

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter provides an analysis of the questionnaires administered to the forty student respondents, series of interviews conducted with ten student respondents (chosen from the 40 respondents), the questionnaires administered to the five English language teachers who are teaching in the school where the study was conducted and the transcripts of the interviews with five English Language teachers teaching in schools with a majority of Semai students. The student respondents are third language learners of English as Bahasa Melayu is their second language and Semai their native language. This chapter discusses their attitude towards the learning of English and factors contributing to these attitudes.

4.1 Findings

All the questionnaires collected from the forty student respondents and transcriptions of interviews were analysed. Findings from the questionnaires and interviews are presented according to the recurring themes discovered from the study.

Students are identified as having negative attitudes towards learning English. These are related to their lack of effort and desire to improve their English which will eventually affect their level of proficiency in English. Contributory factors for their attitudes are categorized under four main factors: social, behavioural, cultural and educational factors.

4.2 Attitudes and Motivation towards Learning English

During the interview sessions, the first question was asked to gain some insights on the students' perception towards learning English. It is in some ways encouraging when all the 10 respondents gave positive responses to the question "*Adakah anda berminat belajar Bahasa Inggeris? Mengapa?*" (Are you interested in learning English? Why?). Three respondents claimed that English is actually their favourite subject (respondent 1, 2 and 5) and were aware that English is vital. One stated, "*Saya berminat belajar Bahasa Inggeris kerana dapat memberi manfaat pada masa hadapan saya*" (I'm interested to learn English because it will be beneficial in future) and "Yes. *Saya berminat belajar Bahasa Inggeris kerana Bahasa Inggeris menentukan masa depan saya*" (Yes. I'm interested to learn English because it determines my future). While another respondent added, "*Ya, Saya berminat belajar Bahasa Inggeris because this subject is very important for me*" (I'm interested in learning English because this subject is very important for me).

Item 17, 18,19 and 22 were constructed to access respondents' perceptions and feelings towards English and the learning of English. The results are displayed in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Students' Perceptions and Feelings towards English and the Learning of English.

Item no.	Responses to items:	SA	A	NA	D	SD
17	<i>Saya tidak berminat untuk belajar Bahasa Inggeris kerana ianya susah.</i> I am not interested in learning English because it is a difficult subject to learn.	9 (22.5)		3 (7.5)	23 (57.5)	5 (12.5)
18	<i>Saya tidak perlu belajar Bahasa Inggeris kerana saya tahu bertutur dalam Bahasa Melayu.</i> I do not have to learn English because I can speak in Bahasa Melayu.	1 (2.5)			35 (85)	4 (12.5)
19	<i>Saya akan dikatakan berlagak sekiranya bertutur dalam Bahasa Inggeris.</i> I will be regarded as snobbish if I speak in English.	16 (15)	24 (60)	2 (5)	4 (10)	4 (10)
22	<i>Berkebolehan bertutur dan membaca dalam Bahasa Inggeris adalah penting.</i> The ability to speak and read in English is important.	13 (32.5)	18 (45)	5 (12.5)	2 (5)	2 (5)

SA=Strongly agree **A**=Agree **NA**=No answer **D**=Disagree **SD**=Strongly disagree
% is bracketed in the table

In response to the item “*Saya tidak berminat untuk belajar Bahasa Inggeris kerana ianya susah*” (I am not interested in learning English because it is a difficult subject) (item 17), more than half of the respondents (57.5%) disagreed with the statement. In fact, only 22.5% (nine students) strongly agreed that they were not interested in learning English because it was a difficult subject to learn. The students were aware of the need to learn English although they are capable of communicating in Bahasa Melayu (item 18). The majority of the respondents (85%) expressed their disagreement with statement 18, “I do not have to learn English because I can speak Malay. 16% of the respondents showed strong disagreement with this statement. This therefore, suggests that in general the students were aware of the importance of learning English even though they speak Bahasa Melayu.

Item 22 also indicated that the respondents were aware of the importance of mastering the English language. A total of 31 respondents or 77.5% of the respondents agreed that the ability to speak and read in English is important. Five respondents did not respond to this item while four respondents (5% disagreed and 5% strongly disagreed) however did not believe that it was important for them to be able to speak and read in English.

57.5% of the respondents expected being labeled a snobbish person when speaking in English. A total of 15% of the students expressed strong agreement with item 19 while another 16% of the students indicated disagreement and strong

disagreement with the statement that they were labeled as snobbish if they spoke in English.

In the interview, it became clear that the respondents were aware of the importance of English and that motivated them to learn the language (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2 Students' Views on the Importance of English

Respondents	Comments
Student 1 (line 4) (line 12)	<i>Ianya adalah subjek yang penting dan ianya menjamin masa depan.</i> (It is an important subject and it determines our future) <i>Boleh mencapai cita-cita seseorang.</i> (To achieve one's ambition)
Student 2 (line 9)	<i>Kita dapat melanjutkan pelajaran peringkat yang lebih tinggi. Contohnya ke peringkat universiti. Selain itu kita juga boleh melanjutkan pelajaran keluar negara.</i> (We can further studies in the university.besides that, we can further our studies overseas).
Student 3 (line 2) (line 10)	<i>Saya berminat belajar Bahasa Inggeris kerana dapat memberi manfaat pada masa hadapan saya.</i> (I'm interested in English as it benefits me in the future). <i>Mendapat menjamin masa depan dan boleh mendapat gred A dalam peperiksaan.</i> (It determines my future and can obtain an A in the examination).
Student 4 (line 5) (line 11)	<i>Kerana dapat mendorong kita di masa hadapan.</i> (To help us in the future). <i>Ialah dapat berinteraksi dengan rakan-rakan dan fasih berhubung dalam Bahasa Inggeris, dapat menyambung pelajaran dan itu je la.</i> (To interact with friends and further studies).
Student 5 (line 10)	<i>Untuk masa depan saya untuk mencapai cita-cita sebagai polis.</i> (To achieve my ambition as a policeman).
Student 6 (line 2) (line 8)	<i>Ya, saya minat sebab ia penting dalam hidup bila kita berhubung dengan orang luar negara, itu je.</i> (I'm interested in English because it is important in our life when interacting with people from overseas). <i>Boleh melanjutkan pelajaran ke luar negara ataupun apabila</i>

	<i>bertemu ramah dengan orang lain boleh cakap dalam Bahasa Inggeris.</i> (To further studies overseas or able to respond in English when interviewed)
Student 7 (line 7) (line 9)	<i>Untuk menulis dan bercakap dengan kawan</i> (To write and speak with friends). <i>Mudah untuk kita pergi ke luar negara.</i> (Easy for us to travel overseas).
Student 8 (line 2) (line 14)	<i>Saya berminat belajar Bahasa Inggeris kerana Bahasa Inggeris menentukan masa depan saya.</i> (I'm interested in learning English because English determines my future). <i>Belajar Bahasa Inggeris untuk Maths, Sains, BI.</i> (Learn English for Maths, Science and English Language subjects).
Student 9 (line 4) (line 9)	<i>Sebab Bahasa Inggeris menentukan masa depan saya.</i> (Because English determines my future). <i>Dapat membantu kawan-kawan yang tidak faham dalam Bahasa Inggeris dan mencapai cita-cita.</i> (To help friends who have problems in learning English and to achieve my ambition).
Student 10 (line 4) (line 10)	<i>Sebab bahasa seluruh dunia.</i> (Because it is a universal language). <i>Mudah bercakap dengan rakan-rakan, senang melanjutkan pelajaran ke luar negara.</i> (Easy to communicate with friends, easy to further studies abroad).

The status of English as a lingua franca is recognized by respondents when they acknowledge it as a medium of communication and would help them connect with people in other parts of the world (Students 4, line 11, Student 6, line 8, Student 10, line 4). Another significant importance of English is that English as perceived by the respondents as a tool to help them achieve their ambition. Three respondents (Students 1, 4 and 9) claimed that English enabled them to achieve their ambition.

Other importance of English are to help them to further their studies (Students 2, 4, 6 and 8) and to guarantee a better future (Students 1, 3, 4, 8 and 9). Meanwhile,

two respondents (Students 3 and 8) identified the importance of English as related to exam and for studying other subjects. They pointed out “*Mendapat menjamin masa depan dan boleh mendapat gred A dalam peperiksaan*” and *Belajar Bahasa Inggeris untuk Maths, Sains, BI*. What the respondents actually meant was English helped in studying Mathematics and Science since these subjects are taught using the medium of English.

One respondent (Student 9) however sees the importance of English as an opportunity for her to help others learn English as she stated “*Dapat membantu kawan-kawan yang tidak faham dalam Bahasa Inggeris.*” (To help friends who have problems in learning English).

So, logically, the responses indicated all the students were aware of the importance of English.

Items 20, 21, and 23 were on the importance of English to the Semai students. The results are presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 The Importance of English to the Semai Students

Item no.	Responses to items:	SA	A	NA	D	SD
20	<i>Saya tidak perlu belajar Bahasa Inggeris kerana peperiksaan diadakan dalam Bahasa Melayu.</i> I do not have to study English since exams are conducted in Bahasa Melayu.	1 (2.5)			34 (85)	5 (12.5)
21	<i>Bahasa Inggeris hanya diperlukan sekiranya hendak melanjutkan pelajaran ke luar negara.</i> English is only required if I want to further studies overseas.	2 (5)		1 (2.5)	30 (75)	7 (17.5)
23	<i>Matapelajaran Bahasa Inggeris penting untuk menjamin masa depan saya.</i> English is important for my future.	16 (40)	20 (50)		1 (2.5)	3 (7.5)

SA=Strongly agree **A**=Agree **NA**=No answer **D**=Disagree **SD**=Strongly disagree
% is bracketed in the table

Referring to Table 4.3, 85% of the respondents disagreed with the statement, “I do not have to study English since exams are conducted in Bahasa Melayu” (item 20). As the reasons for studying English are multi-faceted, and it is clear that the majority of the respondents feel that they need to learn English even though exams are conducted in Bahasa Melayu. 75% of the respondents disagreed with (item 21) “English is only required if I want to further their studies overseas” and seven respondents strongly disagreed with the statement. From item 23, it is made clear that English is regarded as important in their life as 90% of the students or 36 students (16 students strongly agreed and 20 students agreed) admitted that English is important for

their future. This means the students have realized that proficiency in the English language has a positive impact on their life.

However, the importance and comfort of Bahasa Melayu to the respondents cannot be denied. Based on the interviews, all student respondents see Bahasa Melayu as more favourable than English and all respondents understand and are more comfortable speaking in Bahasa Melayu. During the interview, one respondent mentioned, "*Subjek Bahasa Inggeris kerana bahasa yang susah dan jarang digunakan oleh saya*" (English because the language is difficult and I rarely use the language). Another respondent in the interview said "*Bagi saya, subjek Bahasa Inggeris memang sukar dipelajari kerana saya tidak faham dan susah. Bahasa Melayu sama dengan Bahasa Semai*" (For me, English is really difficult to learn for I do not understand and it is hard. Bahasa Melayu is just the same like Semai).

