

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2005), multicultural is an adjective that refers to people of several races, religions, languages and traditions. Malaysia is well -known for its multicultural society (Renganathan, 2005). It has a very diverse population and consists of three main ethnicities: Malays, Chinese and Indians (Encyclopedia of the Nations, 2012).

In a multicultural society like Malaysia, English plays a vital role in connecting the three different ethnicities: the Malays, the Chinese and the Indians, in which these groups rely on English to communicate outside their ethnic groups (Murugesan, 2003). According to Asmah Hj Omar (1975 *as quoted in* Solomon, 1988, p. 64)

It is imperative that a multiracial Malaysia should have one unifying factor to give the people the feeling of oneness. Language as a system of formal expression is the best solution in the search for a binding factor.

In a multicultural society, language plays a vital role in binding the ethnics (Asmah Hj. Omar, 1975 *as quoted in* Solomon, 1988). Language learning through education is an important tool in the attainment of the ideals of a harmonious society. In a multicultural setting, it has a dual task, namely the identification of, and the prerequisite for the special needs of pupils from different cultural backgrounds. Further, it must prepare the pupils for life in a multicultural society (Megarry, 1981: 130 *as quoted in* Chetty, 1997). English language in Malaysia is given the second importance (Asmah Hj. Omar, 1982 *as cited in* Hassan, 2004), acquiring the language helps in connecting the multi-ethnicities.

1.1 Background of the study

1.1.1 Multicultural Society

Malaysia is a multicultural society with rich cultural tradition of three main ethnicities: Malays, Chinese and Indian. These ethnicities live side by side with various indigenous tribes. (Isa, n.d).

According to Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, as of March 2nd, 2012, in Malaysia, Malays and the indigenous groups comprise 67.4% of the population. The Chinese comprise approximately 24.6% of the population. Indians comprise about 7.3% of the population.

1.1.2 National Language Policy in Malaysia

Language policy is formulated by constituted organizations in a nation (Fishman et al., 1971 *as stated in* Rajandran, 2008). In Malaysia, since independence, decision-making for language policies is the responsibility of the government (Rajandran, 2008).

Before independence, English was its official language. The period between 1957 to 1969, Malay language was made the national language, but kept English as an official language for about 10 years. (National Language Policy, 1981: Article 152 *as cited in* Rajandran, 2008). During the period of 1970-2002, English was the language of the private sectors: corporate business and industry, banking and finance (Nair-Venugopal, 2001 *as cited in* Gill, 2005).

The National Language Policy (1981) defines English as the second most important language, only to Malay, and should be taught in schools as a second language (Asmah Hj. Omar, 1985). Hence, English language is learned as a second language in the context of education in the secondary schools in Malaysia.

However, a major shift took place in the National Language Policy for teaching the science and mathematics subjects in 2002. There was a

shift from Malay, the national language to English (Gill, 2005 *as quoted in* Campbell, 2011) and now, these two subjects are learned in English language in schools.

1.1.3 Education System in Malaysia

The current education in Malaysia is inherited from the British system (Solomon, 1988). According to Wong (1977), there are three levels in the education system of Malaysia. At the primary level, students are given six years of education. After completing the primary level, students are promoted to the secondary level and in this level students have to pass the Penilaian Menengah Rendah (PMR) in order to enroll either in post-comprehensive classes or in the vocational schools.

The Education system provides Transitional Bilingual Education Programmes (Solomon, 1988). Bahasa Malaysia, the National Language, is the only medium of instruction in the secondary school level. English language is a compulsory second language (Solomon, 1988).

1.1.4 English Language in Malaysian secondary schools

The introduction of English, as another medium of instruction appeared in the Cheeseman Programme 1945-1949 (Wong, 1977; Chang,

Paul, Ming Phang, 1975 *as cited in* Solomon, 1988). In the secondary schools, English language was introduced as the compulsory second language (Asmah Hj. Omar, 1979 *as cited in* Solomon, 1988).

According to Ministry of Education (1956), report of the education committee, the Razak Report, states that Malay and English languages were made compulsory in the secondary education. The report also provides significance for making English language as a compulsory language, no secondary school student shall experience any disadvantages in the matter of employment or higher education either in Malaysia or overseas.

Implementation of the Integrated Secondary School Curriculum (*Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah* [KBSM]) was started in 1988. The curriculum is hoped to assist students to function and to adapt to the harmonious nation effectively (Solomon, 1988). In this curriculum, English language is a core and compulsory subject for all the students (Murugesan, 2003). There are two major examinations throughout the secondary school years, and English is a core paper. The first is at the end of lower secondary in Form 3 (*Penilaian Menengah Rendah* [PMR] or Lower Secondary School Certificate) and the second at the end of upper secondary in Form 5 (*Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia* [SPM] or Malaysian School Certificate).

Although English language is a compulsory subject in secondary schools, English is still learned as a second language in Malaysia. English language, as a subject was always taken into consideration when changes in curriculum were made. English language has always been one of the main languages and is extensively used in secondary schools. Public examinations such as SPM and STPM (*Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia* or Malaysian Higher School Certificate) are stepping-stones for students either to further their studies or to get a job. English language results are part of the requirement asked in applying to further studies in the tertiary level or when applying for a job.

Nevertheless, it is vital for secondary school students to be proficient in English so that they can use the language efficiently for academic purposes and later in the professional setting (Abdullah et al., 2010). Competency in English language is a vital instrument to help the growing of a knowledgeable society to achieve its objective of becoming a developed country (Lee et al., 2010).

In short, English is an important language to students and they need to master the language in order to excel in their studies and prepare them for the competitive job market. They will also need to have good communication skills, as employers will choose the best candidates who are proficient in English to meet the demands of globalization.

1.1.5 Aims and Objectives of English Language in Upper Secondary Schools

The English Language Curriculum Specifications (2003) states English language in the upper secondary level aims to extend students' English language proficiency in order to meet their needs for English in everyday life, knowledge acquisition, and for future workplace needs.

The English language enables students to:

- (i) form and maintain relationships through conversation and correspondence; take part in social interactions; and obtain goods and services;*
- (ii) obtain, process and use information from various audio-visual and print sources; and present the information in spoken and written form;*
- (iii) listen to, view, read and respond to different texts, and express ideas, opinions, thoughts and feelings imaginatively and creatively in spoken and written form; and*
- (iv) show an awareness and appreciation of moral values and love towards the nation.*

(KBSM English Language Curriculum Specifications, 2003)

The central focus of the Secondary School English Language Programme in KBSM is the development of the four language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking (Hassan and Fauzee, 2002). In short, students will be able to acquire the four skills of the English language by the time they complete their schooling years.

The English language KBSM curriculum is to equip students to communicate effectively; function appropriately in everyday life, and access information as well as able to understand and respond to literary works. English grammar, phonology, vocabulary, ICT skills, thinking skills as well as values and citizenship education were also included in the curriculum (Sidek, 2002). These skills will help them to cater their needs of education in the tertiary level or competitive job market.

1.1.6 Multicultural Classroom

Multiculturalism is to accept multiple ethnic cultures within the population of a country (Sengupta, 2010). Classrooms in schools are the reflection of the multicultural diversity of a country. (Syed Abdullah and Abdul Ghafar, n.d). Likewise, in Malaysia, the multicultural diversity of the country is reflected in the classrooms. Therefore, classrooms are facing challenge to integrate quite a number of students who come from the speaking background of non-English.

