will discuss the methodology used in this study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Learners' performance in second language learning is often evaluated by the grades they achieve in second language assessments. However, learners' performance is often influenced by a variety of motivational factors. The focus of this study is the relationship between the four following motivational factors, i.e. the respondents' socio-economic background, the extent of their use of and exposure to English, their attitude towards the English Language and their perception of their English Language instructors, and the respondents' grades in their English Language assessments.

3.1 THE RESPONDENTS

100 respondents from Pusat Penataran Ilmu dan Bahasa (PPIB) of Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah were selected for this study. These respondents had completed Level 2, i.e. English for Reading and Writing. Level 2 focuses on reading

and writing skills. By the end of Level 2, students are expected to have developed

reading skills such as skimming and scanning to identify important points as well as

develop reading and writing strategies for better and clearer presentation of ideas. The

respondents were selected based on convenience sampling. They were the current batch

of students who had completed Level 2 at the time the study was conducted.

3.2 THE QUESTIONNAIRE

When choosing an instrument for research, every researcher has to take into

consideration two important elements, i.e. the validity of the instrument, and the

reliability of the results (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1996). Reliability and validity are both

important to evaluate the quality of qualitative and quantitative data. The validity of the

instrument should show the extent to which the data collected reflects the characteristics

the researcher wants to know. The reliability of the instrument is reflected in the

consistency and stability of the data collected. These guidelines were borne in mind when

the instrument for this study was selected.

This study is both quantitative and qualitative in nature. A suitable instrument of

data collection for such a study is the questionnaire. The questionnaire is an instrument

used in survey research to get information directly from a group of individuals. Its

advantage is that it can be administered simultaneously to many respondents and requires

only one person for administration. As this study is a research survey involving many

respondents, the use of a questionnaire as the instrument of data collection is appropriate. With the students' hectic schedule as well as the limited time allocated for them during the English Language class, the questionnaire was the ideal instrument to use. The English Language class was conducted once a week for three hours and the use of a questionnaire was a time and cost saving way of gathering information (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1996). However, there are several disadvantages to using a questionnaire. One is that respondents are given no chance to explain their response to a particular question. Also, they are not allowed to provide spontaneous responses as questions are fixed. The researcher has overcome these disadvantages by providing space in the questionnaire for respondents to express their reasons for the answer they chose (see Appendix A).

The questionnaire is regarded by Dane (1990) as the most appropriate instrument for description and prediction. Genesse and Upshur (1996) described the questionnaire as an instrument that provides permanent and exact records of a respondent's answers. As such, the questionnaire was appropriate for this study because the researcher wanted to describe the relationship between the investigated factors, which are the respondents' socio-economic background, their English use and exposure, their attitude towards the English Language and their perception of their English Language lecturers, and their achievement in the English Language.

In order to acquire genuine responses from the respondents, the researcher self-administered the questionnaire, assured the respondents of the confidentiality of their answers and emphasized the need for them to be honest with their answers. The questionnaire was presented in two languages, i.e. Malay and English. This was to

maximize the respondents' understanding of the questions.

3.2.1 Questionnaire Construction

The questionnaire was constructed based on the second language motivation framework by Dornyei (2001). This framework was chosen because, as discussed in section 2.1, it is a comprehensive construct on motivation which is appropriate to second language classroom motivation. Dornyei identified three levels of motivation, namely the language level, learner level and learning situation level. Based on these levels, Sections B, C, D and E in the questionnaire were developed. Sections B and C were developed based on the language level while Sections D and E were developed based on the learner level and the learning situation level respectively.

The questionnaire is divided into five sections, namely Section A, which gathers information on the respondents' background; Sections B and C, which provide information on the respondents' socio-economic background and their level of usage of English and exposure to the language; Section D, which elicits information on the respondents' level of motivation and their attitude towards the English Language, and Section E, which elicits information on the respondents' perception of their English Language instructors.

Genesee and Upshur (1996) stressed the importance of developing clear and concise questions to avoid ambiguous and incomplete information. They also said that the arrangement of the questions should make sense to respondents to avoid confusion.

Instructions should also indicate clearly how respondents should answer questions. All these considerations were taken into account when constructing the questionnaire. A general instruction was given on the cover page of the questionnaire, and specific instructions were given to Sections C, D and E.