Problems that the learners of English face in learning English cannot be dismissed. The major difficulty in learning English discussed by the student respondents in the interview is difficulty in constructing words and sentences in English. According to two respondents (Respondent 7 and 9), they have difficulty in understanding sentences in English as to them English is a lot more difficult to learn compared to Bahasa Melayu. Respondent 8 remarked that English is very confusing. Five students explained that they have the problem of not knowing the meaning of words (Respondents 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6). One student (Respondent 3) complained that he has problems with the pronunciation of English words while another student

(Respondent 8) mentioned that she did not understand the work or exercise given by the teacher. Obviously, in this case, the problems faced by the Semai students are mainly due to lack of vocabulary and limited exposure to the English language. Their limited vocabulary in English made it necessary for them to refer to the dictionary for the meaning of difficult words they came across. These problems eventually could have hampered their acquisition of the language.

Five out of ten students expressed their lack of confidence in getting good grades for English, "*Saya memang tak yakin mendapat A dalam Bahasa Inggeris, sangat susah*" (I'm not confident of getting an A for English, as it is very difficult)." Other students admitted, "*Tidak berkeyakinan*" (Not confident), "*Tak ada keyakinan diri*" (No self-confidence), "*Sebab saya tiada keyakinan diri untuk menjawab lepas tu, takut nanti maknanya salah dan jawapannya salah*" (Because I do not have self-confidence, scared if the meanings and answers are wrong) and "*Gentar untuk menjawab soalan*" (Nervous when I have to answer questions). Anxiety and lack of confidence have proven to be the factors that contribute to the low achievement and proficiency in English language among these Semai students. Lack of confidence has resulted in avoiding the use of the target language among the Semai students. The students are more comfortable using Bahasa Semai and Bahasa Melayu in their conversation.

4.3 Contributory Factors for Attitudes towards Learning English

Contributory factors for the Semai students' attitudes towards learning English can be further divided into four factors: social, behavioral, cultural and educational factors (see Figure 4.1).

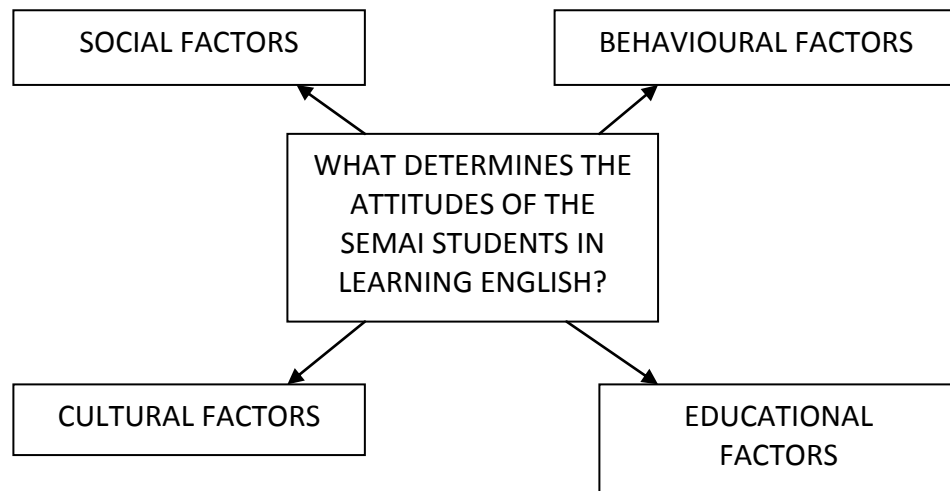


Figure 4.1 The Determinants of the Attitudes of the Semai Students in Learning English

4.3.1 Social Factors

Social factors that contribute to the attitudes of the Semai students in learning English are socio-economic status of the family, language students speak at home, the place they live in and parents' level of education (see Table 4.7). In Section A of the students' questionnaire, the family background and the socio-economic status of the respondents' family (see Table 4.7) were examined by looking at the parents' job and level of education. 45% of the fathers of the respondents rely on pickings from the forest for example rattan, '*petai*' and other seasonal bounty from the forest like durian. Around 30% engage in waged jobs in town like labouring and doing menial jobs. Seven respondents' fathers (17.5%) are farmers while 7.5% or 3 of the respondents' fathers are policemen. The distribution of the respondents' father's jobs is shown in Figure 4.2:

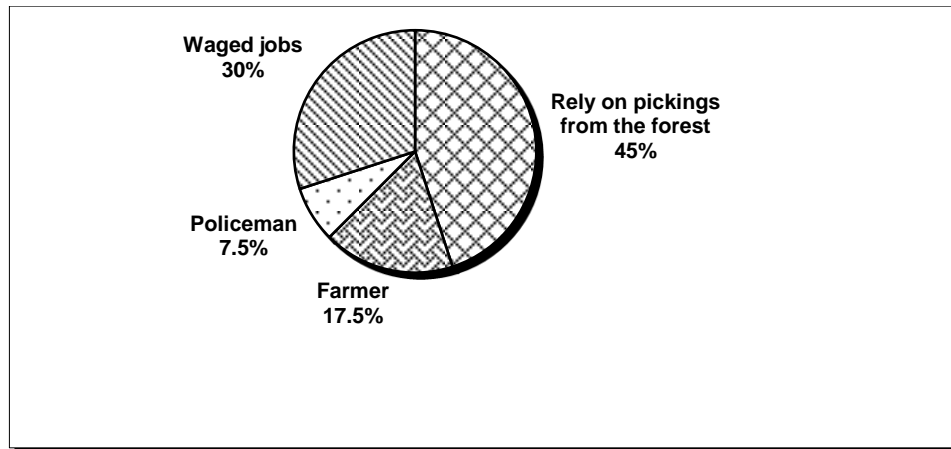


Figure 4.2 Distribution of Jobs/Occupations among the Respondents' Fathers

Only one respondent's mother worked and that as a community kindergarten teacher. By looking at the type of jobs and occupations of the respondents' parents, it is clear that the respondents come from low socio-economic background. Almost half of the respondents' family depends on agriculture whereas some depend on forest pickings. So, it is clear that where they live (see Figure 4.4) and where their parents work results in limited contact with people speaking English and this contributes to their lack of exposure to the language.

The parents are not highly educated since none of the parents had a degree or even a diploma (see Table 4.4). Only four respondents' fathers and two mothers finished their secondary school education. Six fathers and one mother left school at the age of fifteen (PMR/SRP/LCE) while 30 fathers and eight mothers only completed primary school education (Standard 6). A number of 16 fathers and 28 mothers were identified as never having attended school. One father and one mother are identified as having only a Standard 3 education in the primary school as their highest level of education (see Table 4.4).

Table 4.4 Parents' Level of Education

Level of Education	Father	Mother
Degree	-	-
Diploma	-	-
SPM/MCE	4	2
PMR/SRP/LCE	6	1
UPSR	13	8
No Formal Education	16	28
Others(Please state)	Standard 3	Standard 3

However, despite the low level of education among the parents, the parents were concerned about their children’s studies. Responses to item 9 revealed that the respondents get motivation and encouragement to learn English from the parents (see Figure 4.3):

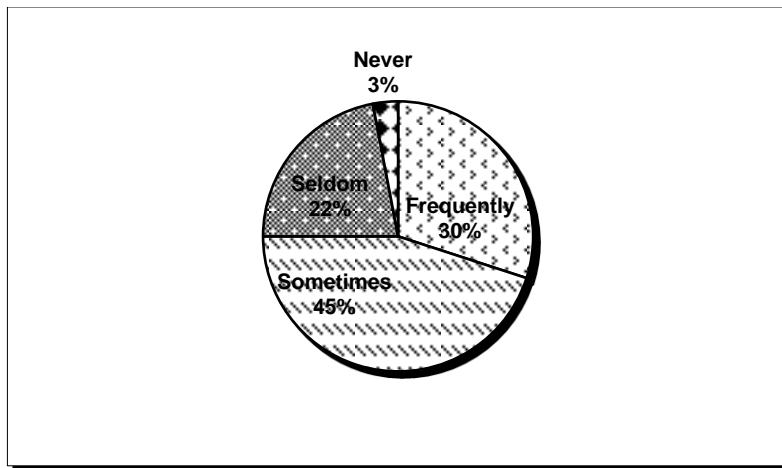


Figure 4.3 Frequency of Parental Support and Encouragement Received in Learning English.

As indicated in Table 4.6, 12 or 30% of the respondents claimed they were frequently encouraged to learn English. 18 students (45%) claimed that the parents only “sometimes” gave them encouragement to learn English. Nine respondents indicated that the parents seldom encouraged and one respondent indicated that she has never been encouraged to learn English.

The respondents were required to indicate the frequency of language (Bahasa Melayu, Bahasa Semai and English) used at home in item 3. The most frequent or dominant language in all the respondents' home is the mother tongue; the Semai language (L1), followed by Bahasa Melayu (L2) and English is rarely used at home (L3) (see Figure 4.4). The Semai language is largely used in the community and respondents feel comfortable speaking in their mother tongue even when in school, since their friends are mostly from the same community. Based on the interviews conducted with the student respondents, when asked which was more difficult to learn, Bahasa Melayu or English, one respondent commented "*Bahasa Inggeris kerana Bahasa Inggeris bukan bahasa rasmi negara dan tidak difahami dalam kalangan kaum Asli*" (English, because English is not the official language of the country and is not well understood by the Orang Asli community).

Compared to Bahasa Melayu, respondents are less familiar with English and it is rarely or seldom used in the Semai family and is regarded as a foreign language. However, 15 students indicated there are family members who can actually converse in English (item 8). Nine students said that their elder sister, two their mother and brother while only one said it was the father who spoke English. This was because their relatives worked in areas where there was a need for them to converse in English. Three students explained that their elder sister (studying in the same school) had positive attitudes about speaking in English with teachers in the school.