However, the multicultural classroom gives an opportunity to students from different cultures and ethnicities to bring their enormous experiences, knowledge, perspectives and insights to the process of learning (Dalglish, 2002). Hence, the process of language learning will be successful and effective.

1.2 Statement of problem

Mohd Yusof (n.d) states a unique characteristic of the Malaysian secondary education is the composition of students drawn from the three different ethnic groups namely Malays, Chinese and Indians. These three main ethnic groups have their own beliefs, cultures, values and norms that will affect their behavior and action. It is a goal of the Malaysian education and schooling practice to boost social integration among the various ethnic groups beyond physical integration, and intends to eliminate social prejudices and discrimination.

Today, English language is considered as a global language and an international lingua franca. English language is given the status of second language in the education system, and it is a compulsory subject in secondary schools in Malaysia (Ministry of Education, 1956). The main objective of English language learning, in Malaysia, is to boost students' reading, writing, listening and speaking skills as well as the needed communication and interactive skills.

So, English language does play a vital role in a multicultural society (Murugesan, 2003).

Wendy (2012) states that a portion of students are still not able to master the English language upon completion of secondary school. English language is also essential in the job market. Acquiring the four skills well in English language helps a person to pursue a bright and successful future.

According to a news reported by Azizan and Lee, on Sunday, April 10 2011, sunday@thestar.com.my (retrieved on February 4th, 2012):

“It does not matter if you are top of your class or have a string of degrees, which dream job will not be yours unless you can speak and write well in English.

MEF executive director, Shamsuddin Bardan, local graduates today could not speak or write proper English, saying this was a reason why they faced difficulties getting jobs in the private sectors.”

The above news item reports that local graduates still lack in the English speaking and writing skills, skills that are crucial in the competitive job market.

English language learning comprises the four language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. The English language KBSM curriculum integrates the four skills in enabling students to acquire the language. Since, English language is a compulsory subject in the Malaysian education system; all students have to learn that language. In the process of learning English as a second language, students face many problems with every skill of language such as reading, writing, listening and speaking (Ahmad, 2011).

Reading is the most important skill because it is the chosen instrument to acquire knowledge (Chawwang, 2008). Reading is the foundation of advanced studies which requires abilities to access both textbooks and other reading materials outside the classroom (Roe, Stoodt & Burns, 1998 *cited in* Chawwang, 2008). Reading is considered as crucial for students studying English as a Second Language (ESL) because most textbooks and the sources of science and technology are published in English. Most ESL students have problems in reading English texts. Gunning (2002 *as cited in* Chawwang, 2008) identifies limited knowledge of vocabulary and of sentence structure is regarded as one of main problems in reading performance. Lack in the two areas, vocabulary and sentence structure affects the reading performance of students.

Students face problems in writing English (Crowe, 1992). In addition, students writing in a second language face challenges related to the second

language acquisition (Sarfraz, 2011). Inadequate exposure to the second language results in the occurrence of multiple errors made in the ESL writing.

Listening is highly ranked compared to the other three skills in language learning. Pearson (1983 *was quoted in* Butt et al., 2010), states that listening involves the simultaneous organisation and combination of skills in phonology, syntax, semantics and knowledge of the text. Students, as listeners cannot refer back to the text for listening comprehension activity in ESL lesson (Kurita, 2012). If the students are not able to capture the input of the spoken text, then their listening comprehension performance will be affected.

Spoken language is different from that of the written language (van Lier, 1995 *as quoted in* Bailey, 2006). Beattie (1983) explains, “Spontaneous speech contains many mistakes, sentences are usually brief” (*as cited in* Ting et al., 2010). Bailey (2006) states spoken English is difficult as it happens in “real time” that limits the opportunity to plan and edit. This leads to the occurrences of errors in the spoken language that downgrades the level of accuracy and leads to miscommunication.

Learning the four skills is vital for a student, as they can face challenging scenarios in the tertiary level education or working life. This is because, in Malaysia, English language is the medium of instruction in the government and non-government organizations.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The present research studies performance in English language learning of the secondary school students in a multicultural classroom setting. Therefore, the objectives for the present study are as follows:

- i. to find out the students' comprehending performance based on their reading and listening skills,
- ii. to classify errors found in the process of development of writing and speaking skills, and
- iii. to analyze speech events of the students' spoken discourse.

1.4 Research Questions

This study proposes three research questions. These research questions will help the researcher to fulfill the purpose and objectives of the study. The research questions are as follows.

- i. How are the form 4 students' performances in comprehension with reference to reading and listening skills?

- ii. What are the types of errors found in the writing skill and speaking skill of the form 4 students (using Keshavarz's model, 1993)?
- iii. Are the form 4 students' speeches appropriate to the context of discussion (with reference to S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G model by Hymes, 1974)?

1.5 Hypotheses

The three hypotheses for the current study are as follows:

- i. students obtain high grades for their reading and listening comprehension,
- ii. students errors are mostly found in the use of lexical items, and
- iii. students' speech is suitable to the topic of discussion.

1.6 Scope of the study

English language learning in a multicultural classroom setting is a broad topic to be studied. Hence, this study narrows down the topic from 'Students'

English language performance in a multicultural classroom setting’ to ‘English language skills development in a multicultural classroom setting’. In other words, the study only focuses on the English language performance in a multicultural classroom setting among the Form 4 school students.

The obvious delimitation of the current study is with reference to the subjects. Out of the two forms of upper secondary school students, only the Form 4 students will be selected as respondents for the study. Form 4 students will be chosen because they still have one more year to overcome the issues they face in the English lesson before they sit for their *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia* (SPM) public examination. After the SPM examination, some will be doing their higher studies and some others will be searching for jobs immediately. All the four skills are vital for them in applying to enroll in a university or when applying for jobs.

The number of respondents is one of the limitations that the researcher will be facing for the present study. Due to the time constraints, the researcher will not choose the whole Form 4 as the respondents, but only a group of selected respondents’ feedback will be examined to justify the outcome for the present study.

In addition, respondents from only one government school in the Klang Valley will be chosen to conduct the study, since the researcher will be carrying

out a mixed-mode study. The researcher will generalize the population based on the results obtained.

1.7 Significance of the study

This study actually fills in the research gap. To date, there is no study carried out to examine students' English language performance in a multicultural classroom setting. People speaking English as a second language are increasing in number; however, its impact on culture remains an under-researched area (Graddol, 2006 *as cited in* Lee, 2010).

Moreover, this study will also help the upper secondary school students to identify problems they face in English language skills development in a multicultural classroom setting. In addition, this study can provide relevant input for teachers in the perspectives of multicultural classroom setting.

The most lasting value of this study will enable educational planners to plan and provide professional teacher training programmes in multicultural classroom setting. The result, students will not be discouraged in learning the English language in a multicultural classroom by upgrading their language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking).

1.8 Definitions of key concepts

1.8.1 English language learning

English language in Malaysia is used and spoken as a second language (National Language Policy, 1981 *as cited in* Hassan, 2004). Each student learns four types of skills when learning the English language: speaking, listening, writing and reading.

These skills help students in their daily life chores, such as speaking to provide information to a friend, listening to English songs, writing essays and reading English newspapers (English Language Curriculum Specification, 2003).

