them having difficulties understanding the language and struggling to perform well in schools. Normazidah Che Musa, Koo Yew Lie, and Hazita Azman (2012) argued "strong influence in mother tongue language" has hindered students to excel in the second language acquisition (Normazidah, Koo, & Hazita, 2012, p. 47).

This issue has given opportunities for researchers to further explore in this area of study. Jan Hardman & Norhaslynda A-Rahman (2014) have proposed a teaching and learning English method that emphasized on communication and interactive learning to overcome low English proficiency among Malaysian students in their research study (Hardman & Norhaslynda, 2014). Earlier, Gnanasugirtham Devakurebai Dorothy (2005) conducted an experimental research on the whole language approach in private preschool's classes in Selangor to remediate the English language reading fluency (Gnanasugirtham, 2005). Another research study

explored by Audrey Bee Yoke Lim (2000) in her dissertation to use computer program CAI to teach and learn English as compared to using traditional method (Lim, 2000). To enrich the previous research studies, this research study interested to contribute new insight to improve the English language early reading proficiency among ESL preschoolers. This study targeted on the government preschoolers to examine effects of Integrated Sound Word Method in teaching early reading to ESL preschoolers. The findings and results from this research study are used to bring awareness the importance of using an effective teaching instruction to achieve the objectives of Ministry of Education's policy in the Malaysia Education Blueprint (2013-2025) where all students are "expected to acquire knowledge, high thinking skills, leadership skills, bilingual proficiency, ethics, spirituality and national identity" (Malaysia Education Blueprint, 2013, p. 30).

## **1.2 Background of The Study**

In 1992, the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE) had conducted a pilot project to introduce preschools known as "*prasekolah*" in several government primary schools. Later in 2013, the pilot project was expanded widely in all government primary schools in the nation (Lily Muliana & Mohamed Nor Azahari, 2013). The purpose for the establishment of public preschools was to cater preschool age young children from the low socio-economy group who cannot afford to send their child to private preschools. It also served to prepare preschoolers as they enter primary education (Hazrina, Alice Sabrina, & Hidayati, 2015; Chee, Mariani, Abdul Jalil, & Nor Mashitah, 2017).

The numbers of preschools in Malaysia are gradually increasing over the years. Currently there are 6,152 government preschools in Malaysia, and 19,048 of others

are run by private and sub-government agencies (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2019). This research study is intended to examine effects of Integrated Sound Word Method in teaching early reading to ESL preschoolers in government preschools. The Integrated Sound Word Method is used as an intervention program that adapts and incorporates both Phonics Approach and Whole Language Approach in finding a meaningful way of teaching early reading and nurture preschoolers' interest in learning the English language (Isahak, 2014).

The Malaysia Education Blueprint (2013-2025) has laid out a plan to transform the education system to “ensure every child is proficient in the Malay language and English language is encouraged to learn as an additional language” where it stated in their second shift of the movement (Ministry of Education, 2013, p.32). The objectives are to preserve and to make the Malay language the dominant language of communication as well as to drive national unity and solidarity. Nevertheless, steps are also taken to enhance the English language proficiency which enables students to compete and venture diversely around the world (Jantmary & Melor, 2014; Sidhu, Kaur, & Chi, 2018). Although the English language is becoming vital in Malaysia, at a same time the standard of the English language among Malaysians are still low. It is necessary to implement effective teaching and learning methods for students starting with the preschoolers. A research by Hamidah Yamat, Ross Fisher & Sarah Rich (2014) urged a serious consideration to be made and intervention program to be implemented in our education system (Yamat, Fisher, & Rich, 2014).

Even though there is a structured curriculum for English teachers to follow, they still faced some challenges in the implementation process which failed the

MOE's aspiration to transform the education system into a world standard (Ng, 2010). One of the obstacles is priority given to the mother tongue language over the English language in schools (Normazidah et al., 2012; Lily Muliana & Mohamed Nor Azahari, 2013; Noor Fazzriene & Nooreiny, 2014). Students are reluctant to practice and use the English language in school or at home. They perceived that the English language seemed to be too difficult to learn because acquiring the language is very different as compared to acquiring their mother tongue in terms of language structures, pronunciation, and writing (Hiew, 2012; Noor Fazzriene & Nooreiny, 2014). Moreover, some of the inexperienced teachers only give little encouragement and motivation to students to apply their classroom learning in their social interaction with peers and family members (Kabilan, 2008). Besides that, the classroom environment also does not show an inviting atmosphere to learn the English language where English teachers only emphasize on rote-learning and the students' English language proficiency is measured through examination scores (Normazidah et al., 2012). Once the examination was over, students tend to forget lessons they had learned in the English language classes if there is no consistent effort put in retaining the learning of English language.

In addition, the external environment such as school and home play key roles to help students in learning the English language. These environments affect students' social and emotional well-being as students need to feel confidence and proud of their ability to use the language with family and friends, as well as to allow them to have the opportunity and freedom to practice the English language in their surrounding (Yamat, Fisher, et al., 2014). For example, when students have a conducive classroom to learn the English language, they are not hesitant to bring their English language knowledge outside of the classroom to interact with their



families, peers and society. Furthermore, when parents allow their children to speak the English language along with their native language, it will significantly improve the children's English language proficiency. On the other hand, students from low socio-economic group where parents are not well educated, they are unable provide a conducive learning environment at home that allows their children to learn the English language (Nor Hani, Maslawati, Melor, & Azizah, 2017). Since these parents have poor English language proficiency, they are struggled to provide appropriate English language learning materials for their children to practice at home (Noor Fazzrienee & Nooreiny, 2014). Ultimately, these parents need to fully rely on the English teachers in schools to educate their children.

As claimed by Noor Fazzrienee Nun Ramlan and Nooreiny Maarof (2014), the English language is treated as the foreign language by many Malaysian students and they do not get the chance to practice the language as their circle of friends also facing the same problem (Noor Fazzrienee & Nooreiny, 2014). Furthermore, limited resources have caused many Malaysian students not to receive adequate reference and proper guidance in learning the English language. Most of the reading books and interactive media were originated from western countries and the materials do not represent the culture and lifestyle of Malaysia. It would be difficult for students to relate information that they learned in English classes with their real-life experiences. When students have little awareness of the importance of English language, they tend to give up and forget the lessons instantly.

Another concern of this research is that the government schools in Malaysia lack of comprehensive and effective resources to assist the learning of English language for the Second Language learners (Hazita, 2016). The preschool's

curriculum known as the National Preschool-Based Standard Curriculum (NPSC) which was stipulated by the MOE emphasizes more on social and emotional development. In term of linguistic development, more focus is given to learning mother tongue language such as the Malay language as compared to other languages (Lily Muliana & Mohamed Nor Azahari, 2013; How et al., 2015). This shows that the opportunity for preschoolers to learn early reading in the English language is restricted. Based on a document stated in the NPSC, time allocation for the English lessons in preschools nationwide is sixty minutes a week (Ministry of Education, 2016a). The fact that majority of Malaysian's children are English as a Second Language learners (L2), communication in the English language with others is very limited as their mother tongue language is still prominent in school and at home. Hence, the only opportunity for L2 to learn and practice the English language is the sixty minutes' session a week during the English lessons.

### **1.3 Rationale of The Study**

The current teaching approach used by the preschool teachers for the English lessons are designed based on the Phonics method. Preschoolers are required to learn letters recognition and letters sound, sound out initial, medial and ending sounds of a word, blending phonemes into single syllable, read high-frequency words, simple phrases and sentences (Ministry of Education, 2016a). The Phonics' instructions that the preschool teachers used basically memorized letters and sounds that do not make sense to preschoolers. Hazita Azman (2016) noted that the "syllabus was influenced by grammar based language learning approach, while choral repetitions and substitution drills were widely practiced" in school (Hazita, 2016, p. 68). Therefore, preschoolers just followed along as their teachers instructed

them to recite sound of letters in class, which each letter sound does not give any meaning to them. This approach does not seem to effectively help preschoolers to improve their English early reading skill, and it may cause them to lose their interest in learning the English language.

There are many other reading instructions developed based the Phonics Approach and Whole Language Approach. Jolly Phonics founded by Chris Jolly in 1989 is one the commonly used Phonics instruction in preschools around the world, whereas Glen Doman's reading flash cards is famous for its Whole Language reading strategy. Both theories are different but able to produce positive outcomes on children's early literacy development. These approaches may seem effective in foreign countries where the English language is their native language. However, neither of these approaches solely suit to Malaysian's context as the majority of the students here are L2 (Hazrina et al., 2015). The learning and teaching approach for the L2 can be slightly different than the native language learners.

Hence, this research study is proposed to use Integrated Sound Word Method as an intervention teaching instruction to enhance the early English reading proficiency among ESL preschoolers. The goal is to examine effects of Integrated Sound Word Method in teaching early reading in preschools' environment that aligned with the second shift of transformation as stated in the Malaysia Education Blueprint (2013-2025). The Integrated Sound Word Method is a systematic teaching instruction where preschoolers learn targeted alphabetical letters and sounds to build meaningful English words, phrases and short sentences in spiral orders. Local contexts are incorporated in the lessons for preschoolers to make connection with words they learned in the classroom to their real-life experiences.

Preschool teachers are encouraged to use visual flash cards and translate vocabulary words in the mother tongue language (Isahak, 2014). With a comprehensive and proper instructions, teachers and preschoolers will be able to efficiently make use of sixty minutes class time to learn the English early reading and to achieve the MOE's objective as to strengthen the English language while upholding the Malay language (Ministry of Education, 2013). Hence, a conducive learning environment should be established where it encourages learning and interaction to allow students to learn the language and apply the knowledge in their environment instead of learning on pure memorization (Yamat, Fisher, et al., 2014). Preschoolers deserve learning early reading in fun and interactive ways where they can understand the purpose of learning the English language and retain the knowledge.

#### **1.4 Statement of Problems**

Learning the English language especially early reading is a challenging task which required preschoolers to master several skills such as recognizing letters and sounds, decoding unknown words, familiarize sight words, understanding vocabulary and comprehend meaning of texts in a story (Marchand, 2015). Imagine how could ESL preschoolers in Malaysia acquire these complex early English reading skills along with their mother tongue language? Over the decades, there are numerous research studies have been conducted to find remedial for poor English language proficiency around the world among L2. In the case of Malaysia scenario, the population of L2 are almost covered the whole nation. How can preschoolers cope to raise the standard of early English reading proficiency in Malaysia? Different perspectives are being explored to examine the gaps whether current preschool's curriculum and the teachers competent to improve the standard of early English reading proficiency in preschools by considering the language factors,

teaching models and preschoolers' learning environment. These areas need extra attention as they are parts of the key issues that caused poor English language proficiency in Malaysia. Hence, this research study seeks to examine effects of Integrated Sound Word Method in teaching early reading to ESL preschoolers to remediate the issues. Its purpose is to determine whether Integrated Sound Word Method able to help improve the early English reading proficiency among government ESL preschoolers.

Referring to the English's curriculum stated in the NPSC and the supports provided by the MOE, there are a few issues that need to be rectified which may lead to poor English language performance in preschools. In the statement of NPSC 2017 which also known as the "*Dokumen Kurikulum Standard Prasekolah Kebangsaan (DKSPK) 2017*", all preschoolers are required to learn 60 minutes of English language lesson in class per week (Kurikulum, 2016). It is the only time where majority of the government preschoolers in Malaysia use the English language in school or perhaps just during the English lessons (Kabilan, 2008; Normazidah et al., 2012). A statistic showed that "21% of Tamil students and 9.84% of Chinese students speak English as a home language" (How et al., 2015, p. 124). Hence, the English language exposure may not be sufficient to enhance students' English literacy learning.

Furthermore, it is always been a major problem for teachers strive to help students with poor English language proficiency despite facing low popularity rate in the subject among students (Noor Fazzriene & Nooreiny, 2014). This is due to students do not show interest in learning the English language as they perceive it is a difficult language. Another research study conducted by Jantmary Thirusanku &

Melor Md. Yunus (2014) have suggested to provide clear guidance and train local teachers to perform better rather than spending a large amount of budget on projects, hiring foreign teachers, and implementing inconsistent curriculum for schools (Jantmary & Melor, 2014). The preschool teachers whose have minimal understanding of content knowledge of the preschool curriculum may affect their ability to give clear explanations of any skills and communicate ineffectively (Chee et al., 2017). Besides that, the teachers also faced challenges in the classroom as they do not get adequate training on implementing activities in diverse classroom with mixed learning abilities, weak in the English language and they also struggle to get through specified syllabus in the curriculum (Kabilan, 2008; Hardman & Norhaslynda, 2014).

Furthermore, the current teaching pedagogy that was adopted from the western country gives less impact to local students. Noor Fazzrienee Nun Ramlan & Nooreiny Maarof (2014) argued that “the techniques of acquiring English as a Second Language is not the same as acquiring the mother tongue language” since the structure and formation of the English language are different from the mother tongue such as the Chinese and Malay languages (Noor Fazzrienee & Nooreiny, 2014, p. 288). Whereas the methods used in Malaysia were to teach the English language for the English native speakers in foreign countries. Some of the contexts used in the teaching instructions are irrelevant in terms of its environmental settings, culture, social and the language expressions. These may lead to students experience language anxiety, confusion in instructional practices and external influences such as social and cultural differences have place the students “linguistically and psychologically isolated” from learning the English language (Normazidah et al., 2012; Hiew, 2012).

The English language proficiency of each student determines by the amount of exposure and opportunity to learn the language. Poverty or low-income families can affect children's reading ability and more likely to experience delayed in language development skills (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). As Noor Fazzrienee Nun Ramlan & Nooreiny Maarof (2014) quoted "a lack of support" from home and community to use the English language may constraints students to acquire the language (Noor Fazzrienee & Nooreiny, 2014, p. 290). This statement also supported by another researchers where the culture norm in environment such as home and society affect the use of English language (Nor Hani et al., 2017). Many parents are worried when their children learn the English language, they will lose their mother tongue language, culture, and national identities. Since there is no strong enforcement from parents and teachers, it makes the home and school environments discouraging for students to speak and practice the English language. In addition, the spirit of embodying pluralism, or ethnic languages especially in vernacular public schools that treated the Malay language as the formal language has left the English language the least priority spoken in those schools (Hazita, 2016). Nevertheless, the ethnic identity is highly respected in this country and the use of mother tongue language has significantly portrayed through students since very young age (How et al., 2015). Students are put in a position where they must master their mother tongue language as a priority language and other languages come next.

Based on the research problems discussed above, this research intended to fill the gaps which focus more on the study of language factor as the role mother tongue language which is the Malay language to help Second Language learners acquiring additional foreign language in Malaysia. In one of the Krashen's Second Language

Acquisition Theories mentioned about the native language can play a role in the Second Language acquisition at the early stage (Krashen, 1982). While, other research studies were criticizing the possibility of second language learners giving up their mother tongue language and concentrating on the challenges of acquiring the English language. There is little research discussed the benefits of using native language to support second language acquisition.

Another gap to be explored in this research is the teaching methodology for ESL preschoolers. Hazita Azman (2016) had highlighted several causes of the limited success in the education's policies. There included "inadequate trained and skilled teachers who are not proficient in the English language, mismatch between curriculum and pedagogical realities, limited time dedicated to language teaching and learning, insufficient and inappropriate learning resources, as well as increased fear of language endangerment" (Hazita, 2016, p.66). A more concrete research study is required to fill in this gap by examining effective teaching approaches to maximize the time given to teach early English reading in preschools. There are multiples studies of Phonics approach and Whole Language approach by the linguistic researchers, but limited study on the integration of both Phonic and Whole Language or balanced approaches as incorporated in Integrated Sound Word Method is yet to be explored in this study. Different teaching models such as explicit instruction, scaffolding, corrective feedback and the use of native language (L1) to support the English language content instruction can enhance preschoolers learning to read. Furthermore, there is little research about the incorporation of local contexts to create a meaningful learning experience for preschoolers in the classroom should be explored. It is possible for preschoolers to learn their culture and tradition in the English language. They are not only preserving their ethnic identity but also bring



it up to another level and embrace it internationally. This is a value-added resource to enrich students' English language learning rather than being considered as sources of interference or negative transfer (Jantmary & Melor, 2014).

By examining these multi layers causes of the English language deficiency in Malaysia, implementation of adequate teaching and learning models are necessary to examine effects of teaching early English reading in government preschools. The existing research studies of ESL are primarily qualitative which focuses on exploring the root causes of poor English performance in schools. Therefore, this research study suggests to using quasi experimental as a quantitative method to examine effects of Integrated Sound Word Method in teaching early reading to ESL preschoolers. In learning early reading for ESL preschoolers, a lot of supports are needed in terms of giving encouragement and providing conducive learning environments as well as adequate, meaningful experience (Normazidah et al., 2012).

### **1.5 Purpose of The Study**

This study is designed to examine effects of Integrated Sound Word Method in teaching early reading to ESL preschoolers. There were some research studies conducted using Integrated Sound Word Method which also known as "*Kaedah Gabungan Bunyi Kata (KGBK)*" in teaching reading and writing in the Malay language and Jawi. The "*KGBK*" approach has significantly improved the Malay language and Jawi proficiency among primary students in Malaysia (Isahak Haron, Abdul Halim bin Ibrahim, Abdul Latif bin Gapor, 2013). Unfortunately, there is no evidence that shows effects of Integrated Sound Word Method toward the teaching of early reading in the English language among ESL preschoolers. Therefore, this

study serves as the pioneer research to examine the effects of Integrated Sound Word Method in teaching early reading to ESL preschoolers in the district of Kuala Lumpur.

## **1.6 Research Objectives**

The objectives of this research study are:

- 1.6.1 To determine the early reading errors among ESL preschoolers.
- 1.6.2 To examine the effects of Integrated Sound Word Method in teaching early reading to ESL preschoolers.
- 1.6.3 To examine the effects of Integrated Sound Word Method in retaining early reading knowledge among ESL preschoolers.

## **1.7 Research Questions**

This study attempts to answer the following questions:

- 1.7.1 What is the frequency of early reading errors among ESL preschoolers?
- 1.7.2 What is the effect of Integrated Sound Word Method in teaching early reading to ESL preschoolers?
- 1.7.3 What is the effect of Integrated Sound Word Method in retaining early reading knowledge among ESL preschoolers?

## **1.8 Research Hypotheses**

- 1.8.1 **H<sub>0</sub>:** The frequency of early reading errors among ESL preschoolers do not change over time.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** The frequency of early reading errors among ESL preschoolers show significant decline over time.

1.8.2 **H<sub>0</sub>:** The Integrated Sound Word Method does not show effect in teaching early reading to ESL preschoolers.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** The Integrated Sound Word Method shows significant effect in teaching early reading to ESL preschoolers.

1.8.3 **H<sub>0</sub>:** The Integrated Sound Word Method does not show effect in retaining early reading knowledge among ESL preschoolers.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** The Integrated Sound Word Method shows significant effect in retaining early reading knowledge among ESL preschoolers.

## **1.9 Limitations and Delimitations of The Study**

### **1.9.1 Limitations.**

A few limitations have been identified that may weaken the supported evidence in this research study. The human limitation of this study examines four preschool classes with small number of preschoolers in a sample size may not be sufficient to be generalized as the whole population of preschoolers in Malaysia. This study also builds on an experimental research where the preschool teachers do not have experience and proper training to conduct the unit lessons. As for spatial limitation, the learning materials may not be enough for each preschooler and they may need to share with a partner. Since most of the materials are prepared by the researcher, the cost is involved in preparing good quality materials. Another limitation is the time limitation. The study is

conducted within a short time frame which the effect shown may not be as predicted. A lot of time also was taken to get permissions to conduct this research study from several government bodies and preschools as well as give priority to school events.

#### 1.9.2 Delimitations.

There were also a few delimitations have been identified in this research study. All government preschools have a maximum number of 25 preschoolers in one class. However, in this study needs at least of 30 preschoolers to conduct the experimental research. Therefore, the researcher needs to use purposive sampling method to choose preschoolers whose deemed fit into the criteria through matching process to proceed with the study. The participants in control and treatment groups must come from two different schools due to limited number of preschoolers in each preschool. The location between these two preschools were assigned as near as possible so that the participants' demographic and learning abilities from both schools could be matched or standardized. Constant field observations and preschoolers' learning objectives are closely monitored. The feedbacks from the preschool teachers are evaluated to get an accurate result.

#### **1.10 Significance of The Study**

The research study aims to examine effects of Integrated Sound Word Method in teaching early reading to ESL preschoolers in the district of Kuala Lumpur. The findings in this research study can be used as a reference by Ministry of Educations, teachers, parents, and other researchers.

Even though the Integrated Sound Word Method is still new and undergoing a process of validation, it has the potential to benefit teachers especially in executing the preschool curriculum as more research on this study proven to be effective in improving the English language reading proficiency among L2. Furthermore, the success of this teaching instrument may provide an alternative to Ministry of Education to consider of implementing Integrated Sound Word Method in all preschools nationwide. However, more research studies need to be proposed to strengthen the validity of this research study.

Another challenge of teaching the English literacy in Malaysia is to update the classrooms with current and relevant literacy needs (Normazidah et al., 2012). Through past research studies, it has revealed that many English teachers faced a lot of challenges when teaching the English subject. One of the many challenges was due to limited access to information to better understand current issues of the English language acquisition that happened in Malaysia. This research study may be able to serve teachers with latest information and additional teaching instruction to teach English as a Second Language in Malaysia. Integrated Sound Word Method is designed suit to local contexts that enables preschoolers to learn in a meaningful way where preschool teachers are encouraged to teach using dual languages to translate difficult words in the classroom.

Nowadays, parents are more aware and concern about their children's whole being especially in education and their future career prospect. Many of them are eager to find sources outside schools that can add-on to their children's learning especially in the English language. The availability of past research studies can help parents in decision making when choosing appropriate teaching and learning

instructions for their children. Therefore, the findings from this research will be able to guide parents to make comparison with other research studies and determine an effective teaching instruction for their children in term of improving their English language reading proficiency. Parents will be able to get up-to-date information and opinion of professional researchers.

Future researchers are encouraged to further explore and expand the study in other fields. This research study only examined on the effects of Integrated Sound Word Method in teaching early reading to ESL preschoolers. There are other opportunities for researchers to explore in different areas using Integrated Sound Word Method such as in “*Orang Asli*” [Originate people] community, the English language remedial classes, and special education for students with learning disabilities. Moreover, the availability of this study may help future researchers through previous literature reviews and its tools to collect information to build more concrete evidence to support their research findings.

### **1.11 The Present Study**

Learning an additional language can be challenging to many people especially in the English language. Although the English language and the Malay language have some similarities in term of using alphabetical letters, but they are distinctively different in sentences structure, syntax and pronunciation. For example, the English language has 26 alphabetical letters same as the Malay language, but those 26 letters made up more than 44 sounds as compared to the Malay language only has 28 sounds (Isahak, 2014).

In learning early reading for ESL preschoolers, they need to be scaffolded where teachers must monitor the learning process from time to time. Integrated

Sound Word Method is introduced to examine the effects of the instrument toward early reading in the English language literacy for ESL preschoolers. The study is measured using quantitative research method. Generally, the Integrated Sound Word Method is a set of learning instruction to guide preschoolers in learning letters sound, letters recognition, blending, read meaningful words, phrases and sentences in a systematic and sequential ways (Isahak, 2014). Extension to this approach, preschoolers able to build new words through zone proximal development in their learning environment regardless it is in school or at home. Their performances can be monitored by teachers through active learning in large and small groups. By the end of the early reading module, the early reading diagnostic test is conducted to evaluate the effects of the program.

In reference to the past research studies, this study is set to fill the gaps in teaching early reading of the English language to ESL preschoolers in the district of Kuala Lumpur. This topic is consciously chosen to increase the early English reading proficiency among Malaysian preschoolers and to nurture them to become a bilingual individual as they enter competitive world in the twenty first century.

## **1.12 Operational Definitions**

The operational definitions stated in this study are briefly define in alphabetical order. These definitions are only for the purpose of this study and might mean slightly different from the general terms.

### **1.12.1 Emergent literacy.**

It is defined as “the skills, knowledge and attitudes” that are developed in the early stage as prerequisites to develop more structural forms of reading and writing (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998, p. 337). For this study, the Emergent

literacy serves as an early reading for English as a Second Language learners in preschools.

#### 1.12.2 English as a Second Language (ESL).

ESL is most often perceived as a foreign language due to it is not a mother tongue and it is not frequently used in daily activities (Yamat, Fisher, et al., 2014). As for this research study, the English as a Second Language refers to individual who learns English as a Second Language through formal and informal teaching and learning instructions in preschools.

#### 1.12.3 Integrated Sound Word Method (ISWM).

ISWM is a systematic and sequential integration of the Phonics and the Whole Language approaches to teach reading and writing in the English language (Isahak Haron, et. al 2013). This study uses ISWM as an instrument to examine effects of teaching early reading to the ESL preschoolers.

#### 1.12.4 Phonics Approach.

Phonics Approach binds phonemes and graphemes together in an alphabetical system as a method for teaching reading. The smallest unit of a sound is called phoneme, but it does not necessarily a single letter. In the English language, there are 44 phonemes with 26 letters (Lyle, 2016). In this study, it defines an alphabetical order system, each individual letter represents a unique sound. This approach teaches preschoolers recognize the relationship between the letter and its sound. Combination of the letters and sounds formed a word.