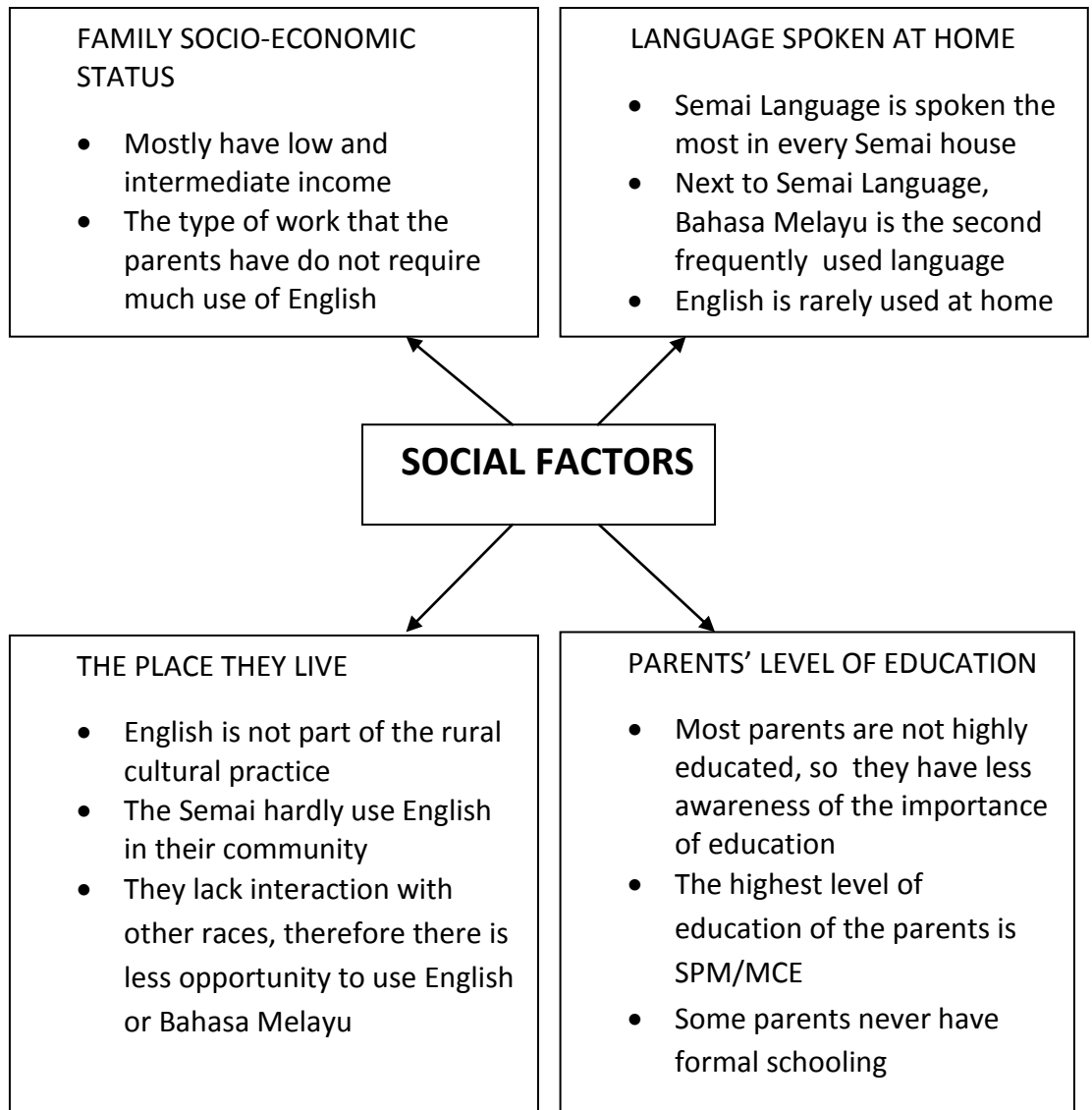


Figure 4.4 The Social Factors that Contribute to the Attitude of the Semai Students towards Learning English

4.3.2 Behavioural Factors

Learners' behaviour contributes to the achievement in the second language learning. The behavioural factors that contribute to the attitude of the Semai students towards learning English are shown in Figure 4.5.

In Section A of the students' questionnaire, the respondents' academic background is given. 32 respondents failed their Bahasa Inggeris paper in the Penilaian Menengah Rendah (PMR) trial in 2007. Only five respondents (12.5 %) obtained D grade while two a C for the paper. Only one scored a B and none scored an A for the paper (see Table 4.5). Based on their PMR trial results, it can be deduced that the students' level of proficiency in English is poor (failures) and below average (D grade).

Even though they did badly in their PMR trial, they were still hopeful and quite confident of getting better grades in the final PMR examination. This was indicated in their responses when asked what they expected to get for the Bahasa Inggeris (English language) paper in PMR 2007. Five aimed to get an A, 10 a B, 10 a C and 15 a D. This shows that the students planned to improve and get better grades for the final exams. Unfortunately, their result for the English paper in PMR 2007 did not show much improvement. Compared to their grade in the PMR trial, the same number of students got a B for the paper (1 student), 2.5% improvement in the C grade (3 students), a decline of 2.5% (4 students) for the D grade and the same number of students obtained

an E for English in PMR (32 students). The students set too high a goal which is not aligned with their ability. Inadequate effort could also contribute to their underachievement in the English language paper.

Table 4.5 Distribution of Students' Grade for English Paper in PMR trial, Target Grade for PMR and Grade for English Paper in PMR 2007

Items	A	%	B	%	C	%	D	%	E	%
1. Grade for English Paper in PMR trial 2007	0	0	1	2.5	2	5	5	12.5	32	80
2. Target grade for English Paper in PMR 2007	5	12.5	10	25	10	25	15	37.5	0	0
3. Grade for English Paper in PMR 2007	0	0	1	2.5	3	7.5	4	10	32	80

One's efforts and attitudes are crucially important in contributing to the success in second language learning. Section B of the students questionnaire which consists of two parts; part I and II were included so as to get an indication of the students' efforts and attitudes to learn English. Items 10 to 19 and item 22 (see Appendix 1) determine the level of motivation that the students have in learning English. Three items on the students' efforts to improve their English were constructed in items 10, 11 and 12 (see Appendix 1).

In item 10, students were asked whether they attended tuition class. A high percentage of students (72.5%) indicated that they had English tuition. This could probably have been because they were staying in hostel where attendance for extra classes organized by the school is compulsory. 27.5% of respondents stated that they did not attend any English tuition even when the tuition was organized by the school and was free.

24 students (60%) revealed that they read English newspapers (item 11), while 16 (40%) students did not read English newspapers. Some respondents felt that they can improve their English by reading English storybooks (item 12), “How many English books do you read in a month?” One student stated 3 books, five students read 2 books, while seven students (17.5%) read 1 book.

Items 13, 14, 15 and 16 were constructed to determine the frequency of use of English among the respondents in school. The results are shown in the following table (Table 4.6).

Table 4.6 Items on the Frequency of Use of English Among the Respondents in School

Item no.	Responses to items:	SA	A	NA	D	SD
13	<i>Saya menggunakan Bahasa Inggeris semasa berinteraksi dengan kawan-kawan saya</i> I use English when interacting with my friends.			4 (10)	26 (65)	10 (25)
14	<i>Saya menggunakan Bahasa Inggeris setiap masa untuk melatih pertuturan saya supaya lebih fasih..</i> I speak English often to improve my English.	2 (5)	10 (25)	3 (7.5)		25 (62.5)
15	<i>Saya hanya akan bertutur dalam Bahasa Inggeris sekiranya dipanggil oleh guru tersebut untuk menjawab soalan.</i> I will only speak English if I were asked by the teacher to answer a question.		5 (12.5)	4 (10)	19 (47.5)	12 (30)
16	<i>Saya tidak pernah langsung bertutur dalam Bahasa Inggeris.</i> I have never spoken in English.	5 (12.5)	1 (2.5)		28 (70)	6 (15)

SA=Strongly agree **A**=Agree **NA**=No answer **D**=Disagree **SD**=Strongly disagree
% is bracketed in the table

In item 13, it is shown that a large number of the students (65%) did not use English when speaking with friends. Only 25% of the students admitted they used English in their daily conversation with their friends and 25 students (62.5%) did not feel the need to practice speaking English often as a way to improve their English. Only 5% of the students strongly agreed with the fact that they spoke English often in order to improve their English. Item 15 however revealed that the majority of the students did

not actually answer or respond in English when spoken to in English by a teacher. 47.5% disagreed with the statement “I will only speak English when asked by the teacher to answer questions” while 30% of the students strongly disagreed. 12.5% of the students however, made an attempt to speak in English when called by a teacher to answer questions. 12.5% of the students strongly admitted that they have never spoken in English with anyone while one student expressed strong agreement with “*Saya tidak pernah langsung bertutur dalam Bahasa Inggris*” or “I have never spoken in English”.

Items 31 to 40, reveal the strategies employed by the students to learn English. In item 35, students were asked explicitly about their responses towards the instruction given by the teacher in the English classroom (see Table 4.7).

Table 4.7 An Item on Students’ Response Towards the Instructions Given by the Teacher

Item no.	Responses to item:	SA	A	NA	D	SD
35	<i>Saya tidak mempedulikan arahan guru saya.</i> I just ignore my teacher’s instruction.	5 (12.5)	4 (10)		19 (47.5)	12 (30)

SA=Strongly agree A=Agree NA=No answer D=Disagree SD=Strongly disagree % is bracketed in the table

In item 35, the Semai students can be described as obedient and have a positive response towards the English teacher's instructions as 47.5% of the students (19 students) disagreed with, "*Saya tidak memperdulikan arahan guru saya*" (I just ignore my teacher's instruction). Another 30% (12 students) strongly disagreed with the statement. Only 9 students admitted that they disobeyed the English teacher's instructions (5 strongly agreed and 4 agreed).

Items 34 and 39 revealed who the students turned to when they faced problems concerning their English lesson (see Table 4.8).

Table 4.8 Responses to "Who Would You Turn to When Having Problems Concerning Your English Lesson?"

Item no.	Responses to items:	SA	A	NA	D	SD
34	<i>Saya akan bertanya kepada kawan saya selepas matapelajaran itu perkara yang tidak difahami.</i> I will ask my friends to explain things that I do not know after the lesson.	18 (45)	16 (40)	2 (5)	2 (5)	2 (5)
39	<i>Saya akan bertanya kepada adik-beradik saya sekiranya ada masalah dalam matapelajaran Bahasa Inggeris.</i> I will refer to my siblings for any problem that I have in learning English.	11 (27.5)	14 (35)	1 (2.5)	11 (27.5)	3 (7.5)

SA=Strongly agree A=Agree NA=No answer D=Disagree SD=Strongly disagree % is bracketed in the table

Item 34 reveals whether the students asked friends to explain things that they did not understand. 45% of the students or 18 students strongly agreed with the statement while another 40% or 16 students agreed and admitted that they would ask their friends if there was anything that they did not know regarding the English language after the English lesson. There were two students who did not provide an answer. Another two students disagreed/strongly disagreed with the statement.

Students were asked to respond to the statement, “I will refer to my siblings for any problem that I have in learning English”. 27.5% (11 students) strongly agreed with the statement and 35% (14 students) agreed. Another 11 students disagreed and three students strongly disagreed that they would refer to their siblings for any problem they faced concerning English. One student did not provide an answer.