1.8.2 Multicultural classroom setting

Multicultural classroom describes a system of instruction that attempts to foster cultural pluralism and acknowledges the differences between races and cultures in a classroom setting (Khatoon, Rehman & Ajmal, 2011). It addresses the educational needs of many cultures found in a society that has more than a set of traditions (Advameg, 2012).

As in the context of Malaysia, multicultural classroom consists of various students from different cultural backgrounds. The three main ethnicities found in every classroom are Malays, Chinese and Indians.

1.8.3 Reading skill

Reading is a complex cognitive ability of a reader. The reader is able to decode symbols to construct meaning from a written text. The most widely cited definition for reading is given by Anderson et al. (1985 *as quoted in* Fuenzalida, 2011), and reading is explained as the process of constructing meaning from written texts. It is a complex skill requiring the coordination of a number of interrelated sources of information.

Reading skill is an interaction that is complex between the text and the reader. The reader comprehends the information based on the reader's prior knowledge, experiences, attitudes and language community (cultural and social factors).

Reading strategies enable a reader with decoding, translating symbols to sounds and comprehension. Morphological, syntactic, semantic and contextual clues are used to help in the identification of meaning for the unknown words. Reading skill helps students to decode and interpret

symbols from a written text, hence help them to comprehend the information.

1.8.4 Writing skill

According to Abu Shawish and Atea (2010), writing is a skill that makes people to think. In addition, it is a sophisticated skill when compared to other skills in the language learning process. Writing can be defined as a presentation of language with the use of a set of signs and symbols.

Students gain confidence, fluency and creativity when they master the writing skill. Writing skill is a specific ability, which helps students to put their thoughts into words in a meaningful form and interact mentally with the message.

There are three types of writing: (i) personal, (ii) transactional and, (iii) creative writing. Personal writing includes sending greetings, typing messages and writing informal letters. Writing memos, business correspondence and writing advertisements are examples of transactional writing. Creative writing consists of poetry writing, songs, etc.

According to Nesamalar et al. (1995 *as quoted in* Mohamed Ali and Mohideen, 2009), for assessment purposes, students produce narration, description, exposition, persuasion and argumentation writings. Good writing skills are required for personal, institutional and occupational purposes (Richards, 1990 *as quoted in* Mohamed Ali and Mohideen, 2009). Highly desired writing skills consist of readability, coherence, cohesion, unambiguity, appropriateness in the use of language etc.

1.8.5 Listening skill

As defined by the International Listening Association (1996), listening is a process of receiving, building meaning from and responding to spoken and/or nonverbal messages. In English classrooms, students do more listening than the other three skills (reading, writing and speaking).

Listening skills are aimed in helping people to listen carefully to learn and gather information. Specific listening skills include listening for general and specific information, transferring information, summarizing, note taking and predicting. Usually, specific listening skills are highly emphasized in an English language classroom.

1.8.6 Speaking skill

Speaking is an activity used to communicate with others. Language is used to interact as to express ideas, feelings and thoughts (Advanced Oxford Learner's Dictionary, 2005). The two purposes of speaking skill in a language are transactional and interactional.

The two purposes have their functions in speaking. Transactional function is conveying information such as providing instructions, describing a place and giving short talk on a certain topic. On the other hand, interactional function is establishing and maintaining good social relationships, by expressing feelings, suggesting opinions etc.

1.9 Conclusion

This chapter gives a brief explanation and description of the background, statement of problem, objectives, research questions and hypotheses, scope of study, significance and definitions of key concepts. The research is an attempt to investigate Form 4 students' English language performance in a multicultural classroom setting in a school in the Klang Valley.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the literature pertaining to the research on the Form 4 school students' English language performance in a multicultural classroom setting. It addresses the performance of reading and listening comprehension, errors in the writing and speaking skills and accuracy of spoken discourse to the topic of discussion.

2.1 Reading and listening comprehension

2.1.1 Reading comprehension

The process of constructing meaning is done through the background knowledge of a reader with the text and the context of reading situation. Background knowledge assists a reader to construct meaning. The text and context of reading situation are part of the process of building meaning (Dutcher, 1990 *as cited in* Ulmer et al, 2011).

Reading comprehension is an interaction between the text and a reader, in which meaning is constructed through intentional thinking (Durkin, 1993 *as reported in* National Reading Panel, 2000). Intentional thinking is concerned with decisions made mentally by readers to think about a topic or a situation found in the text (http://faculty.washington.edu/gmobus/TheoryOfSapience/SapienceExplained/2.relationshipsapienceclevernessaffect/relationships_files/intentionalThinking.html, *retrieved on* April 10th, 2012). Hence, a reader needs intentional thinking to build meaning and understand the text. In other words, a reader decides on interpreting the message to obtain a clear meaning from the written text.

It is the responsibility of a reader to construct meaning and ideas of messages found in the text (Harris & Hodges, 1995 *as cited in* Snowball et al, 2005). An activity of extraction and construction of meaning that is carried out simultaneously involving written language, which includes a reader, text and the purpose of reading (RAND Reading Study Group, 2002 *as cited in* Coiro, 2003). In order to obtain message from the written text, there should be primary involvements from a reader and text to extract and create understanding of written language concurrently.

Reading comprehension is an interactive process between the text and a reader, to construct meaning (Prado, 2004 *as cited in* Parker, n.d).

Chorney (2005) defines interactive process of reading as a process where a reader takes control in understanding the texts that he/she is reading. Accordingly, a reader participates actively in building meanings from the text. In addition, a reader is free to create meanings to understand the message that is found in the text.

Some of the proposed definitions have been presented in this section. To sum up, reading comprehension is an activity or process a reader is engaged actively with the written text. It is also a construction process to create or build meaning from the message that is found in the written language.

2.1.2 Listening comprehension

According to Pearson & Fielding (1983 *as cited in* Hyslop and Tone, 1988), knowledge of the spoken language in terms of phonology, syntax, semantics and spoken text structure are significant for a listener to comprehend the spoken message. A listener will not be able to build meaning from the spoken language if he/she does not have some command over these key concepts.

Byrnes (1984 *as cited in* Oxford, 1993 and Osada, 2004) stated that “listening comprehension is an extremely complex problem solving

activity”. It is an activity that comprises abilities to comprehend words, phrases, clauses, sentences and discourse connections.

Anderson & Lynch (1988 *as cited in* Fujio, 2010) explain that the systematic knowledge, context and schematic knowledge are basis for listening comprehension. Levels of phonology, syntax and semantics are known as systematic knowledge. Physical setting and participants are situational knowledge for the context. Background and procedural knowledge, consists of experience, memory and individual knowledge, are identified as schematic knowledge. Brown (1986 *as cited in* Fujio, 2010), defines systematic knowledge as discourse-internal context, while context is external.

Hasan (2000 *as cited in* Thomas & Dyer, 2007) explains listening comprehension as an interactive process that enables listeners to largely understand the spoken text; in which a listener mainly focuses on the input that is heard, meaning that is created and relating it to the existing knowledge. Listeners’ technique of selecting and interpreting information ensures understanding of the spoken language.