#### 1.12.5 Phonemic Awareness

It means an ability to hear, identify, and manipulate the individual sounds (phonemes) in the English language (Hanzl, 2014). As for this study, this term is used to determine preschoolers' ability to read phonemes in the text.

#### 1.12.6 Preschools.

Preschools offer an early childhood education for children age four to six years old (Lily Muliana & Mohamed Nor Azahari, 2013). In this study, preschools refer to public school classes established by the Ministry of Education that are annexed into the primary schools.

#### 1.12.7 Reading Comprehension

It is defined as “the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning” through understanding and interpretation of written texts (Snow, 2002, p. 11). This research focuses on early reading comprehension to determine the ability to understand and construct meaning from text.

#### 1.12.8 Reading Proficiency.

This is a process of “translating visual codes” which involves decoding letters into corresponding sounds and linking those sounds to single words to form a meaningful language (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998, p. 849). The term reading proficiency in this study is used to decode letter sounds of a word, phrase, sentence, and story.

#### 1.12.9 Whole Language Approach.

This approach emphasizes that a language is meaningful when it formed “a complete system” between words and functioned in relation with each other

to create meaning (Huang, 2014, p. 71). This research study uses this approach in reading and recognizing sets of words. Preschoolers learn to read meaningful words through social interaction with teachers and friends.

### **1.13 Summary**

Malaysia has been undergone several phases of transformation, especially in the education system. Ever since the English language was recognized as a compulsory second language in government schools starting from preschools, many graduates still not managed to master the language through eleven years of formal English language learning. The gaps withholding the English language achievement among L2 have been identified, and this research study is proposed to improve preschoolers' early English reading proficiency by examining the effects of Integrated Sound Word Method in teaching early reading to ESL preschoolers. It strives to help the preschoolers recognize letters and its sounds, blend to form words and phrases as well as read simple sentences effectively and meaningfully despite of several challenges faced by the ESL preschoolers, preschool teachers, policy makers and parents. The findings would benefit many parties such as the Ministry of Education, teachers, parents and other researchers. Later in chapter 2, researcher will discuss in detailed the historical backgrounds, challenges, theories, and teaching models that serve as the pillars of formation to this research study.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

In Malaysia, preschools are owned by three organizations. There are the government funded preschools which attached in the government primary school's building, private-owned preschools, and the preschools under umbrella of government bodies (Ministry of Education, 2016b). These preschools are controlled by the Ministry of Education and must follow the National Preschool-based Standard Curriculum (NPSC) as stated in the National Education Act 1996. The NPSC noted that preschoolers are required to attend 60 minutes of the English language lesson in class per week (Ministry of Education, 2016a). Nevertheless, these preschools have the authority to set their own goals and objectives, create and operate their preschool's program, as well as to manage their manpower, students ratio and schedules (Lily Muliana & Mohamed Nor Azahari, 2013).

As for the preschools' English language curriculum, the teaching and learning philosophies are varied from one preschool to another to cater their targeted preschoolers' need in the English language acquisition. The teaching and learning English language strategies have evolved for the past few decades to suit with students' current needs due to the social and environmental changed (Jantmary & Melor, 2014). The focus of the current preschool's curriculum is to create a balance and holistic learning atmosphere that covers intellectual, physical, artistic, emotional, social, spiritual and character development (Chee et al., 2017). It is importance to choose and use precise pedagogy that suits the needs of today young children in Malaysia. There are two majors early reading approaches that are widely

used in teaching emergent readers. The Phonics approach teaches children to recognize letters and sounds from a-z, then blend individual sound together to build words. It is described as the “bottom-up” instruction to decode reading texts. Another approach is known as the Whole Language approach which emphasizes on “top-bottom” instruction where children are taught to read as whole words based on their prior knowledge and experience they encountered while reading (Gnanasugirtham, 2005). There will be a new early reading approach that adopted both the Phonics and Whole Language approaches. This study examines Integrated Sound Word Method that targeted on the most commonly used letters and sounds to build meaningful words. Children are taught a few vowel and consonant letters sounds to build simple words that they are familiar with in systematic and sequential ways. The children then expand their vocabulary words as they incorporated more letters and sounds to their previous learning (Isahak, 2014). All of these approaches are vital in teaching early English reading in Malaysia particularly for emergent readers like preschoolers. Later in this chapter explores background of preschools in Malaysia, challenges of teaching ESL, related theories, teaching models for ESL preschoolers as well as past studies of learning ESL in different countries.

## **2.2 Background of Preschools in Malaysia**

The age appropriates to enroll children into preschool program in Malaysia is between three to six years old (Zainurin & Mohd Sabri, 2011). The Ministry of Education (MOE), Ministry of Rural and Regional Development, as well as a sub-bodies under Prime Minister Department called Department of National Unity and Integration are involved in the establishment of preschool education in Malaysia (Lily Muliana & Mohamed Nor Azahari, 2013). Besides that, there are also many

preschools centers owned by private individuals, enterprises or organizations as well as the local and oversea franchises.

The first preschool in Malaysia started as early as in 1970's under the management of Ministry of Rural and Regional Development was named as "*Kemajuan Masyarakat, KEMAS*". Then another preschool was established by the end of 1970's when Department of National Unity and Integration built a neighborhood association called "*Rukun Tetangga*" and provides preschool program under the name of "*PERPADUAN*". "*PERPADUAN*" accepts children of all races and background that lived in the urban community (Ng, 2010). In the year 1992, a public preschool known as "*Prasekolah*" was introduced by MOE in a pilot project to set up the preschool in government primary school's compound. By the year of 2003, the MOE had officially announced the establishment of "*Prasekolah*" in Malaysia (Lily Muliana & Mohamed Nor Azahari, 2013). The latest number of preschools (as per the year 2019) from the three organizations discussed above are as follow; there are 6,152 preschools owned by the government with 205,200 enrolments, 8,494 "*KEMAS*" preschools with 215,229 preschoolers, and "*PERPADUAN*" owned 1,781 preschools with 37,964 enrolments (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2019). Even though some of these preschools are either fully or partially funded by the government, their teaching pedagogies and instructions are slightly different from each other. These due to the preschools are operating in a different location, offer different objectives, have various teacher's qualification, provide different facilities, fees structure, and schedules (Lily Muliana & Mohamed Nor Azahari, 2013).

In addition, there are other preschools that were established by the private sectors and religious bodies which given different names such as “*tadika*”, “*tabika*”, and “*prasekolah*” (Ng, 2010). These preschools are encouraged by the government since it can cater different groups of population, especially affordable families and provides quality education to young children (Lily Muliana & Mohamed Nor Azahari, 2013). Recently, the demand for early childhood education has gained popularity among educated parents in urban and rural areas as to prepare their children for a smooth transition to Standard One (Hazrina et al., 2015). The factors that influenced parents’ decisions for private preschools in Malaysia lean toward its brand name, mediums of instruction, curriculum, religious based, other parents’ testimonial, fees structure, location, transportation, quality of teachers and services provided such as safety, hygiene, food, and infrastructure (Zainurin & Mohd Sabri, 2011; Lily Muliana & Mohamed Nor Azahari, 2013). Despite the nature of business structure as a private enterprise, the Ministry of Education is responsible to oversee and monitor the operation of these privately-owned preschools to make sure they follow the rules and regulations written in the National Education Act 1996.

Regardless the objectives and other facilities offered by the public and private preschools, the main purposes of preschools are to provide a good quality of education more accessible to everyone and to give opportunity for children to gain more knowledge to live the lifestyle they wanted in the future (Heng, 2008; Lily Muliana & Mohamed Nor Azahari, 2013). Therefore, competition among these sectors create a healthy environment that offers variety of early childhood education program for young children to learn and gain knowledge. It also allows less fortunate children from a low socio-economic group in rural and inner-city areas an

opportunity to get an equal education as others (Heng, 2008). As mentioned by Lily Muliana Mustafa and Mohamed Nor Azahari Azman (2013), children aged from birth to five years old are known to be critical years for them to develop and growth (Lily Muliana & Mohamed Nor Azahari, 2013). Nurture a child's whole well-being at an early age is vital to ensure proper upbringing in the child's holistic developments. Therefore, parents and teachers play an important role to make sure every child deserve a decent quality of education in preschools.

### **2.3 Challenges of Teaching English As A Second Language (ESL)**

The Documents of National Preschool-based Standard Curriculum 2017 (NPSC 2017) has divided the English language syllabus into three main areas; "Listen and Speaking", "Reading" and "Writing". The outline for the Reading content is as follow:

"Pupils are able to recognize and sound out letters of the alphabet, recognize and sound out initial, medial and ending sounds in a word, blend phonemes (sounds) to form single syllable words, recognize and read high frequency/sight words, read simple phrases, read simple sentences, read texts independently, read and respond to texts read" (Ministry of Education, 2016b, p.52).

Emergent literacy is defined as "the skills, knowledge and attitudes" that are developed in the early stage as perquisitions to develop more structural forms of reading and writing (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998; p. 337). Malaysia is considered novice when it comes to teaching emergent literacy to ESL preschoolers. It is important to form a concrete structure or system that can effectively teach early English reading to preschoolers. This might due to many preschools in Malaysia

have insufficient teaching and learning materials that slowed down the English language acquisition in the classroom. Furthermore, many preschool teachers are not competent or well-trained in conducting activities in the English language. Hence, adequate training is needed to prepare teachers to be expert in the subject area and improve their English language command in the classroom (Hazita, 2016). Mohd Sofi Ali (2003) noted in his case study that some English teachers showed no confidence in teaching the English subject because they have poor English proficiency and lack of “pedagogical knowledge” to teach the language (Mohd Sofi, 2003; p. 4). Jantmary Thirusanku and Melor Md. Yunus (2014) urged to empower the qualities of English teachers to have well-rounded personalities who can nurture and give impact to students’ learning, articulate and teach the English language as well as acquire problem solving and leadership skills (Jantmary & Melor, 2014). Ideally, a childcare center and preschool’s atmosphere should be inviting to instill learning which gives safe and positive environment to children acquire the emergent literacy (Whitehurst and Lonigan, 1998).

However, the current teaching instructions in preschools do not encourage preschoolers to participate in teaching and learning processes. The classroom’s atmosphere is teacher-centered where the teachers driving the instructions to meet their individual goals to complete a specific unit lesson through rote learning and pattern drillings (Mohd Sofi, 2003). They are also being confined with specific school books and constantly lead by assessments (Arif, 2014). This leads to preschoolers have little opportunity to express their thoughts and they must do any given tasks by the teacher. Preschoolers are being trained to do drill and rote learning to memorize alphabets and words in the books or on the board (Normazidah et al., 2012). They do not show much enthusiasm in learning as it is



merely memorizing alphabetical letters and sounds that do not make sense or give meaning to them until later age.

In Malaysia, the duty of teaching ESL is challenging because of the “strong influence” of mother tongue language hinders the learning of the English language (Normazidah et al., 2012; How et al., 2015). Majority of the students preferred to choose their mother tongue language to communicate with each other in their surrounding (Mohd Sofi, 2003). This desire has resulted poor motivation in learning the English language (How et al., 2015). Besides that, lack of support from parents and teachers also may affect students’ learning as they feel little motivation to learn the English language. Many less educated parents afraid that their mother tongue language may gradually cease as their children acquired a new language. Therefore, factors such as unenthusiastic attitude, lack of supports and motivation towards learning the English language in the students’ social environment have worsened the effort of acquiring the English language (Normazidah et al., 2012).

An introduction of a new policy by the Ministry of Education; “To Uphold *Bahasa Malaysia* and Strengthen the English language (*MBMMBI*)” in 2012 has laid out various steps to improve the English language proficiency and to enable students enhance the knowledge to explore and compete nationally and internationally. This initiative intended to enculture and master the languages to foster national unity and develop a new economy globally (Jantmary & Melor, 2014). Aligning with the mission of the *MBMMBI*’s policy, integrate both languages instead of separating the languages and weighing the importance of one language over the other would be beneficial for students to emulate the two languages together hand in hand. Students use the advantage of being fluent in L1

language to help master the English language. It is interesting to note in Juliana Othman (2010) survey showed that 95.8% ( $m = 3.42$ ) of her respondents reported that they used both Malay language and English language interchangeably and translating during classroom talk as part of the classroom instructional practices (Juliana, 2010). Siti Hamin Stapa and Abdul Hameed Abdul Majid (2006) documented that the Malay language helped L2 to better improve their English writing skill (Siti Hamin & Abdul Hameed, 2006). Through conceptualized the translation would benefit the students to fully understand the lessons taught in the English class (Mohd Sofi, 2003). A good bilingual education can be achieved through proper and calculated implementation of the policy that enable Second Language learners to master both the native and English languages (Yamat, Umar, & Mahmood, 2014).

Furthermore, incorporating and relating classroom learning of the English literacy into students' social lives would be more relevant and meaningful (Normazidah et al., 2012). Arif Jawaid (2014) pointed lessons that connect to the real world scenarios is easier to retrieved as it integrated in the long term memory (Arif, 2014). Moreover, doing hands-on and real life activities such as daily routines, art and craft, role play, model building, and others allow students the opportunities to apply knowledge they learned to make sense of the learning in a new language (Arif, 2014). However, many teachers feel that implementation of such activities in the classroom may raise another issue of classroom management to control large number of students with mixed learning abilities and with low levels of English language proficiency (Hardman & Norhaslynda, 2014). Aspects that can help to untie the teachers' dilemma is to begin introduced words of similar sounds in both the Malay and English languages. For examples, apple or "*epal*", bus or

“*bas*”, bag or “*bag*”, ice or “*ais*”, cream or “*krim*”, clip or “*klip*”, sauce or “*sos*”, and many more can be exploited in the first round of learning to read. The Second Language learning gradually prepared the learners to move up to more challenging tasks (Arif, 2014). When the Second Language learners embrace their culture and tradition using the English language, they are not only preserving their traditional customs but also bring it up to another level and promote it internationally.

## **2.4 The Related Theories**

### **2.4.1 Bandura’s Social Learning Theory**

The Bandura’s Social Learning Theory was established by Albert Bandura in 1977. Albert Bandura (1977) claimed that a new social behavior of a person is developed through observation and direct experience of an existing behavior of others. Referring to the study by Neal Miller and John Dollard in 1941 and Operant Conditioning analysis by B. F Skinner in 1938, Bandura made an assumption that modeling leads the learning process where observers can imitate the act with or without the reinforcing stimulus (Bandura, 1977). In 1962, Bandura conducted an experimental study on children aged 3-6 years old using plastic Bobo doll to investigate whether observation and imitation able to stimulate a new social behavior such as aggression. The findings have shown that children learned social behavior through observation or imitating the behavior of another person as model. However, there are certain steps that need to be followed in order to achieved the targeted behaviour (Harare, 2016). Hence, the Social Learning theory is governed by these four important processes: Attention, Retention, Reproduction and Motivation (Bandura, 1977).

According to Bandura (1977), Attentional process is the initial process that activate observers' instinct to model a behavior. It is influenced by the perceptual abilities, cognitive abilities, and arousal or past performance. Retention processes enable observers to remember the features of the observed behavior through mental images, coding, cognitive organization and rehearsals. It moved on to Reproduction process where observers must be able to create similar responses in accordance to the model or observed behavior. The characteristics to reproduce the behavior include acquiring the component skills, physical capabilities and self-corrective adjustment based on corrective feedback. Lastly, Motivation is processes involved to reprimand or encourage the imitation of observed behavior. In order to acquired desired behavior, the enforcement of motivational process can come from the observers themselves, instructors, or giving tangible and intangible rewards (Bandura, 1977; Harare, 2016).

#### 2.4.2 Krashen's Second Language Acquisition Theory

According to Stephen Krashen (1982), Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theory is viewed as the "theoretical linguistics" where a set of hypotheses is used to serve as pillars for many second language research studies to collect a wide range of data (Krashen, 1982). There are five hypotheses proposed by Krashen in SLA theory which will be discussed below.

The Acquisition-learning Distinction is a hypothesis to determine effective methods in acquiring a second language. An "acquisition" method is a subconscious process such as implicit learning and natural learning. Whereas, a "learning" method is a conscious development of second language knowledge that has undergone explicit learnings (Krashen, 1982). The Natural Order Hypothesis is

used to investigate orders of acquiring second language. Krashen (1982) claimed that the English grammatical morphemes are the most commonly researched by researchers. Most researchers found statistically significant similarities findings that both children and adult have almost the same “natural order” of second language acquisition which usually begin with progressive marker -ing, then continued with plural marker (s), third person singular marker (s) and possessive marker (s). However, Krashen did not restrict teachers to follow the “natural order” in their pedagogical teaching. He wanted researchers to find reasons to reject the grammatical sequencing to expand the study of SLA (Krashen, 1982). Furthermore, the Monitor hypothesis asserts that the term “learning” stated in the Acquisition-learning Distinction has a function as a Monitor. This means learning happened when amendment is made on the erroneous before it was spoken or written out in the form of self-correction. The Monitor must meet three criteria in order to acquire the language. The first criteria related to time where learners need enough time to process their think and consciously applied the rules properly. Overused or underused of rules in conversations may lead to misunderstanding. The second criteria focus on form where learners paid attention on the rules when conveying their oral messages or written messages. The final criteria is knowing the rule as it is crucial for learners to know the structure of the language which they were being exposed. Proper used of Monitor allows learners to learn the language that they are not yet acquired especially the simple and easy rules (Krashen, 1982). The Input Hypothesis is used to enquire how a language is acquired, regardless it is a first language or a second language. There were some assumptions have been made through the Input Hypothesis. This research study will only focus on the assumptions related to the SLA. The Input hypothesis supports the Natural Order

hypothesis as it claimed that acquirers acquired second language in stages starting from one stage ( $i$ ), before moving up to the next stage ( $i + 1$ ) after they understand meaning of the language. These stages refer to the process of “acquisition” and not “learning” where it uses context cues, real life knowledge, and additional linguistic information to support the language acquisition. Therefore, when the language is communicated effectively, and the input is clearly understood, it allows the acquirers to move up to ( $i + 1$ ) automatically. This means that the Input is emerged and not being taught directly. There were evidence showed that acquirers are more likely experience silent period and tend to use L1 rules in SLA at the beginning stage. Even though it rises controversial arguments in regard to the advantages and disadvantages of this evidence, Krashen (1982) had summarized that the use of L1 is “temporarily enhance production” that need not be used throughout the second language acquisition process. This is better than drilling the L2 rules which unable provide comprehensible input to acquirers (Krashen, 1982). Once the acquirers received sufficient input to express their thoughts, the use of L1 should gradually fade away. The fifth hypothesis is the Affective Filter hypothesis. It discusses correlation between the affective variables and the process of SLA. The affective variables include motivation, self-confidence and anxiety that are measured at different degree. They act as a filter that restrict the input of the SLA. For example, acquirers whose have strong attitudes toward second language acquisition may gain more input since it over-powered their affective filter which is weaker or low. On the other hand, when acquirer’s attitudes are at minimal level, the input for the second language will be less as it has strong defended for affective filter. This is due to the input not able to reach a section of the brain to process the language skill. Therefore, the Affective Filter hypothesis insinuates that pedagogical instructions

for SLA should covered both delivering comprehensible input and creating an environment that promotes a low filter such as low anxiety. Even though these hypotheses seem abstract, Krashen suggested researchers to use both theoretical and applied linguistics in teaching and studying languages to gain more insight of the language acquisition process (Krashen, 1982).

## **2.5 Teach Reading with Integrated Sound Word Method**

The Integrated Sound Word Method (ISWM) is a reading and writing instructions designed by Professor Emeritus Dato' Dr. Isahak Haron in 1979 (Muhammad Razif & Isahak, 2017). This approach was developed for the purpose to help students who struggled with reading in the English language. Second Language learners might find it challenging to learn the English language as an additional language where they are not commonly practicing in daily lives. This method is an English version of "*Kaedah Gabungan Bunyi Kata (KGBK)*" that is used as an alternative to improve and remedial reading and writing (2M) in the Malay language and Jawi. It emphasizes a systematic and sequential technique of instructions to create meaningful set of words, phrases and sentences through 'word attack' skill (Isahak Haron, Abdul Halim bin Ibrahim, Abdul Latif bin Gapor, 2013). According to Prof. Dato' Dr. Isahak Haron (2014), students need not have to know all 26 alphabetical letters and sounds at a time to learn reading and writing. Students can read and write systematically after a few sessions of repeated words recognition using ISWM (Isahak, 2014; Muhammad Razif & Isahak, 2017).

A century ago, there were heated debates in the western countries over the emergent reading and writing approaches. There are known as the Phonics Approach and Whole Language Approach. Both approaches have its pros and cons

in teaching young children to read and write. The Phonics Approach is an alphabetical order system where each individual letter represents a unique sound called phoneme. This approach teaches children to recognize the relationship between the letter and its sound. Combining and blending of the letters and sounds formed a word. However, each individual letter is independent and does not represent any meaning. Children also may get confused between letter and its sound as some letters have more than one sound and its sounds are similar to another letter. On the other hand, the Whole Language Approach emphasizes on reading and recognizing sets of words. It is one of the ways for children learn to read meaningful words through their daily experience with their parents, siblings, friends and contact with environments which help them remember the words they learned. Children able to read very fast through this approach, but they only know how to read words they have learned and cannot recognize any other words that they never see before. Hence, the Integrated Sound Word Method was developed assimilating the Phonics Approach and Whole Language Approach that uses the strengths of both methods, and integrating them in a systematic way which allows children to read and write meaningful words (Isahak, 2014). Figure 2.1 depicts the Integrated Sound Word Method as a subset of both Phonics and Whole Language approaches.



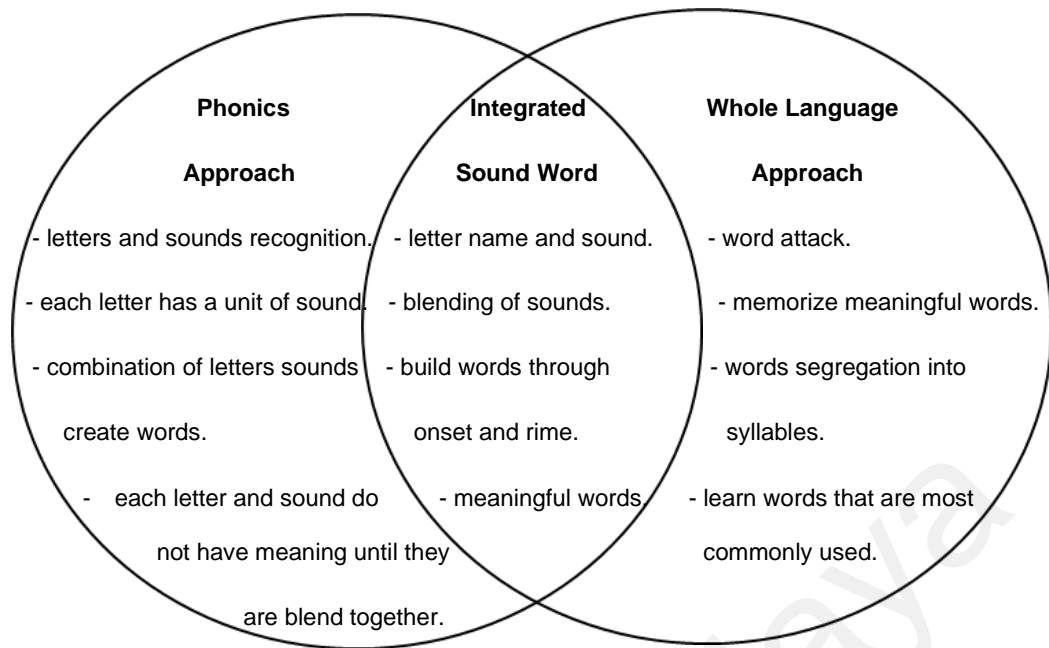


Figure 2. 1: The Similarities and Differences of Phonics Approach, Integrated Sound Word Method and Whole Language Approach.

The purpose of Integrated Sound Word Method (ISWM) is to help improve the early English reading proficiency among ESL preschoolers using an easy, sequential, and systematic instruction. The ISWM has twelve levels of reading proficiency to become a fluent reader. As for the emergent readers in preschools, it is necessary for preschoolers to achieve at least up to level four of reading proficiency in an academic year. The Early Reading booklet is attached in APPENDIX C for reference. This module serves as the core foundation of teaching early reading using ISWM to ESL preschoolers where lessons and activities are built based on this module.

Continuous research studies have been on going throughout the years to validate the effects of this method in the Malay language and Jawi. Dewi Maslehah Md. Yusop (1995) did an experimental study on students' progress in learning to

read Jawi using “*KGBK*” with the aid of Roman alphabets had shown that students need not have to know all alphabetical letters in proper order to learn to read. She claimed that through well planned, systematic and sequential instructions, students were able to learn to read Jawi effectively (Dewi Maslehah, 1995). In Nani Menon (2000) research study showed that “*KGBK*” gave a direct impact on reading skills in the Malay language. It improved students’ recognition of syllables, words, sentences, and phrases to help them to read (Nani Menon, 2000). Furthermore, Muhammad Razif Abzol Amir and Isahak Haron (2017) also examined the effectiveness of “*KGBK*” to sharpen students’ ability to read and write in the Malay language among year three students with dyslexia. The results have shown that “*KGBK*” was effectively increase the students reading and writing proficiency as they enjoyed learning the lessons (Muhammad Razif & Isahak, 2017). There were several other studies investigated the effectiveness of “*KGBK*” in “*KEMAS*” preschools, remedial classes in government primary schools, vernacular Chinese and Tamil schools, as well as to teach reading and writing for indigenous students in Malaysia. The findings from these studies generally agreed that “*KGBK*” is easy to use and can effectively learn to read and write in the Malay language (Isahak, 2014). In addition, the “*KGBK*” method also has been used to teach reading and writing in Jawi for Muslim children and it has proven that the children were able to read and write effectively in short amount of time. “*KGBK*” gained its recognition in the Islamic, Scientific, Cultural and Education Organization (ISESCO) as an innovative and effective method for teaching reading and writing using the Arabic scripts to reduce illiteracy problem in Muslim countries (Isahak, 2014).