It appears that students’ reluctance and reduced effort in learning English have led to the students’ negative attitude towards learning English. This is shown in responses to items 36, 38 and 40. In items 36, 38 and 40, students have to reveal their responses and reactions towards the work or assignment given by the English language teacher. The results are shown in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9 Students' Responses and Reactions towards the Work or Assignment Given by the Teacher

Item no.	Responses to items:	SA	A	NA	D	SD
36	<i>Saya akan meniru latihan yang dibuat oleh kawan saya sekiranya kerja yang diberikan tidak siap.</i> I will just copy my friends' answers if I am unable to complete the work given.	1 (2.5)	23 (57.5)	4 (10)	7 (17.5)	5 (12.5)
38	<i>Saya akan meminta orang lain untuk menyiapkan kerja saya.</i> I will ask someone else to complete my assignment.	1 (2.5)			25 (62.5)	14 (35)
40	<i>Saya akan mencari alasan untuk tidak menyiapkan kerja yang telah diberikan.</i> I will find excuses not to complete the work given by the teacher.	4 (10)	19 (47.5)	3 (7.5)	3 (7.5)	11 (27.5)

SA=Strongly agree A=Agree NA=No answer D=Disagree SD=Strongly disagree % is bracketed in the table

Because they are weak in the language, more than half of students (57.5%) agreed that they just “copy from their friends’ answers” if they are unable to complete the work given by the teacher (item 36). However, 17.5% (7 students) disagreed and 12.5% (5 students) expressed strong disagreement. Another 10% did not respond and only one student strongly agreed with it.

A large number of the students (62.5%) disagreed with “I will ask someone else to complete my assignment” (item 38). Another 35% of the students or 14 students expressed strong disagreement with the statement. Only one student strongly agreed to have someone else to complete his/her assignment or homework given by the teacher.

Item 40 “I will find excuses not to complete the work given by the teacher”. 47.5% of the students or 19 students agreed and admitted that they gave excuses if they were unable to complete the work given by the teacher. In fact, four students strongly agreed with the statement. 27.5% of the students however strongly disagreed with this. From the three types of responses towards the work or assignment given by the teacher, copying friends answers is what most students do when they have not completed the work given (2.5% strongly agreed, 57.5% agreed). This is followed by giving excuses to the teachers (10% strongly agreed and 47.55% agreed). In this case, the students do not have self-autonomy in learning the English language. Students did not take the initiative to complete the work on their own as they appear not see the urgency for them to complete the work given by their teacher.

From the interviews conducted with the students, the students’ negative attitudes provide an answer which explains their underachievement in the English classroom. One student (Student 3) admitted the reason why he was weak in English is “..*kerana tidak belajar bersungguh-sungguh dan malas belajar*” (Because I didn’t study hard and I am lazy to study). Another two respondents (Respondents 8 and 9)

said, “*Sebab tak berusaha*” (Because I did not make the effort to learn English). Respondent 6 admitted, “*Banyak main-main*” (Play a lot) and Respondent 7 “*tidak tumpu perhatian pada guru*” (Didn’t pay attention to the teacher). Negative attitudes which are described as not having a strong desire to study and the non-serious attitudes towards learning of English have contributed to the underachievement of students in the English Language.

The misconceptions of suitable strategies to be used when learning English language also occur among the Semai students. Items 31, 32, 33 and 37 show the strategy used by the students when they encounter difficult words in English. The results are presented in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10 Strategies Employed when Encountering Difficult English Words

Item no.	Responses to items:	SA	A	NA	D	SD
31	<i>Saya meminta guru saya untuk menerangkan makna yang tidak difahami dengan menggunakan Bahasa Inggeris yang lebih mudah</i> I will ask my teacher to explain the meaning of difficult words in simple English.	2 (5)	7 (17.5)	29 (72.5)		2 (5)
32	<i>Saya meminta guru saya menerangkan perkataan yang tidak difahami dalam Bahasa Melayu.</i> I will ask my teacher to explain the meaning of difficult words in Bahasa Melayu.	14 (35)	22 (55)	1 (2.5)	2 (5)	1 (2.5)
33	<i>Saya bertanya kepada kawan saya dengan cepat tentang makna yang</i>	12 (30)	16 (40)	3 (7)	6 (15)	3 (7.5)

	<i>tidak difahami.</i> I will quickly ask friends for the meaning of difficult words.					
37	<i>Saya akan mencari makna perkataan yang tidak difahami di dalam kamus.</i> I will look up the meaning of the difficult word in the dictionary.	18 (45)	22 (55)			

SA=Strongly agree, **A**=Agree, **NA**=No answer, **D**=Disagree, **SD**=Strongly disagree
% is bracketed in the table

In item 31, 72.5% of the students (29 students) disagreed and 5% (two) of the students strongly disagreed with the statement “I will ask my teacher to explain the meaning of difficult words in simple English”. This shows that the students are not comfortable if the teacher explained the meanings of words in English instead of Bahasa Melayu. Only 17.5% (seven) students agreed and 5% (two) students strongly agreed with that approach.

As for item 32, 55% of the students (22 students) agreed with “I will ask my teacher to explain the meaning of difficult words in Bahasa Melayu” (item 32). 35% (14 students) strongly agreed with the statement. Students preferred Bahasa Melayu to be used by the teachers as that helps the students understand the words better. Only two students disagreed and one did not provide an answer and one strongly disagreed.

40% (16 students) agreed and 30% of the students showed strong agreement with “I will quickly ask friends for the meaning of difficult words” (item 33). 15% or

6 students disagreed with the statement and 7.5% (3 students) strongly disagreed. 7.5% of the students did not answer.

Besides asking the English teacher (item 32) and friends (item33) to explain the meaning of difficult words in Bahasa Melayu and asking the English teacher to explain in simple English (item 31), all students made an attempt to look up the meanings of difficult words in the bilingual dictionary (item 37). 45% of the students or (18) strongly agreed with the strategy while another 55% (22) students agreed.

From all the 4 items mentioned (items 31, 32, 33 and 37), the most preferred strategy employed by the respondents when encountering difficult English words is to look up the meaning of the difficult words in the dictionary (45% strongly agreed and 55% agreed). This is followed by asking the teacher to explain the meaning of difficult words in Bahasa Melayu (35% strongly agreed and 55% agreed). Students would also ask their friends for the meaning of difficult words (30% strongly agreed and 40% agreed).

In the interviews conducted with the student respondents (see Appendix 5), question 6 tried to seek strategies that the respondents employed in constructing sentences in English. Almost all the respondents (nine out of ten respondents) revealed that a bilingual dictionary (Bahasa Melayu-English) is a must for them in constructing English sentences. The students felt that they needed to find the translation of the Bahasa Melayu words in English. This could be due to the low-proficiency level of

second language learners. Since they have a limited range of vocabulary, writing sentences in English is a difficult task. There is an interference from their L1 (Semai Language) and L2 (Bahasa Melayu). Students tend to think in their L1 and L2 before translating into their L3 which is English. As Student 2 in the interview said,

“Bagi saya fikir dalam Bahasa Semai dahulu, kemudian Bahasa Melayu selepas itu saya selalu mencari makna dan perkataan yang susah terlebih dahulu selepas itu saya akan mencari makna yang senang kemudian dalam Bahasa Inggeris.” (I first think in Semai Language and then Bahasa Melayu. Later, I will find the meanings of more difficult words before looking for the meaning of easier words in English).

Another respondent said, *“Buat ayat menggunakan Bahasa Melayu. Saya tanya dengan cikgu bagaimana nak buat ayat Bahasa Inggeris”* (Use Bahasa Melayu to construct sentences. I asked my teacher how to construct sentences in English). Respondent 8 mentioned, *“Strategi saya macam cari dalam kamus untuk perkataan Bahasa Inggeris. Mula-mula tu buat ayat Bahasa Melayulah”* (My strategy is look up for the words in the dictionary. But before that I construct sentences in Bahasa Melayu). Therefore, for the Semai students, when producing sentences in English, sentences in Semai language or Bahasa Melayu are first constructed before being translated into English. Generally, the respondents started constructing sentences based on the direct translation of words from Semai Language to Bahasa Melayu and later to English.

Students' preference about strategies used by the English teachers during English lesson affected their learning preference (see Table 4.11).

Table 4.11 Students' Preference of Strategies Carried out by the English Teachers During English Lessons

Item no.	Responses to items:	SA	A	NA	D	SD
25	<i>Mengajar dalam Bahasa Melayu.</i> Teach in Bahasa Melayu.	18 (45)	3 (7.5)		5 (12.5)	14 (35)
26	<i>Menterjemah perkataan dalam Bahasa Melayu semasa mengajar</i> Translate sentences to Bahasa Melayu during the lesson.	31 (77.5)	7 (17.5)		1 (2.5)	1 (2.5)
27	<i>Menerangkan makna perkataan atau konsep yang diajar dalam Bahasa Melayu.</i> Explain meanings or concepts in Bahasa Melayu.	31 (77.5)	8 (20)			1 (2.5)
28	<i>Memberi arahan dalam Bahasa Melayu</i> Give instructions in Bahasa Melayu.	25 (67.5)	1 (2.5)	6 (15)	6 (15)	2 (5)
29	<i>Menyuruh saya menggunakan kamus untuk mencari makna perkataan yang tidak difahami.</i> Ask me to use dictionary to look up meanings of words.	30 (75)	7 (17.5)		1 (2.5)	2 (5)
30	<i>Menyuruh saya meneka makna perkataan tersebut terlebih dahulu.</i> Ask me to guess the meaning of words before explaining.	25 (62.5)	4 (10)	5 (12.5)	4 (10)	2 (5)

SA=Strongly agree A=Agree NA=No answer D=Disagree SD=Strongly disagree % is bracketed in the table

From the results presented in Table 4.11, it shows that the respondents expressed strong preference for Bahasa Melayu to be used in the English classroom.

The respondents preferred the English teachers to teach English using Bahasa Melayu (item 25), translate sentences to Bahasa Melayu during the lesson (item 26), explain meanings or concepts in Bahasa Melayu (item 27) and give instructions in Bahasa Melayu (item 28). Almost half of the respondents (45%), strongly agreed and 7.5% (3 students) agreed that the English teachers should teach in Bahasa Melayu. However, 35% (14 students) strongly disagreed with the statement and 12.5% (5 students) disagreed.

77.5% (31 students) strongly agreed that translation should be used as a teaching technique by the English teachers. 17.5% (7 students) also agreed that teachers should use the method of translation. Only one student expressed disagreement.

Respondents favoured instructions to be given in Bahasa Malaysia during English lesson (item 28). The respondents expressed their comfort with Bahasa Malaysia and 67.5% (25 students) strongly felt that the English teacher should give instructions in Bahasa Melayu. However, 6 students disagreed and 22 students strongly disagreed. Another 6 students or 15% of the students did not take any stand (NA=No answer). Item 25, 26, 27 and 28 show students' comfort and familiarity with Bahasa Melayu or the Malay language. Their option for language used by the English teacher is largely Bahasa Malaysia.

In items 29 and 30, students were asked whether they preferred teachers to direct them to use a dictionary to look up the meanings of words or guess the meaning of words before providing an explanation. 75% (30 students) strongly agreed that dictionaries should be used to look up the meaning of words and 17.5% of the students agreed to use a dictionary when encountering new words. The majority of the students too (62.5%) agreed that the meaning should be guessed before the teacher explained the meaning.