Vandergrift (2002 *as cited in* Liubiniene, 2009) defines listening comprehension as a process of using knowledge of linguistics and prior knowledge to understand the message of a spoken language. There are two

comprehending processes that lead to the listeners' understanding of the spoken language: 'top-down' and 'bottom-up'. The process of 'top-down', is to understand the meaning of the message, in which students' rely on their prior knowledge, while the 'bottom-up' process is the understanding of spoken language that is advanced from sounds to words, to relationships between grammatical forms and lexical meanings (Morley, 2001 *as cited in* Liubiniene 2009). As categorized by Fujio (2010), contextual and schematic knowledge are utilized under the 'top-down' process, whereas systematic knowledge utilizes the 'bottom-up' process.

It is a process that is engaged with hearing, understanding, integrating and responding (Smit, 2006). Therefore, a listener listens to the spoken language; builds meaning by integrating words, phrases, clauses, sentences and discourse to respond to post-listening activities.

According to Samian & Dastjerdi (2012) listeners achieve comprehension with active and conscious mental activity. This mental activity uses clues from contextual information, personal expectations, cognitive processing skills and background knowledge to generate comprehension of the spoken language.

There are a few proposed definitions on listening comprehension presented in this section. In short, input of spoken language and students'

existing knowledge are vital for students to construct and comprehend meaning from the spoken language.

2.1.3 Model of input hypothesis by Krashen (1985)

Comprehended input aids in the language acquisition process (Krashen, 1998 *as cited in* Thanajaro, 2000). The Monitor Model or Input Hypotheses is a model introduced by Krashen (1985 *as cited in* Smit, 2006). Language input, which includes structures that are ranked higher than that of the competency level, is essential to the amount of language acquisition. Krashen (2003 *as cited in* Ponniah, 2010) says that language is acquired when messages from the spoken or written language are understood.

A summary of Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982 *as cited in* Repove, 2004) is as follows: (a) it is never a process of learning, but relates to the process of acquiring, (b) acquisition is done by understanding language structures is a little ahead of the present competence, (c) sufficient understanding of the input obtained helps in the success of communication, and (d) the ability to produce is not direct teaching, it is emergence.

2.1.4 Performance

2.1.4.1 Performance in reading comprehension

Canney & Winograd (1979) examined schemata for reading and reading comprehension performance. The study aims to describe the ways reading is developed by students' schema and inappropriate schema is a factor to ineffective reading comprehension performance. The authors of the study developed an interview questionnaire for the first phase of the study. Six different passages (three different levels of difficulty) were chosen from Silvaroli Reading Inventory (1976 *as mentioned in* Canney & Winograd, 1979). The results showed that students' reading schemata could differentiate the performance between higher and lower comprehenders. The lower comprehenders have undeveloped word recognition that decreases their performance in reading comprehension.

Ameer and Khouzam (1993) used the theory of reading that was introduced by Kirby (1988). The study was conducted to examine 48 students, who were learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), in their reading comprehension performance (memorizing and generating meaning) with respect to reading

styles. The result found through that study shows that students have low reading comprehension performance in memorizing and generating meaning.

Gender differences in Reading Comprehension Performance in Relation to Content Familiarity of Gender-Neutral Texts is a study that was carried out by Al-Shumaimeri (2005). This study aims to examine different levels of reading comprehension performance among gender. A total number of 132 male and female students of English as a Foreign Language at the tertiary level were respondents for this study. Multiple-choice questions from two gender-neutral texts were used to assess students' reading comprehension performance. The results obtained show that male students reading comprehension performance is higher than that of the female students' reading comprehension performance.

Wu (2011) in the study entitled 'Anxiety and Reading Comprehension Performance in English as a Foreign Language' explored the relationship between language anxiety, reading anxiety and reading performance. 91 first year college students (learning English as a Foreign Language) participated in this study. The results obtained illustrate that students achieve higher

performance in reading comprehension when they experience lower language anxiety and reading anxiety.

In this section, a few studies along with the results obtained on reading comprehension performance were discussed. In the present study, the researcher attempts to find the reading comprehension performance among Form 4 school students using five different genres of texts.

2.1.4.2 Performance in listening comprehension

Shang (2005) conducted an exploratory study to investigate cognitive operations on L2 listening comprehension performance. The study aims to examine the relations and differences between components of cognitive operations (interpretation of main idea, identification of details and interpretations of implications) on 63 EFL listeners' comprehension performance. The outcome of the study displays students listening comprehension performance is better in the interpretation of main ideas compared to those inference items. In addition, listening comprehension performance of low-level students is affected when they are given detailed questions.

Elkhafaifi (2005) in the study viz; Listening Comprehension and Anxiety in the Arabic Language Classroom, revealed that foreign language (FL) anxiety in learning and listening are two separate entities, however both the entities associate negatively with performance. The results found in the study suggest that reduced learning and listening anxiety may enable students' performance in their listening comprehension.

A study on 'The Relationship between Prior Knowledge and EFL Learners' Listening Comprehension: Cultural Knowledge in Focus', was carried out in 2012 by Samian & Dastjerdi to investigate the impact of cultural awareness in improving listening comprehension of Iranian EFL learners. The study consisted of 40 respondents who were divided into four groups, in which they were assigned four separate listening comprehension activities to be carried out. The outcome of the research concluded language listening materials that are culturally-oriented and familiar would help to improve the Iranian EFL learners' listening comprehension performance.

In this section, a few studies along with the results obtained on listening comprehension performance were discussed. In the present study, the researcher attempts to find the listening

comprehension performance among Form 4 school students using an audio text.

2.2 Error analysis

Darus & Subramaniam (2009) stated that Corder and colleagues introduced error analysis of the Second Language Acquisition (SLA) in 1970s. Norris (1983 *as quoted in* Sanal, 2008) states that there is an Italian proverb ‘Sbagliando simpara’ (We can learn through our errors)...making mistakes can indeed be regarded as an essential part of learning. Brown (1987 *as cited in* Sanal, 2008) agrees with the view and states that mistakes are often made in the language learning process.

Error analysis is a study of linguistics that studies the errors learners make. The occurrences of errors are then compared within the target language (Darus & Subramaniam, 2009).

Richards & Sampson (1974 *as cited in* Huang, 2002) listed seven issues of errors in second language acquisition: (a) transfer of language, (b) inference of intra-lingual, (c) sociolinguistic situation, (d) modality, (e) age, (f) successions of approximate systems, and (g) universal hierarchy difficulties.

According to Brown (1980 *as cited in* Huang, 2003) inter-lingual transfer, intra-lingual transfer, context of learning and communication strategies are sources of errors in the learning of a second language.

2.2.1 Error analysis in writing

In 2003, Sarfraz carried out a case study on Error Analysis of the Written English Essays of Pakistani Undergraduate Students. The results showed inter-language and interference of mother tongue are the two types of errors occurred in the corpus of 50 essays. The number of errors caused by the inter-language is found to be higher when compared to the errors due to the interference of mother tongue.

A case study on Error Analysis of the Written English Essays of Secondary School Students in Malaysia was conducted in 2009 by Darus and Subramaniam. 72 essays were analyzed for errors. Identification and classification of errors were made. Six most common errors found in the essays were forms of the singular/plural, verb tense, choice of words, use of prepositions, subject-verb agreement and word order.

Lee (2010) examined Error Analysis of Chinese Learners of the Korean Language: Focus on Source Analysis of Content-Based Errors. A

total number of 500 essays were examined to identify the errors. The results indicate that most of the observed errors are spelling errors.