Through the past research studies of “KGBK” in the Malay language and Jawi, the author, Professor Emeritus Dato’ Dr. Isahak Haron (2014) believes that it can be applied in teaching reading and writing of the English language. He claimed that there are some similarities and differences between these languages as they all came from the same root that used Latin scripts. The Malay and English writing used the same number of alphabetical letters, but the English language has over 40 phonemes as compared to the Malay language with 27 phonemes. Thus, students who have master the reading and writing skills in the Malay language would have the basic “word attack skills” to facilitate them into reading English literacy (Isahak, 2014).

Since this research study is the pioneer research using ISWM to teach early reading in the English language, researcher has sought validation from three expert panels. They include an Associate Professor of the Language and Literacy Department from University Malaya, an Assistance Director of Early Childhood Curriculum Development in Ministry of Education and the Leader of Early Years Program from Taylor International School. These expert panels are creditable and have many years of experience in their field of expertise. The results of Content Validity Index will be discussed in next chapter.

## **2.6 Teaching Models to English As A Second Language Learners (L2)**

Emergent literacy considers an important asset of learning tool which will determine a student’s success in the future. The teaching methodologies for English as a Second Language learners (L2) can be slightly different from teaching the native language and it sometimes can be challenging. The reasons are the language structure of the English language could be varied from the native language and students are not communicating in the English language as often as their native

language. Usually teachers of a second language will use differentiated instruction strategies to help L2 in acquiring the English language. This topic discusses a few teaching models that are appropriate to use in teaching early English reading in preschools. The teaching models are explicit instruction, scaffolding, corrective feedback and the use of native language (L1) to support the English language content instruction.

According to Anita L. Archer and Charles A. Hughes (2011), explicit instruction is a well-rounded teaching technique of delivering academic contents in a structural and systematic ways (Archer & Hughes, 2011). It is structured in a way that lessons are organized and focused on critical contents to optimize instructional time. It is designed systematically to sequence the skills, strategies, and concepts in logically order from easy to hard, and broken down the complex skills and strategies into smaller units of instruction (Archer & Hughes, 2011). However, its effectiveness toward the L2 learning's outcomes still debatable among many academic scholars as it compared to the implicit instruction. Through implicit instruction, the English language learning happened naturally without paying much attention on the English grammar rules. The rules are induce by examples where L2 make their own inferences (Nabizadeh, Taghinezhad, & Azizi, 2016). Stephen Krashen (1981) believed there is no difference in the process of acquiring a second language and the first language where acquiring either of the languages need meaningful interaction through natural communication. He claimed that the L2 do not need conscious awareness in using the English grammar rules (Krashen, 1981). These statements proved its points when a second language learner learned speaking and listening skills of a second language as they acquired the implicit knowledge. In term of reading and writing, L2 need to be taught explicitly on how

the language is used academically especially the grammar rules. There were numerous studies pointed out that explicit instruction has given positive impacts in enhancing the L2's English grammar rules and it encourages the L2 to develop metalinguistic awareness of that rules (Nazari, 2013). Rick de Graaff (1997) conducted an experimental study on explicit instruction and its effects toward second language acquisition. The findings had shown significant differences in learning simple morphological structure and complex syntactic structure between the explicit and implicit groups. Participants who received explicit instruction performed better than those who did not receive the treatment (de Graaff, 1997).

An extension to the explicit instruction, scaffolding provides a series of guidance to teach new skills where the learning objectives and rationale of learning are clearly stated. It also gives clear explanations and demonstrates appropriate instructional strategies in teaching the content as well as supports guided practices through feedback (Archer & Hughes, 2011). Scaffolding was first initiated by David Wood, Jerome Bruner and Gail Ross (1976) in a study of *"The Role of Tutoring in Problem Solving"*. The researchers used scaffolding to guide a child or a novice learner in a problem solving process with an adult or expert supervision who controlled the elements of task to be achieved by the learner beyond the learner's ability (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976). Later in 1978, Lev Vygotsky expanded the study of scaffolding in his Sociocultural theory (Samana, 2013). According to Lev Vygotsky (1978), the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is defined as "the distance between the actual developmental level" as it challenged learners in problem solving to achieved specific goal under supervision and guidance from adults or peers assistance who set the level of potential development (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). This concept is closely related to scaffolding because ZPD

uses scaffolding as a tool to help learners achieved their potential goal (Walqui, 2006). Scaffolding ensures success and builds confidence among students as they learn because scaffolding provides needed support that bridge the gaps between the learners' current abilities and the instructional goals (Archer & Hughes, 2011). In the school classroom, teachers generally considered as the expert who provide scaffolding assistance the novice learners (Samana, 2013). The benefits of scaffolding include directing learner's to focus on task, simplifying or breaking down the problem into smaller units, providing clear directions to the problem solving, identifying important features, managing learner's frustration and showing possible solutions to the learner (Wood et al., 1976).

Modelling, bridging, contextualization, building schema, re-presenting text and developing metacognition are the six main types of instructional scaffolding suitable for L2 to learn a new language. Modelling provides clear explanation and visual examples for learners to have a clear picture to imitate (Walqui, 2006). Through modelling process, the English teacher needs to initiate an interaction with learners by first working together with them in a class activity and gradually hand over the responsibility to the learners. Bridging is a common method to connect learners' prior knowledge to the new topic or subject that they are going to learn. Teachers can use anticipatory guide or allow learners to share their personal experience that relates to the new topic. This way, learners can feel that their knowledge is being appreciated and encourage them to develop a sense of achievement to further explored (Walqui, 2006). Contextualizing helps learners to use nonlinguistic information such as manipulative, pictures, short videos, and other types of realia to make sense of academic language. Teachers are encouraged to use contextualized representation by creating verbal or graphic analogies through

learner's experiences to bring complex ideas close to learner's understanding (Walqui, 2006). Schema building allows learners to organize knowledge and to understand the information which will help them enhance new information in related field. Graphic organizers, mind maps, compare and contrast matrix can be used to guide learners to focus on important contents, reduce learners' anxiety toward overwhelming flow of information and ambiguity on certain concepts (Walqui, 2006). Re-presenting text is another technique which teachers can use to reinterpret dry and complex contexts from one genre to another genre. Second language learners may not know all the meaning of vocabulary words in the text. However, if teachers able to change the format of reading into a play, dialogue, personal narrative or report where each learner take responsibility to learn their scripts, they are able to understand the whole idea of the context. This kind of language learning often engaging, it brings texts to life and makes learning a meaningful experience to the learners. Other examples of re-presenting text include changing a poem into a personal narrative, re-producing a historical narrative into a real time story, and translating scientific text into letter or creating an integrated poster with quotes (Walqui, 2006). Developing metacognition for Second Language learners is not an easy task but it can be accomplished through rigid and consistent routine. Once learners are comfortable with the learning strategy, they will be able to proceed independently and can successfully engage in all of the scaffolding procedures. In order to achieve this, teachers have to setup a reciprocal teaching strategy for learners to strictly follow the proper steps in completing an activity. For example, learners must read to understand, then summarize the text, ask questions, predict the outcome, give opinion, and complete self-assessment with rubric provided. All these scaffolding instructions able to overtake the traditional learning

system and replace it with richer, more stimulating and highly interactive curriculum for Second Language learners (Walqui, 2006)

Another teaching model is Corrective feedback. Corrective feedback is one of the teaching instructions teachers use to draw attention to L2's erroneous utterances and lead them to alter the knowledge output (Sarkhanlou, 2016). According to Rod Ellis, Shawn Loewen and Rosemary Erlam (2006), this teaching model attempts to tackle learners mistakes by giving an indication that errors have been committed and providing the correct form of language, or giving metalinguistic information to justify the errors which have occurred (Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006). This means that Corrective feedback happens when teachers acknowledge errors made by the L2 and they will give proper advice to correct the learning outcomes. The Corrective feedback frequently occurred in the classroom and it can be in form of written and oral comments that aims to improve the English language learning for short terms and long terms (Sarkhanlou, 2016). The Corrective feedback is divided into two categories which commonly known as Explicit feedback and Implicit feedback. Explicit feedback is feedback given to correct the errors with metalinguistic explanations. On the other hand, Implicit feedback can be delivered in various ways for instance clarification notes, clarification inquiries, comprehension lists, reformulation as well as recast (Kalanzadeh, Jafarigohar, Ghonsooly, & Soleimani, 2018).

In most preschool classrooms, the preschool teachers use oral feedback explicitly for correction, recasts, clarification inquiries, repetition, metalinguistic feedback and elicitation. Nasy Pfanner (2015) classified the explicit correction as treating the learning errors explicitly with correct form of explanation. For example,



a teacher responds either “yes” or “no” to students’ answer and reinstate the correct form of learning. When the teacher corrected the student’s error, he or she also explained and justify reasons for the error committed. Recast is another way of giving implicit feedback where teacher reformulates part or entire speech correctly without emphasizing errors that the student made. Recast encourages teachers to translate the feedback into a language that the student can understand, but it does not expect an immediate repair. Clarification inquiries occur when a teacher acknowledges a student’s speech has been misjudge or incorrect and needs a reiteration or a reformulation to seek clarification of the meaning. Usually the teacher will ask the student to repeat the speech to confirm the error and to let the student aware there was an error in his or her speech which then lead to self-correction. Repetition of errors refer to a teacher reinstate the incorrect speech without literally correct the student, but to emphasis the mistake. Whereas, a Metalinguistic feedback requires a teacher to ask questions or make suggestions without providing the correct answer to refine the student’s thoughts in order for him/her to rephrase the information given earlier. Elicitation are methods used by teachers to draw student’s attention to provide the correct answer. There are three ways that teachers can do; 1.) allows for “fill in the blank”, where teacher stops and allows the student to finish the teacher’s speech like, “No, not that. It’s a ...”, 2.) invites an open question “How do we say *x* in English?”, and 3.) requires a reformulation of the incorrect speech (Pfanter, 2015, p. 47). All these Implicit and Explicit feedback are used interchangeably depending on the nature of contents in the language acquisition. However out of the six Corrective feedback techniques discussed above, recast is the most commonly used technique in L2 classroom. One

of the advantages is its capability to guide and model by juxtaposing L2's incorrect and correct forms (Rassaei, 2015).

There are never ending debates on whether to use monolingual to teach second language or to use code switching between the mother tongue language and the second language for teaching instruction. A researcher believed that monolingual approach is more effective in the second language acquisition, and some claimed that the code switching can slow down the language learning development (Mulia, 2015). Nevertheless, there also academic scholars support the use of L1 in the English language content instruction. According to Patrick Proctor, Bridget Dalton, and Dana Grisham (2007), the L2 can integrate their L1 literacy skill to interpret the second language content and comprehension including translations and cognate awareness (Proctor, Dalton, & Grisham, 2007). Moreover, the use of L1 promotes transition for learners to build confidence, motivation and initiate interaction with others. It is a strategic strategy that helps the Second Language learners strengthen their listening, observing, following, performing, thinking, exploring, speaking, reflecting, reading and writing skills as they move on the academic path (Arif, 2014). The use of both Malay and English languages is highly encouraged in preschool classrooms to facilitate initial confidence building. However, teachers have to use it moderately since overused of the native language can disrupt the input of the second language (Paker & Karağaç, 2015). Khedir Almoayidi (2018) pointed out that the use of L1 in classrooms should not be restricted, and it should be used according to the needs of learners as well as the classroom situation (Almoayidi, 2018).

Najwa Hanna Halasa and Majeda Al-Manaseer (1999) have proposed a few methods of incorporating the use of L1 into the second language teaching instruction. They are the Alternating Approach, the New Concurrent Method, the Community Language Learning Method, and the Dodson's Bilingual Method (Halasa & Al-Manaseer, 1999). The Alternating Approach happened when both learners are mutually benefit from the language learning. For example, a native English speaker studies aboard and befriend with a native speaker of that country. Therefore, the native speaker of the foreign country can learn English from the English native speaker, while the native English speaker learned the country's native language. This approach has proven success in improving the students' oral skill and self-satisfaction (Halasa & Al-Manaseer, 1999). The New Concurrent method is used to create connections between the L1 and the second language. It allows teachers to interchange two languages between one another under certain circumstances such as introducing new concept, difficult vocabulary, or complex grammar rules as well as classroom management and discipline (Halasa & Al-Manaseer, 1999). The Community Language Learning Method encourages open communication among learners and teachers freely in the second language with some mixture of native language. For example, teachers may interfere and translate words or sentences into L1 until they gradually become more independent to use the target language (Halasa & Al-Manaseer, 1999). Carl J. Dodson (1967) had introduced the Dodson's Bilingual method to help second language learners understand the second language contents in their native language. At first teachers read a sentence in the second language, then they interpreted it into L1. An assessment came in later to test the students' understanding in both the native language and second language (Halasa & Al-Manaseer, 1999). This methods

developed multi-competence among learners as Cook (1999) believed that the native language will always remain the L2 learner's mind and it is irrational not to utilize the language to support second language learning or reluctant to use it in the classroom (Cook, 1999).

## 2.7 Theoretical Framework

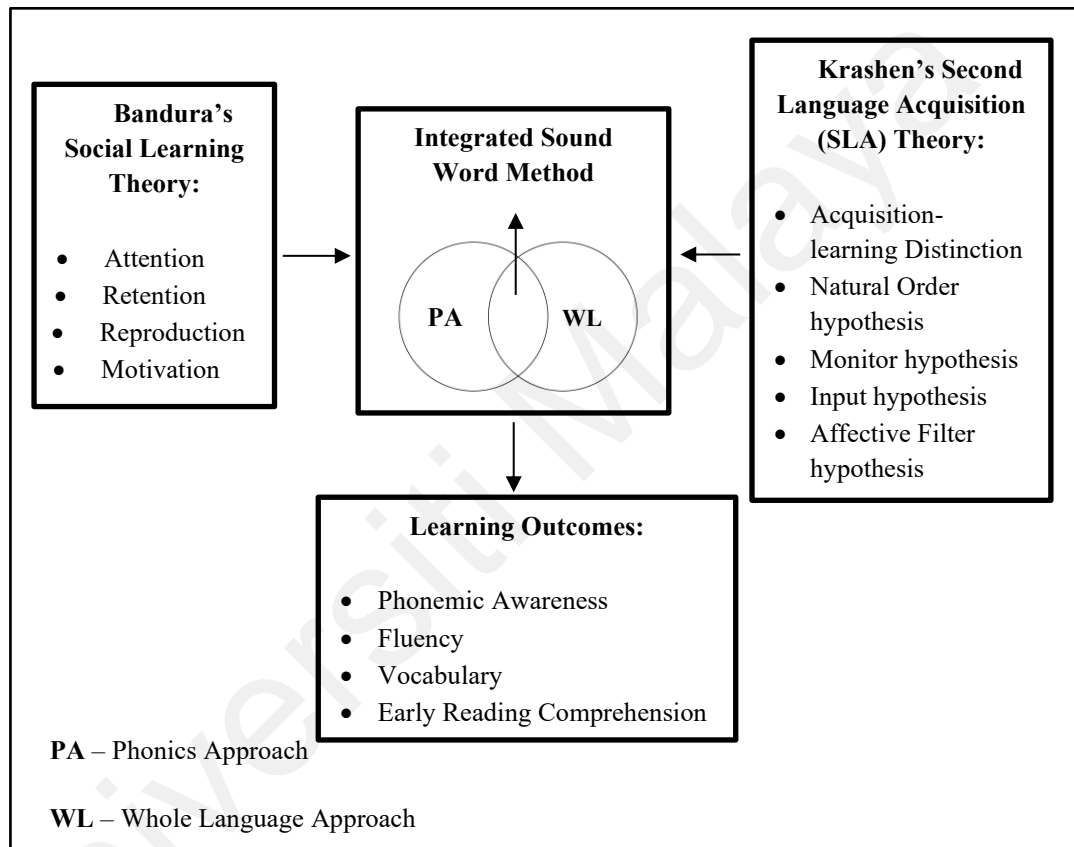


Figure 2. 2: The Theoretical Framework of The Study.

The primary process of second language acquisition is interaction, where learners use their social skill to make connection and build relationship with peers and teachers in school through share interest as well as opportunity to learn new language. This process involved both cognitive development and share social practices. The cognitive and the social developments must together in order to achieve better classroom learning (Walqui, 2006). As shown in Figure 2.2, the theoretical framework is incorporated in the methodology of Integrated Sound

Word Method which combines both Phonics and Whole Language approaches in teaching early reading to ESL preschoolers as it emphasizes on both cognitive and social developments.

There are two theories that influenced the process of teaching early reading to the ESL preschoolers using Integrated Sound Word Method, which are the Bandura's Social Learning Theory and the Krashen's Second Language Acquisition (SLA) Theory. This study uses the theories to identify the underlying factors which able to influence the SLA among preschoolers in order to achieve optimal learning outcomes. The preschoolers are instilled with Social Learning approach that was introduced by Albert Bandura in 1977 through the process of learning using Integrated Sound Word Method. According to Bandura (1977), a learning can occur unconsciously in a social setting through modelling regardless of the location or form of learning. In order for the learners to model the observed behavior, they have to fulfill some criteria stated as Attention, Retention, Reproduction and Motivation (Bandura, 1977).

Besides that, the Krashen's SLA theory also influenced the process of SLA in reading. It implies toward the cognitive development of the L2. Krashen (1982) believed that language should be acquired through implicit instruction and structured grammatical rules are taught through explicit instruction where the learning takes place. There are natural orders of learning where both adult and children follow the same ways in language acquisition. The learning process is also known as the Monitor where learning happened when amendment is made on the erroneous before it was spoken or written out in the form of self-correction. The language acquirers could gain Input if they acquired the language in proper orders

and monitor the learning process. The acquirers are allowed to get Input through the use of first language (L1) at the early stage of learning, but it has to limit the use of L1 as they progress to higher levels of reading. Affective variables are psychological behaviours such as motivation, self-confidence and anxiety which may act like a filter in the language acquisition. In order to receive the optimal input, acquirers must have lower Affective-filter (Krashen, 1982)

Therefore, these two theories are used as the pillars to guide the implementation Integrated Sound Word Method in teaching early reading to ESL preschoolers. This study leads preschoolers toward achieving the learning outcomes of mastering phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary and early reading comprehension.

## **2.8 Related Reading Approaches**

The first step of teaching learners to read is to get them engaged (Hendrickson, 2014). It is all teachers desired to make the English language learning easy and interesting for everyone. The English language should be taught in a systematic and sequential ways with a meaningful interaction between the teacher and learners to create a lively learning environment. The class activities should be fun and engaging, and the most important of all is that learners able to learn and retain knowledge of everyday lessons.

The International Reading Association issued a statement titled *Using Multiple Methods of Beginning Reading Instruction* (1999), stressed that an instruction or approach cannot be assumed as one size fits all. There is no single way of teaching that can successfully teach all learners to read (Morrow, 2009). Even though the Phonics and Whole Language Approaches have their own individual uniqueness

which can help emergent readers in learning reading and writing. Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998) claimed reading required learners to translate visual codes into meaningful language like Phonics emphasizes the reading through an alphabetic system to decode letters into individual sound and connects those sounds to form a single word (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). On the other hand, Lyle (2016) argued that the purpose of reading is to understand the meaning in the text, not to focus on sounding out individual letters or identifying single words (Lyle, 2016). Therefore, exploring both of the approaches is necessary to find a balanced perspective, and implement learning strategies based on these approaches to meet the learning styles of individual learners as to lead them becoming a fluent reader (Morrow, 2009). The Phonics and Whole Language approaches will be discussed individually below.

### 2.8.1 Phonics Approach.

According to Sue Lyle (2016), Phonics binds phonemes and graphemes together in an alphabetical system as a method for teaching reading. The smallest unit of a sound is called phoneme, and it is not always representing a single letter, for example, “oo” is a phoneme in the word “cook”. In the English language, there are 44 phonemes (Lyle, 2016). Phonics Approach was established in the field of linguistic study. The linguist experts believe that the first step of learning to read is to begin sounding the basic single unit of sound called phoneme. Each unit sound represents by a symbol called letter. The main objective in the Phonics’ instruction is to draw a relationship between graphemes (symbolic letters) and phonemes (sounds) in order for children to understand there is a systematic and predictable links in both graphemes and phonemes. It will help children understand these relationships and recognize familiar words accurately and automatically as they decode new words. These are Phonics’ rules are vital in order to become a fluent

reader. This is to strengthen the child's ability to read unfamiliar words using strategies in Phonics instructions (Phajane, 2014).

In teaching reading and writing through Phonics Approach, there are three main structures that define the teaching instructions which can be classified as Analytic Phonics, Synthetic phonics and Spelling-based models. The Analytic model abides by the principles of the top-down processing in reading, whereas Synthetics Phonics follows the bottom-up model (Yap, 2014). As for the Spelling-based model, words are built through onset and rime Consonant-Vowel-Consonant (CVC) structure.

The early Synthetic Phonics was clearly represented by Orton-Gillingham (1937) model that showed step-by-step instructions to teach children with severe reading disability or dyslexics (Yap, 2014). This Synthetics model begins with learning to build relationships between letters and sounds before blending them to create words (Phajane, 2014). For example, the letter sound of *a/n/t/* turned into a word "*ant*". Students were taught to sound out and blend the letter sound together to create a sound of "*ant*". As for longer letters word, students were taught to segment the sounds into syllable as parts of the whole, like the letter's *e/l/e/p/h/a/n/t/* segmented it into *e-le-ph-ant* which create a sound of "*elephant*". De Graaff et al. (2009) posited that once these basic grapheme-phoneme correspondences are gasped, most words in the English language can be decoded without difficulty, and this expands children's reading vocabulary (Yap, 2014).

The Analytic model teaches children to differentiate sounds in words where they start with identifying a word and breaking it apart to form syllables and then single letter sound (Phajane, 2014). For instance, the word "*tiger*" is breaking down



into syllables of *ti-ger* then separate it into the individual letter as *t/i/g/e/r/*. Students were taught first by reviewing the five individual sounds *t/i/g/e/r/* (tiger). Then students cited the sounds, and they blended the two sounds together. This model of reading focuses on a learner's prior knowledge and language experiences to enable them to decode the word (Yap, 2014).

Another Phonics' method is the Spelling-based method where words are sorted through spelling patterns (Phajane, 2014). It is an onset and rime strategy where students sort letter sounds to create words. This is when teachers started to teach Consonant-Vowel-Consonant (CVC) words. Usually, teachers begin teaching VC sounds such as *"-at"*, *"-an"*, and *"-ap"*. Then students find another Consonant to blend in to make words like *"c-at"*, *"b-at"*, *"p-an"*, *"c-an"*, *"m-ap"*, and *"l-ap"*. A research study clearly stated that neither of these methods is superior than the others (Wyse & Goswami, 2008). Teachers can use it interchangeably in their teaching instructions to help students master the Phonics' skill. Furthermore, the National Reading Panel (NRP) 2000 reported that the most effective instruction to teach the first graders is through Phonics approach (Phajane, 2014).

Phonics Approach has been widely used around the world, but it is not necessarily effective to Malaysian's context. It can help children to read, however it does not warrant the children will comprehend the text and understand meaning of each individual word. Mainly because Malaysian children do not get as much literacy exposure in the English language like the foreign children in western countries which the English language is their native language. Malaysian teachers are teaching students to memorize every single letter and sound from *a-z*. Through

drill and memorization, the objective of the lesson is achieved without considering the learning outcomes of the students' performance.

### 2.8.2 Whole Language Approach.

On the other hand, the Whole Language Approach's philosophers believed that a language is meaningful when it formed "a complete system" between words and functioned in relation with each other to create meaning (Huang, 2014, p. 71). It does not mean to be broken down into smaller units through process of decoding. Since Whole Language Approach derived from the perspective of psycholinguistic, it evolved within the theory of Constructivism where the learning occurred naturally through social interaction and their experiences with the environment. The Constructivism's theory emphasizes on active learning where learners constantly find new resources to add-ons or link to their prior knowledge. It creates a contextualized representation of constructing information instead of acquiring the language (Jantmary & Melor, 2014).

During the early years, children are taught to read and write words that are related to them like body parts, family, school, food and sight words. The concept of Whole Language Approach had stern relationship with Goodman's conceptualization in 1967. He established the idea by believing that the process of learning to read is part of the human behavior and maturing processes (Huang, 2014). Children are trained to remember and be familiar with words using pictures, flash cards and thematic unit. Therefore, Marie Clay (1966) had introduced a term called "*The Emergent Literacy*" (Morrow, 2009). The Emergent Literacy is defined as "the skills, knowledge and attitudes" that are developed in the early stage as prerequisites to develop more structural forms of reading and writing (Whitehurst

& Lonigan, 1998, p. 337). Children's emergent literacy often used interchangeably with listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities.