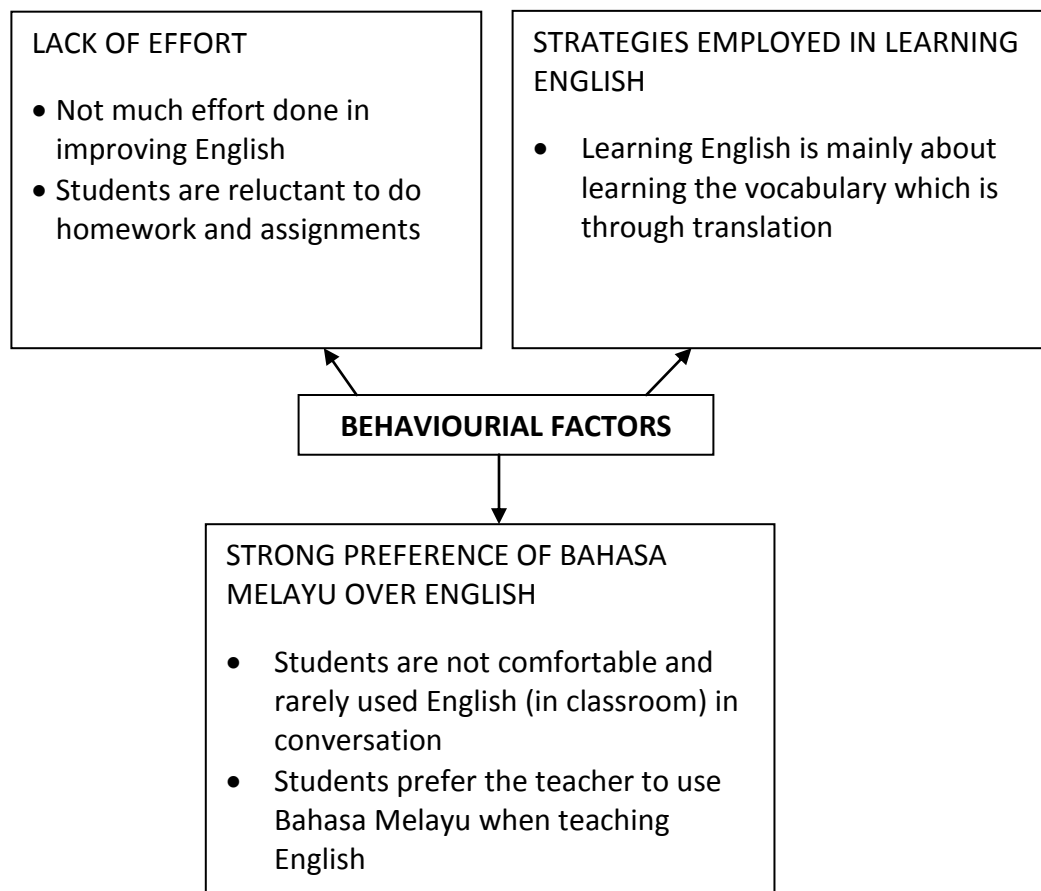


Figure 4.5 The Behavioural Factors that Contribute to the Attitudes of the Semai Students Towards Learning English

(line 112)	“They like to be absent from school. Because some of them don’t feel that education is important. Some of them work at night. ‘ <i>Tangkap katak</i> ’ (catch frogs). It’s quiet expensive when they sell it. I think about 12 ringgit per kilo and when they told me, ‘ <i>Cikgu kais pagi makan pagi, kais petang makan petang</i> ’ they already have this in their mind. So they don’t care about their future. What they find today is for the next day.”
Teacher 4 (line 157)	“For them education is not important, the most important is to be in their own family.”
(line 165)	“They don’t put education much important, that’s it. Education is not the top of the list, the top of list probably family. Or having a family, you know, a huge family. Let’s say education is just like minor thing, or is a force that you do for education.”
(line 179)	“School is not relevant, education is not relevant for them.”
Teacher 5 (line 15)	“I don’t think they really care about education. They prefer to stay at home than to come to school. During ‘ <i>musim buah</i> ’ or fruit season many will be missing from school. What do they get from coming to school? If they stay at home, at least they can get money from selling the fruits. These students they don’t know education is important. They don’t care whether they have education or not.”
(line 21)	“If they want to go to school, they’ll go and if they don’t feel like going to school, they won’t. There are many cases of playing truancy and dropout in the school, compared to other schools I’ve been to.”

From the interview conducted with the teacher respondents, feedback was received on how Semai culture affects education in general. The teachers’ views were based on their years of experience teaching and dealing with the Semai students. From the responses in teachers’ questionnaire and interviews, it appeared that all teachers

were biased and prejudiced as they perceived that most of the Semai students are not interested in education. According to the teachers, the students' laidback and lackadaisical attitude indicates their indifference towards education. An instant reward is what they expect from education and when they do not get a reward, they start playing truant (Teacher 5, line 15, Teacher 3, line 112). Some of the students feel comfortable with what they have, they do not try hard or put more effort in order to excel and master the English language (Teacher 2, line 8).

The Semai students' attitudes towards English is also noted. Below are the teachers' comments on the Semai students' attitudes towards English (see Table 4.13).

Table 4.13 Teachers' Views on Semai Students' Attitudes Towards English

Respondents	Comments
Teacher 2 (line 251)	"I think at present, most of them think to pass the exam. They get through the language, they get through exam. Not because they want to learn English. I don't think they bother if there is no exam."
Teacher 3 (line 179)	"No. Education is not relevant to them, English is worst. That is what they would think. For us, yes education, English are important. But for them, they don't see why they have to learn English."
Teacher 4 (line 191)	"One is English environment, the family, they don't use the language, the environment also they don't have much importance. For what, for them, English is for what? Because they use Semai to speak right. When they buy things everybody was like talking in the same language. Because Bahasa also not being used. So what's there? They don't go out. They got married with their people themselves, that's why. So, what's the use?"

Teacher 5 (line 10)	“I don’t think they really care about English or they really have an interest in English. If they are interested in English, I’m sure their English isn’t that bad. Even in secondary school, Form 3, 4, 5, they are very weak. Just like the primary school students.”
(line 100)	“They don’t see the importance of the language. So they don’t bother improve their English.”
(line 103)	“I don’t think they ever use English when talking with friends or relatives. The parents don’t use English, nobody in the family use English. And I don’t think they read any English material at home. So, what do they need English for? They can survive without English.”

According to the teachers, students are not cognizant to the importance of English in their life. Hence, English is regarded as something that they can do without or English is not needed for them to earn a living. Since English is considered as unimportant and irrelevant in their lives, the driving force and the motivation to learn the language is lacking.

From the interviews with teachers, the attitude of the parents towards education was also highlighted (see Table 4.14).

Table 4.14 Teachers' Views on the Parents' Role in Their Children's Education

Respondents	Comments
<p>Teacher 1 (line 155) (line 159)</p>	<p>“Parents play an important part. Parents influence a lot.”</p> <p>“Some of the students they have to spend one hour to two hours to go to school. So if you ask the parents to come, most of them won't come. But I think we can do some programmes to attract the parents to join the school programme to educate parents. The parents' perspective is very important so they can educate their children.”</p>
<p>Teacher 2 (line 28)</p> <p>(line 38)</p>	<p>I wouldn't be blaming the students much. I think, it comes from their background. Parents don't really take an interest and they feel that if their children refuse to do something, they just leave them. Sometimes the children get up and just say, “I refuse to go to school.”</p> <p>They don't have the time. I feel teachers have really emphasizing on education and trying to bring them up. Whereas out of 500 parents, maybe around 100 concern over the children's education. Other than that, they really love the children very much. We lay fingers on them, they don't like like us scolding their children”</p>
<p>Teacher 3 (line 38)</p> <p>(line 154)</p>	<p>“..but we have to know that Orang Asli they have these beliefs, we call it “<i>hukum Syaib</i>” for children. According to Cikgu Allang, this <i>hukum 'Syaib'</i> is for children, you know. So the parents <i>'dalam hukum ini parents mesti manjakan anak-anak dia'</i>. Everything for children <i>la</i>, must be pampered. That's why if the children don't go to school, they don't care. Because they <i>'ikut' hukum 'syaib'</i>.”</p> <p>“One way is to educate the parents. Tell the parents that education is important, ask every parent to force their children because the Orang Asli doctor told us once you come to puberty, you cannot scold them anymore. Maybe it's their belief so when their children don't want to go to school, the parents won't say anything.”</p>
<p>Teacher 4 (line 191)</p>	<p>“As I said, the parents who's really open minded, who's really mixing around with other races, they are okay, doing well. Probably not speaking wise but doing well in the exam wise, right. But</p>

	mostly about 70% are very close-minded, education is not important for them.”
Teacher 5 (line 25)	“We have been doing the same thing again and again, meeting with the parents. But as expected only few parents turned up. How can we talk with the parents about their children if they do not give their cooperation.”
(line 108)	Most parents they are not educated, or don’t know much about education. During PIBG meeting, not many would attend.

The teachers opined that the Semai students’ poor attitude is due partly to the parents’ indifference to their children’ education. The Semai parents consider that education does not change their life at all (Teacher 2, line 38). Children who go to school for 10 to 12 years lose their survival skills in the jungle. They are incapable of climbing trees, finding rattan and hunting animals. Once they finish school, they are unable to get a good job and instead have to go to the jungle without those survival skills.

Next, cultural beliefs and superstitions have a great influence on the life of the Semai. In *‘Hukum Syaib’* parents are prohibited from scolding the children once they reach puberty. Doting upon children is a must while scolding is frowned upon in the culture (Teacher 3, line 38).

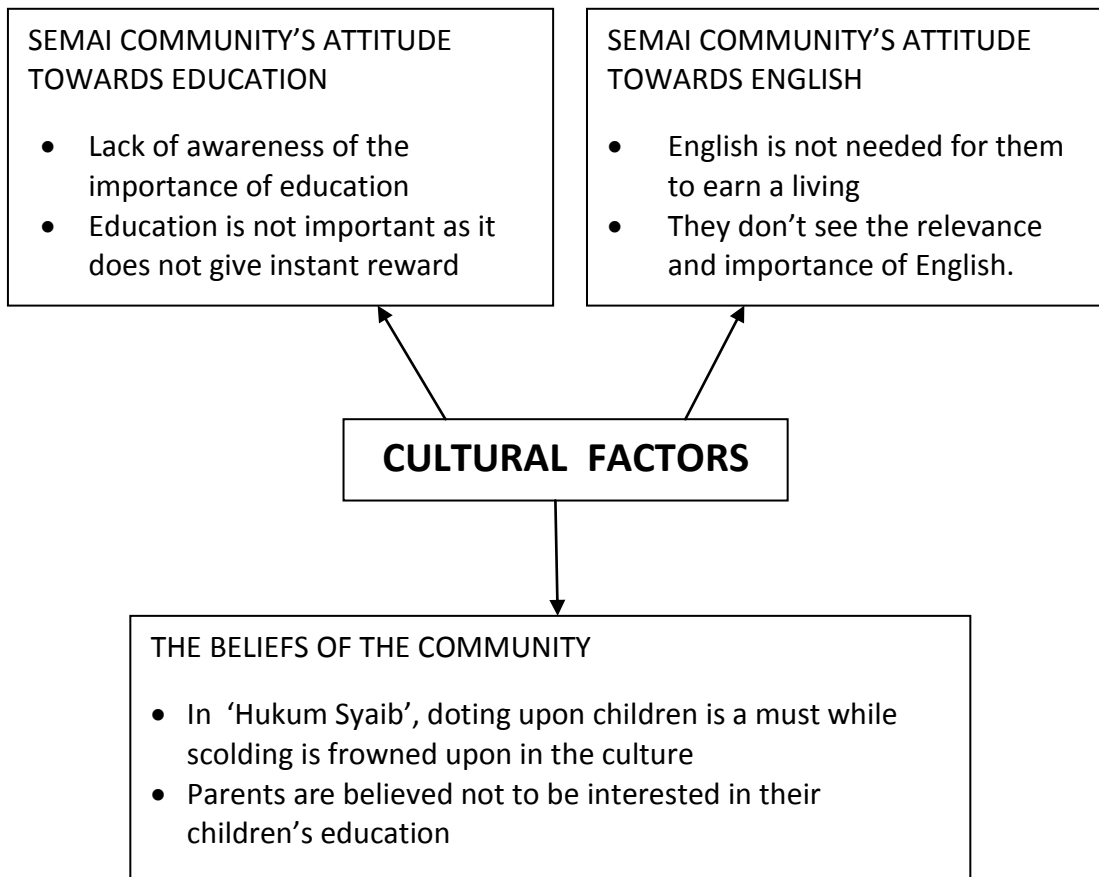


Figure 4.6 Teachers' Perception on The Cultural Factors that Contribute to the Attitudes of the Semai Students Towards Learning English