Zarei (2011) conducted a study entitled Analysis and Categorization of the Most Prevalent Errors of Intermediate and Elementary Iranian EFL Learners in Writing in Iran. In this study, the dominant errors were analyzed and categorized. The results indicated that frequent errors are found in the syntactico-morphological category.

Lee (2003) conducted a study on Error Analysis with reference to Medical Students' Writing. Identification and classification of errors in the formal and informal letter writing were carried out. Most errors found were due to mother tongue transfer and in the use of prepositions and articles.

A few studies on error analysis with reference to writing were discussed in this section. The researcher of the present study aims to classify errors found in the written essays among Form 4 school students.

2.2.2 Error analysis in speaking

A study was carried out by Harashima (2006) on error analysis of the speech of an experienced learner in English. There was only one

respondent, Aki who speaks fluent English. The results obtained show that tense form is the most common error found in Aki's speech.

Clopton (2008) conducted a study on Articulation Errors in Childhood Apraxia of Speech. It aimed to study the types and positions of articulation errors made by children with Childhood Apraxia of Speech (CAS). The results showed that CAS children errors were mainly, due to the substitution of word initials and omission of additional consonants.

To sum up, the researcher of the present study intends to classify the errors found in the spoken language of Form 4 school students.

2.2.3 Taxonomy of errors in the study of Keshavarz (1999 *as cited in* Zarei, 2011)

Keshavarz (1999 *as cited in* Zarei, 2011), classified errors into four categories viz; orthographic type, phonological type, lexico-semantic type, and syntactico-morphological type.

Orthographic errors are concerned with errors of spelling. This kind of errors does not represent errors caused by alphabets and sounds. They are related to same spelling but pronounced differently, homonyms

and rules of spelling that are ignored. (Keshavarz, 1999 *as cited in* Zarei, 2011).

Keshavarz (1999 *as cited in* Zarei (2011) explains inadequate language phonemes in students' mother tongue or in the first language and the differences of two language (syllable structures and the pronunciation of words and letters) are errors that are categorized as phonological errors.

Lexico-semantic errors are errors found in the use of words. Wrong words or terms are used in the language Keshavarz (1999 *as cited in* Zarei (2011).

20 sub-categories of errors are listed as syntatico-morphological errors (Keshavarz, 1999 *as cited in* Zarei, 2011). They are errors in the use of: (a) tenses, (b) prepositions, (d) articles, (e) active and passive voices, (f) "it is" instead of "there is", (g) negative construction, (h) conditional clauses, (i) negative imperatives in indirect speech, (j) relative clauses, (k) subject-verb inversion in indirect questions, and (l) verb groups, besides, (m) wrong sequence of tenses, (n) wrong word order, (o) misplacement of adverbs, (p) lack of subject-verb inversion in wh-questions, (q) wrong use of plural morphemes, (r) wrong use of parts of speech, (s) wrong use of quantifiers and intensifiers, and (t) use of typical mother tongue construction.

In the present study, the researcher will use the Keshavarz (1999 *as cited in* Zarei, 2011) Taxonomy of Errors to classify the errors found in writing and speaking among the Form 4 school students.

2.3 Discourse

Tannen (1983) explains discourse as anything “beyond the sentence”, the formation of a text in any mode from two or more sentences. Discourse is a stretched language that is longer than a sentence, mainly spoken language (Crystal, 1992). According to Asmah (1980, *as quoted in* Idris Aman, 2010) explains discourse as a language that is beyond the sentence structure.

Fairclough (2003) views discourse as a text “an element of social life which is closely interconnected with other elements”. Aman (2010) concludes discourse is a complete unit of language that has meaning, which is used for communication purposes.

There are a few proposed definitions on discourse presented in this section.

2.3.1 Features of spoken discourse

Spoken discourse features can be explained under three different aspects: (i) manner of production, (ii) contextual features and (iii) linguistic features.

(i) Manner of production: less planning and forethought, is always momentary (unless recorded)

(ii) Contextual features: spatio-temporal context is shared between the interlocutors, feedback is immediately received (such as body language, facial expression etc.)

(iii) Linguistic features: sentences are less structured and less complex (incomplete sentences, little subordinate etc), frequent use of fillers (such as 'er', 'mmm' etc), frequent logical connectors (and, but, then etc)

(Nunan 1993; Georgakopoulou and Goustos, 1997,

adapted from Muniandy, V. A. A., 2002)

2.3.2 S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G model (Hymes, 1974 *as cited in* Lee, 2007)

Dell Hymes (1974 *as cited in* Lee, 2007) developed the model of S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G. Below is the further explanation of the mnemonic device, proposed by Hymes (1974 *as cited in* Lee, 2007):

2.3.4.1 ‘S’ for Setting and Scene:

‘Setting’ refers to the concrete physical surrounding where the conversation takes place for example, in the library, in the school canteen. ‘Scene’ describes the cultural definition of a conversation. The characteristics of the conversation are also described in this section of analysis.

2.3.4.2 ‘P’ for Participants

Two participants are needed in a conversation to take place, speaker and listener. A speaker who sends out the message and is received by the listener. There are multiple participants who play roles in the conversation, such as interpreters, spokespersons, receivers, senders, addressors etc.

2.3.4.3 'E' for Ends

'Ends' refers to the purpose of the conversation to take place.

2.3.4.4 'A' for Act sequence

'Act sequence' refers to the actual conversation that takes place. This is by analyzing the words used, ways the words are used, and the interconnections between the conversation and the topic of discussion.

2.3.4.5 'K' for Key

'Key' provides the description of the tone (intonation) and manner of a conversation performed. The 'key' can be sarcastic, mocking.

2.3.4.6 'I' for Instrumentalities

'Instrumentalities' refers to the means of conversation: 'channel' and 'forms of speech'. 'Channel' is the choice of medium a speaker chooses in order to transfer the message to the listeners. 'Form of speech' refers to the dialect or variety used to transmit the message.

2.3.4.7 ‘N’ for Norms of interaction

‘Norms of interaction’ refers to socially acceptable speech event of a community.

2.3.4.8 ‘G’ for Genre

‘Genre’ refers to the categories of utterances: for example news, prayers, poems, etc.

The description for each alphabet found in the S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G model was presented. In the present study, the researcher intends to analyse the Form 4 students’ spoken discourse using the model proposed by Hymes (1974 *as cited in* Lee, 2007), the S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G model to describe their speech appropriateness to the chosen topic of discussion.

2.4 Summary

To conclude, this research will specify the performance of students in comprehension based on their reading and listening skills, classify errors found in the process of development in writing skill and speaking skill, and analyse the appropriateness of the students’ spoken discourse in the English language learning in a multicultural classroom setting. The outcome of this research will also be

helpful to increase the knowledge of educators about teaching strategies and corpus planning in the future.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The present research attempts to investigate performance in learning English in a multicultural classroom setting among Form 4 students at a secondary school in the Klang Valley. This chapter includes the following:

- i. methodology used for the study
- ii. data for the study
- iii. data processing and analysis
- iv. pilot study

3.1 Methodology used for the study

The present research will be conducted based on task based learning method as proposed by Willis (1998). The researcher adopts the three stages found in task-based learning method to the present study. The first stage (pre-

task), researcher introduces and explains further on the instruments as to help the respondents to prepare for the main task. In task cycle (second stage), respondents perform the task using the four language skills. In the final stage, the researcher analyses the data collected.