The questionnaire has a combination of closed-ended questions, open-ended questions and multiple-choice items. For the multiple-choice items, respondents indicate their responses by choosing a point along a Likert scale that best corresponds to their feelings. Based on the responses obtained from the pilot testing, all the multiple-choice items were provided with spaces to enable respondents to express their opinions. This is used to gather qualitative data from the respondents. The questions and items were arranged according to the factors investigated to facilitate data analysis. The factors are the respondents' socio-economic background, their English use and exposure, their attitude towards the English Language and their perception of their English Language instructors.

There are 49 items in the questionnaire (see Appendix A). Items 1-3 (Section A of the questionnaire) elicit the background information of the respondents, while items 4-7 (Section B of the questionnaire) elicit data on the socio-cultural background of the respondents. Items 8-11 (Section B of the questionnaire) elicit socio-economic background information about the respondents. Items 12-25 (Section C of the questionnaire) inquire about the respondents' use of and exposure to the English Language, while items 26-37 (Section D of the questionnaire) investigate the respondents' attitude towards the English Language. Items 38-49 (Section E of the questionnaire) elicit information on the respondents' perception of their English

Language instructors. After developing the format of the questionnaire, the researcher assigned numerical index scores for each variant of every item. These numerical index scores cumulatively determine the respondents' socio-economic background, their use of and exposure to English, their attitude towards the English Language and their perception of their English Language instructors. The scoring is explained in detail in section 3.4. Qualitative data obtained through the open-ended question items will be analyzed to identify and categorize the reasons for the respondents' choices.

3.2.1.1 Respondents' Demographic Background

Section A elicited the demographic background of the respondents. The respondents were asked to provide their ethnicity and their English Language grades for MUET and Level 2 English for Reading and Writing. There were three items for this section (Questions 1-3).

3.2.1.2 Respondents' Socio-economic Background

Sociologists have identified a range of variables by which to measure status or social class. Trudgill (1974) used six variables to classify social classes in Norwich, namely respondents' occupation, income, education, housing, locality and father's occupation. Five of these six variables were identified as appropriate for this study, namely education, father's occupation, income, locality and type of housing, as the determinants of the respondents' social class. Trudgill (1974) used the respondents' occupation, educational level, housing and locality. For this study, the researcher used the respondents' parents' occupation, income, educational level and locality instead, because

the respondents of this study were students who were all studying and had not yet completed their tertiary education. Therefore, respondents' occupation, income, educational level and locality variables would not be suitable for use in this study. In addition, the location of the respondents' previous secondary school, their parents' area of residence, the predominant ethnicity in their housing area and their immediate neighbours' ethnicity were also elicited. There are eight items in this section (Questions 4-11).

3.2.1.3 Respondents' English Use and Exposure to the Language

Section C elicited the respondents' use of and exposure to English. There are 14 items in this section, i.e. two items on the type of language(s) used by respondents and by their parents at home (Questions 12-13), and 12 items on the frequency of English Language usage and exposure (Questions 14-25). A five-point Likert scale was employed for this section. The respondents were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with the statements by choosing from among *all the time, often, sometimes, seldom* and *never* as variants for their answers. For each of these items, respondents were also asked to provide reasons for their choice.

3.2.1.4 Respondents' Attitude towards the English Language

Section D elicited information on the respondents' attitudes towards the English Language. There were 12 items in this section (Questions 26-37). Respondents were

asked how they felt towards the culture of English-speaking people, how important English was for their future and whether or not they saw the necessity of using English to interact with lecturers or friends. A five-point Likert scale was used for this section. The respondents were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with the statements by choosing from among *strongly agree, agree, not bothered/do not know, disagree* and *strongly disagree* as variants for their answers. Respondents were also asked to provide their reasons for every item.

3.2.1.5 Respondents' Perception of their English Language Instructors

The respondents were asked about their perception of their English Language instructors in Section E. There were 12 items in this section (Questions 38-49). Each of the items elicited the respondents' opinion on the characteristics and behavior of their English Language instructors. A five-point Likert scale was employed for this section. The respondents were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with the items by choosing from among *strongly agree, agree, not bothered/do not know, disagree* and *strongly disagree* as variants for their answers. For every item, the respondents were asked to provide reasons for their answers.