4.3.4 Educational Factors (Teachers' Views)

These findings point out that the educational setting factors contributing to the attitude of the Semai students in learning English include having one dominant ethnic group in the school, a uniform English language syllabus, the use of less effective methods in the English classroom, limited usage of Standard English as a language of instruction in the classroom and high illiteracy rate among the Semai students (see Figure 4.7).

Having a school mainly for the Orang Asli does not provide a conducive environment for the students to learn English. The fact that the mother tongue is extensively used among the respondents in the study is undisputable. 80% of the teachers believed that the Semai students would have a better proficiency level of English if the students were given the chance to mix with other races in school.

Teachers' comments on the schools as a non-conductive environment for the students to learn English are as follows (see Table 4.15):

Table 4.15 Teachers' Views on School as Non-conductive Environment to Learn English

Respondents	Comments
Teacher 1	"But I think you can see that they like to stick to their own group. Like that day I asked them to form a group for choir for English Week and they said, "Teacher, can we have a group for Asli only?" They don't like to mix with other races, So they just stick

The views of the teachers on the relevance of the English language syllabus are presented in Table 4.16.

Table 4.16 Teachers' Views on the Relevance of the English Language Syllabus to the Semai Students

Respondents	Comments
<p>Teacher 1 (line 106)</p> <p>(line 66)</p>	<p>“But I heard from some of the Form 1 teachers, they are facing a problem that some of the Form 1 students could not understand Bahasa Melayu as well. So how are we going to teach English? They just understand Semai only. Now you are introducing another language. I wonder, what do they learn in primary school?”</p> <p>“They could not construct even one simple sentence. So, I encourage them to study from the primary school work, from the very basic. Even though they are Form 3, if you use Form 3 things, they could not understand. I just use the primary school materials. Simple English.”</p>
<p>Teacher 2 (line 181)</p>	<p>“We are like trapped you know, finish the syllabus, we have to do this. If they don't score we will be bombarded by the headmistress, by the department.”</p>
<p>Teacher 3 (line 53)</p> <p>(line 185)</p> <p>(line 192)</p>	<p>“Some of them they don't know how to read and write. Some of them they can read but very slow.”</p> <p>“I think maybe they're not interested because they cannot read and write, some of them and I don't know what they have been doing in primary school.</p> <p>“I think Form 3, the last class like 50%, a lot, half of the class. Or rather they recognize the word and read very slow. Form 5 like 3 to 5 students. I don't know what they got in primary school. It's difficult to teach them. Come back to basic with ABC. We can't afford to do that, especially for the Form 3. We prepare them for exam already. They even copy wrongly. They cannot construct one simple correct sentence.</p>

Teacher 4 (line 131)	“You have to go to the old ways you cannot just use that KBSM syllabus.”
(line 267)	Obviously, the present English language syllabus is suitable for students who have exposure to English. But this case with the Semai students, I think the syllabus is a bit too advanced for them. Can you imagine how are they going to learn English literature when they don’t even know how to read Malay.”
Teacher 5 (line 35)	“At form 3, 4 or 5, we cannot waste our time teaching them how to read and write. They should learn all that in primary school. Now, in secondary school, we have different syllabus, different content. We have to catch up with the syllabus, teaching according to the syllabus.”

As for the suitability of the English language syllabus, most teachers reported that the syllabus was too advanced for the majority of the Semai students whose proficiency level is considered poor. In their case, the findings show that the teachers think that the English language syllabus introduced by the Malaysian Ministry of Education is irrelevant and inappropriate and is an impediment to their success in learning the language. Having a uniform English language syllabus for all primary and secondary students in Malaysia obviously is not appropriate for these Semai students. As mentioned by the teacher respondents, the English language syllabus is regarded as too difficult for the Semai students due to the poor proficiency level of English (Teacher 4, line 267, Teacher 5, line 35). Instead, teachers should be given more time to help students to love and learn English and not be restricted by having to complete the current KBSM syllabus which is exam- oriented (Teacher 2, line 181).

Besides that, the use of less effective methods in the English classroom and limited usage of Standard English as a language of instruction in the classroom could also be the factors that could affect the attitude of the Semai students in learning English.

Teachers should provide suitable teaching strategies where teachers should understand their difficulties in learning the language and give ideas on learning strategies. Students' negative attitudes towards English can be changed by teaching through various ways that interest them. When asked about the ways to make students interested in English, a variety of responses were obtained from the teachers' questionnaires.

A variety of methods in teaching English is important according to one teacher (Respondent 4). Two other teachers admitted that including language games in their lesson resulted in students' interest (Respondent 1, 2 and 3). Another teacher felt communicating with the students in English and telling the students the advantages obtained from learning the language is an important strategy (Respondent 5).

Below are the teachers' comments on the use of songs, games, and rewards as effective methods to teach English to the Semai students (see Table 4.17):

Table 4.17 Teachers' Views on the Use of Songs, Games, and Rewards as Effective Methods to Teach English to the Semai Students

Respondents	Comments
Teacher 1 (line 176)	“I think, they are effective ways, but somehow these kind of activity really spend time. You have to stick to syllabus. You cannot make it every time you have class. So, once a while maybe. They will be excited. Now you cannot do. Penilaian Menengah Rendah is just around the corner. Time factor. But I think those are the good ways to encourage students to participate in English classroom.”
Teacher 2 (line 99) (line 104) (line 238)	<p>“For level 1, we use songs, games. But when comes to level 2, where their future is decided by exams, we can't be singing and having games except for co-curricular activities and societies. So, we can't really do that.”</p> <p>“Because if it is not for the exam, you can use some other methods to teach, to gain the interest. Now, we are always preparing them for exam.”</p> <p>“They love music, they love games and dancing. But if you want to teach language using all these games and dancing, it takes a lot of time. Time factor. You want them to gain language, it's good. To sit for exam, no. Some even suggest we have different syllabus for the Semai.”</p>
Teacher 3 (line 55) (line 67) (line 137)	<p>“But when comes to singing English songs, they know how to sing. Because they like entertainment.”</p> <p>“If let's say you give games, then, they enjoy. Because they are music smart, they are more to kinetic part. They don't want to sit still, they like to move around, things like that.”</p> <p>“We have to give them group work, they have to move from one group to another group. They like music. You let them listen to song and ask them to fill in the blanks, even though they don't know the word but they really like to do that. Anything to do with music and also like to see teaching courseware music, background music.”</p>
Teacher 4 (line 55)	“I don't believe that, because I've taught them for few years and I don't use. I don't really believe in rewarding because if that is the

	only way we are using, they only ask for reward at the end of the day. So, that's why I go for drilling.”
Teacher 5 (line 49) (line 56)	“They like activities like English games. Oh yes, they love singing, too.” “They also love games, simple exercise. But I cannot use games all the times as not much can be learned from the games. Too much games is also not good as they tend not to be serious in lesson.”

According to 80% of the teachers, songs are effective way of making students interested in the language since the students are believed to be very musically inclined. Unfortunately, for some teachers, teaching the Semai students through games, songs and various activities is not practical. There are constraints in conducting the activities in class as conducting such activities takes up time (Teacher 1, line 176, Teacher 2, line 238). The teachers too, are obliged to complete the syllabus as students have to be prepared for examinations (Teacher 1, line 176, Teacher 2, line 99, 104). Hence, teachers choose to ignore the effectiveness of the method and stick to the traditional way of teaching English (Teacher 4, line 55).

Next, the importance of having a bilingual dictionary is pointed out. The following table shows the teachers' perception on the necessity to use a bilingual dictionary (see Table 4.18).

Table 4.18 Teachers' Views on the Necessity to have a Bilingual Dictionary of Bahasa Melayu and English for the Semai Students

Respondents	Comments
<p>Teacher 2 (line 88)</p> <p>(line 209)</p>	<p>“And I think we depend a lot on dictionary, bilingual dictionary. It’s compulsory. They should have it in their bag everyday. I told them, 365 days a year, dictionary should be in their bag.”</p> <p>“We depend on the bilingual dictionary. Some teachers said we should use English dictionary but I said I don’t agree. They will find the words in dictionary and they don’t understand. It’s better to find it in Malay and they understand. So, I insist and make everybody buy bilingual.”</p>
<p>Teacher 3 (line 100)</p> <p>(line 215)</p>	<p>“I’m teaching Form 4 and Form 5. Form 5 is okay because, it’s quite a good class but for Form 4, let’s say if I’m teaching reading comprehension. I have to go sentence by sentence with them because they don’t really understand. Even a simple word like ‘have’ they have to check in dictionary. But not all of them, only the weak ones. Once you’ve checked the meaning, the next time they meet the same word, they are not confused you know.”</p> <p>“I encourage, in Form 1 they must buy. It’s compulsory, it’s very important. Even some of them they don’t know how to look for the meaning in the dictionary. <i>Pusing, pusing, tak dapat-dapat</i>. Because they don’t know ABC.”</p>
<p>Teacher 4 (line 276)</p>	<p>“Oh, yes. Most of the time we use dictionary, bilingual dictionary, Malay – English.”</p>
<p>Teacher 5 (line 59)</p>	<p>Dictionary is a must, it’s easy for them to check the meaning in English.</p>

Generally, all the teacher and student respondents depended on bilingual (Bahasa Melayu – English) dictionaries for the learning and teaching of English. Hence, a bilingual dictionary is a necessity (since there is no trilingual dictionary of Semai Language-Bahasa Melayu-English). Teacher 3 (line 100) informed that a bilingual dictionary is a must for the Semai students as their low level of proficiency in the language forces them to depend on the dictionary most of the time. Although a dictionary is provided for the students in school, the teacher encouraged the students to own a personal dictionary (Teacher 2, line 209, Teacher 3, line 215).