Marie Clay was a psychologist in early childhood development from University of Auckland, New Zealand. She had dedicated herself to doing research in children's development and their ability to read and write at very young age. Based on her earlier theory of Emergent Literacy, she had introduced "graded books" to help children to read at different stages of mastering the English language (Isahak Haron et al., 2013). One of the popular graded books is "*Dick and Jane*" where children were taught to read simple phrases and words' meaning through picture illustrations. This way, children learned to relate pictures with the words. In schools, teachers use the "read aloud" technique with "the big book" to teach students recognized meaningful words. This technique has been widely used in preschools around the world.

Another well-known Whole Language Approach was introduced by Glenn Doman in 1981. The technique was known as "*Look and Say*" who had claimed that children can read 120 words as young as three years old (Isahak Haron et al., 2013). Children were taught using sets of flash cards where each word gave a meaningful representation to the children. For examples words like "*daddy*", "*mommy*", "*hand*", "*leg*", "*cat*", "*dog*", and others meaningful words. However, one of the drawbacks on this method is children can only read words that they have learned and familiarized. They will not be able to read books that have a lot of unfamiliar words they never see before.

## 2.9 Review of Past Studies

### 2.9.1 In Malaysia.

In 1996, the Malaysian government had reviewed and revised “*Akta 152 Perlembagaan Malaysia*” [Malaysian Act 152] and stipulated the English language to be a compulsory second language in schools. Hence, all Malaysian students are required to learn the English language as early as preschool aged of five-six years old (Hazita, 2016). It is one of the initiatives taken by the government realizing a state of emergency in improving the English language proficiency among Malaysian (Sudhakaran, 2015). Unfortunately, it does not guarantee the students’ English language competency after eleven year of learning the language as evident shown in the major examinations’ result of English subject (Hazita, 2016).

Reflect upon the “Literacy and Numeracy Screening” (LINUS) program introduced in 2012, and the LINUS 2.0 existed a year later as the extension of the previous LINUS program with an addition of English Literacy. LINUS 2.0 aimed to increase the English language proficiency among Malaysian, especially the lower primary students (Hadzir, N., Alias, A. M., Kamaruzaman, A. L., & Mohd Yusof, 2016). Meanwhile, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin acted as our Deputy Prime Minister at the time called for 61,000 English language teachers in the government schools to attend training as an initiative to gain more knowledge and skills in the English language under the first wave of the three waves of Malaysia Education Blueprint Plan 2013-2025 (Jantmary & Melor, 2014). Nevertheless, the implications from these moves clearly shows that the current solutions do not significantly elicit targeted improvement in students’ English language achievements. A strong foundation of curriculum and proper planning are necessary, and it would be better to start from early age as in preschools education.

A research study done in 2012 suggested that a more meaningful learning should be created in a language curriculum to promote holistic learning through experiences (Normazidah et al., 2012). In order to nurture students toward the learning of the English language, it is important for teachers to practice a reflective learning pedagogy to let students to be more independent and involved in their learning process (Normazidah et al., 2012). The learning environment also has an effect on the students' holistic development as it allows them to feel confident to use the language, gives optimum exposure and opportunities to use the language (Yamat, Fisher, et al., 2014). Furthermore, NoorAileen Ibrahim, Mohamad Syafiq Ya Shak, Thuraiya Mohd et al. (2015) claimed that active learning in the classroom increases the students' understanding the learning of the English language which then leads to improvement in students' results. This is due to a conducive and non-threatening classroom environment can evoke and retain the students' interest in learning the language (NoorAileen et al., 2015).

Learning English as a Second Language in Malaysian's environment required teachers to understand and tolerate with the students' cultural as well as their social background. Living in a multi-cultural country like Malaysia, the students come from different ethnic background and have different spoken language at home. Therefore, the English teachers need different teaching approach as compared to teaching the students' native language. This helps to achieve their attainment in the English language proficiency (Noor Fazzrienee, & Nooreiny, 2014). Even though the English language and the Malay language share some common terms where they both came from the Latin roots that uses alphabetical system, but the letters in both languages produce different sounds or phonemes. Furthermore, the use of grammar

in sentence structures or syntax in English language is different from the Malay language (Isahak, 2014).

These features are easily confused by the English as Second Language learners (L2). Lack of understanding in the use English language structures often caused students perceived the language as a difficult subject to learn. Most English teachers in Malaysia only emphasizes rote-learning and memorization of the English language rules that will be tested in the examinations without taking time to let students explore the language (Normazidah et al., 2012). Therefore, Malaysian students failed to understand the grammatical concepts in the English language because the grammar rules are different from their mother tongue language. Moreover, the English language structures and pronunciations seem to be more complex to understand which contribute more confusion in verbal communication when they got limited practices in using the language. Noor Fazzrienee Nun Ramlan and Nooreiny Maarof (2014) showed the difference in the use of possessive determiner between the Malay language and the English language. They explained that the words “*saya*” [I], “*awak*” [You], and “*mereka*” [They] as the first, second- and third-person pronouns. Similarly, they also can be used as both noun phrase to determine specific person or pre-modifier to indicate a possession such as “*kucing saya*” [My cat] and “*bag mereka*” [Their bags]. Direct translation does not give students the correct answer since the structure and use of grammar rule are different in these two languages (Noor Fazzrienee, & Nooreiny, 2014). Most importantly, students need to know the purpose of learning the English language. Once they have a purpose guiding the way, students will build interest in learning and it makes them feel easy to grasp the English language learning in the classroom.

In other case, students who have adequate English language proficiency, they still hesitate and feel shy to use the language. The psychological insecurity has impacted their ability to communicate the language with others. This has led to the students' incompetency in forming sufficient English sentences during oral assessment in schools. Mainly because they were concerned that they will be laughed at for committing minor grammar mistakes or friends will discriminate them for showing off their ability to communicate in the English language. The students feel stressed or anxious when they try to converse with other in the classroom and indirectly demotivated them to do their best in the English language (Noor Fazzrienee & Nooreiny, 2014). The feeling of anxiety has caused students exhibit some negative thoughts of withdrawal like insecurity and embarrass when using the language (How et al., 2015). A lot of supports from various aspects needed for these students to encourage them and build their confident in learning the English language (Yamat, Fisher, et al., 2014).

When there is lack of supports especially from teachers and parents, students are left being emotionally and socially unprepared to face challenges and criticisms from others. Several studies have revealed the root cause of the language anxiety experienced by students especially the L2. The factors include the learners themselves, the school instructional and social practices as well as the cultural influences have put them in linguistically and psychologically isolated distress (Normazidah et al., 2012). Parents, administrators, teachers, and students themselves should acknowledge the importance of mastering the English language as a Second Language for the brighter future prospect. The English language is not only an international language, but also a pivotal hub of communication around the world. It is crucial for teachers to understand students' needs and diversified the

English language learning in order to create a conducive multicultural classroom environment (Hardman & Norhaslynda, 2014). This will help teachers to choose and plan strategic teaching methodologies which can make their lessons achievable and meaningful. Teachers should consider the cultural diversity that influenced the process of English language learning among the L2 (Jantmary & Melor, 2014).

### 2.9.2 Other Countries.

Developed countries like the United States and the United Kingdom also faced the same predicament as the number of foreign immigrants keeps rising in the country for the past few decades. According to statistic provided by Patricia Carol Bryant (2012), the enrollment of the L2 in the preschool program in New Jersey has increased by 21% within five years. While the state government struggled to train enough ESL's teachers to support these rapid growth of ESL preschoolers (Bryant, 2012). It is still a controversy to determine how children of non-English native speaker in western countries have successfully learned the English language. As early as 1900, some philosophers and linguists claimed that children began to read through Phonics Approach, then some pro-Whole Language Approach's philosophers and psychologist argued that children needed to learn to read naturally through imitation in their environment. Later in the year 1955, Rudolf Flesh established a book titled "*Why Johnny Can't Read*" to critic Whole Language Approach that many children were still struggling to read even after they entered elementary schools (Isahak Haron et al., 2013). Rudolf Flesh suggested a more structured and systematic Phonics method to be introduced again in schools as core teaching instruction to teach reading and writing in the United States.



Since then, a Systematic Phonics method gained its popularity in many English native countries. In 2005, the Australian government has recognized the Systematic Phonics method as a systematic, direct and explicit phonics instruction for teaching reading (Wyse & Goswami, 2008). Where else in England, the Rose report (2006) recommended the Systematic Phonics to be used as teaching reading instruction in the country (Rose, 2006). It required all teachers to follow the standard of teaching procedure stipulated by the UK government. The Systematic Phonics aims to use simple decoding strategy to teach letters and sounds in alphabetical system. It includes sounding out individual letters, combining and blending them together to form a word (Lyle, 2016).

Nowadays, many foreign countries faced the same dilemma as in Malaysia. Globalization has opened the door for millions of people migrating to another country due to many reasons such as business opportunity, career growth and political instability in home country. Therefore, the English language has become an importance medium of communication to interact and survive in the country. Kenya and Nigeria used the English language as a link language, while India considered it as an associate official language, Ghana takes it as an additional language, a bridge language for Singapore and an ordinate language in the Philippines (Jantmary & Melor, 2014). Nevertheless, countries like the United States, the United Kingdom handled issues of the L2 more effectively than those countries where the English language is not their native language like Malaysia, Indonesia, India and many more. For example, the people in Indonesia speak more than one language (local dialects) besides their national language depending on the geographical areas. Even though the learning of English language started in preschools, but it is not being emphasized of its importance until Grade Four while

the Competency-Based Curriculum which used to teach the English language is more focus on the Communicative Approach (Lie, 2007). The preschool setting in Indonesia emphasizes the “oral-based” competency that enhance preschoolers’ expressive and receptive language rather than focuses on the reading and writing skills (Yuli Rachmawati, Sophia Fithri Al Munawwarah, Wildan Nurul Aini, 2014).

Similar situation happened in Canada where the presence of minority first language (L1) other than the English native speakers in preschool programs has been worrying due to concern over these children’s ability to continue developing their native language as well as to maintain their bilingualism as the English as Second Language learners in the country (Paradis & Kirova, 2014). In this scenario, the Whole Language Approach was suggested to teach the English language through book reading as well as to develop a bilingual community. According to Johanne Paradis and Anna Kirova (2014), it is possible for the minority children have greater motivation and opportunity to learn the English language in the classroom and community when a diverse context is available to them as compared to only the L1 is predominantly used in its cultural community (Paradis & Kirova, 2014).

## **2.10 Conceptual Framework**

The research study is conducted using a quasi-experimental model. It serves to examine effects of Integrated Sound Word Method in teaching early reading to ESL preschoolers. The English literacy learning in Malaysia should be integrated into the theory of literacy as social practice. Therefore, the English language learning should be expanded to a broader view where it can be used to navigate the social interaction, to create meaningful connections, to demonstrate individual identities

and to accomplish the social objectives (Normazidah et al., 2012). However, the reality shows in the society perceived learning the English language as an academic subject to pass examination (NoorAileen et al., 2015).

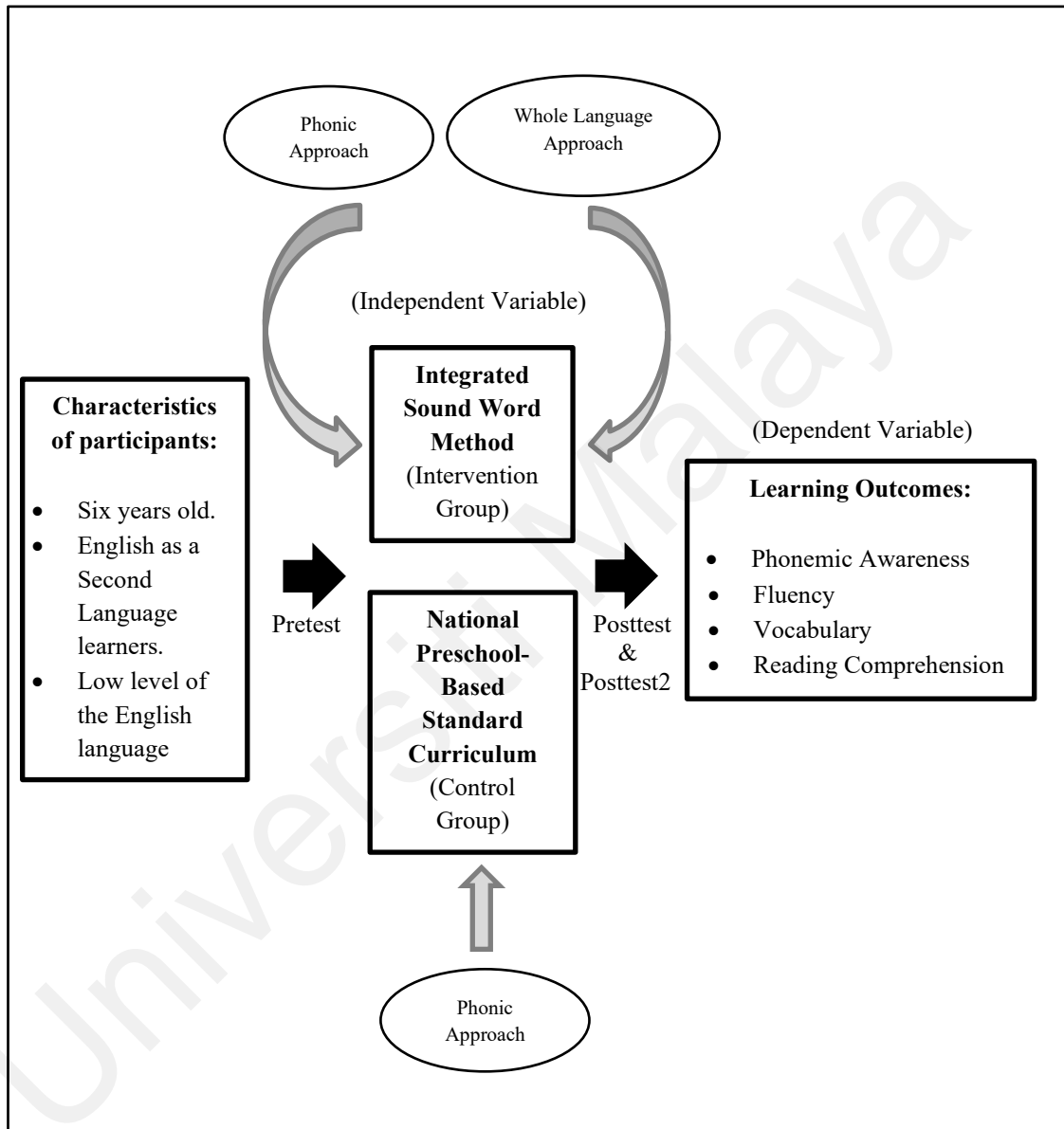


Figure 2. 3: Conceptual Framework of Teaching Early Reading Using Integrated Sound Word Method to ESL Preschoolers.

The conceptual framework presented in Figure 2.3 shows an overall process of this research study which uses Integrated Sound Word Method to teach early

reading to ESL preschoolers. The participants of this study have been identified and divided into control and intervention groups. They are preschoolers aged of six-year-old who are also English as a Second Language learners. They were chosen through screening test and matching process to standardize their age and level of their English language proficiency.

The Independent variable for this research study is Integrated Sound Word Method which used in the treatment program. The Integrated Sound Word Method is infused with a balanced approach that emphasizes on both the Phonic Approach and the Whole Language Approach. Whereas the current teaching to read method as stipulated in the National Preschool-Based Standard Curriculum is adopting the Phonics approach.

The Dependent variable is the learning outcomes. The learning outcomes are measured through the pretest, posttest and posttest<sup>2</sup>. The assessments are conducted in the form of Early Reading Diagnostic Checklist. The learning outcomes determine the participants' ability to master early reading of Phonemic Awareness, Fluency, Vocabulary and Reading Comprehension.

## **2.11 Summary**

The preschools in Malaysia are managed by the government and sub-government bodies as well as the private sectors. They all operate differently depending upon the needs of their target populations. Through previous literature reviews, there were two main theories that guide the emergent literacy in preschools. However, the effectiveness of the theories still arguable until today. More research studies are needed in this field to evaluate and find effective solutions that better redefined the structures of preschool education system in Malaysia. The objectives of learning

early reading should incorporate both social processes and practices as they created meaningful activities, and not just fulfilling the cognitive capacities of language acquisition. Memorizing letter sounds or words may have little effect on understanding ideas in reading texts. It may help the preschoolers to decode and read words, but they may not understand meaning of the words. There are slight differences between decoding and understanding reading texts. Therefore, this research study will further explore the effects of Integrated Sound Word Method in teaching early reading to ESL preschoolers. The research methodology for this research topic will be presented in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

As the English language gained its recognition around the world, country like Malaysia has taken many steps to prepare the students to compete in the fast growing world (Noor Fazzriene & Nooreiny, 2014). The purpose of this research study is to investigate effects of Integrated Sound Word Method in teaching early reading to ESL preschoolers. The Integrated Sound Word Method is used to teach early English reading to the ESL preschoolers in the district of Kuala Lumpur. This chapter discusses method for the study, the population of the study and participants selected for this study. The research instruments and its procedures will be presented continued by the organization of data and analysis. The research tools, content validity and pilot study also will be stated later in this chapter to verify the validity and reliability of the study.

#### 3.2 Research Design

This study uses quasi experimental as research design where the frame of study is a quantitative method. It attempts to influence a particular variable and suitable for testing hypotheses in the cause and effect relationship (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). This study focuses on the government funded preschoolers aged of six in the district of Kuala Lumpur. Since the participants come from diverse backgrounds and have broad spectrum of learning abilities, it is difficult for researcher to measure the effects of Integrated Sound Word Method under true experimental research conditions. Therefore, quasi experimental design is chosen where it is suitable for this study due to the nature of the participants that is hard to control. Two groups

are formed which one group is assigned as the control group and the other as the invention group. In this quasi experimental study, the preschoolers are matched accordingly based on the age, gender and the English language proficiency to test the validity of hypotheses toward the effects of Integrated Sound Word Method in teaching early reading to ESL preschoolers. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2009), researchers must do their best in controlling all variables that may affect the outcomes of the experimental studies. Matching allows the participants to be categories on certain variables of interest” (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009).

Table 3. 1

*The Outline of Quasi Experimental Study*

	<b>P</b>	<b>O<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>X</b>	<b>O<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>O<sup>3</sup></b>
<b>Intervention Group</b>	Age, gender and English Proficiency	Diagnostic Test	Integrated Sound Word Method	Diagnostic Test	Diagnostic Test
<b>Duration</b>	1 Week	1 Week	10 Weeks	1 Weeks	1 Weeks
	<b>P</b>	<b>O<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>C</b>	<b>O<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>O<sup>3</sup></b>
<b>Control Group</b>	Age, gender and English Proficiency	Diagnostic Test	NPSC's Syllabus	Diagnostic Test	Diagnostic Test

Table 3.1 presents an outline of the research design. The symbol *P* means the participants in each group have been matched on certain variables. In this case are the age, gender and the English proficiency of participants. The symbol *O* refers to observation (measurement) of the dependent variable, while *X* represents exposure of the group to the treatment of interest. The symbol *C* stands for Control group where

this group does not receive any treatment. The placement of the symbols from left to right indicates the order in time from  $M$  to  $O^3$  (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009).

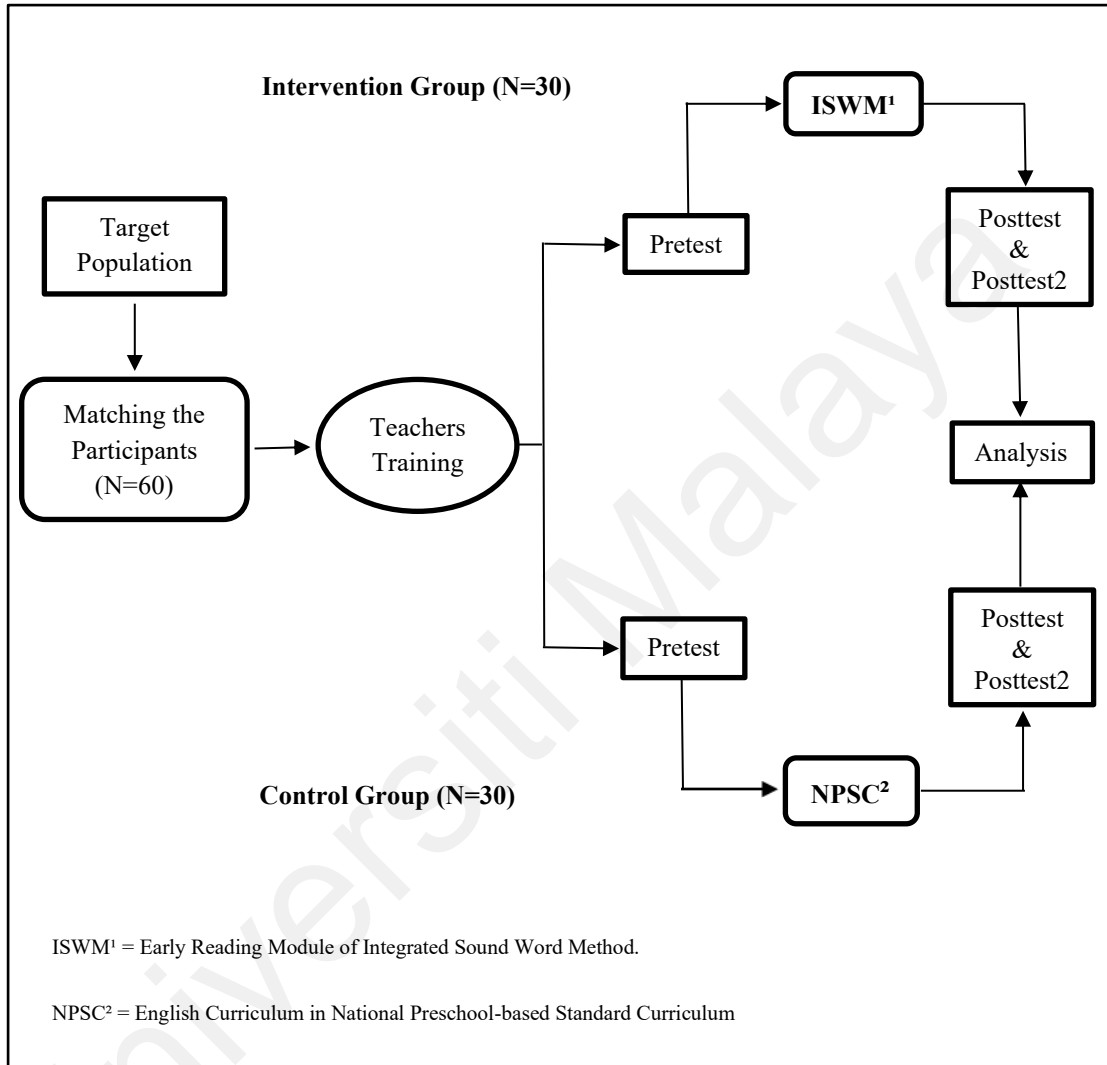


Figure 3. 1: The Quasi Experimental Study of Using Integrated Sound Word Method in Teaching Early Reading to ESL Preschoolers.

As shown in Figure 3.1, a total of sixty participants of the ESL preschoolers from two different preschools were selected. Since the participants came from different preschools, a matching process is used to identify participants with similar age, gender, and the English language proficiency. Preschool teachers were trained



to conduct pretest and posttest. Then, the preschool teachers in intervention group received an intensive training on Integrated Sound Word Method. The participants in both control and intervention groups took a same pretest. Treatment was given to the intervention group using an intervention module of Integrated Sound Word Method. On the other hand, the control group proceeded with the current learning method. By the twelfth week, both groups did a same posttest. After two weeks interval, a posttest 2 was conducted again, and the results are evaluated and compared. These tests are used to measure effects of Integrated Sound Word Method in teaching early reading of phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary and early reading comprehension. It is important to assess the effects of immediate post treatment and two weeks interval post treatment to determine the overall improvement in the preschoolers' early reading skill using Integrated Sound Word Method. The learning outcomes are evaluated using SPSS to determine if there are any significance changes in phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary and early reading comprehension.

### 3.2.1 Threats to Internal Validity.

One of the major threats to quasi experimental design is the confounding variables which may affect validity of the study. The threats to internal validity refer to the problems arise during the experimental procedures or the experiences of participants which affected the results of cause-and-effect relationship in the study (Creswell, 2008). In order to achieve the validity, researchers must eliminate all possible effects of the judgment of explaining and maintaining the independent variable that might influence the dependent variable when comparing with the control group (Yap, 2014). This study has identified four potential threats to internal validity: Testing, Instrumentation, Regression, and Maturation.

Testing: It is a potential threat of internal validity because participants may become familiar with the outcome measures and remember the answers for later testing (Creswell, 2008). Usually, in the experimental research study, a test like the pretest was being used several times throughout the study in various occasions. Participants tend to remember the responses that they previously do if the test was being repeated multiple times. To remedy the situation in this research study, the outcomes will be measured less frequently, and reshuffle items in the test in different order during the posttest than those were used in earlier testing.