3.2.2 PILOT QUESTIONNAIRE

A pilot test was administered on 9 July 2007 to a group of ten students from Level 3 English for Occupational Purposes. Seven male students and four female students answered the questionnaire.

The purpose of this pilot test was to check the reliability and validity of the questionnaire. It was also to identify flaws in the questionnaire to enable the researcher to modify the questionnaire in such a way that it could be read and understood easily by the actual respondents later. The main focus was to identify and correct any errors in the questionnaire items and to rephrase, delete or add to the existing construction of the items. Any inappropriate, unclear, inadequate or redundant questions would also be attended to. The answers and feedback from the pilot test were not considered as part of the data of the study. The researcher personally administered the questionnaire and explained in English and Malay the purpose of the study and asked the respondents to answer every item in the questionnaire as accurately as possible. The pilot test respondents were told to ask the researcher for clarification whenever they did not understand any of the questions. They were also assured that their answers would be kept strictly confidential and would not be used to evaluate their course performance in any way. The time taken for the administration and filling in of the questionnaire was thirty minutes.

The pilot questionnaire had a combination of closed-ended questions, open-ended questions and multiple-choice statements. Space was only provided in Section B (Questions 14-24) for the respondents to explain and express their opinions. There were 50 items in the pilot questionnaire. These were divided into four sections, i.e. Section A for socio-economic background, Section B for English use and exposure, Section C for attitude towards the English Language and Section D for respondents' perception towards their English Language instructors.

The pilot test showed that the respondents preferred to have spaces for Sections C and D. It also revealed that information on the respondents' background should be grouped in another section. This was to facilitate the data tabulation. As a result, Section A which elicited information on the respondents' background was added to the questionnaire.

The researcher also deleted Item 1 in Section A because gender is not one of the factors that the researcher wished to study. The researcher also realized that an item to elicit the respondents' Level 2 English for Reading and Writing results needed to be added in the questionnaire as the researcher wanted to see the relationship between the factors and the respondents' achievement in the English Language.

The pilot study also showed that Item 3 in Section A should also be provided with a MUET variant because the respondents wrote their MUET result instead of SPM and STPM results. However, SPM and STPM variants were deleted because only a few respondents wrote their results. Item 4, which was a statement, was rephrased to follow the sentence structure of Item 5, which was a question. This was to maintain the parallelism of the sentence structure. To avoid redundancy, some of the variants in Item 10 were deleted and rephrased. The deleted variants are *Post Graduate Degree/PhD/Master* and *Religious School*. *Bachelor Degree* was rephrased to *Degree*; *Form Six/STPM/STP/HSC*, *Form Five/SPM/MCE/SPVM/SC* and *Form Three/SRP/LCE/PMR* were rephrased to *Secondary School*. Genesse and Upshur (1996) stressed the importance of instruction in a questionnaire. This is to assist respondents to answer the questions. Three respondents did not answer Item 12 and 13 and the feedback

was that they did not know how to answer the questions. In relation to this, a specific instruction was added for Items 12 and 13 and a general instruction was also provided on the cover page of the questionnaire.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The modified questionnaire was subsequently administered to 110 respondents who had completed their Level 2 English for Reading and Writing. A short briefing was given to explain clearly the purpose of the study and the researcher guided the respondents throughout the completion of the questionnaire. The respondents were assured of the confidentiality of the questionnaire. They were told that their responses were only intended for this study. The researcher collected the questionnaire at the end of the session. However, only 100 completed questionnaires were usable in this study. 10 responses were discarded because they were incomplete and lacked vital information such as the respondents' attitude towards the English Language and their perception of the English Language instructors. Therefore, the total number of responses used in this study was 100.

3.4 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

To analyze the factors, the researcher adapted Trudgill's (1974) method of measuring social class. Trudgill (1983) conducted a study on language and social class in Norwich where he assigned a numerical index score to the respondents' occupational, income, educational and/or other classification variables. The numerical index score carried certain points which were then added up to determine the social class of the respondents.