The researcher will use the Malaysian Education Grading System (2009) to categorize the respondents' performance for the reading and listening tasks and thus relates the outcome with Krashen's (1985) input hypothesis. The input hypothesis is adopted to evaluate the respondents' performance in comprehending the text materials.

The error analysis model that will be adopted for the study is the one proposed by Keshavarz' (1999 *as cited in* Zarei, 2011). The model will be used to analyse errors found in the linguistic levels for the writing and speaking tasks. The classification of errors are orthographic, lexical (lexical and semantic levels) and grammatical (morphological and syntactic levels)

S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G model introduced by Hymes (1974 *as cited in* Lee, 2007) will be applied to evaluate respondents' spoken discourse. In other words, the model will be used to analyze the precision of respondents' speech to the topic of discussion.

3.2 Data for the study

Data was collected by making use of a set of instruments that consists of 5 sections.

3.2.1 Instruments

The instrument will be task-based, in which each respondent will need to carry out each task according to the time allocation. There will be five (5) sections found in the instruments. The first section (Section A) is the biographical information. The second section (Section B) consists of the reading task. Next, section C consists of the writing task. Section D is the listening task and finally, section E, is speaking task.

3.2.2 Data collection

Data for the study includes biographical information, in general, and the data for the actual analysis (reading task, writing task, listening task and speaking task). The data collection for the present study was carried out as follows:

Section A: Biographical information

This section will help the researcher to gather information about respondents' biographical information, in general, such as name, class and gender. The researcher will also obtain the background information of the respondents, such as race and religion. This information will help the researcher to relate it with the data obtained for the actual research analysis.

Moreover, respondents will have to state grades obtained for English subject in Peperiksaan Menengah Rendah (PMR) and Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) trial examination. These grades will help the researcher to group the respondents according to their achievements that represent their ability in English language.

Besides that, respondents will need to indicate languages used to communicate within the society; parents, grandparents, siblings, relatives, cousins, best friend, school friends, tuition friends, teachers at school, teachers at tuition centers/private tutors, friends at religious places and elders at religious places. Information gathered on languages used by the respondents to communicate with others will help the researcher to gain more

information about the respondents' background and to relate the same with their proficiency in English.

Section B: Reading task

In this section, the respondents will find texts drawn from various genres (advertisement/announcement, science content, literary, conversation and narration). Respondents will have to read and reread the extracts to understand and comprehend the information in each extract.

There will be a combination of objective and structure based questions. The respondents will need to choose correct answers and write appropriate structured answers to some of the questions on each text.

This activity helps the researcher to obtain information on the respondents' ability to comprehend the content in various texts.

Section C: Writing task

For this section, all the 18 respondents will be given 1 hour to write an essay (continuous writing). Continuous writing is a

writing task that can be found in *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia* (SPM) English (Paper 1: Section B).

The length of the essay should be approximately 350 words. In the SPM examination, students are encouraged to write about 350 words. The researcher will apply the same instruction to carry out the writing task with the 18 respondents chosen.

This section helps the researcher to view and examine on the choice of vocabulary used by the respondents from various cultural backgrounds.

Section D: Listening task

Respondents will be given 1 minute to read the instructions. Researcher then plays the Compact Disk (CD) and respondents listen to the conversation. Then the respondents will be given another 1 minute to read the statements. Then, the researcher will play the CD for the second time. Respondents will be given 3 minutes to write TRUE or FALSE in the space provided.

Next, respondents will be given another 1 minute to read the instructions and view the flow chart. The researcher will play

the CD again, and as the respondents listen to the conversation, they tick the correct boxes.

The researcher will gather information on the respondents' listening ability, in which the respondents are expected to fill in the blanks while listening to the CD player, using their memorization skill.

Section E: Speaking task

For this activity, only 12 respondents will be chosen out of the 18 respondents. The 12 respondents will be grouped in fours of the same ethnicity. Each group will be allocated 10 minutes to speak on their own cultural wedding ceremony. The researcher records the conversation using Sony Ericsson W508i sound recorder.

This activity helps the researcher to obtain information on the respondents' oral competency. The researcher is a passive participant, who observes the conversation without directly participating in it. The researcher also records the conversation for the purpose of making corrections found.

3.2.3 Sampling

Creswell (2009) explains purposive random sampling which helps the researcher to understand the problem and the research questions. The respondents will be selected based on the purposive random sampling from three different ethnic groups as the present study focuses on the language learning in a multicultural classroom.

3.2.4 Participants

A total number of 18 students aged 16 years old will be selected for the current study. 9 males and 9 females will be representing the 18 respondents. Each gender group will represent the three main ethnic groups (Malay, Chinese and Indian). The following pie charts show the number of respondents according to ethnicity and gender.

All the 18 respondents are the researcher's English class students. The respondents are from a school in Klang Valley.