Instrumentation: During the administration process of conducting pretest and posttest, a potential threat to internal validity may occur if the instruments are constantly changing (Creswell, 2008). Inconsistency in delivering research instrument possibly will affect the students' test scores as they get confused with the instrument. Therefore, to overcome this potential problem, it is important that the instrument used able to yield consistent results under standardized procedures throughout the experimental period such as giving routine instructions to participants.

Regression: When researcher selects participants for grouping purpose, it is based on extreme scores either choosing the highest or lowest scores. This allows researcher to gauge the outcome whether the subjects will do better or worse on the posttest as compared to the pretest regardless of the treatment they received (Creswell, 2008). This means over the time, the participants' scores regress toward the mean. To eliminate the possibility of this threat, a matching process is conducted at the beginning of the research procedures to discount participants with potential

extreme scores which show a huge gap between age, gender and English proficiency in control and intervention groups.

Maturation: Participants may grow or change during the experimental period as they will become older, wiser, stronger and gain more experience. These changes may affect their scores between the pretest and posttest (Creswell, 2008). Hence a careful selection of age group and the English language proficiency level for both control and intervention groups may help to eliminate this threat. This type of selection is importance to control the uniformity of participants' rate of maturation as they all have same age and equal level of the English proficiency.

### **3.3 Population of The Study**

This study chooses the English as Second Language learners in government owned preschools of the district of Kuala Lumpur as participants of the research. Two preschools which are annexed in the government owned primary schools are selected to conduct this quasi experimental research. Researcher has used purposive sampling to choose Sekolah Kebangsaan Tiara Permai and Sekolah Kebangsaan Batu Muda as the samples of study. These schools have been identified at risk in the English language reading. All students in these schools are English as Second Language learners whose majority are Malays, with a small number of Indians population. The demographic backgrounds of the population are categorized as low socioeconomic group whose mostly live in the government support housing apartments. The targeted preschoolers in the population chosen are aged of six years old whose have little understanding of English language. This is mainly because their mother tongue or native language is predominantly used in their daily life activities.

### 3.4 Participants of The Study

Sixty ESL preschoolers from two preschools in the district of Kuala Lumpur were selected and divided into two groups; Control and Intervention groups. These participants were being selected through purposive sampling method. Researcher chose purposive sampling due to the criteria of the participants matched to the requirements for this experimental purpose. Fraenkel (2009) mentioned that purposive sampling is used when researchers use their best knowledge or fair judgment to choose a sample that they feel deemed appropriate and able to fit into the research criteria based on their prior information (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). This experimental study needs participants whose are English as a Second Language learners, aged of six years old and have low English language reading proficiency. Then, a screening test through structured oral assessment with the preschoolers using the English language was conducted. Questions asked include but not limited to *“How are you?”*, *“What is your name?”*, *“How old are you?”*, *“Do you like to go to school?”*, *“Can you name the alphabets for me?”*. Researcher marked “Yes” or “No” on the checklist to determine whether the preschoolers able to answer the questions. Based on the screening test’s scores, the researcher selected sixty preschoolers that best meet the criteria based on the responses given by the preschoolers and recommendation by the preschool teachers.

According to Ghazali Darulsalam and Sufean Hussin (2016), a researcher can obtain a research sample as large as possible within a reasonable expenditure of time and energy. For a descriptive study, 100 is the recommended minimum number of subjects required. Whereas, 50 is appropriate for correlation study and at least 30 participants in each group to fulfil the experimental and causal-comparative studies (Ghazali & Sufean, 2016). Since this is a quasi-experimental study, the research

participants as small as 30 people in each group is acceptable. Therefore, this study chooses 30 preschoolers for Intervention group whose will undergo treatment using Early Reading Module of Integrated Sound Word Method for 10 weeks. In contrast, the other 30 participants are assigned to the Control group whose received no treatment. This group are using the existing method as stated in the National Preschool-based Standard Curriculum. The independent variable is the Integrated Sound Word Method. The dependent variable for this study is outcome of the pretest and posttest scores that measured ESL preschoolers' early reading skills of mastering phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary and early reading comprehension. Both Intervention and Control groups received the same pretest, posttest and posttest 2 to assess the participants' English language early reading proficiency. The tests results are used to measure effects of Integrated Sound Word Method in teaching early reading to ESL preschoolers. The significance of Pretest-Posttest-Posttest2 of the Intervention program also will determine the overall effects of post treatment toward preschoolers' early reading proficiency using Integrated Sound Word Method.

### **3.5 Research Instruments**

Integrated Sound Word Method was developed by Professor Emeritus Dato' Dr. Isahak Haron. This approach evolved around two big theories, Phonics Approach and Whole Language Approach. The Phonics Approach refers to an alphabetical order system, each individual letter represents a unique sound called phoneme. This approach teaches preschoolers to recognize the relationship between the letter and its sound. Combining and blending of the letters and sounds formed a word. Whereas, the Whole Language Approach emphasizes on reading and recognizing sets of words through word attack strategy. It allows preschoolers learn to read

meaningful words through exposure in their daily experiences with their caregivers, siblings, friends and environments which can help them remember the words they learned. Hence, Integrated Sound Word Method assimilates both the Phonics Approach and Whole Language Approach that uses the strengths of both approaches and integrating them in a systematic and spiral structures which allow preschoolers to read and writes meaningful words (Isahak, 2014). Permission to use the research instrument from Professor Emeritus Dato' Dr. Isahak Haron, Faculty of Education, University of Malaya is approved for the sole purpose of this research study.

Table 3. 2

*The Differences Between Early Reading Module of Integrated Sound Word Method and The English Reading Curriculum in NPSC 2017*

<b>Early Reading Module of Integrated Sound Word Method.</b>  <b>(Intervention Group)</b>	<b>English Reading Curriculum in NPSC 2017.</b>  <b>(Control Group)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letters and sounds recognition of <i>a, i, o, b, c, p, t, s, n.</i></li> <li>• Integrate two and three letters sound, and blend to make words.</li> <li>• Form short phrases and sentences.</li> <li>• Read simple sentences.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letters and sounds recognition from <i>a-z.</i></li> <li>• Identify and sound out initial, medial and ending sounds in a word.</li> <li>• Blend phonemes (sounds) to form single syllable words.</li> <li>• Identify and read high-frequency words.</li> </ul>

Table 3.2 shows The Differences Between the Early Reading Module of Integrated Sound Word Method and The English Reading Curriculum as in NPSC 2017. In this experimental study, the Early Reading Module of Integrated Sound

Word Method is used in an intervention tool to determine its effects as compared to the existing method based on the NPSC 2017's English curriculum.

To achieve the objectives of this research study, a Pretest, Posttest and Posttest 2 are given to both Control and Intervention groups. The pretest is given to participants before commencement of the experimental research, an immediate posttest is given after the experimental study ended, and the second posttest is delivered after two weeks interval. The Early Reading Module of Integrated Sound Word Method is used as intervention mode for the Intervention group. Whereas, the Control group continued the English curriculum as stipulated in the NPSC 2017. The researcher trained preschool teachers who are in the intervention group on how to conduct teaching instructions in class using Integrated Sound Word Method. Teaching materials such as Early Reading booklet, Alphabet cards, Vowel-Consonant and Consonant-Vowel-Consonant cards, manipulatives, worksheets, and story book are provided by the researcher. At the end of the module, a thematic topic is used to evaluate participants' understanding of the lessons. The researcher keeps close contact with the preschool teachers to get feedback and response on the lessons.

### **3.6 Validity and Reliability**

Validity is an importance determinant of participants' scores in an instrument to make sense and meaningful. It allows researchers to analyze and make an accurate conclusion from the sample to the whole population. Whereas, reliability refers to the scores of an instrument which yield a stable and consistent results without errors (Creswell, 2008). There are several criteria that needed to be followed in the process of validation.

First and foremost, three expert panels are chosen to validate the credibility and reliability of the research instrument through Content validity. The Content validity is a primary step in developing a new experimental instrument as it links abstract concepts and theories with observable and measurable variables. Content validation need to undergo the Development process and the Judgment quantification process. In the Development process, researchers need to do an extensive literature research review to identify appropriate contents to develop an instrument that comprises relevant items. Then, move to the Judgment quantification process which required appointed experts panels to evaluate the newly developed instrument and rate the contents base on the relevancy, accuracy, and clarity of the items, as well as the overall comprehensiveness of instrument (Sirajudeen, Pillai, Shah, & Mohan, 2012). The Content Validity Index (CVI) is a matrix used to analyze the feedbacks from the expert panels. Finding of the CVI's result for this study will be discussed later in next subtopic 3.7.

Besides that, as mentioned by Ghazali Darulsalam and Sufean Hussin (2016), there are some ethical rules that researchers must adhere to such as researchers are prohibited to conduct the instructions, the number of participants in the experimental groups must be equal, and the research instrument must undergo a Pilot test study (Ghazali & Sufean, 2016). Thus, preschool teachers need to be appointed for each group. These teachers need to be guided and facilitated from time to time to deliver accurate and smooth instructions. Two weeks before the experimental research is conducted, the researcher trained the preschool teachers on how to deliver lessons through the Integrated Sound Word Method. Then, they meet once a week to get an update and feedback on the progress of the lessons. Frequent monitoring can help to make sure the research study is progressed as planned and



followed proper code of ethics in research procedures. Furthermore, participants from both groups must be equal in term of the number of preschoolers in each group, age and level the English language proficiency. Two schools which are located close to each other are assigned with the same number of participants. A matching process was carried out for both Control and Intervention groups so that preschoolers in each group have similar age and level of the English language proficiency. Moreover, same Pretest and Posttest must be given to both Control and Intervention groups. The lesson plans for both Control and Intervention group must appropriate to the preschoolers' level of development, and the duration suggested by the researcher is between three to four months. These criteria have been validated through Pilot test which discussed later in this chapter.

To prove the reliability of the research instrument, the Test-retest reliability procedure is established to examine the stability of the instruments for this study. The test is given to a non-participating's preschoolers from a neighbouring class two times after one-week interval. To minimize the possibility of memorization and familiarity of the instrument, researcher has re-arranged the order of alphabets and words selections in the test. However, the test administration procedures remained the same as the actual study. A reliability of coefficient is then calculated between the two sets of scores. A high coefficient score indicated a strong evidence of reliability (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). The findings of Test-retest reliability will be discussed in subtopic 3.11.

### **3.7 Content Validity Index**

This quasi-experimental study is the pioneer research using Integrated Sound Word Method to teach early reading in the English language. Hence, researcher has sought

validation from three expert panels. The process of validation an instrument can be done through professional viewpoints of the expert panels. The expert panels must consist of content experts and lay experts. The backgrounds of content experts should be professionals who have research experience or actively involved in their field of expertise, while the lay experts can be the potential research subjects (Zamanzadeh et al., 2015). This study has appointed Associate Professor from the Language and Literacy Department of University Malaya and Assistance Director of Early Childhood Curriculum Development in Ministry of Education as content experts. On the other hand, the Leader of Early Years Program from Taylor International School is represented the lay expert. These expert panels are creditable and have many years of experience in their field of expertise.

The Content Validity Index (CVI) is widely used in reporting instrument development. Expert panels rated the instrument items based on the contents clarity and its relevancy to the research study on a 4-point ordinal scale (Zamanzadeh et al., 2015). The CVI is calculated by tallying the results of the experts according to the degree of scale where the experts agreed based on the point values given for each criterion. High CVI scores mean the items judged is relevant to the content domain and the overall instrument (Sirajudeen et al., 2012).

Table 3. 3

*The Content Validity Index (CVI) for Integrated Sound Word Method*

Item	Expert 1	Expert 2	Expert 3	CVI
Clarity	0	1	1	0.67
Presentation and Organization	1	1	1	1
Suitability of Lessons	1	1	1	1
Adequateness of the Content	1	1	1	1
Words Choice	0	1	1	0.67
Attainment of Purpose	1	1	1	1
Learning Objectives	1	1	1	1
Scale and Assessment	1	1	1	1
Overall CVI				0.92

As shown in Table 3.3, the CVI for this study was calculated for each item as well as for the overall instrument. Results from the expert panels yielded a 0.92 of overall CVI which shows good agreement on the proposed instrument. According to Sirajudeen, Pillai, Shah & Mohan (2012), “when CVI score at 0.70 gives an average agreement, a 0.80 means adequate agreement, a 0.90 represents good agreement and CVI of 1.00 indicates 100 percent agreement between raters.” (Sirajudeen et al., 2012, p.15). Therefore, it can be concluded that this instrument has successfully achieved majority agreement from expert panels, and it can be used as a valid and reliable tool to teach early reading to the ESL preschoolers.

### 3.8 Procedures of The Study

Systematic but tedious procedures are taken place to ensure smooth transmission of the research study. When both Control and Intervention groups are identified, a Pretest is given to all participants in each group. Then, the preschool teachers in

each Control and Intervention groups started the teaching instructions followed individual's lesson plans. As for Control group, the participants learn early reading using the existing method of instructions which has determined by the National Preschool-based Standard Curriculum 2017 (NPSC 2017). Meanwhile, the Intervention group, the participants undergo a series of learning instructions based on the Early Reading Module of Integrated Sound Word Method. Each lesson is conducted once a week for 45 minutes throughout the period of ten weeks. The researcher consistently facilitated the preschool teachers during the intervention program. A thematic topic is used at the end of the module to evaluate participants' understanding of that topic. Changes and modifications are made when necessary to meet the needs of the participants and give rooms for school events or holidays. During the experimental period, the researcher often monitored the classrooms in both Control and Intervention groups to get an update of the instructional progress and observed participants' work during class activities. The lesson plans and the teacher's anecdotal notes for each early reading lesson using Integrated Sound Word Method in the Intervention group are attached in APPENDIX A. By the end of the thirteenth week, both Control and Intervention groups take an immediate posttest, and second posttest is given in two weeks interval after the experimental study ended to determine participants' achievement toward the learning of early reading. The general flow of teaching procedures by weeks are as follow:

**Week one:** Researcher goes to preschools of Control and Intervention groups to meet with the preschool teachers and preschoolers. The researcher gives a short introduction to preschoolers and conducts a screening test to get to know each preschooler's English language proficiency. A matching process is conducted after the visits to determine equal number of participants with similar age, gender and

the English language proficiency. An intensive training is also conducted after school hours with the preschool teachers of Control group and Intervention group.

**Week two:** Preschool teachers from both Control and Intervention groups perform a Pretest to everyone in the class using Alphabets cards and Early Reading Diagnostic checklist given by the researcher. The researcher then collects the results of participants whose have been identified as the sample for this experimental study.

**Week three - week twelve:**

This is the ten weeks of instructional learning periods where the Control group proceeds the lessons using the existing method of instructions which has stipulated in the National Preschool-based Standard Curriculum 2017 (NPSC 2017). On the other hand, the Intervention group begins the learning instructions based on the Early Reading Module of Integrated Sound Word Method. In each lesson, the preschool teacher starts the instruction as a large group either in a circle or in front of the board. During this time, the teacher is reviewing previous lesson and introducing new lesson for that day. Then the teacher divided the participants into small groups for interactive learning activity. All participants are given the chance to participate and do hands-on activities with manipulative. The preschool teachers then gather the participants in a group again to recap lesson that they have learned and scaffold them when completing written work in the Early Reading booklet independently. These routines continued until the end of the intervention program.

**Week thirteen:** At the end of the experimental period, preschool teachers from both Control and Intervention groups conduct a Posttest using the same Alphabets cards and checklist given by the researcher. The researcher collects results of participants whose have been identified as the sample for this experimental study.

**Week fifteen:** The preschool teachers conducted a second posttest after a two weeks interval. The Alphabets cards that were used to test the participants' early reading knowledge have been reshuffled to control the threat of internal validity. The purpose of the second posttest is to assess whether participants able to retain lessons they have learned after completion of the experimental study. Then, the pretest and two posttest results from both groups will be analyzed and evaluated to examine the effects Integrated Sound Word Method in teaching early reading to English as a Second Language preschoolers.

### **3.9 Research Tools**

The main research tools used in this research study are Early Reading Diagnostic Checklist with Alphabets cards, lesson plans, Early Reading booklet and the teaching materials. As attached in APPENDIX A is the lesson plans used to guide the preschool teachers in teaching process. Whereas, the Early Reading Diagnostic Checklist used in the Pretest, Posttest and Posttest 2 at the beginning and ending of experimental period, as well as after the two weeks interval are shown in APPENDIX B. The classwork of early reading letters, phrases and sentences in the Early Reading booklet is attached in APPENDIX C. The tool also includes protocol interview with the preschool teachers and participants in the preschools as well as the anecdotal notes recorded during the experimental period. There is a structured oral assessment to screen preschoolers' English language proficiency before the commencement of the experimental study. The purpose of this assessment is to identify preschoolers of low English language proficiency in the population. The learning materials and lesson plans used are developmental aged appropriate where preschoolers know how to utilize the given materials and understand the lessons taught by the preschool teachers.

### **3.10 Pilot Study**

The pilot study is used as preliminary test on the research instrument before the actual experimental research is conducted (Ghazali & Sufean, 2016). This allows researcher to validate the validity and reliability of the Early Reading Diagnostic test and the Early Reading booklet. The pilot study is conducted in a small scale of participants who are not the selected participants in the actual study for purpose to identify erroneous in the experimental procedures and instruments (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). Through the outcomes of the pilot study, the researcher needs to make appropriate adjustment and amendment to eliminate any defect and weakness in the research instrument before it tested on the actual participants in the research groups (Ghazali & Sufean, 2016).

This pilot study was done in a government funded preschool in the city of Klang, Selangor. There were 25 preschoolers in the class. However, only 12 of the preschoolers have been identified weak in the English language performance were chosen to participate in this pilot study. Therefore, pilot study served as a review and remedial course for a week using the Early Reading Module of Integrated Sound Word Method. The research procedures followed as proposed in this research study where the preschool teacher was trained to use Integrated Sound Word Method, and a Pretest was given to the 12 participants that were identified weak the English language reading skill. During the one-week period of Integrated Sound Word Method's lessons, these participants were given a Posttest after they completed each early reading level of Integrated Sound Word Method. Two days after the completion of the pilot study, an Early Reading Diagnostic Checklist was given to the participants. The findings from the pilot study are shown below:

Table 3. 4

*Mean, Median, and Standard Deviation of Integrated Sound Word Method*

	Pretest Level 1	Posttest Level 1	Pretest Level 2	Posttest Level 2	Early Reading Level 1	Early Reading Level 2
Mean	48.0	86.0	34.0	68.0	98.8	38.8
Median	60.0	90.0	30.0	70.0	100.0	38.5
Standard Deviation	35.5	16.5	25.0	34.3	3.8	27.0

*Level 1 = Phonemic Awareness**Level 2 = Fluency*

In table 3.4 that shows mean, median, and standard deviation of Integrated Sound Word Method of ten participants. Two participants were eliminated due to absentee during the pilot study period. When the mean scores of Level 1 Pretest and Posttest is compared, it shows an increment from 48% to 86%, and the standard deviation for Level 1 Pretest is 35.5, 16.5 for Level 1 Posttest. Level 2 Posttest scores increased by half from 34% to 86% as compared to Level 1 Pretest. The standard deviation for Level 2 Pretest and Posttest is 25.0 and 34.3. However, when these participants were tested again two days after the completion of pilot study, the mean scores for Level 1 is 98.8% with standard deviation of 3.8, and 38.8% for Level 2 with standard deviation of 27.0.



Table 3. 5

*The Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test of Integrated Sound Word Method*

		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Posttest Level 1 - Pretest Level 1	Negative Ranks	0 <sup>a</sup>	0.0	0.0
	Positive Ranks	9 <sup>b</sup>	5.0	45.0
	Ties	1 <sup>c</sup>		
	Total	10		
Posttest Level 2 - Pretest Level 2	Negative Ranks	0 <sup>d</sup>	0.0	0.0
	Positive Ranks	9 <sup>e</sup>	5.0	45.0
	Ties	1 <sup>f</sup>		
	Total	10		

a. Posttest L1 scores < Pretest L1 scores

b. Posttest L1 scores > Pretest L1 scores

c. Posttest L1 scores = Pretest L1 scores

d. Posttest L2 scores < Pretest L2 scores

e. Posttest L2 scores > Pretest L2 scores

f. Posttest L2 scores = Pretest L2 scores

Table 3. 6

*The Wilcoxon Signed Rank Statistics<sup>a,c</sup> of Integrated Sound Word Method*

			Posttest L1 - Pretest L1	Posttest L2 - Pretest L2
Z			-2.687 <sup>b</sup>	-2.754 <sup>b</sup>
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)			0.007	0.006
Sig.			0.004	0.003
Monte Carlo Sig. (2-tailed)	99% Confidence Interval	Lower Bound	0.002	0.002
		Upper Bound	0.005	0.005
		Sig.	0.002	0.002
Monte Carlo Sig. (1-tailed)	99% Confidence Interval	Lower Bound	0.001	0.001
		Upper Bound	0.003	0.003
		Sig.	0.002	0.002

a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

b. Based on negative ranks.

c. Based on 10000 sampled tables with starting seed 926214481.

As for tables 3.5 and 3.6 show the result of Wilcoxon Signed Rank test. This test was conducted to evaluate the effects of Integrated Sound Word Method in teaching early reading to ESL preschoolers to see whether the Posttest's scores for Level 1 and Level 2 show significant changed as compared to the Pretest's scores of Level 1 and Level 2. Since the participants in this pilot study is less than 30, the Wilcoxon Signed Rank test is chosen to perform this non-parametric analysis (Ghazali & Sufean, 2016). The results of Level 1 Pretest and Posttest scores (mean rank = 0.5, n = 10) indicated a significant difference,  $z = -2.687$ ,  $p < .01$ , and  $r = -0.85$ . The results of Level 2 Pretest and Posttest scores (mean rank = 0.5, n = 10) indicated a significant difference,  $z = -2.754$ ,  $p < .01$ , and  $r = 0.87$ . As a result, the participants in the pilot study show significant improvement in their early reading of the English language after using Integrated Sound Word Method.

Nevertheless, there are minor changes need to be done in the research tools after evaluating comments and feedback from the preschool teacher. The teacher suggested to extend the duration of the lesson to 45 minutes since she struggled to complete each lesson in 30 minutes, and more pictures illustrations is required to show meaning of each phrase or sentence. All preschoolers in the class are English as a Second Language learners and majority of them cannot speak English. It is difficult for her to teach in a short time frame and without pictures to show meaning of the words. Overall, the preschoolers enjoyed the lessons and have no trouble completing the Early Reading booklet.

### **3.11 Test-Retest Reliability**

The test-retest reliability is serves to measure consistency of the research results using same participants under same conditions in two intervals of time. Integrated

Sound Word Method of Early Reading Diagnostic Checklist is administered twice with a group of preschoolers whose are other than the research sample. However, the criteria of the ESL preschoolers are almost equally as same as the research participants. There is one-week lapse in between the first test and the second test. The order of the items in the Early Reading Diagnostic Checklist are reshuffle within each level to avoid test effect. Data collected from Level 1 – Phonemic Awareness and Level 2 - Fluency are analyzed using IBM Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS) as presented in next page.

Table 3. 7

*Test-Retest Reliability Scores*

	Correlations		
	N	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pretest L1 scores - Posttest L1 scores	10	.821**	.004
Pretest L2 scores - Posttest L2 scores	10	.891**	.001

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3.7 shows the Pearson correlation test result to determine the reliability of the research instrument. The test-retest correlation values for the Pretest Level 1 - Posttest Level 1 and Pretest Level 2 - Posttest Level 2 are .821 and .891 respectively at the significant level of  $p < .05$ . A research instrument has correlation value ( $r$ ) of .65 and above means that the instrument is reliable to use for research (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). This instrument's reliability values achieved above .65 ( $r = .82$ , and  $r = .89$ ) which means that the instrument is reliable where the data is

valid within sample that have same characteristics as this group of research participants.

### 3.12 Data Organization

Every raw data needs to be sorted and organized into clear and useful information. In this research study, there are three phases of data collection and organization. The data will be collected before and after the experimental study to measure the effects of Integrated Sound Word Method in teaching early reading to ESL preschoolers. Figure 3.2. shows the flow chart of the Phases of Data Organization.

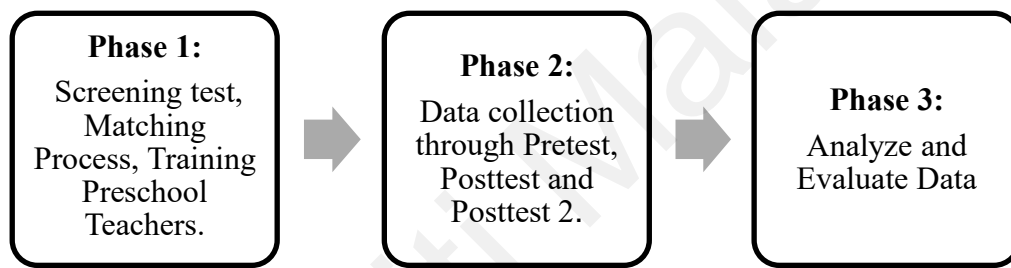


Figure 3. 2: The Phases of Data Organization.