For this study, each variant is assigned a score. For instance, the educational level variable has five variants, i.e. *Degree, Diploma/Certificate, Secondary School, Primary School* and *No formal Education*. Each of these variants was given a numerical index score depending on its level. The highest level of education, that is *Degree*, was given a maximum score of 5. The lowest level of education, that is *No Formal Education*, was given a minimum score of 1. The same assignation of scores was also applied for respondents' parents' occupation variable, income variable and locality variable. The cumulative score for each variable was then used to determine the respondents' social class. Sections C, D and E of the questionnaire were analyzed using this adapted method. The result of the analysis was then compared to the respondents' Level 2 English for Reading and Writing results in order to see the relationship between respondents' motivation and their results.

3.4.1 Socio-economic Background

To determine the socio-economic background or social class of the respondents, the researcher added up the cumulative scores for each variable, namely the respondents' parents' income, locality, educational background and occupation. The cumulative scores were used to divide the respondents into three social classes, i.e. upper class (UC), middle class (MC) and lower class (LC). The socio-economic background or social class variables are discussed as follows:

3.4.1.1 Occupation

Occupation is a vital factor that determines one's social status (Ballantine 2001). For this study, the researcher used the classification of occupation based on the Employment

Statistics in Sabah 2002-2004 as the study was conducted in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. Each

of these occupations was given a numerical index score (see Table 3.1). At the top of the

scale were the legislators, senior officials, managers and professionals, which carried a

score of 5. Technicians and clerical workers were given a score of 4. Skilled agricultural

and fishery workers were given a score of 3, whereas craft and related trades workers as

well as plant and machine-operators and assemblers were given a score of 2. Elementary

occupations or labor jobs were given a score of 1. As the questionnaire asked for the

occupation of both parents, the scores of both occupations were added up. Then, the

mean of both scores was determined.

Table 3.1: Scores for Occupation Variable

Occupation Group	Score
Legislator, Senior Officials & Managers and Professional	5
Technicians and Clerical Workers	4
Skilled Agricultural & Fishery Workers	3
Craft Workers, Trades Workers	2
Elementary Occupation	1

3.4.1.2 Income

The standard of living of a person is determined by his income. In this study, the total of

both parents' incomes was sought. Then, the mean score of the total of both parents'

incomes was used to determine their social class. However, in the case of respondents

who gave only the income of one parent because only one parent was working, this one

income became the total. A minimum score of 1 was given to a parent who had no

income (see Table 3.2). The income variable was divided into a five-point Likert scale as

shown in Table 3.2. According to the Eighth Malaysia Plan 2001-2005, the lower income

household earned less than RM1,500, the middle income household earned between

RM1,500 and RM3,500 and the higher income household earned RM3,500 and above.

However, for this study, the researcher adapted this classification in line with income

norms for the specific occupations given in Table 3.1. In order to determine the social

class of the respondent, a score was then assigned to each level of income (see Table

3.2.), i.e. a score of 5 was given to the highest level of income, i.e. RM3,500 and above,

and a score of 1 was given to the lowest level, i.e. RM888 and below/none. According to

the Ninth Malaysian Plan 2006-2010, the gross poverty line income of Sabah in 2004 is

given as RM888. The researcher used this gross poverty line income as the bottom scale

of the income level.

Table 3.2: Scores for Income Variable

Monthly Income (RM)	Score
RM 3,500 and above	5
RM 2,500 - 3,499	4
RM 1,500 - 2,499	3
RM 889 - 1,499	2
RM 888 & below / None	1

3.4.1.3 Education

Children with highly educated parents obtained higher marks than those with less

educated parents (Svensson, 1971). The environment from which the learners come also

affects their development of second language (Mohana, 1984; Chandrasegaran, 1979).

Thus, it can be concluded that parents' education level will influence their children's attitudes and motivation for learning the English Language. To elicit the information on the education background of the parents, the highest level of education of the parents was sought. As for the income variable, the maximum score of 5 was given to the highest level of education, and the minimum score of 1 was given to the lowest level of education so that the social class of the respondents could easily be categorized (see Table 3.3). Where respondents provided the educational levels of both parents, the two scores were added up and the mean was used.