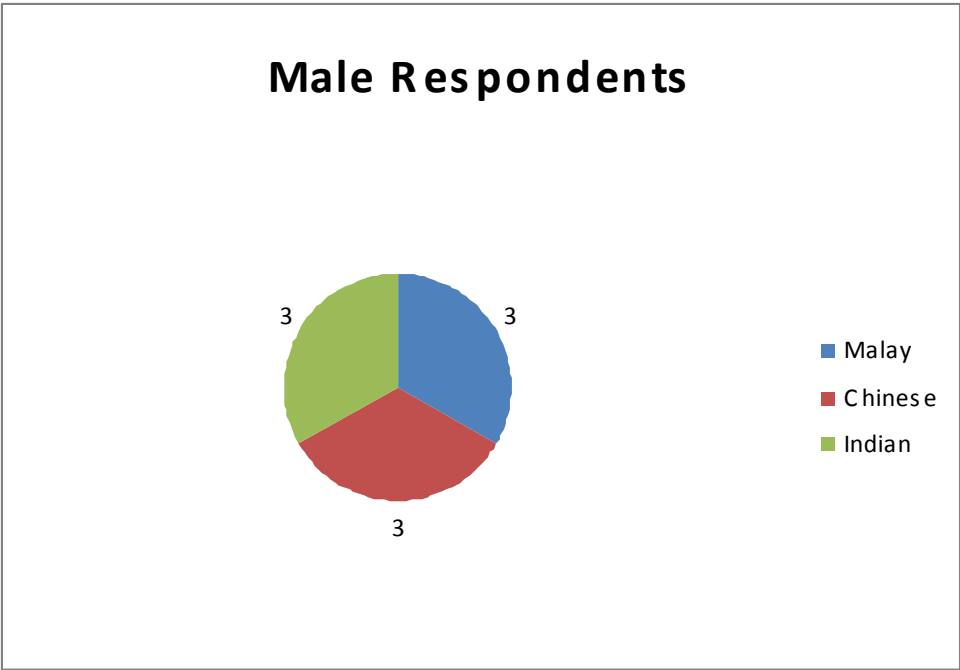


Figure 3.1: Number of male respondents according to ethnicity

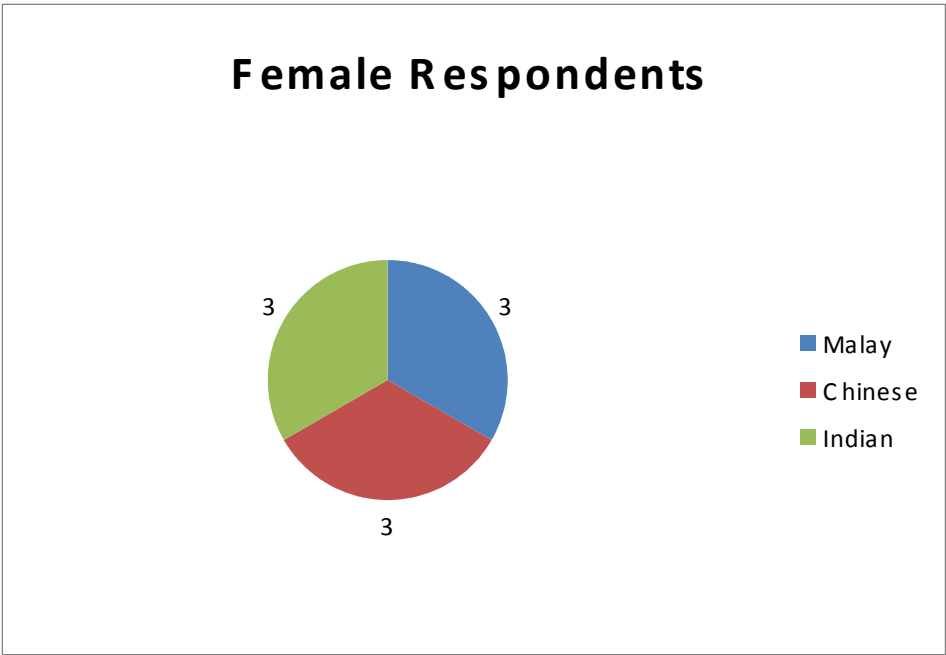


Figure 3.2: Number of female respondents according to ethnicity

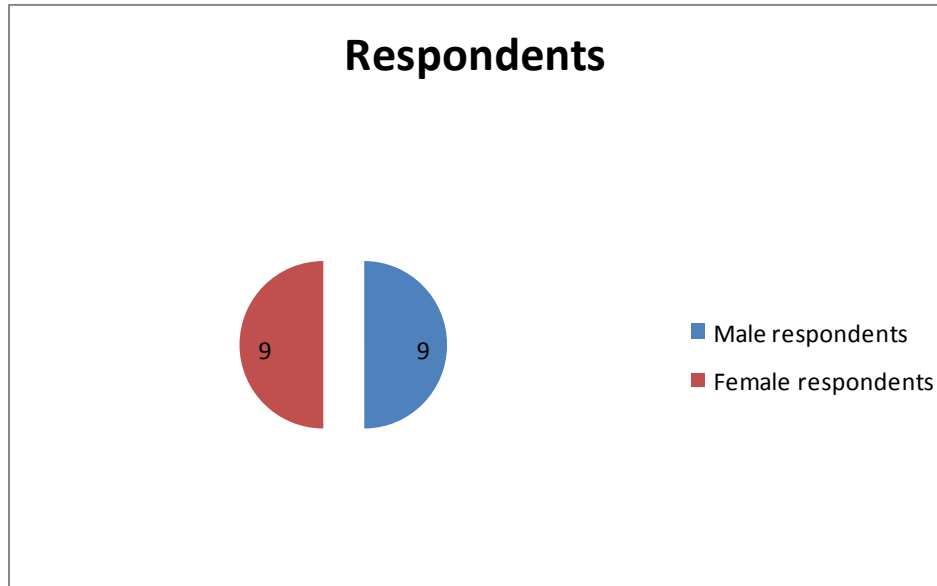


Figure 3.3: Total number of respondents according to the gender

All three figures above (pie charts 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3) show the number of respondents selected for the present study. Figures 3.1 and 3.2 show the number of respondents participating in this study from three different ethnicities. Whereas, figure 3.3 shows the total number of respondents participating in the study representing the male and female genders.

As shown above, eighteen respondents from both genders (male and female) will take part in this study that is, six respondents from each ethnicity will participate in this study (Malay, Chinese and Indian). The six respondents from each ethnicity consist of three males and three females.

3.3 Data processing and analysis

In order to complete the study, the researcher elicits data by distributing the instruments to all the 18 respondents. The researcher will carry out observations and recordings while the respondents complete each section.

Although, the instruments consist of 5 sections, classification of data will be based on the number of correct answers for reading and listening tasks and word-level errors for writing and speaking tasks. The data will be classified into three sets of information for the current study in order to complete the writing of the report. The information thus gained is very helpful for the researcher to do the analysis of the related study.

The first set of information is the number of correct answers given for the reading and listening tasks, which indicates the students' comprehension performance. The analysis will be carried out using the Malaysian Education Grading System (2009) and Krashen's input hypotheses (1985).

The second set of information consists of the students' word-level errors, which will help the researcher to classify the errors in the development of writing and speaking skills. The errors will be analysed and classified according to Keshavarz' error analysis model (1999 *as cited in* Zarei, 2011).

The final set of information will cater to the needs of the researcher to discover the accuracy of students' spoken discourse to the topic of discussion. Hymes (1974 *as cited in* Lee, 2007) S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G model will be used to analyse the respondents' spoken discourse.

Results of the analysis will be presented in the form of tables, pie charts and bar charts.

3.4 Pilot study

Prior to the actual full-hedged study, a pilot test will be conducted on a small scale to ascertain the actual data collection and the analysis for the related study. 4 respondents will be chosen randomly for this pilot study.

After the pilot study, actual data collection and data analysis will be carried out following the procedures used in the pilot study with suitable reinforcements wherever necessary. The researcher would ensure that the data collected is valid and reliable.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter explains the methodologies used for the analysis. In addition, this chapter also describes the data for the study, which includes research

instruments, methods and techniques for data collection and sampling of participants. Also, this chapter explains ways data will be processed and analyzed. This chapter also explains the ways pilot test will be administered.

The data obtained would allow the researcher to examine the Form 4 school students' English language performance in a multicultural classroom setting. Chapter 4 will present the research findings and results.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

The classified data was analysed by applying the chosen research methods and organized systematically. The results and findings drawn from the analysed data will be discussed as they are presented.

To analyse the respondents' English language efficiency, the researcher analysed the use of language structures as reflected in the four language skills tested viz, reading, writing, listening and speaking.

The researcher has given codes for all the respondents, as in the table below:

Table 4.1: Codes for the respondents

| <i>Codes</i> | Respondents |
|--------------|----------------------------------|
| <i>f1m</i> | First female Malay respondent |
| <i>f2m</i> | Second female Malay respondent |
| <i>f3m</i> | Third female Malay respondent |
| <i>f4c</i> | Fourth female Chinese respondent |

Table 4.1, continued

| | |
|------------|----------------------------------|
| <i>f5c</i> | Fifth female Chinese respondent |
| <i>f6c</i> | Sixth female Chinese respondent |
| <i>f7i</i> | Seventh female Indian respondent |
| <i>f8i</i> | Eighth female Indian respondent |
| <i>f9i</i> | Ninth female Indian respondent |
| <i>m1m</i> | First male Malay respondent |
| <i>m2m</i> | Second male Malay respondent |
| <i>m3m</i> | Third male Malay respondent |
| <i>m4c</i> | Fourth male Chinese respondent |
| <i>m5c</i> | Fifth male Chinese respondent |
| <i>m6c</i> | Sixth male Chinese respondent |
| <i>m7i</i> | Seventh male Indian respondent |
| <i>m8i</i> | Eighth male Indian respondent |
| <i>m9i</i> | Ninth male Indian respondent |

4.1 Biographical information

All the respondents were Form 4 students when the data were collected. The respondents consist of nine males and nine females. There are in total 18 respondents selected consisting 9 males and 9 females. They belong to the three ethnic groups viz, Malays, Chinese and Indians. The pie chart below shows the classification of groups of the respondents involved.