The large usage and preference of Bahasa Melayu (code-switching to Bahasa Melayu) by the English language teachers in the classroom affects the students’ proficiency in English. Teachers’ comments on the language of instruction used in the classroom are presented in Table 4.19.

Table 4.19 Teachers’ Views on the Language of Instruction Used in the Classroom

Respondents	Comments
Teacher 1 (line 51)	“Bilingual, most of the time in Malay. But most of the exercise, I try to explain in English. Instruction in English, they understand.”
Teacher 2 (line 85)	“We use bilingual there. Most of the time, I use English.”

<p>Teacher 3 (line 120)</p> <p>(line 122)</p> <p>(line 143)</p>	<p>“Mixed. But for good class about 95% I use English.”</p> <p>“Both. First I say in English, then I look at their faces. <i>Kalau ada nampak macam</i> question mark je, I will repeat the things in Bahasa Melayu. I have to. If not, they don’t do your work. If they don’t understand, they just sit there and do nothing.”</p> <p>“Furthermore if you use English 100%, they don’t understand, they switch off their mind. They switch off their mind, that’s it. And they will mlook at you as though they really listen to you but actually they don’t.”</p>
<p>Teacher 4 (line 272)</p>	<p>“I use both, unavoidable. For good classes, almost 95% English. I still need to use Bahasa Melayu as they understand it better. Weak classes more often. For very weak classes more than 50% Malay.”</p>
<p>Teacher 5 (line 62)</p>	<p>“Both English and Bahasa Melayu.</p> <p>They don’t really understand English, better use Malay. Sometimes, English with Malay translation. For a good class, mostly English.</p>

All teachers code-switch to Bahasa Melayu in teaching English to the Semai students. There are a large number of students who prefer teachers to use Bahasa Melayu when teaching (see 4.2.2, Table 4.7) and they claimed that this was the best way (using Bahasa Melayu to teach English). Teachers do code-switching and translation in the English classroom due to several reasons; as to give the students better understanding of the lesson (Teacher 4, line 272, Teacher 5, line 62) and to get the students’ attention and interest (Teacher 3, line 143) as the students are more familiar with Bahasa Melayu than English. Since the teachers use a large proportion of

Bahasa Melayu in the classroom, this deprives them of the opportunity to use English meaningfully. Due to the frequent usage and code-switching to Bahasa Melayu in the classrooms, students tend to be less familiar and less exposed to English. Thus, it is difficult to encourage students to speak in English as the teachers themselves do not speak the target language, English.

Teachers preference for Bahasa Melayu was also detected as there were instances when the teachers code-switched from English to Bahasa Melayu during the interview. The teachers tend to slip easily to Bahasa Melayu during the interview as the interview was conducted in an informal setting. During the interview, the teachers were also detected using a Malaysian variety of English (mesolect; which is widely spoken by the academics, professional and the English-educated Malaysian) and not Standard English or acrolect (which is near to native English).

The high rate of illiteracy could be a factor that shapes the Semai students' attitudes, too (refer to Table 1.2). Some of the Semai students were identified as illiterate (Teacher 3, line 53,185,192, Teacher 4, line 131,line 267, Teacher 5, line 35). Since most of them are learning English through translating from English to Bahasa Melayu and then to Semai Language, learning English would be doubly difficult and cumbersome for some Semai students as they also have problems in reading and writing Bahasa Melayu (Teacher 4, line 267).

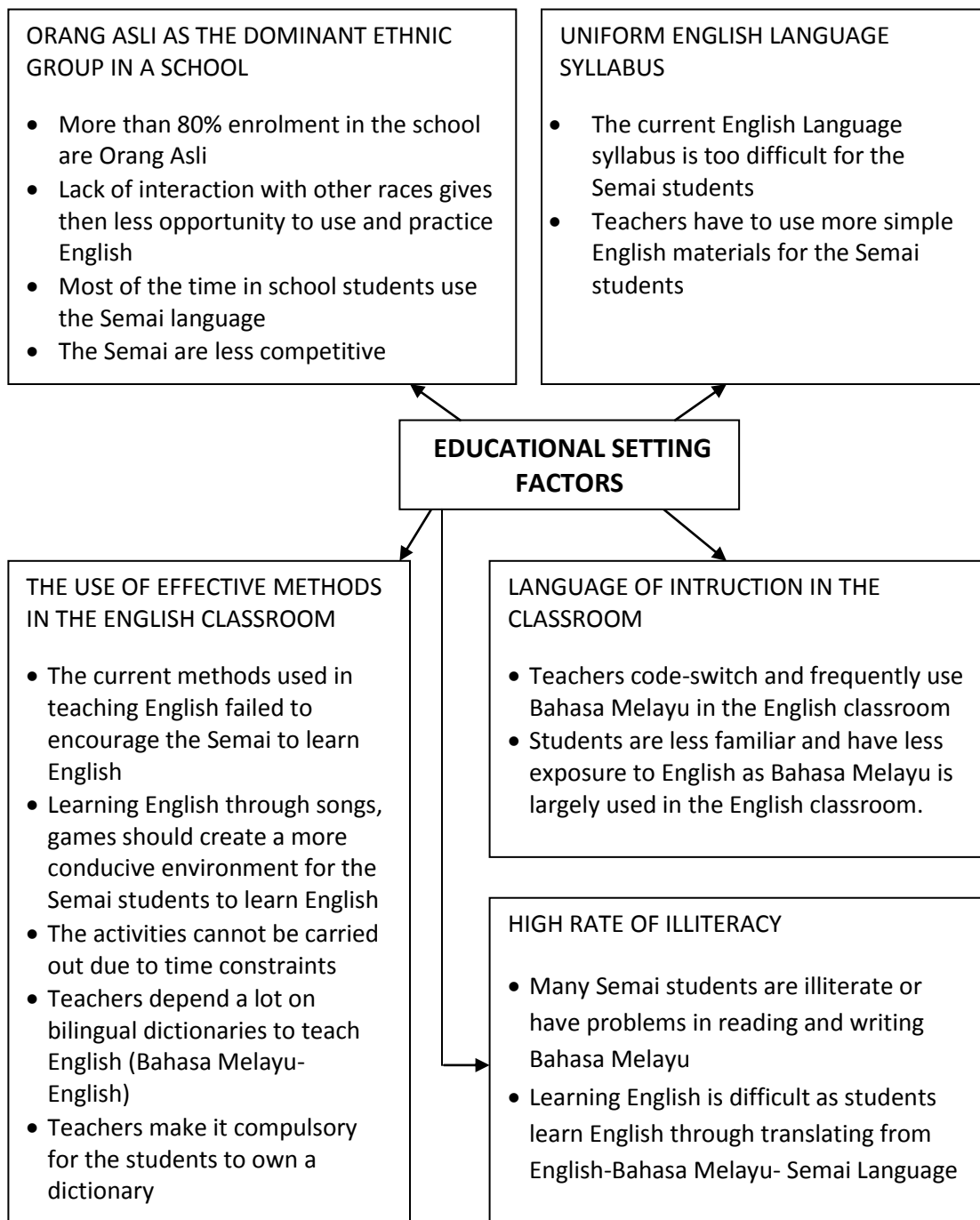


Figure 4.7 Teachers' Perception on The Educational Setting Factors that Contribute to the Attitude of the Semai Students towards Learning English.

4.4 Discussion

4.4.1 Relations between Language Learning Strategies and Attitudes

Teacher talk and learner's behaviour are among the major issues discussed by Chaudron (1988) in relation to the effectiveness of classroom instructions. Learners' behaviours includes learners' linguistic behaviour, learning strategies and social interactions with other learners. Learners tend to have certain beliefs and preference in their approaches to learning task. Explicably, most of us learn best when information is presents in the way that matches our learning preference. The Semai students tend to have some preferences about English language learning strategies. The students believe learning English is a matter of translating from English to Bahasa Melayu and Semai language or vice-versa. Most of the time students need to refer to the dictionary for the meanings of words and by doing that they think they are learning the language effectively. Using a bilingual dictionary of English and Bahasa Melayu will assist students in learning English. The students, too showed large preference on the usage of Bahasa Melayu by the teachers in the English classroom as they prefer teachers to translate sentences, give instructions, explain meanings or concepts and even teach in Bahasa Melayu. Having the appropriate strategies to learn English among the Semai students resulted in positive attitudes towards learning English especially when the teachers' teaching styles match students' learning style and strategy (Dunn, 1984).

4.4.2 One Dominant Ethnic Group in the School and Its Impact on the Attitude and Proficiency of English Language

The school environment somehow shapes the students' personality and way of thinking and looking at things. In a school where almost all students are of the same race, in this case most are Orang Asli, it puts them at a great disadvantage and can cause them to be academically backward. As the Semai students normally interact or prefer to mix around with students of the same community, they lack exposure to other languages and cultures. English is only used during English lessons but even then, Bahasa Melayu is largely used in the English language classroom and during Mathematics and Science lessons. Bahasa Melayu is used as a medium of instruction in teaching all the other subjects in school. Besides using Semai, the Semai students, too are comfortable using Bahasa Melayu in their daily interaction with friends or teachers. It is the medium of instruction both at primary school and secondary school level.

As the Semai mostly interact with friends from their community, they become close-minded and are not exposed to other races. Their world only revolves around themselves and they feel secure surrounded by their own community. There is less competition for academic achievement nor the desire to improve their English performance. Most of the students appear to be underachievers. Since the students have less exposure and practice in English, it has resulted in low English proficiency level resulting in them being uncomfortable when using English.

Promoting peer learning is vital as it can be ‘psychologically upfting’ (David, 2007). However in learning English among these Semai students, peer learning fails to act as a motivational tool. Students were unable to learn through their ‘peer networks’ (David, 2007) as most of the students in the school have generally the same level of English proficiency.

4.4.3 The relation of ‘Attitude’ and ‘Motivation’ with Proficiency Level of English among the Semai Students

One of the findings in the study points out that parents’ educational background is a significant factor which contributes to students’ English proficiency level (see Baker: 1995, Muna; 2001). In this case, the low education level and the low socio-economic status of the Semai parents somehow affected their interest in their children’s education and therefore contributed to the low English proficiency of the students. This contrasts with the case of the French learners in Louisiana (Gardner, 1972) and in the Philippine study (Gardner,1972) as both the Filipino students studying English and the French learners have parental support and encouragement to study the language and are successful in improving their language proficiency.

The students realize that proficiency or mastery in the English language has an effect on their life. Most likely, the respondents have a positive orientation towards English. Based on the interviews and questionnaires administered to the Semai

students, they acknowledge the importance of the English language and its utilitarian values. They see the social and instrumental value of English is to upgrade their socio-economic status or to contribute to their family income. English is seen as an important international language. English is regarded as a tool to achieve their ambition as it makes them more marketable and guarantees them a better job after school. English also helps them to further their studies and provides them a better future. The importance of English is also related to exam purpose and for the purpose of studying other subjects particularly Mathematics and Science. Their goal to master a second language is identified as instrumental orientation which is to gain social recognition and economic advantages.