Table 3.3: Scores for Education Variable

Education Level	Score
Degree	5
Diploma /Certificate	4
Secondary School	3
Primary School	2
No formal education	1

3.4.1.4 Types of Housing

Type of housing is vital as it reflects the standard of living and economic conditions of the household (Cullen, 1969). The housing variable in this study was based on the type of house and not the ownership because there is a probability that people prefer to rent a house rather than to buy their own house. Table 3.4 shows the types of housing and the score given for each type. The types of housing are grouped accordingly based on location and their similarity in the comfort and luxury they project. For example, a

single-storey terrace is grouped together with a single-storey kampung house because both approximately share the same comfort and luxury level although the single-storey kampung house is built on private land and is privately owned while a single-storey terrace house may be either owned or rented. As for educational level, a maximum score of 5 was given to the top of the scale, i.e. detached house/bungalow. The minimum score of 1 was given to flat/squatter house as it is at the bottom of the scale. This scale enabled the researcher to categorize the respondents' social class.

Table 3.4: Scores for Housing Variable

Type of Housing	Score
Detached house/Bungalow	5
Semi-detached/Condominium	4
Double-storey terrace/Apartment/Double storey kampung house	3
Single-storey terrace/Single storey kampung house	2
Flat/Squatter house	1

3.4.1.5 Classification of Social Class

In order to determine the respondents' social class, the researcher accumulated the scores for each of the four variables, namely the respondents' parents' occupation, income, educational background and locality. The maximum cumulative score for all the variables is 20.0 (if the respondents scored the maximum of 5 for each variable) and the minimum cumulative score for all the variables is 4.0 (if the respondents scored the minimum of 1 for each variable). To determine the range of score for each social class, the researcher divided the total accumulated range of scores, i.e. 16.0 (20.0–4.0) by three as there are three levels of social class, namely the upper, middle and lower classes. Thus, the range

of the score for each social class is 5.3. This is shown in Table 3.5. If the total score of a respondent is 20, he or she is classified as an upper class respondent. If the total score of a respondent is 9.5, he or she is classified as a middle class respondent.

Table 3.5: Range of Scores for Level of Social Class

Social Class	Score
Upper Class(UC)	14.8 - 20.0
Middle Class (MC)	9.4 - 14.7
Lower Class (LC)	4.0 - 9.3

3.4.2 English Use and Exposure to the Language

For this section in the questionnaire, the students' frequency of English use and language exposure was identified by a five-point Likert scale. Each point on this Likert scale was given a score, i.e. a score of 5 for *all the time*, 4 for *often*, 3 for *sometimes*, 2 for *seldom* and 1 for *never*. Respondent scores for each item in the section were added up to determine each respondent's English use and exposure.

Based on the fact that there are 12 items in this section, the total cumulative score ranges from 12 (the minimum cumulative score) to 60 (the maximum cumulative score). This range of 48 (60-12) was then divided into three categories which are *high, medium* and *low*. The range of the score for each category is 16 (48÷3). The respondent's English use and exposure is *low* if the score is 12.0 to 28.0, *medium* if the score is 28.1 to 44.1, and *high* if the score is 44.2 to 60.0 (see Table 3.6).

**Table 3.6: Range of Scores for Use of the English Language
and Exposure to it**

Category	Score
High	44.2 - 60.0
Medium	28.1 - 44.1
Low	12.0 - 28.0

3.4.3 Attitude towards the English Language

Attitude is a mental state of readiness, organized through experience which applies a direct or dynamic influence upon an individual's responses to subjects or situations with which it is related (Gardner, 1985). In this study, a five-point Likert scale was used to identify the respondents' attitudes toward English. Each point on this scale was given a score, i.e. 1 for *strongly disagree,* 2 for *disagree*, 3 for *not bothered/do not know,* 4 for *agree* and 5 for *strongly agree*. Each respondent's score was then added up to determine their attitude towards the English Language. Because there are 12 items in this section, the total cumulative score ranges from 12 to 60. This cumulative score was divided into three categories (60–12÷3) to determine the range of scores for each category of the respondents' attitude towards the English Language instructors. The categories are *positive* if the respondent scores 44.2 to 60.0, *neutral* if the respondent scores 28.1 to 44.1 and *negative* if the respondent scores 12.0 to 28.0 (see Table 3.7). For example, if the respondent accumulated a score of 56, the respondent has a *positive* attitude towards their English Language instructors.