As refers to Figure 3.2, the first phase, participants from two preschools undergo a screening test before they are matched based on their age, gender and the English language proficiency. The maximum number of preschoolers in one class in the government funded preschools are 25 preschoolers. Since this experimental study needs 30 participants in each group, two preschool classes are combined to form one Control group and one Intervention group through matching process. The matching process is to select 30 participants among boys and girls whose are aged of six with low English language proficiency for each group. The preschool teachers are trained to conduct Pretest and Posttest, and preschool teachers from Intervention group receive additional training on conducting lessons using Integrated Sound Word Method.

In phase two, the study begins with a Pretest given to both Intervention and Control groups. The test is in the form of Early Reading Diagnostic test using Alphabets cards and checklist to assess preschoolers' basic understanding of letter sounds and letters recognition. Within a period of ten weeks, the Intervention group uses Early Reading Modules of Integrated Sound Word Method, whereas the Control group uses the existing method as stated in the National Preschool-based Standard Curriculum of the English language syllabus. By the end of the tenth week, Posttest is conducted for both Control and Intervention groups. Then two weeks interval after the completion of the experimental study, a second posttest is conducted to the same groups. Results are collected by the preschool teachers and passed them to the researcher.

At the third phase, the data collected will be used to analyze and evaluate using IBM Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS) to examine the effects of Integrated Sound Word Method in teaching early reading to ESL preschoolers. The results of the findings will be presented in the form of tables for further discussions.

### **3.13 Data Analysis**

Data collected from a pretest and two posttests are to be analyzed using the SPSS. The analysis is divided into a descriptive analysis and inferential analysis. The descriptive analysis serves to summarize the overall trends or tendencies of the data to show patterns of the scores and how one score is positioned in comparison to others (Creswell, 2008). It is used to evaluate research question one and its hypothesis. Thus, the measure of central tendencies like mean and standard deviation are used to determine the participants' reading errors when attempting to

learn early reading of the English language before and after the implementation of the quasi experimental study.

Moreover, this research study also using the inferential analysis to compare groups and relationship of two variables. The purpose of inferential analysis is to extract intrinsic information based on the scores given by the participants and make predictions about the population (Creswell, 2008). To answer research question two and hypothesis two, the analyses of independent t-test and pair-sample t-test are used to compare the mean score values of the Pretest and Posttest from both Control and Intervention groups. It is to determine the effects of the Integrated Sound Word Method in teaching early reading by looking at the significance differences between these two mean scores. The significance level is specified at alpha-Cronbach,  $\alpha = .05$  or 95% of confidence level.

In order to examine research question and hypothesis three to see whether there is any significant difference between the Pretest, Posttest and Posttest 2 scores for the Control and Intervention groups, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with overall changes to both groups and Tukey Post-Hoc multiple comparisons of time are chosen. This is used to investigate whether the participants in Intervention group received better scores in retaining knowledge of learning early reading in the English language in comparison to participants in the Control group based on their background as the English as a Second Language preschoolers. The independent variable is the Integrated Sound Word Method, and the dependent variable is the learning outcomes to master early reading of Phonemic Awareness, Fluency, Vocabulary and Reading Comprehension. The repeated-measures-analysis is conducted to test the difference in the mean scores between Pretest, Posttest and

Posttest 2. The significance level is specified at less than .05 (alpha-Cronbach,  $\alpha < .05$ ).

Furthermore, a Normality test has been done to determine whether the data has a normal distribution (parametric) or an abnormal distribution (non-parametric). The purpose is to allow researcher to choose adequate statistical analysis for parametric and non-parametric data. There are a few methods used to identify the data distribution which are; (1.) the values of mean, median and mode, (2.) the Skewness and Kurtosis test ( $\pm 2$ ), and (3.) the Bell Curve (Ghazali & Sufean, 2016).

Ghazali and Sufean (2016) explained that the Skewness and Kurtosis values are referred to the shape of data distribution where zero value of Skewness and Kurtosis represents data that has 100% normal distribution. The distribution is considered normal when both of the values are at the scale between  $\pm 1.7$  or  $\pm 2.0$  (Ghazali & Sufean, 2016). Table 3.8 shows the mean, median and mode values for Early Reading Diagnostic Pretest and Posttest, while Figure 3.3 shows the Bell Curve of Early Reading Diagnostic Pretest and Posttest.

Table 3. 8

*The Mean, Median and Mode of Early Reading Diagnostic Pretest and Posttest*

		Pretest	Posttest
N	Valid	60	60
	Missing	0	0
Mean		21.500	61.042
Median		15.000	67.500
Mode		12.500	100.00
Skewness		1.491	-.276
Kurtosis		2.427	-1.602

The findings in Table 3.8 shows that the values of mean, median, and mode for the Early Reading Diagnostic Pretest and Posttest are close to one another. The Pretest values for Mean is 21.50, Median is 15.0 and Mode is 12.5. While the Posttest value for Mean is 61.04, Median is 67.50 and Mode is 100.00. This means that the Pretest and Posttest values for Mean, Median and Mode are within the cluster of normal distribution. The Normality test for this research study also can be determined through the values of Skewness and Kurtosis. The Skewness and Kurtosis values for Pretest are 1.491 and 2.427 respectively, whereas the Skewness and Kurtosis values for Posttest are -.276 and -1.602. Since these values are within the range of  $\pm 1.7$  or  $\pm 2.0$ , it can be concluded that the values in Early Reading Diagnostic Pretest and Posttest are normally distributed.

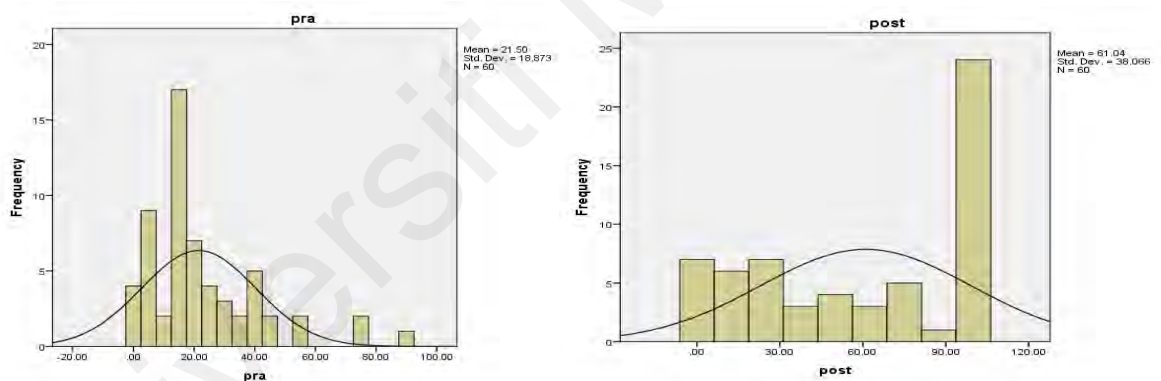


Figure 3. 3: The Bell Curve of Early Reading Diagnostic Pretest and Posttest.

The values of Pretest and Posttest are distributed normally based on the shape of bell curve shown in the Figure 3.3. Therefore, these values can be used to generate parametric statistic for any inferential analysis such as T-test, Independent sample t- test, One-way ANOVA or Correlation.



Table 3. 9

*Matrix of Data Analysis*

<b>Research Objectives</b>	<b>Research Questions</b>	<b>Sample Type</b>	<b>Data Scale</b>	<b>Types of Analysis</b>
1. To determine the early reading errors among ESL preschoolers.	What is the frequency of early reading errors among ESL preschoolers?	ESL Preschoolers n = 60.	Ratio.	Mean and Standard Deviation.
2. To examine the effects of Integrated Sound Word Method in teaching early reading to ESL preschoolers.	What is the effect of Integrated Sound Word Method in teaching early reading to ESL preschoolers?	ESL Preschoolers n = 60.	Ratio.	Independent t-test and Pair-sample t-test.
3. To examine the effects of Integrated Sound Word Method in retaining early reading knowledge among ESL preschoolers.	What is the effect of Integrated Sound Word Method in retaining early reading knowledge among ESL preschoolers?	ESL Preschoolers n = 60.	Ratio.	One-way ANOVA, Tukey Post-Hoc Multiple Comparison and Repeated-measures analysis.

The above table 3.9 shows the Matrix of Data Analysis for this research study. The hypotheses may be tested using different types analysis depending on the number of variables states in the research objective, sample size and measurement scale. This can result whether to accept or reject the hypothesis (Kothari, 2012). The researcher is in a position to make valid decision to redefine the hypotheses as proposed earlier whether to reject or not to reject the null hypotheses.

### **3.14 Summary**

This study is designed to investigate the effects of Integrated Sound Word Method in teaching early reading to ESL preschoolers. The chapter has presented a clear flow of research methodology where the researcher is using quasi-experimental method as the research design, the participants for Control and Intervention groups have been identified in Kuala Lumpur area, the instruments have been validated through content validity index, test-retest and pilot study, as well as the research procedures are clearly laid out. Moreover, the standard of data organization and data analysis are listed. The SPSS is used to answer and measure three research questions at a significance level of .05. The descriptive and inferential analysis such as mean, standard deviation, Independent t-test, Paired-sample t-test, and one-way ANOVA are used to evaluate the learning outcomes of the experimental study. Later in the chapter, the researcher will be able to discuss and conclude findings to the proposed hypotheses whether Integrated Sound Word Method shows significance effects in teaching early reading to ESL preschoolers.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS

#### 4.1 Introduction

Data collected from the quasi experimental study are sorted for analysis. Through the research analysis, researcher able to answer three research questions as proposed in the earlier chapter. The analysis is divided into four sections; 1.) A descriptive analysis on the profile of participants, 2.) A descriptive analysis on the participants' reading errors in learning early reading in the English language (stated in the research question 1), 3.) A descriptive and inferential analysis on the effects of Integrated Sound Word Method in teaching early reading to ESL preschoolers (stated in the research question 2), and 4.) A descriptive and inferential analysis on the effects of Integrated Sound Word Method in retaining early reading knowledge among ESL preschoolers (stated in the research question 3).

#### 4.2 Profile of Participants

The process of sample selection used in this study is the purposive sampling method. There are a few reasons to justify the researcher's decision. The research study is conducted in the district of Kuala Lumpur. Even though Kuala Lumpur known as the capital city of Malaysia, there are small sections of the city occupied by low socioeconomic population that highly depends on the government funding. This group of people often left behind in the fast pace of city development. The family education background and living conditions in an environment affect children upbringing especially academic performance in school. Most of the participants selected are living in the government support housing apartments and are raise predominantly speaking their native language which is the Malay

language. The schools that have been identified in the area are at risk for poor English language performance.

Table 4. 1

*The Profile of Participants*

	Participants	Percent (%)
Total number of participants (N)	60	100
Age (years old)	6	100
English language proficiency	Low Proficiency	100

Table 4.1 shows the profile of participants, there is a total of sixty participants who were chosen from two government preschools. The selected preschools through purposive sampling are Sekolah Kebangsaan Batu Muda which assigned to be the Control group, and Sekolah Kebangsaan Tiara Permai which assigned as the Intervention group. All the participants were selected using a matching process to fit into the experimental study's criteria. The participants must be at aged of six years old and have low level of the English language proficiency. The percentages are equals to 100%. The purpose of the matching process is to control the threat to internal validity.

Table 4. 2

*The Gender of Participants*

Gender	Participants		
	Control Group	Intervention Group	Total
Male	14	16	30
Female	16	14	30
Total	30	30	60
Percent (%)	50	50	100

Table 4.2 shows the gender of participants in Control group and Intervention group. The researcher also tried to match the best possible amount of the participants to form an equal number of female and male in the Control and Intervention groups. The Control group consists a total of thirty participants which include sixteen females and fourteen male participants. Whereas, Intervention group consists of thirty participants with fourteen females and sixteen male participants. The Control group made up of 50% of the participants same as the Intervention group who also made up of 50% of the participants.

Since all participants were matched before the commencement of the experimental study, the participants' age, socio-economic background, and gender will not be considered as part of the factors that affect the result findings in this study.

### 4.3 The Reading Errors in Learning Early Reading Among ESL Preschoolers

This research analysis is attempted to answer research question one that were mentioned in the earlier chapter; What is the frequency of reading errors in learning early reading among ESL preschoolers? Two hypothesizes are to be tested where the null hypothesis ( $H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2$  or  $\mu_1 - \mu_2 = 0$ ) stated that the frequency of early reading errors among ESL preschoolers do not change over time. On the other hand, the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1: \mu_1 \neq \mu_2$  or  $\mu_1 - \mu_2 \neq 0$ ) stated the frequency of early reading errors among ESL preschoolers show significant decline over time. The measure of central tendencies such as mean and standard deviation are used to determine the participants' reading errors when attempting to learn early reading of the English language before and after the implementation of the quasi experimental study. The tables presented are the results of data analysis of the reading errors attempted in the Early Reading Diagnostic test for Control Group and Intervention Group.

Table 4. 3

*The Mean and Standard Deviation of Reading Errors in Control Group*

Level	Item	Description	Pretest	Posttest	Posttest 2	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	a	recognition	4.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.73
		sound	15.00	10.00	10.00	11.67	2.89
	i	recognition	9.00	1.00	4.00	4.67	4.04
		sound	18.00	13.00	14.00	15.00	2.65
	n	recognition	12.00	9.00	10.00	10.33	1.53
		sound	21.00	23.00	23.00	22.33	1.15
	p	recognition	10.00	6.00	7.00	7.67	2.08
		sound	23.00	21.00	19.00	21.00	2.00
	t	recognition	11.00	5.00	7.00	7.67	3.06

		sound	23.00	20.00	21.00	21.33	1.53
		Mean	14.60	10.90	11.60		
		Standard Deviation	6.48	8.13	7.43		
2	it	read	22.00	18.00	22.00	20.67	2.31
	on	read	20.00	11.00	20.00	17.00	5.20
	at	read	27.00	20.00	20.00	22.33	4.04
	an	read	27.00	20.00	21.00	22.67	3.79
	is	read	24.00	20.00	21.00	21.67	2.08
		Mean	24.00	17.80	20.80		
		Standard Deviation	3.08	3.90	.84		
3	cat	read	27.00	22.00	23.00	24.00	2.65
		match	29.00	23.00	26.00	26.00	3.00
	bin	read	27.00	23.00	25.00	25.00	2.00
		match	28.00	24.00	26.00	26.00	2.00
	top	read	28.00	22.00	26.00	25.33	3.06
		match	29.00	24.00	26.00	26.33	2.52
	big	read	28.00	24.00	25.00	25.67	2.08
		match	29.00	25.00	26.00	26.67	2.08
	fan	read	28.00	24.00	26.00	26.00	2.00
		match	29.00	24.00	27.00	26.67	2.52
		Mean	28.20	23.50	25.60		
		Standard Deviation	.79	.97	1.07		
4	it is a pen	read	28.00	25.00	25.00	26.00	1.73
		match	28.00	25.00	25.00	26.00	1.73
	he is a boy	read	29.00	27.00	26.00	27.33	1.53
		match	29.00	27.00	26.00	27.33	1.53
		Mean	28.50	26.00	25.50		
		Standard Deviation	.58	1.15	.58		

Table 4.3 shows the mean and standard deviation of reading errors in Pretest, Posttest and Posttest2 of Early Reading Level 1, 2, 3, and 4 for Control group. The

mean and standard deviation for Pretest Level 1 is 14.60 and 6.48 respectively. The mean for Posttest Level 1 shows a decrease to 10.90 and its standard deviation is 8.13. However, the mean for Posttest2 Level 1 shows a slight increase to 11.60 with a standard deviation of 7.43. As for the mean and standard deviation for Pretest Level 2, the scores show 24.00 for Mean and 3.08 for standard deviation. Posttest Level 2 shows mean score of 17.80 and standard deviation of 3.90. Whereas, Posttest2 Level 2's mean score is 20.80 and standard deviation marked at 0.84. Pretest Level 3 has a mean score of 28.20 and a standard deviation of 0.79. The mean score shows a decline to 23.50 with a standard deviation of 0.97 for Posttest Level 3. In Posttest2 Level 3, the mean is 25.60 and standard deviation of 1.07. For Level 4 Pretest mean is 28.50, Posttest mean is 26.00 and Posttest2 mean is 25.50. The standard deviation for the same level is 0.58, 1.15 and 0.58 for the Pretest, Posttest and Posttest2 respectively. Overall, the mean scores of reading errors for Early Reading Level 1, 2, 3 and 4 have shown a decline from Pretest to Posttest and a slight increase in Posttest2. This means that participants in the Control group have displayed some improvement by reducing the number of reading errors in each level before and immediately after the quasi experimental. However, the number of reading errors in the Early Reading level 1, 2 and 3 seemed to show slight increment two weeks after the experimental study ended except for level 4 where the mean score of reading errors dropped by 0.5.



Table 4. 4

*The Mean and Standard Deviation of Reading Errors in Intervention Group*

Level	Item	Description	Pretest	Posttest	Posttest 2	Mean	Standard Deviation	
1	a	recognition	4.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.73	
		sound	13.00	1.00	1.00	5.00	6.93	
	i	recognition	5.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	1.73	
		sound	22.00	1.00	2.00	8.33	11.85	
	n	recognition	3.00	2.00	3.00	2.67	.58	
		sound	29.00	2.00	3.00	11.33	15.31	
	p	recognition	6.00	4.00	4.00	4.67	1.15	
		sound	26.00	3.00	4.00	11.00	13.00	
	t	recognition	6.00	3.00	3.00	4.00	1.73	
		sound	25.00	2.00	3.00	10.00	13.00	
			Mean	13.90	2.10	2.60		
			Standard Deviation	10.46	.99	1.07		
	2	it	read	18.00	2.00	2.00	7.33	9.24
		on	read	21.00	2.00	3.00	8.67	10.69
at		read	23.00	2.00	3.00	9.33	11.85	
an		read	28.00	2.00	2.00	10.67	15.01	
is		read	25.00	2.00	1.00	9.33	13.58	
			Mean	23.00	2.00	2.20		
		Standard Deviation	3.81	.00	.84			
3	cat	read	20.00	7.00	8.00	11.67	7.23	
		match	20.00	7.00	7.00	11.33	7.51	
	bin	read	20.00	8.00	9.00	12.33	6.66	
		match	21.00	8.00	8.00	12.33	7.51	
	top	read	22.00	7.00	8.00	12.33	8.39	
		match	24.00	7.00	8.00	13.00	9.54	
	big	read	26.00	10.00	10.00	15.33	9.24	
		match	26.00	10.00	10.00	15.33	9.24	
	fan	read	24.00	8.00	7.00	13.00	9.54	
		match	25.00	8.00	7.00	13.33	10.12	
			Mean	22.80	8.00	8.20		

		Standard Deviation	2.49	1.15	1.14	
	it is a pen	read	25.00	9.00	10.00	8.96
		match	25.00	9.00	10.00	8.96
4	he is a boy	read	27.00	8.00	8.00	10.97
		match	27.00	8.00	8.00	10.97
		Mean	26.00	8.50	9.00	
		Standard Deviation	1.15	.58	1.15	

Table 4.4 shows the mean and standard deviation of reading errors in Pretest, Posttest and Posttest2 of Early Reading Level 1, 2, 3, and 4 for Intervention group. The mean and standard deviation for Pretest Level 1 is 13.90 and 10.46 respectively. The mean and standard deviation for Posttest Level 1 shows a drastic decrease to 2.10 and 0.99 respectively. However, the mean and standard deviation for Posttest2 Level 1 shows slight increase to 2.60 and 1.07 respectively. As for the mean and standard deviation for Pretest Level 2, the scores show 23.00 for Mean and 3.81 for standard deviation. Posttest Level 2 shows mean score of 2.00 and standard deviation marked at 0. Whereas, Posttest2 Level 2's mean score is 2.20 and standard deviation of 0.84. Pretest Level 3 has a mean score of 22.80 and a standard deviation of 2.49. The mean score declined tremendously to 8.00 with standard deviation of 1.15 for Posttest Level 3. In Posttest2 Level 3, the mean is 8.20 and standard deviation of 1.14. For Level 4 Pretest mean is 26.00, Posttest mean is 8.50 and Posttest2 mean is 9.00. The standard deviation for the same level is 1.15, 0.58 and 1.15 for the Pretest, Posttest and Posttest2. Overall, the mean scores of reading errors for Early Reading Level 1, 2, 3 and 4 have shown a huge decline from Pretest to Posttest and a slight increase in Posttest2. This means that participants in the Intervention group have greatly improved by reducing the number of reading

errors in each level before and immediately after the quasi experimental. However, the number of reading errors in each level seemed to show a little high two weeks after the experimental study ended.

In comparison between the Control group and the Intervention group (refer to table 4.3 and 4.4), participants in both Control and Intervention groups have shown improvement in reducing the numbers of reading errors in each level. Nevertheless, the number of reading errors have declined the greatest in overall mean scores between Pretest and Posttest for each level in Intervention group. Even though both groups showed a slight increment in number of reading errors after two weeks completion of the experimental study, the Intervention group has shown much lesser increment than the Control group except for the level 4. Overall, the finding confirms the hypothesis that the frequency of early reading errors among ESL preschoolers have decline over time. Then, the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1: \mu_1 \neq \mu_2$  or  $\mu_1 - \mu_2 \neq 0$ ) which stated the frequency of early reading errors among ESL preschoolers show significant decline over time is accepted.

#### **4.4 The Effect of Integrated Sound Word Method in Teaching Early Reading to ESL Preschoolers**

The research analysis is attempted to answer research question two that were mentioned in the earlier chapter; What is the effect of Integrated Sound Word Method in teaching early reading to ESL preschoolers? To answer this research question, Independent Sample T-test analysis is computed to compare the mean scores of Pretest Level 1, 2, 3 and 4 of Early Reading Diagnostic of Control Group with Pretest Level 1, 2, 3 and 4 of Early Reading Diagnostic of Intervention Group. This is to determine both Control and Intervention groups have an equal early

reading ability before treatment is given to the Intervention Group. The Levene's Test was used to further confirm the equality of variance. Its purpose is to avoid any discrepancy of participants in Control and Intervention groups. Then, Paired-samples T-test analysis is computed to compare the mean scores of Pretest-Posttest Level 1, 2, 3 and 4 of Early Reading Diagnostic of Control Group with Pretest-Posttest Level 1, 2, 3 and 4 of Early Reading Diagnostic of Intervention Group. The results of this analysis are to determine significance effect of Integrated Sound Word Method in teaching early reading to ESL preschoolers. Therefore, the findings allow researcher to show concrete evidence whether to support or not to support this research study. The tables presented are the results of data analysis of the Early Reading Diagnostic test between Control Group and Intervention Group.

Table 4. 5

*Mean and Standard Deviation of Pretest Level 1, 2, 3 and 4 in Control and Intervention Groups*

	Pretest	N	Control Group	Intervention Group
Mean	Level 1	60	47.33	55.00
	Level 2	60	22.00	22.33
	Level 3	60	8.67	8.00
	Level 4	60	5.00	3.67
Standard Deviation	Level 1	60	29.24	23.89
	Level 2	60	32.63	25.82
	Level 3	60	23.89	14.72
	Level 4	60	20.13	9.64

Table 4.5 shows the Mean and Standard Deviation of Pretest Level 1, 2, 3 and 4 in Control and Intervention groups. Mean scores for Control group are 47.33 in

Level 1, 22.00 in Level 2, 8.67 in Level 3 and 5.00 in Level 4. While, the standard deviations for Control group are 29.24, 32.63, 23.89 and 20.13 in respective level. On the other hand, the mean scores for Intervention group are 55.00, 22.33, 8.00 and 3.67 for level 1 to 4. The standard deviation in level 1 is 23.89, level 2 is 25.82, level 3 is 14.72 and level 4 is 9.64. The overall mean scores in Intervention group (M= 22.25) is slightly higher than the Control group (M= 20.75).

Table 4. 6

*Mean and Standard Deviation of Posttest Level 1, 2, 3 and 4 in Control and Intervention Groups*

		Participants		
	Posttest	N	Control Group	Intervention Group
Mean	Level 1	60	64.00	91.33
	Level 2	60	41.00	93.33
	Level 3	60	25.33	74.00
	Level 4	60	15.00	84.33
Standard Deviation	Level 1	60	28.11	26.49
	Level 2	60	43.58	25.37
	Level 3	60	43.30	42.07
	Level 4	60	35.11	29.67

Table 4.6 shows the Mean and Standard Deviation of Posttest Level 1, 2, 3 and 4 in Control and Intervention groups. In Control group, the mean score for level 1 is 64.00, level 2 is 41.00, level 3 is 25.33 and level 4 is 15.00. The standard deviation for the same group in level 1 to level 4 are 28.11, 43.58, 43.30, and 35.11 respectively. Whereas in Intervention group, the mean scores are 91.33 in level 1, 93.33 in level 2, 74.00 in level 3, and 84.33 in level 4. The standard deviations

showed 26.49, 25.37, 42.07, 29.67 from level 1 to level 4. The overall mean scores for Intervention group has drastically increase (M= 85.75) as compared to Control group (M= 36.33).