Gardner and Lambert (1985) claimed that the integrative oriented learners might be better motivated than the instrumentally oriented learners because the nature of their goals is to sustain the long-term effort needed to master a second language. In integrative motivation, the more a student admires the target culture; reads English books, or looks for opportunities to practice the language, the more successful the student will be in the L2 classroom. This lacking of integrative motivation in the Semai students resulted in them to be less proficient and less successful in their pursuit to master the English language.

4.4.4 Contributory Factors for Successful English Language Learning

Teachers factors and students factors are among the contributory factors for successful language learning. Educating students is mostly the teachers' responsibility. Talented teachers as discussed by Hood (1980), include 'properly-oriented' teachers who are non-prejudiced about the Orang Asli and see them as people with general lack of intelligence and narrow communal social habits. These teachers should have a genuine interest especially in Orang Asli social development so that there will be less problems in imparting education to the Orang Asli children. Teachers should not prejudge students.

Teachers teaching the Semai students should also adapt themselves well in the society so as to be respected by members of the community. Teachers are also expected to develop good relationships with the parents so as to gain their confidence and trust regarding the importance of education (Edo, 1984).

Many studies have indicated that the success of second language learning depends greatly on the credibility of the English teacher. Teachers need to be creative, innovative and provide students with diverse range of teaching techniques and classroom activities so as to draw the students' attention and facilitate learning. As discussed by Oxford (1999), teachers can help to boost students' confidence and self-esteem by providing various styles and strategies that provide activities for classroom success. Teachers' too must vary their teaching style and technique since different learners have different learning styles and preference. Teaching English to the Semai

students with music has proven very effective. The Semai are intensely musical people as music is used in sacred and non-sacred rituals or ceremonies, and much of their dancing is accompanied by songs. Learning English would be interesting for the Semai students if music is incorporated in lessons. Teaching English with music will eventually lead to high levels of motivation to learn English among the Semai students (see 4.2.6).

Teachers' attitudes and role are important as teachers are believed to contribute to the students' interest in learning the language. To make the learning of English more effective, the student respondents prefer teachers who have a pleasant conduct and who are concerned about them. During the interview, when asked their opinion of their English language teachers, all the 10 respondents described their teachers as '*sangat baik*' (very good). The students too revealed that they received encouragement and support from the English language teachers to learn English. Advice was also given by the teachers to make the students interested in learning the language. One respondent commented that his teacher is enthusiastic in teaching while another respondent (Student 1) related that the teacher is generous and gives prizes to the students during lessons. One teacher was reported as being concerned about her students (Student 2) while another teacher was described as '*baik*' or kind for she takes the initiative to explain the lesson in Bahasa Melayu (Student 3) and this strategy is favoured by the students.

One teacher respondent (Teacher 4) described her role as an English teacher as a facilitator, “We have to be very close to them, you have to. I think that element is very important. Make them feel safe with you. If they feel safe with you, they will accept anything that you ask them to do. They are very comfortable with you, and that is the most important. You are like a friend to them. Plus, give them a bit of motivation because they need that, they always feel that they very low, that people looking at them as they are stupid, at the rest of the races.” She also took the initiative to be close with the students as that was the only way she could approach the students; “..everytime you meet them, you ask them, you greet them by names, instead of by *'budak'*, student. I need to call them by their name. Name is quite personal” (line 88).

The success in learning a language results from students' willingness to learn the language. The Semai students do not really perceive the study of English as an integrative orientation or motivation. Although they realized that there is a need for them to be proficient in English, they did not have the desire and motivation to read English (see 2.6). Students can be described as not having the desire to learn English as they try to avoid doing homework or assignments on their own. Instead, they tend to copy friends' work and gave excuses for not doing the work given by the English language teacher.

Looking at the students' poor performance in the PMR examination, it was no surprise when 17 respondents admitted that they did not read any English book in a month. There is no doubt that the students' performance in English was relatively poor

since they lack practice in reading or worse were not able to and not interested in reading text in English. They put very little effort in completing the homework given by the English teacher.

Besides that, it is obvious that the students were reluctant and did not take the opportunity to speak English. It is a waste to learn English for at least 9 years (six years in primary school and three years in secondary school) and yet have never actually communicated using the language (as mentioned in item 16). From the analysis of the data in the questionnaire, the students regularly use Semai language or Bahasa Melayu while English is very rarely used in the community. Limited opportunity to practice English resulted in the Semai students having poor mastery of the English language.

4.4.5 Teaching the Semai Students through Music, Games and Rewards

In Malaysia, the national system of education and policy are determined by the government. The nature, the content and administration of the syllabus and school system are all fixed, while deviation from the syllabus is frowned upon and not encouraged. A fixed and uniform curriculum is imposed on every student without looking at the different socio-economic and family backgrounds the students come from. In the case of the Semai students learning English, it is a great disadvantage to the Semai as most of them come from low socio-economic background and live in

rural areas. Due to this, they lack the exposure to the English language and their proficiency level of English is much poorer compared to students from other races who live in urban areas. The English syllabus is too challenging for the Semai students (informal interviews with English teachers in schools with a large enrolment of Orang Asli).

Based on an informal conversations between the researcher and few teachers in one SOAP school (SK Batu 7, Kuala Woh), the researcher discovered an interesting fact about the teaching and learning process of the Semai students. According to the teachers '6Ms' are required in teaching the students instead of '3Ms', '*membaca, menulis dan mengira*' (read, write and count). The other 3Ms are identified as '*menyanyi*', '*makan*' and '*main*' (sing, eat and play). The teachers tried to emphasize the importance of having songs, reward in terms of food and games when teaching English to the Semai students. A similar pattern was also identified with the Aborigines of Australia where the children are taught by using songs and games and rewarded with food (an interview with Associate Professor Dr. Juli a/l Edo, an Orang Asli himself). In Australia, however the Aborigines have specially customized education syllabus meant just for the Aborigines which is different from the rest of the mainstream education syllabus. The separate syllabus has proven effective and benefited the Aborigines. The Australian government, too is very supportive and provides finance for the education of these Australian Aborigines (an interview with Associate Professor Dr. Juli a/l Edo, an Orang Asli himself).

Based on the interview with the teacher respondents, teaching English using songs was admitted as an effective way to make students use the language since the students are very musically-inclined. However, it could not be done most of the time as teachers and students are confined to the fixed syllabus. The teachers believed that if the education system is not so exam oriented, students could be assessed in a different way and more interesting methods like teaching English to the Semai students through games, songs and various activities could be adopted in helping the students learn English effectively. Besides that, rewarding students with small gifts and food could be an effective way to motivate the Semai students to learn.

It can be concluded that in teaching English among the Semai students, not only do the teachers need to be creative, innovative and provide students with a diverse range of teaching techniques and classroom activities, but the government, too should be supportive and more concerned about the need to establish a separate English language syllabus for the Orang Asli students.

4.4.6 Creating Awareness on the Importance of Education

Undeniably, Orang Asli parents are left out of the education system (Nicolas, 2006). Environmental factors that lead to lack of interest towards education among the Semai are the distance from home to school, lack of exposure to English, the need for immediate income, general lack of intelligence, language problem and feeling of intimidation due to their physical appearance (Edo, 1984). For some Orang Asli

parents, an instant reward for education is important. The time children spend in school is regarded as a waste and a loss in an investment. They do not see the major effect and impact that the education brings in their lives as they are not informed of their children's prospects for the future. In contrast, survival skills are much more needed and more beneficial and help the children to be more independent.

According to Edo (1984), as the parents lack awareness on the importance of education, they become unconcerned and ignore the children's education. Lack of encouragement and support from the parents are expected when the parents are not aware of the benefits of their children going to school. Therefore, parents should be allowed to be more involved in their children's education and be allowed to take a more proactive role (Nicholas, 2006). Teachers and schools should regard the parents as important partners in the education process. If the Semai parents are not directly involved in their children's education, it is hard for them to see what education has to offer them and how their needs and aspiration can be realized.

4.4.7 The Irrelevance of English and the Relevance of Bahasa Melayu in the Life of the Semai

How relevant is English in the life of the Semai and how much do they benefit from learning English in their life? The importance of having a proper education in school does not seem important and urgent to the society (see Table 1.1), how do we convince them that English language is essential and should be learned by the Semai

children? Besides the Semai language, the students are comfortable with Bahasa Melayu, the national language. Due to where they live (in the Semai community), they lack interaction with people speaking English. At home they speak Semai most of the time and in school, they also speak the same language when communicating among themselves. When speaking with friends or teachers from other races, they shift to Bahasa Melayu. No one speaks English in the community and English is something that they can do without in the community.

According to David (2008, 9), in the rural setting, “where there is no large supportive environment to learn English, the study of English has not been taken seriously.” For the Semai, Bahasa Melayu has gained greater popularity than English since there are similarities between the Semai language and Bahasa Melayu in terms of words and vocabulary. Some of the words in Semai are considered as loan words from Bahasa Melayu which makes them feel more comfortable using Bahasa Melayu compared to English. The following table (Figure 4.9) shows some examples of common words in Bahasa Melayu and Semai language.

Table 4.20 Example of Common Words in Bahasa Melayu and Semai Language

Language	Semai Language	Bahasa Melayu	English
Word 1	<i>Gemar</i>	<i>gemar (suka)</i>	like, enjoy
Sentence	<i>Eng <u>nggemar</u> cak pele sempa.</i>	<i>Saya <u>gemar</u> makan buah durian.</i>	I like eating durian.
Word 2	<i>Jahat</i>	<i>Jahat</i>	Evil
Sentence	<i>Perendat sengoi nanek kelaku de <u>jahat</u>.</i>	<i>Membunuh manusia adalah satu perbuatan yang <u>jahat</u>.</i>	Killing men is an evil thing to do.

4.5 Conclusion

The achievement of the Semai students in learning English are determined by four factors: social factors (see Figure 4.4), behavioural factors (see Figure 4.5), cultural factors (see Figure 4.6) and educational factors (see Figure 4.7). Social factors that contribute to the attitudes of the Semai students in learning English are socio-economic status of the family, language students speak at home, the place they live in and parents' level of education. The behavioural factors that contribute to the attitude of the Semai students towards learning English include lack of effort, strategies employed in learning English, strong preference for Bahasa Melayu over English and passive nature of the Semai. The cultural factors that relate to the students' attitudes towards learning English language are the Semai community's attitude towards education, Semai community's attitude towards English and the Semai community's beliefs. The majority of the Orang Asli students in a school, uniform English language syllabus, the use of non-effective teaching methods in the English language classroom, the non-use of English as a language of instruction in English classroom and the high rate of illiteracy among the Semai students are the educational factors that could affect the attitude of the Semai students in learning English.