Table 3.7: Range of Scores for Attitude towards the English Language

Category	Score

Positive	44.2 – 60.0
Neutral	28.1 – 44.1
Negative	12.0 – 28.0

3.4.4 Respondents' Perception of the English Language Instructors

For this study, a five-point Likert scale was used to elicit the respondents' perception of their English Language instructors. Each point on the scale was given a score to determine the category of respondents' perception of their English Language instructors, i.e. 1 for *strongly disagree,* 2 for *disagree*, 3 for *not bothered/do not know*, 4 for *agree* and 5 for *strongly agree*. Each score of the respondents was added up to determine the respondents' perception of their English Language instructors.

Based on the 12 items in this section, the total cumulative score ranges from 12 to 60. This range was then divided into three categories (60–12÷3) to determine the range of score for each category of the respondents' perception of their English Language instructors. The category is *positive* if the respondent scores 44.2 to 60.0, *neutral* if the respondent scores 28.1 to 44.1 and *negative* if the respondent scores 12.0 to 28.0 (see Table 3.8). For example, if the respondent accumulated a total score of 56, the respondent has a *positive* perception of his or her English Language instructors.

Table 3.8: Range of Scores for Students' Perception of their English Language Instructors

Category	Score
Positive	44.2 – 60.0
Neutral	28.1 - 44.1
Negative	12.0 – 28.0

3.4.5 English Language Grades

A test or an examination is "a method of measuring a person's ability, knowledge or performance in a given domain" (Brown, 2004). In accordance to this, the researcher used the overall results (ranging from 0 to 100) and grades (ranging from A to E) obtained by the respondents in their Level 2 assessments. The overall results are obtained from five types of assessments, namely:

i. Mid-semester Test (10 percent of the overall marks)

ii. Test 1 (10 percent of the overall marks)

iii. Test 2 (10 percent of the overall marks)

iv. Essays (30 percent of the overall marks)

v. Final Examination (40 percent of the overall marks)

The marks from each type of assessment were added up to determine the respondents' total mark score. To determine the grade, the researcher employed the UMS grading system (see Table 3.9).

Table 3.9: UMS Grading System

Grade	Percentage	Classification
A	80-100	Distinction
A-	75-79	
B+	70-74	Credit
B	65-69	
B-	60-64	

C+	55-59	Pass
C	50-54	
C-	45-49	
D+	40-44	
D	35-39	
E	0-34	Fail

The researcher then compared the English Language grade of each respondent with their cumulative scores for the variables being studied, i.e. the socio-economic background, their English use and exposure to the language, attitude towards the English Language and their perception of their English Language instructors to determine the relationship between the respondents' motivation and their achievement in the English Language.

3.5   CONCLUSION

The chapter explains the construction of the instrument used in this study which is the questionnaire and the method used to analyze the data. The questionnaire was constructed based on the second language motivation framework by Dornyei (2001) who has identified three levels of motivation, namely the language level, learner level and learning situation levels. To analyze the data, the researcher used Trudgill's (1974) method of analyzing his data in Norwich that is to assign numerical index for each variables used in the study. In addition, the researcher also had a combination of closed-ended questions, open-ended questions and multiple-choice statements for the questionnaire in order to obtain the quantitative as well as qualitative data for this study. To see the relationship between the respondents' motivation and their achievement in the English Language, the researcher compared the English Language grade of each respondent with their cumulative scores for the factors being studied, i.e. the

respondents' socio-economic background, their English use and exposure to the language, attitude towards the English Language and their perception of their English Language instructors. Chapter 4 will discuss the findings of this study, that is, the relationship between the variables and the respondents' achievement in the English Language examination.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter reports the findings of the study on the relationship between the respondents' socio-economic background, their English use and exposure to the language, their attitude towards the English Language and their perception of their English Language instructors, and the English Language achievement or grades obtained for their Level 2 English for Reading and Writing course. The chapter discusses the data as they apply to the four research questions of this study, namely:

i. Does a student's socio-economic background influence his or her academic achievement in the English Language examination?

ii. Does a student's use of English and exposure to the language influence his or her academic achievement in the English Language examination?