Table 4. 7

*Early Reading Diagnostic Pretest of Control Group – Intervention Group*

	Independent Samples Test				
	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
	F	Sig	<i>t</i>	df	Sig (2 tailed)
Pretest Level 1	2.18	.146	-1.112	58	.271
Pretest Level 2	2.11	.152	-.044	58	.965
Pretest Level 3	.94	.335	.130	58	.897
Pretest Level 4	1.10	.298	.327	58	.745

Table 4.7 above shows the difference between Early Reading Diagnostic Pretest of Control Group and Intervention groups. The findings shown there is no significant difference between the Pretest Level 1 of Control Group with Pretest Level 1 of Intervention Group,  $t(58, -1.112)$ ,  $p>.271$  ( $p>.05$ ). This means that Pretest Level 1 of Control Group and Pretest Level 1 Intervention Group did not have any effect. The difference between Pretest Level 2 of Control Group with Pretest Level 2 of Intervention Group showed no significant difference,  $t(58, -.044)$ ,  $p>.965$  ( $p>.05$ ). This means that Pretest Level 2 of Control Group and Pretest Level 2 Intervention Group did not have any effect. The finding also showed there is no significant difference between the Pretest Level 3 of Control Group with Pretest Level 3 of Intervention Group,  $t(58, .130)$ ,  $p>.897$  ( $p>.05$ ). This means that Pretest

Level 3 of Control Group and Pretest Level 3 Intervention Group did not have any effect. The difference between Pretest Level 4 of Control Group with Pretest Level 4 of Intervention Group showed no significant difference,  $t(58, .327)$ ,  $p>.745$  ( $p>.05$ ). This means that Pretest Level 4 of Control Group and Pretest Level 4 Intervention Group did not have any effect. As a result, it can be concluded that there is no significance difference in Pretest scores of level 1, level 2, level 3 and level 4 between the Control and Intervention Groups.

Moreover, the finding from the Levene's test proved the equality of variances as it measured level 1 ( $F=2.18$ ,  $p=.146$ ), level 2 ( $F=2.11$ ,  $p=.152$ ), level 3 ( $F=.94$ ,  $p=.335$ ), and level 4 ( $F=1.10$ ,  $p=.298$ ). The Levene's test is used to test whether the variances of the Control and Intervention groups are significantly different. The Levene's test is significance when the alpha value is less than .05, ( $p<.05$ ) and it would have violated the assumption of homogeneity of variance (Field, 2013). Therefore, the Pretest's scores for level 1, level 2, level 3 and level 4 of Control group and Intervention group are not significance since the alpha value,  $\alpha$  ( $p>.05$ ). This means that participants in both Control and Intervention groups have similar level of the English language proficiency. Hence, it is fair to make comparison between these two groups.

Besides that, two hypothesizes are to be tested where the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ :  $\mu_1 = \mu_2$  or  $\mu_1 - \mu_2 = 0$ ) stated that the Integrated Sound Word Method does not show effect in teaching early reading to ESL preschoolers. On the other hand, the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ :  $\mu_1 \neq \mu_2$  or  $\mu_1 - \mu_2 \neq 0$ ) stated the Integrated Sound Word Method shows significant effect in teaching early reading to ESL preschoolers. To justify the hypothesis that the preschoolers who undergo Integrated Sound Word

Method program would demonstrate better improvement in their early English reading proficiency than the preschoolers who do not get the treatment, comparisons were made to determine the difference in mean scores. The significance level is specified at .05 (alpha,  $\alpha = .05$ ). The findings are presented in tables below:

Table 4. 8

*Early Reading Diagnostic Posttest Level 1 of Control Group – Intervention Group*

		Paired Samples Statistics				
		Mean	Standard Deviation	<i>t</i>	df	Sig (2 tailed)
Paired 1	Posttest Level 1 Control Group.	64.00	28.11	-3.827	29	.001
	Posttest Level 1 Intervention Group.	91.33	26.49			

Table 4.8 above shows a Paired-samples T-test to compare the difference between Posttest Level 1 of Control Group with Posttest Level 1 of Intervention Group. There is a significant difference in the scores for Control group ( $M = 64.00$ ,  $SD = 28.11$ ) and Intervention group ( $M = 91.33$ ,  $SD = 26.49$ ) with conditions;  $t(29) = -3.827$ ,  $p = .001$ , and represented a medium-sized effect,  $r = 0.58$ . The results indicate that there is a difference in the level 1 early reading proficiency between the Control group and Intervention group after posttest was conducted. The mean score value is higher after treatment was given to Intervention group.



Table 4. 9

*Early Reading Diagnostic Posttest Level 2 of Control Group – Intervention Group*

		Paired Samples Statistics				
		Mean	Standard Deviation	<i>t</i>	df	Sig (2 tailed)
Paired 1	Posttest Level 2 Control Group.	41.00	43.58	-5.480	29	.000
	Posttest Level 2 Intervention Group.	93.33	25.37			

Table 4.9 above shows a Paired-samples T-test to compare the difference between Posttest Level 2 of Control Group with Posttest Level 2 of Intervention Group. There is a significant difference in the scores for Control group ( $M = 41.00$ ,  $SD = 43.58$ ) and Intervention group ( $M = 93.33$ ,  $SD = 25.37$ ) with conditions;  $t(29) = -5.480$ ,  $p = .000$ , and represented a medium-sized effect,  $r = 0.71$ . The results indicate that there is a difference in the level 2 early reading proficiency between the Control group and Intervention group after posttest was conducted. The mean score value is higher after treatment was given to Intervention group.

Table 4. 10

*Early Reading Diagnostic Posttest Level 3 of Control Group – Intervention Group*

		Paired Samples Statistics				
		Mean	Standard Deviation	<i>t</i>	df	Sig (2 tailed)
Paired 1	Posttest Level 3 Control Group.	25.33	43.29	-4.891	29	.000
	Posttest Level 3 Intervention Group.	74.00	42.07			

Table 4.10 above shows a Paired-samples T-test to compare the difference between Posttest Level 3 of Control Group with Posttest Level 3 of Intervention Group. There is a significant difference in the scores for Control group ( $M = 25.33$ ,  $SD = 43.29$ ) and Intervention group ( $M = 74.00$ ,  $SD = 42.07$ ) with conditions;  $t(29) = -4.891$ ,  $p = .000$ , and represented a medium-sized effect,  $r = 0.67$ . The results indicate that there is a difference in the level 3 early reading proficiency between the Control group and Intervention group after posttest was conducted. The mean score value is higher after treatment was given to Intervention group.

Table 4. 11

*Early Reading Diagnostic Posttest Level 4 of Control Group – Intervention Group*

		Paired Samples Statistics				
		Mean	Standard Deviation	<i>t</i>	df	Sig (2 tailed)
Paired 1	Posttest Level 4 Control Group.	15.00	35.11	-8.705	29	.000
	Posttest Level 4 Intervention Group.	84.33	29.67			

Table 4.11 above shows a Paired-samples T-test to compare the difference between Posttest Level 4 of Control Group with Posttest Level 4 of Intervention Group. There is a significant difference in the scores for Control group ( $M = 15.00$ ,  $SD = 35.11$ ) and Intervention group ( $M = 84.33$ ,  $SD = 29.67$ ) with conditions;  $t(29) = -8.705$ ,  $p = .000$ , and represented a large-sized effect,  $r = 0.85$ . The results indicate that there is a difference in the level 4 early reading proficiency between the Control group and Intervention group after Posttest was conducted. The mean score value is higher after treatment was given to Intervention group.

As a result, the mean differences between the Pretest and Posttest of Early Reading Diagnostic Level 1, 2, 3 and 4 for both Control and Intervention groups showed a significance increase in the early English reading proficiency at .05 level of significance. Nevertheless, the Intervention group has shown a greater effect than the Control group. This confirms the hypothesis that preschoolers who undergone Integrated Sound Word Method achieved higher early English reading proficiency scores. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1: \mu_1 \neq \mu_2$  or  $\mu_1 - \mu_2 \neq 0$ ) stated the

Integrated Sound Word Method shows a significant effect in teaching early reading to ESL preschoolers is accepted.

#### **4.5 The Effect of Integrated Sound Word Method in Retaining Early Reading Knowledge Among ESL Preschoolers**

This research analysis is attempted to answer research question three that were mentioned in the earlier chapter; What is the effect of Integrated Sound Word Method in retaining early reading knowledge among ESL preschoolers? Two hypotheses are to be tested where the null hypothesis ( $H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2$  or  $\mu_1 - \mu_2 = 0$ ) stated that the Integrated Sound Word Method does not show effect in retaining early reading knowledge among ESL preschoolers. On the other hand, the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1: \mu_1 \neq \mu_2$  or  $\mu_1 - \mu_2 \neq 0$ ) stated the Integrated Sound Word Method shows significant effect in retaining early reading knowledge among ESL preschoolers.

One-way ANOVA is used to determine the overall changes over time whether participants in Intervention group able to retain the early reading knowledge based on their background as the English as a Second Language preschoolers. It measures if there is significance different between the pretest, posttest and posttest2 scores of the Control and Intervention groups.

Then, repeated measure analysis is performed to examine differences in mean scores between pretest, posttest and posttest2. The significance level is specified at .05 (alpha,  $\alpha = .05$ ). Tables presented are the results of data analysis of the Early Reading Diagnostic test between Control group and Intervention Group.

Table 4. 12

*Descriptive Analysis of Early Reading Diagnostic Pretest Level 1 to 4 of Control Group – Intervention Group*

Early Reading Diagnostic		N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
						Lower bound	Upper bound
Level 1 Pretest	Control	30	47.33	29.24	5.34	36.42	58.25
	Intervention	30	55.00	23.89	4.36	46.08	63.92
	Total	60	51.17	26.75	3.45	44.26	58.08
Level 2 Pretest	Control	30	22.00	32.63	5.96	9.82	34.18
	Intervention	30	22.33	25.82	4.71	12.69	31.98
	Total	60	22.17	29.18	3.76	14.63	29.70
Level 3 Pretest	Control	30	8.67	23.89	4.36	-.25	17.59
	Intervention	30	8.00	14.72	2.69	2.51	13.49
	Total	60	8.33	19.67	2.54	3.25	13.42
Level 4 Pretest	Control	30	5.00	20.13	3.68	-2.52	12.52
	Intervention	30	3.67	9.64	1.76	.07	7.27
	Total	60	4.33	15.66	2.02	.29	8.38

Table 4.12 above shows a descriptive analysis of Early Reading Diagnostic Pretest Level 1 to 4 of Control Group and Intervention Group. There is a total of 60 participants in this study who have equally divided into Control group and Intervention group. The mean scores of level 1 pretests for Control and Intervention groups are 47.33 and 55.00, while its standard deviations are 29.24 and 23.89 respectively. The mean scores of level 2 pretests for Control and Intervention groups are 22.33 and 22.00, while its standard deviations are 32.63 and 25.82 respectively. For level 3 pretests' mean scores and standard deviation of Control

group are 8.67 and 23.89. The Intervention group's mean score is 8.00 and standard deviation is 14.72 for the same level 3 pretest. Whereas, the level 4 pretests' mean score and standard deviation for Control group are 5.00, 20.13 respectively and for Intervention group are 3.67, 9.64 respectively.

Table 4. 13

*Differences in Early Reading Diagnostic Pretest Level 1 to 4 of Control Group – Intervention Group*

<b>One-way ANOVA</b>						
Early Reading Diagnostic		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Level 1 Pretest	Between Groups	881.67	1	881.67	1.24	.271
	Within Groups	41336.67	58	712.70		
Level 2 Pretest	Between Groups	1.67	1	1.67	.002	.965
	Within Groups	50216.67	58	865.81		
Level 3 Pretest	Between Groups	6.67	1	6.67	.017	.897
	Within Groups	22826.67	58	393.56		
Level 4 Pretest	Between Groups	26.67	1	26.67	.107	.745
	Within Groups	14446.67	58	249.08		

<b>Test of Homogeneity of Variances</b>				
	Levene's Test	df 1	df 2	Sig.
Level 1 Pretest	2.18	1	58	.146
Level 2 Pretest	2.11	1	58	.152
Level 3 Pretest	.94	1	58	.335
Level 4 Pretest	1.10	1	58	.298

The above table 4.13 is one-way ANOVA's results that show overall changes in pretest mean scores by groups. The level 1 pretest result shows the  $F(1,58) = 1.24, p > .05$  is not significance. This means that there is no difference in overall level 1 pretest between Control group and Intervention group. Similar patterns shown in the level 2 pretest's score  $F(1,58) = .002, p > .05$ , level 3 pretest's score  $F(1,58) = .017, p > .05$  and level 4 pretest's score  $F(1,58) = .107, p > .05$ . As a result, the Early Reading Level 1, 2, 3, and 4 pretest's results are not significant since all of its  $p$  value is greater than .05. There are no significance differences in the overall mean scores before the treatment program started in this research study. These scores are supported by the Test of Homogeneity of Variances through the Levene's test. The pretest scores of level 1 to 4 for both Control group and Intervention group are not significant as ( $F=2.18, p=.146$ ), ( $F=2.11, p=.152$ ), ( $F=.94, p=.335$ ), and ( $F=1.10, p=.298$ ) at its respected level, where the  $\alpha$  values ( $p > .05$ ). It means that participants in Control and Intervention groups are equally at same level of the early English reading proficiency before the commencement of the experimental study.

Table 4. 14

*Descriptive Analysis of Overall Changes Over Time in Control Group*

<b>Descriptive</b>							
	Time	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
						Lower	Upper
Level 1	Pretest	30	47.33	29.24	5.34	36.42	58.25
	Posttest	30	64.00	28.11	5.13	53.50	74.50
	Posttest2	30	57.67	31.48	5.75	45.91	69.42
Level 2	Pretest	30	22.00	32.63	5.96	9.82	34.18
	Posttest	30	41.00	43.58	7.96	24.73	57.27
	Posttest2	30	37.33	41.02	7.49	22.02	52.65
Level 3	Pretest	30	8.67	23.89	4.36	-.25	17.59
	Posttest	30	25.33	43.30	7.90	9.17	41.50
	Posttest2	30	23.00	39.49	7.21	8.25	37.75
Level 4	Pretest	30	5.00	20.13	3.68	-2.52	12.52
	Posttest	30	15.00	35.11	6.41	1.89	28.11
	Posttest2	30	13.67	32.32	5.90	1.60	25.74

Based on the statistic shown in table 4.14, the mean scores of level 1 pretest, posttest and posttest2 for Control group are 47.33, 64.00 and 57.67 respectively, while its standard deviations are 29.24, 28.11 and 31.48 respectively. The mean scores of level 2 pretest, posttest and posttest2 are 22.00, 41.00 and 37.33, while its standard deviations are 32.63, 43.58 and 41.02 respectively. For level 3 pretest, posttest and posttest2 mean scores and standard deviation are (M=8.67, 25.33, 23.00) and (SD= 23.89, 43.30, 39.49) respectively. Level 4 pretest mean score is 5.00, posttest mean score is 15.00 and posttest2 mean score is 13.67. Its standard deviation showed 20.13, 35.11 and 32.32 for pretest, posttest and posttest2 respectively.



Table 4. 15

*Differences in Early Reading Diagnostic Level 1 to 4 of Control Group***One-way ANOVA**

Early Reading Diagnostic		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Level 1	Between Groups	4246.67	2	2123.33	2.42	.095
	Within Groups	76443.33	87	878.66		
Level 2	Between Groups	6095.56	2	3047.78	1.97	.146
	Within Groups	134736.67	87	1548.70		
Level 3	Between Groups	4886.67	2	2443.33	1.83	.166
	Within Groups	116123.33	87	1334.75		
Level 4	Between Groups	1768.89	2	884.44	.99	.376
	Within Groups	77796.67	87	894.22		

As shown in above table 4.15, there was statistically no difference between Early Reading Diagnostic's mean scores in Control group as determined by the one-way ANOVA's results. The overall changes in the mean score in level 1,  $F(2,87) = 2.42, p > .05$  is not significant. Same results were shown in the level 2 mean score  $F(2,87) = 1.97, p > .05$ , level 3 mean score  $F(2,87) = 1.83, p > .05$  and level 4 mean score  $F(2,87) = .99, p > .05$ . As a result, the Level 1, 2, 3, and 4 mean scores differences are not significant since all its  $p$  value is greater than .05. The analysis has revealed that participants in Control group do not show the effect of retaining knowledge in learning early English reading.

Table 4. 16

*Descriptive Analysis of Overall Changes Over Time in Intervention Group*

Descriptive							
	Time	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
						Lower	Upper
Level 1	Pretest	30	55.00	23.89	4.36	46.08	63.92
	Posttest	30	91.33	26.49	4.84	81.44	101.22
	Posttest2	30	87.00	26.28	4.80	77.19	96.81
Level 2	Pretest	30	22.33	25.82	4.71	12.69	31.98
	Posttest	30	93.33	25.37	4.63	83.86	102.81
	Posttest2	30	85.67	23.59	4.31	76.86	94.47
Level 3	Pretest	30	8.00	14.72	2.69	2.51	13.49
	Posttest	30	74.00	42.07	7.68	58.29	89.71
	Posttest2	30	66.33	38.73	7.07	51.87	80.79
Level 4	Pretest	30	3.67	9.64	1.76	.07	7.27
	Posttest	30	84.33	29.67	5.42	73.25	95.41
	Posttest2	30	75.33	28.01	5.11	64.88	85.79

Table 4.16 shown a descriptive analysis of overall changes over time in Intervention group. The mean scores of level 1 pretest, posttest and posttest2 are 55.00, 91.33 and 87.00 respectively, while its standard deviations are 23.89, 26.49 and 26.28 respectively. The level 2 pretest, posttest and posttest2 mean scores are 22.22, 93.33 and 85.67, while its standard deviations are 25.82, 25.37 and 23.59 respectively. For level 3 pretest, posttest and posttest2 mean scores and standard deviation are (M=8.00, 74.00, 66.33) and (SD= 14.72, 42.07, 38.73) respectively. Level 4 pretest mean score is 3.67, posttest mean score is 84.33 and posttest2 mean score is 75.33. Its standard deviation showed 9.64, 29.67 and 28.01 for pretest, posttest and posttest2 respectively.

Table 4. 17

*Differences in Early Reading Diagnostic Level 1 to 4 of Intervention Group***One-way ANOVA**

Early Reading Diagnostic		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Level 1	Between Groups	23628.89	2	11814.44	18.06	.000
	Within Groups	56926.67	87	654.30		
Level 2	Between Groups	91108.89	2	45554.44	73.20	.000
	Within Groups	54140.00	87	622.30		
Level 3	Between Groups	78175.56	2	39087.78	33.64	.000
	Within Groups	101096.67	87	1162.03		
Level 4	Between Groups	117242.22	2	58621.11	100.04	.000
	Within Groups	50980.00	87	585.98		

As shown in above table 4.17, there was a statistically difference between Early Reading Diagnostic's scores in Intervention group as determined by the one-way ANOVA's results. The overall changes in the mean score of level 1,  $F(2,87) = 18.06$ ,  $p < .05$  is significant. Same results were shown in the level 2 mean score  $F(2,87) = 73.20$ ,  $p < .05$ , level 3 mean score  $F(2,87) = 33.64$ ,  $p < .05$  and level 4 mean score  $F(2,87) = 100.04$ ,  $p < .05$ . As a result, the Level 1, 2, 3, and 4 mean scores differences are significant since all of its  $p$  value ( $p = .000$ ) are less than .05. The analysis has revealed that Integrated Sound Word Method showed significant effect in retaining early reading knowledge among participants in Intervention group.

Table 4. 18

*Multiple Comparisons Overall Changes by Time of Early Reading Diagnostic Level 1 to 4 of Control Group and Intervention Group*

### Multiple Comparisons

Group	Early Reading Diagnostic	(I) Time	(J) Time	Mean Difference (I – J)	Standard Error	Sig.
Control Group	Level 1	Pretest	Posttest	-16.667	7.654	.081
		Pretest	Posttest2	-10.333	7.654	.372
		Posttest	Posttest2	6.333	7.654	.687
	Level 2	Pretest	Posttest	-19.000	10.161	.154
		Pretest	Posttest2	-15.333	10.161	.292
		Posttest	Posttest2	3.667	10.161	.931
	Level 3	Pretest	Posttest	-16.667	9.433	.187
		Pretest	Posttest2	-14.333	9.433	.287
		Posttest	Posttest2	2.333	9.433	.967
	Level 4	Pretest	Posttest	-10.000	7.721	.402
		Pretest	Posttest2	-8.667	7.721	.503
		Posttest	Posttest2	1.333	7.721	.984
Intervention Group	Level 1	Pretest	Posttest	-36.333*	6.605	.000
		Pretest	Posttest2	-32.000*	6.605	.000
		Posttest	Posttest2	4.333	6.605	.789
	Level 2	Pretest	Posttest	-71.000*	6.441	.000
		Pretest	Posttest2	-63.333*	6.441	.000
		Posttest	Posttest2	7.667	6.441	.462
	Level 3	Pretest	Posttest	-66.000*	8.802	.000
		Pretest	Posttest2	-58.333*	8.802	.000
		Posttest	Posttest2	7.667	8.802	.660
	Level 4	Pretest	Posttest	-80.667*	6.250	.000
		Pretest	Posttest2	-71.667*	6.250	.000
		Posttest	Posttest2	9.000	6.250	.325

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

This is a comparative analysis to further investigate in detailed to determine which groups have significantly retain early reading knowledge in each level through Tukey Post-Hoc Multiple comparisons overall changes by time between pretest, posttest and posttest2. Table 4.18 shows mean differences of pretest, posttest and posttest2 of Early Reading level 1, 2, 3 and 4 for Control group and Intervention group. As shown in Control group, the significant values for all tests between pretest-posttest, pretest-posttest2 and posttest-posttest2 for Level 1, 2, 3, and 4 are greater than .05 level of significance. This means that there are no significant differences in the mean scores. On the other hand, the Intervention group showed significant values of  $p = .000$  for pretest-posttest and pretest-posttest2 for Level 1, 2, 3, and 4 which are smaller than .05 level of significance. This means that there are significant differences in the mean scores. The significant values for posttest-posttest2 Level 1, 2, 3, 4 of Intervention group are  $p = .789$ ,  $p = .462$ ,  $p = .660$ ,  $p = .325$  respectively which are greater than .05 level of significance. This suggests that there are no significant differences in the mean scores in posttest and posttest2. The findings have showed that the Intervention group performed better in retaining early reading knowledge as compared to the Control group in each level. The participants in Intervention group can retain early reading knowledge after learning to read using Integrated Sound Word Method. Therefore, the null hypothesis ( $H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2$  or  $\mu_1 - \mu_2 = 0$ ) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1: \mu_1 \neq \mu_2$  or  $\mu_1 - \mu_2 \neq 0$ ) which stated the Integrated Sound Word Method shows significant effect in retaining early reading knowledge among ESL preschoolers is accepted.

#### **4.6 Overview of Improvement**

This chapter has answered research question 1; What is the frequency of early reading errors among ESL preschoolers?, research question 2; What is the effect of Integrated Sound Word Method in teaching early reading to ESL preschoolers? and research question 3; What is the effect of Integrated Sound Word Method in retaining early reading knowledge among ESL preschoolers?

Overall, both Control and Intervention groups have shown significant effects which concluded that each group of teaching early reading approach able to improve the early reading proficiency among ESL preschoolers. However, the Intervention group elicited greater effect after using Integrated Sound Word Method in teaching early reading. The findings also indicated that the participants in Control and Intervention groups showed interest in learning early English reading. In term of retaining early reading knowledge, the Intervention group performed statistically better than the Control group after treatment was given for 10 weeks. Even though both groups recorded lower mean scores after two weeks lapse of the study, it did not affect the overall performance and showed no significant difference. Therefore, this experimental study accepted all three alternative hypotheses as proposed in the earlier chapter.

#### **4.7 Summary**

The analyses and findings presented in this chapter showed the frequency of early reading errors, mean scores and standard deviation of pretest, posttest and posttest2 between Control group and Intervention group, as well as the mean differences of pretest, posttest and posttest2 scores in Control and Intervention groups to determine the effects of early reading toward ESL preschoolers. The results have shown that both Control and Intervention groups yielded significant improvement

in the early reading proficiency. Nevertheless, the Intervention group showed a greater effect in acquiring early reading proficiency. Hence, all null hypotheses were rejected, and alternative hypotheses were accepted as the results have confirmed the Intervention group showed significant effects of Integrated Sound Word Method in teaching early reading to ESL preschoolers. Next chapter will further discuss and justify the rational of significance effects produced by the Intervention group.

Universiti Malaya

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents discussions and implications of the research findings in this study through the results derived from the analyses in previous chapter. A detailed summary will be elaborated in relation to the past research studies, theories and recommendations from this research as well as for future research.

#### 5.2 Discussion of Research Results

Referring to the research questions below which have previously addressed in Chapter I, the discussion is divided into three sections according to the order of research questions to further illustrate the significance effect for each question.

- 1) What is the frequency of early reading errors among ESL preschoolers?
- 2) What is the effect of Integrated Sound Word Method in teaching early reading to ESL preschoolers?
- 3) What is the effect of Integrated Sound Word Method in retaining early reading knowledge among ESL preschoolers?

To confirm the hypotheses and answers the above research questions, data were gathered for analyses using SPSS. A descriptive analysis of central tendencies, independent t-test, paired-samples t-test, one-way ANOVA and repeated-measured analysis were computed to examine the effects of Integrated Sound Word Method in teaching early reading to ESL preschoolers. The significance level is specified at .05 (alpha,  $\alpha = .05$ ).



### 5.2.1 The Frequency of Reading Errors in Learning Early Reading Among ESL Preschoolers.

To answer research question 1 (What is the frequency of early reading errors among ESL preschoolers?), a descriptive analysis of central tendencies measurement was computed to confirm the frequency of reading errors among ESL preschoolers have decline significantly in both Control and Intervention groups over time (see table 4.3 and 4.4). In comparison participants in both Control and Intervention groups have shown improvement in reducing the numbers of reading errors in each level. Nevertheless, the number of reading errors have declined the greatest for Pretest-Posttest in each level of Intervention group. Although both groups showed a slight increment in number of reading errors after two weeks completion of the experimental study, but the Intervention group has shown much lesser increment than the Control group except for the level 4.

One of the reasons that leads to decline of early reading errors in Intervention group is the consistent routine and procedures during the experimental period. The Integrated Sound Word Method emphasizes on structured and sequential instructions where one lesson connects to another lesson in a spiral pattern. The beginning of each lesson is to review the previous lesson. The findings is supported by the previous research study of Dewi Maslehah (1995) who claimed that through planned, systematic and sequential instructions, students were able to learn to read effectively (Dewi Maslehah, 1995).

Furthermore, a lot of pictorial examples and interactive learning activities were implemented throughout the lessons to strengthen the preschoolers' understanding on the lesson. As Arif Jawaid (2014) stressed that learning new knowledge through

hand-on activities or incorporation of real life events can ‘better integrated into long-term memory’ and easier retrieved (Arif, 2014). Besides that, conceptualized the translation helps students would fully understand the contents taught by the teacher (Mohd Sofi, 2003). The preschool teacher takes the role as facilitator to guide and scaffold the ESL preschoolers to recognize and sound out letters and words correctly. Then, she may translate the meaning of difficult words in the Malay language and use objects or pictures to enforce their understanding toward the subjects.

The statistic showed a slight increment in the reading errors after two weeks interval of the experimental study ended. This means that reinforcement and continuous guidance are needed to ensure preschoolers able to master the early reading skills. This finding is aligned with NoorAileen Ibrahim, Mohamad Syafiq Ya Shak, Thuraiya Mohd et al. (2015) claimed that active learning in the classroom increases the students’ understanding of the lessons and leads to improve in students’ results (NoorAileen et al., 2015). Therefore, in order to acquired desired behavior, the enforcement of motivational process can come from the observers themselves, instructors, or giving tangible and intangible rewards (Bandura, 1977; Harare, 2016).

#### 5.2.2 The Effect of Integrated Sound Word Method in Teaching Early Reading to ESL Preschoolers.

Based on the research question 2 (What is the effect of Integrated Sound Word Method in teaching early reading to ESL preschoolers?), the findings have showed that both learning to read methods; Integrated Sound Word Method and the NPSC’s English Curriculum can help preschoolers develop their early English literacy’s

skills. Preschoolers from the Control and Intervention groups recorded a significant improvement in the Pretest-Posttest scores of Early Reading Level 1, 2, 3, and 4. The effect can be seen in the results of the Paired-samples t-test as shown in tables 4.8, 4.9, 4.10 and 4.11. This indicates that both methods are beneficial in developing preschoolers' early reading skills which has contributed to the children's early literacy development. However, the results have shown Integrated Sound Word Method elicited a greater effect as compared to the NPSC's English curriculum.

The success of Integrated Sound Word Method lies in the implementation phases of the teaching instructions. Preschoolers are progress in a systematic and sequential ways as they are only allowed to move up to the next phase after completing the current phase. The primary step for every new phase is to review and to enhance preschoolers' understanding from the previous lessons. Even though this study is a pioneer study of "KGBK" in the English language, there were several past research studies using "KGBK" in the Malay language and Jawi have proven to elicit similar findings. In a study conducted by Dewi Maslehah Md. Yusop (1995) claimed that through planned, systematic and sequential instructions, students were able to learn to read Jawi effectively (Dewi Maslehah, 1995). The findings of this study also supported by another study which showed Integrated Sound Word Method has produced a similar impact on students' early reading skills especially in letters, words, and short sentences recognitions (Nani Menon, 2000).

As for the current English curriculum, preschoolers are learning alphabets and its sounds through repetition and memorization. The preschoolers are being taught to recognize letters and sounds, continued by say-aloud practice, identifying initial and medial sounds and ended with blending and segmenting words. In each unit,

there is no reference or revision of the previous units and each unit is not interconnected or not related to each other. This has supported the past research study by Mohd Sofi (2003) who claimed the teachers are driving the instruction to meet their individual goals to complete a specific unit (Mohd Sofi, 2003). This finding also aligned with another study which pointed that preschoolers are being trained to do drill and rote learning to memorize alphabets and words in the books or on the board (Normazidah et al., 2012).

One of the major challenges faced by the English teachers is the strong influence of mother tongue language. Students choose to communicate in their mother tongue language instead of the English language which resulted in poor motivation to learn the language (How et al., 2015). Therefore, Integrated Sound Word Method encourages the use of mother tongue language in translating meaning of words when necessary. However, this approach has to be used in moderation, and will gradually fade away as the ESL preschoolers mastering the early reading proficiency. Arif (2014) also suggested in his study to begin introduced words of similar sounds in both the Malay and English languages (Arif, 2014). The Integrated Sound Word Method has incorporated the author's idea into the lessons where preschoolers are learning new words that are familiar to them such as cat means "*kucing*", fan means "*kipas*", sit means "*duduk*" and others. Furthermore, a few researchers noted that the English lesson periods in schools are the only time where students can fully utilize their skills to practice speaking, reading and writing in the English language. Noor Fazzriene Nun Ramlan and Nooreiny Maarof (2014) added that teaching dual-languages in the classroom can create confusion among students. They pointed out the differences of how the Malay language does not parallel in the English language especially the possessive determiner and sentence

structures (Noor Fazzrienee & Nooreiny, 2014). Despite these difference point of views, the observation from this study showed that preschoolers who are weak in the English language may be left behind because they do not understand the instructions, questions or meaning of certain words without any translation. This phenomenon has happened in the preschool classrooms where many preschoolers do not understand their teacher' instructions when she speaks in the English language. Besides pictorial, sign language and movement also play an important role in helping preschoolers to learn early reading skills.

### 5.2.3 The Effect of Integrated Sound Word Method in Retaining Early Reading Knowledge Among ESL Preschoolers.

The research question 3 (What is the effect of Integrated Sound Word Method in retaining early reading knowledge among ESL preschoolers?) has been answered through the One-way ANOVA, Repeated measured and Tukey Post-Hoc Multiple Comparison within group. The analyses have indicated differences in mean scores between pretest, posttest and posttest2 of Intervention group where it has attained a significant effect in retaining the early reading knowledge among ESL preschoolers (see tables 4.14, 4.15, 4.16, 4.17, 4.18). These suggest that the preschoolers in Intervention group have enjoyed the English lessons in the classroom and they were able to retain early reading knowledge taught by the preschool teacher.

There are a few factors that contributed to the development of preschoolers' early reading proficiency and ability to retain the knowledge. The teaching instructions of Integrated Sound Word Method are divided into whole class learning which focuses on explicit instruction and interactive small group learning where scaffolding and corrective feedback take place. In every learning level, preschoolers

are interacting either with the preschool teacher or with their peers. This social learning approach has encouraged preschoolers to learn together and help each other to progress to the next level. Therefore, it makes learning in the classroom fun and meaningful. This interpretation is in connection with several studies in early literacy, theoretical background and model of teaching instructions. The finding of this present study supported by Yamat, Fisher and Rich (2014) who claimed that learning environment seems to have an impact on children's holistic development as it provides exposure and opportunity to use the English language. Students gain confidence to speak the language when they received supports from teachers and peers (Yamat, Fisher, et al., 2014). Furthermore, active learning in the classroom increases students' understanding of the English language and leads students to improve their English language performance. This is due to a conducive and non-threatening classroom environment can evoke and retain the students' interest in learning the language (NoorAileen et al., 2015).

In a tradition classroom scenario, preschool teacher drives the instruction and preschoolers are expected to listen and learn. Then, the preschoolers are asked to complete the workbook activities. The finding from this study is in line with other studies who help to contribute to the existing literature on teaching and learning the English language in Malaysia where most of the English teachers emphasis on rote-learning and memorization of the English language rules without taking time to let students explore the language (Normazidah et al., 2012). Moreover, Hazita Azman (2016) found that choral repetition and substitution drills were widely practice in schools (Hazita, 2016). In order to have a productive and effective learning environment, it is importance for teachers to create a reflective learning pedagogy

which allowed students to be more independent and involve in their learning process (Normazidah et al., 2012).

Living in a multi-cultural country like Malaysia, acquiring the English language requires different approaches than acquiring the students' native language (Noor Fazzriene & Nooreiny, 2014). The English teachers must tolerate and understand the students' cultural and social background as this will contribute to the success in their English language proficiency (Noor Fazzriene & Nooreiny, 2014). It is a challenging task for English teachers as many Malaysian parents are worried when their children learn the English language, they will lose their mother tongue language, culture and national identities (Normazidah et al., 2012); (Lily Muliana & Mohamed Nor Azahari, 2013). In addition to the concern over losing the mother tongue language, parents who are not well educated are struggling to provide adequate English learning materials for their children to practice at home (Noor Fazzriene & Nooreiny, 2014); (Nor Hani et al., 2017). Hence, the lack of support from home has force teachers to think of different teaching approaches to effectively help preschoolers to improve their early reading proficiency. One of the ways is to integrate local contexts to create a meaningful learning experience for preschoolers to relate their learning with the world around them. The findings of this study also consistent with the work conducted by Yamat, Fisher and Rich (2014) whose stated that a conducive learning environment that encourages learning and interaction should be established for students to learn a language and apply the knowledge in their environment instead of learning on pure memorization (Yamat, Fisher, et al., 2014).

Therefore, Integrated Sound Word Method emphasizes on the use of local contexts and materials in its teaching and learning processes. This is in line with the study of Jantmary Thirusanku and Melor Md. Yunus (2014) whose have suggested the administrators to provide clear guidance and train local teachers to perform better rather than spending a large amount of budget on projects, hiring foreign teachers and implementing inconsistent curriculum for schools (Jantmary & Melor, 2014). The Integrated Sound Word Method was introduced by Prof. Emeritus Dato' Dr. Isahak Haron in 1979 (Muhammad Razif & Isahak, 2017). The author's philosophy is to create a systematic and sequential technique of instructions that are meaningful to students (Isahak Haron, Abdul Halim bin Ibrahim, Abdul Latif bin Gapor, 2013). The findings have showed this approach able to retain preschoolers' knowledge on lessons they learned in class as well as to nurture their interest in learning the English language. When preschoolers are introduced to five or six letters and sounds in a unit and they have to opportunity to explore the letters and sounds to build meaningful words, phrases and short sentences with proper guidance. The content of the learning is built using information that preschoolers familiarize and can be found in their environment. The levels of learning gradually increase with support as a few difficult words are translated into the Malay language such as cat is "*kucing*", cap is "*topi*" and tap is "*pancur*" to help preschoolers build meaningful phrases and short sentences. Meaningful activities are incorporated such as educational games, songs, physical movements throughout the lessons. By the end of each unit, a thematic word is used to expand the preschoolers' understanding through show and tell, art and craft, and interaction with the object.



### 5.3 Implications of The Study

#### 5.3.1 Theoretical Implication

Through the theoretical perspectives, findings in the Integrated Sound Word Method complement the Bandura's Social Learning theory and Krashen's Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theory. The process of second language acquisition does not limit to only cognitive development but also share social practices. The cognitive and the social development must go together in classroom learning (Walqui, 2006). The following section discusses how the Bandura's Social Learning and Krashen's Second Language Acquisition theories influenced the process of teaching early reading to ESL preschoolers using Integrated Sound Word Method.

The Bandura's Social Learning theory was established by Albert Bandura in 1977. He believed that a new behaviour pattern is acquired through personal experience or modelling behaviour of other. Bandura (1977) mentioned four processes; Attentional process, Retention process, Reproduction process and Motivation process are contributed to a development of a new behaviour or to change a behaviour (Bandura, 1977). In this study, these processes can be seen during the whole class and interactive learning activities where interaction was actively taking place at this time. In the whole class activity, Attention process began when preschool teacher initiates the learning process by introducing a new learning topic. The Retention process happened when the preschool teacher review and reinforce previous lessons using flash cards, pictures, "*I Spy ...*" game and songs that the preschoolers have previously learned. Then the Reproduction process occurred in the interactive learning activity when the preschoolers re-created similar letters and words that they have learned on that day with their group

members. During this process, preschoolers learned to do self-corrective adjustment based on corrective feedback given by the preschool teacher or group members. Motivation is a process when the preschool teacher encouraged the learning sessions and the preschoolers' desire to learn more. When preschoolers able to complete the whole circle of the Bandura's Social Learning theory, then they have successfully learned the unit lesson in the classroom.

The Krashen's Second Language Acquisition theory is a "linguistics theory" that was proposed by Stephen Krashen in 1982. It has a set of hypotheses that guide researchers to explore in the field of Second Language Acquisition (Krashen, 1982). Out of the five hypotheses laid out by Krashen, there were only three hypotheses that are relevant and used in this study which are the Monitor Hypothesis, Input Hypothesis and Affective Filter Hypothesis.

The Monitor Hypothesis asserts that three criteria must be met in order to acquire a language. The first criteria is time where second language learners need sufficient time to think and apply conscious rules effectively (Krashen, 1982). This finding has showed that the preschoolers were not given sufficient time to learn a topic. Sixty minutes a week for the English language lesson is perceived to be insufficient due to the fact that majority of the preschoolers are English as a Second Language learners where supports from outside the classroom are limited. The second criteria is focus on form where learners paid attention on the rules when conveying their oral messages or written messages (Krashen, 1982). The Integrated Sound Word Method is incorporating both the Phonic approach and the Whole Language approach where they emphasis on the letter recognitions and sounds in connection to the targeted letters and words they learned. The final criteria is knowing the rule as it is crucial for learners to know the structure of the language

which they were being exposed (Krashen, 1982). The Integrated Sound Word Method teaches preschoolers “word attack” strategy to enable them to use their previous knowledge to identify new words and read phrases.

The Input Hypothesis claimed that learners acquired second language in stages starting from one stage ( $i$ ), before moving up to the next stage ( $i+1$ ) after they understand meaning of the language (Krashen, 1982). The lesson plan (Appendix A) in this study has laid out proper steps that guide preschoolers in acquiring early reading skills. It is a systematic and sequential plan that constantly review previous lesson before a new lesson is introduced. This is to reinforce and help ESL preschoolers to retain knowledge that they have learned previously and make connection to the current and future lessons. Krashen (1982) also supported the use of L1 as the “temporarily enhance production” that need not be used throughout the second language acquisition process (Krashen, 1982). He stated that it is better than drilling the L2 rules which unable to provide comprehensible input to the learners (Krashen, 1982).

The Affective Filter Hypothesis discusses correlation between the affective variables which are motivation, self-confidence and anxiety with the process of second language acquisition. These variables act as a filter that restrict the input of the second language acquisition (Krashen, 1982). The findings of this study have showed that preschoolers of the Intervention group have strong attitudes toward learning early reading where they gained more input as it over-powered their affective filters which is weaker or low. On the other hand, preschoolers of the Control group have low attitudes to acquire the input of early reading which they have strong defend for the affective filters.

As a result, both the Bandura's Social Learning theory and Krashen's Second Language Acquisition theory have effects on the preschoolers' early reading acquisition. They influenced the preschoolers' behaviours and perceptions toward learning early reading as to whether to achieve the optimal learning outcomes.

### 5.3.2 Pedagogical Implication

As the Ministry of Education (MOE) aims to raise the standard of English language proficiency while sustaining the Malay language as the national language, several strategies have been planned and implemented nationwide. To support the mission of the MOE, Integrated Sound Word Method is established to bridge the gaps from past studies through systematic and sequential instructions. In this study, there are some teaching models were used to teach early reading to the ESL preschoolers which include explicit instruction, scaffolding, corrective feedback and the use of native language (L1) to support the English language content instruction.

Explicit instruction is defined as structured, systematic and effective technique to teach academic contents (Archer & Hughes, 2011). Even though there were some arguments from past studies debating of using explicit instruction versus implicit instruction in teaching early reading, in context of Malaysia scenario the findings have showed that the explicit instruction is more appropriate to teach the English as a Second Language learners (L2). First of all, the L2 in Malaysia are living in the home country where their mother tongue language is predominantly used in their everyday lives. Through implicit instruction, the L2 would not be able to effectively learn the English language as the language is only used in schools or during English lessons. Secondly, since the participants of this study are ESL

preschoolers aged of six, this age group needs a structures and systematic instruction to guide and motivate them to be an independent learner especially when this is their first time learning the English language. This has supported the past research study by Nazari (2013) where he claimed that explicit instruction has a greater effect in improving L2 grammar and encouraging the L2 to develop metalinguistic awareness (Nazari, 2013).

Apart from the Explicit instruction, Scaffolding plays a major role in providing a series of guidance throughout the learning process in order to achieve the learning objectives. It was introduced by David Wood, Jerome Bruner and Gail Ross in 1976 (Wood et al., 1976), and later it was refine by Lev Vygotsky as he expanded the study of Scaffolding (Samana, 2013). This study has contributed to the study of Aida Walqui (2006) where the author proposed six main types of instructional scaffolding strategies for L2. There are modelling, bridging, contextualization, building schema, re-presenting text and developing metacognition (Walqui, 2006). In this study, the modelling is acted by the preschool teacher who provide clear explanations and visual examples for preschoolers to have better understanding of learning outcomes. The preschool teacher also initiated an interaction in whole class activity, and gradually hand over the responsibility to the preschoolers in interactive learning activity and finally independent work. Bridging was conducted at the beginning of the lesson where the preschool teacher connects the preschoolers' prior knowledge to a new topic that they are going to learn. In addition, Contextualization helps preschoolers to use non-linguistic information such as flash cards, pictures, physical movements, games, and manipulative to make sense of the lessons taught by the preschool teacher. In schema building, the preschoolers learned to organize their thoughts in a form that is easy for them to understand and

something they can relate to. The preschool teacher facilitated the preschoolers to sort out words, do matching and made connection to figures that they already knew. These can reduce preschoolers' anxiety toward overwhelming flow of information and ambiguity on certain concepts (Walqui, 2006). Re-presenting text is another technique used by the preschool teacher to make the learning fun by reinterpreting dry and complex contexts from one genre to another genre. In the preschool class, pictures are often used to re-presenting words, and sometimes body movements and sing along are used to show how the words work. Implementing the metacognition skill was a little challenging as consistent routine is needed to train the preschoolers. This is due to the experimental period was short and the lessons were not conducted on everyday basis. Therefore, developing metacognition in scaffolding was not able to achieve.

Corrective feedback is frequently used in this study as part of the teaching techniques. There are two main types of Corrective feedback which are the Explicit feedback and Implicit feedback (Kalanzadeh et al., 2018). In each of the Explicit and Implicit feedbacks are break down into several other types of feedbacks which were discussed in Literature Reviews. Through my observation in the preschool's classroom, the preschooler teacher was vigilant toward the mistakes done by the preschoolers and use oral corrective feedback explicitly to correct the learning outcomes. The preschool teacher acknowledged individual preschooler's mistake and asked the preschooler to follow along to repeat the correct letter sound or words multiple times which known as the Recast form of corrective feedback. The preschool teacher also used Elicitation method where she gave hints or used L1 meaning to give clue to the preschoolers of the correct answer. For example, when a preschooler did not know the word "cat" when asked. The preschool teacher will

give hint by making the cat's sound "*meow*" or she will ask what is "*kucing*" in the English language.

As the use of L1 language is also supported by the Krashen's Second Language Acquisition theory, the L1 language is incorporated in this study to translate verbal instructions or define difficult words to ESL preschoolers. This study connects to the study of Patrick Proctor, Bridget Dalton, and Dana Grisham (2007) whose stated that the L2 may deploy the L1 literacy knowledge to enhance the understanding of the second language contents (Proctor et al., 2007). Najwa Hanna Halasa and Majeda Al-Manaseer (1999) proposed a few methods of using L1 into the second language teaching instruction. They are the Alternating Approach, the New Concurrent Method, the Community Language Learning Method, and the Dodson's Bilingual Method (Halasa & Al-Manaseer, 1999). This study has supported three of the methods that have proposed by the authors. The New Concurrent Method involved linking the native language and the second language (Halasa & Al-Manaseer, 1999). The preschool teacher usually used this method when introducing new skill, explaining difficult vocabulary, and giving instructions. The Community Language Learning Method encourages open communication to each other spontaneously in the second language with some mediation of the native language (Halasa & Al-Manaseer, 1999). In this study, the Preschool teacher started to initiate open conversations with preschoolers during the Whole class activity. For instance, the preschool teacher asked what they have learned last week. The responses that the teacher usually received were either incomplete or the sentences were mixed with both L1 and L2 languages. The preschool teacher then interfered and translated words or corrected the sentence in the English language. The Dodson's Bilingual Method is similar to the Community Language Learning

Method in a way that it helps the second language learners understand the second language contents in the L1 (Halasa & Al-Manaseer, 1999). The preschool teacher was trying as much as she can to speak the English language in the classroom during English lessons. Often time, preschoolers did not understand her instructions until she translated her instructions in the Malay language. As the preschoolers familiarize with the instructions, the Malay language translation is no longer needed.

Based on the research findings, the teaching models used in this experimental study have impacted the teaching of early English reading to ESL preschoolers. Both Control and Intervention groups have found using some of these methods to deliver the English lessons in the classrooms. However, one shoe does not fit all. This is same as to teaching English as a Second Language. Several teaching models have been proposed through past research studies, one model may be more effective than the other depending on the nature of the study. Therefore, more future studies are needed in this area to determine the effectiveness of teaching models in teaching the English language to L2.

#### **5.4 Recommendation From The Research**

The Integrated Sound Word Method is not the only pedagogy used to teach early reading to the ESL preschoolers. There are other teaching methodologies that were proposed for the same objective. Each of them has its strengths and weaknesses including the Integrated Sound Word Method. The strengths of Integrated Sound Word Method have been discussed in previous chapters as well as in this chapter. There are a few rooms of improvement in this study that future researchers can explore such as number of letters or words allocated for each lesson, diversified the



interactive learning activities based on preschoolers' abilities and use technology for creative teaching.

The current number of letters and words in each lesson seemed to be too many for preschoolers to learn in one short lesson. Some preschoolers felt exhausted and confused when too many letters or words were introduced at one time. In addition, the research sample chosen were ESL preschoolers with poor English language proficiency. It can be challenging for some of them to learn so many letters or words at one time. Therefore, in future research may reconsider the content to be delivered to ESL preschoolers in each lesson.

This study also noted the participants in the research sample have different learning ability and learning style. The preschool teacher felt challenging when conducting the lessons with diverse learning abilities especially preschoolers with hyperactivity or learning disability in the classroom. It is recommended for future research to have a proper plan of activities in the classroom that can accommodate the preschoolers with different learning abilities or diversified the activities based on preschoolers' learning styles.

Furthermore, the learning materials used in this study are limited and abstract to the eyes of the preschoolers. For example, the word "*pot*" can represent cooking pot and flower pot, both objects have the same word but do not look alike. A picture of a cat may be interpreted as a tiger. A picture of a pen looks as big as a size of a fan. These illustrations may cause misconceptions to preschoolers. Therefore, appropriate pictures or real objects is needed to show preschoolers the true meaning of the words. Furthermore, incorporation of the use of technology in the classroom can help preschool teachers solved this issue. In the future, researchers can consider using video clips or Augmented Reality images as part of their research inquiry.

## **5.5 Recommendation For Future Research**

Since Integrated Sound Word Method is new in the field of English literacy, there are some recommendations for future research studies to review and explore to further investigate the effects of Integrated Sound Word Method. One of the ways that future studies can consider is the length of research period may be extended to the entire school year in order to get a better understanding on teaching the English language using Integrated Sound Word Method.

Moreover, the sample size in this study is limited to only two preschools in the District of Kuala Lumpur. Whereas there is a total of 6,152 (as per year 2019) government preschools in Malaysia and this number still growing rapidly (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2019). Therefore, future studies can expand the research study to different states in Malaysia or in different type of preschools in Malaysia. This is to further validate the current research study in different demographic or geographical areas.

The design of this study is using quantitative method that focuses on quasi experimental study. There are some limitations in deriving a detailed finding as the nature of study that is hard to control. It would be better if future studies are conducted using mixed-mode method where quantitative and qualitative analysis can be used to find more accurate results. The triangulation system is looking into all aspects of the study.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has summarized the discussions of research question 1, 2, and 3 as well as made inferences from theoretical framework and its implication toward teaching early reading to ESL preschoolers using Integrated Sound Word Method.

Furthermore, the proposed teaching models from past studies were applied and discussed through pedagogical implication. These implications have supported the research findings and hence confirmed the effects of Integrated Sound Word Method in teaching early reading to ESL preschoolers. Nevertheless, continuous research studies in this field is needed to strengthen the evidence in this study.

Together, we can achieve the mission of Ministry of Education; “To Uphold *Bahasa Malaysia*, and to strengthen the English language”. Our children are the leaders of tomorrow, it is important to find an effective teaching instruction to fulfil the objectives as stated in the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 where all students are “expected to acquire knowledge, high thinking skills, leadership skills, bilingual proficiency, ethics, spirituality and national identity” (Malaysia Education Blueprint, 2013, p.30).

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