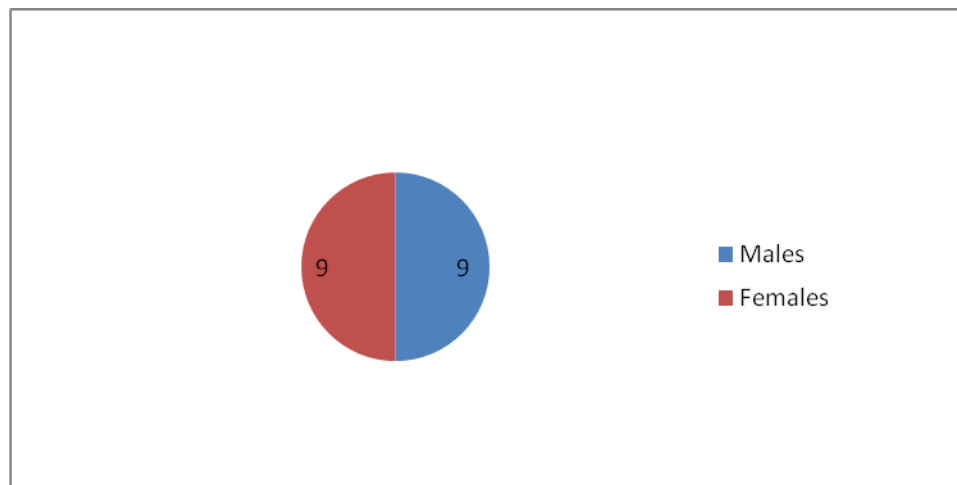


Figure 4.1: The number of respondents for each gender

Based on figure 4.1, a total number of 18 respondents participated in this study. There were a similar number of respondents representing both genders (male and female). The researcher chose nine respondents from each gender because there would be a comparable number of subjects representing the three main ethnic groups: Malays, Chinese and Indians.

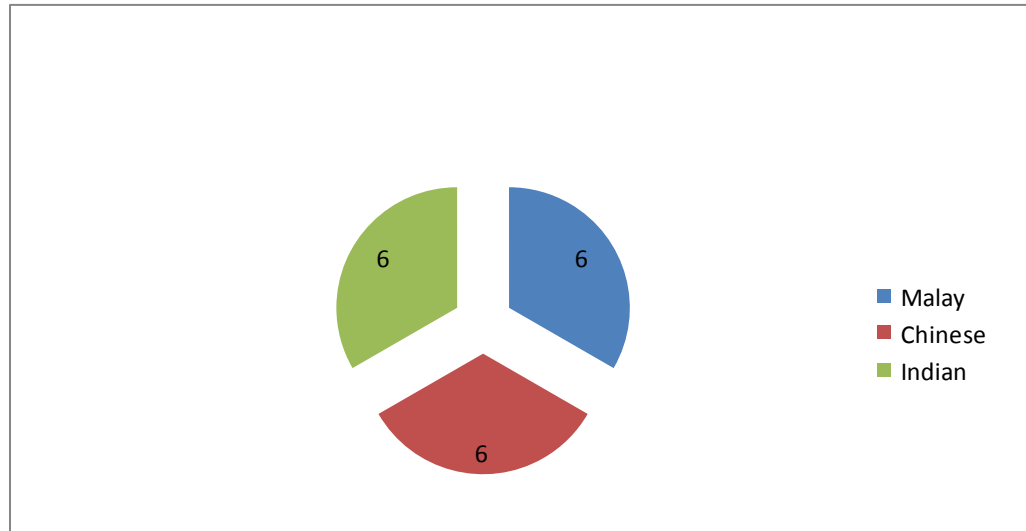


Figure 4.2: The number of respondents representing each ethnicity

The figure above shows the similar number of respondents who participated in this study. There were six respondents from each ethnic group (Malay, Chinese and Indian). There are three males and three females representing each ethnic group respectively.

The respondents were asked to state the grade they obtained in the PMR examination. PMR is the abbreviation for “*Peperiksaan Menengah Rendah*”, in which students will sit for this public examination in their Form 3 (15 years old). Students are streamed to different classes based on their performance in this examination. The bar chart below shows the grades obtained in English subject in the PMR examination.

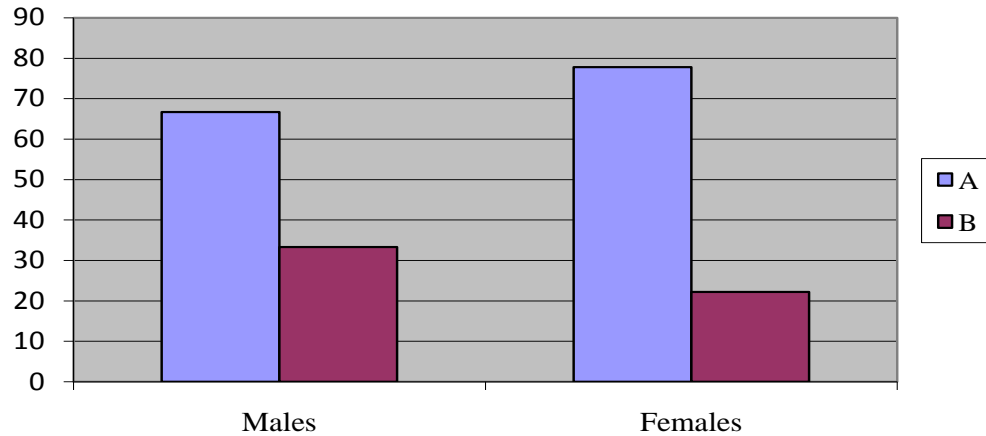


Figure 4.3: Grades obtained in the PMR for English

The above figure shows the percentage of grades obtained for English subject in the PMR examination. Around 66.7% of male respondents obtained grade A and 33.3% obtained grade B for English subject in PMR examination. On the other hand, for the female respondents, 77.2% obtained grade A and 22.2% obtained grade B for English subject in PMR examination.

The respondents also did indicate languages that they use to communicate with others, who are their parents, grandparents, siblings, relatives, cousins, best friends, school friends, tuition friends, teachers at school, and teachers at tuition centers/private tutors, friends at the religious place and elders at the religious place.

The table below indicates the number of respondents and the languages they use to communicate with others. This information helped when the researcher analyzed the other sections of the instrument.

From the table given below (Table 4.2), all respondents from the Malay background are found to use Malay language to communicate with others, except only five respondents' use Malay language to communicate with grandparents and four respondents use Malay to communicate with teachers at tuition centers/private tutors. There are around 83 percent (% hereafter) of Chinese respondents who communicate in Malay language with best friends, school friends and teachers at school. As for siblings and teachers at tuition centers/private tutors, only 33% and 50% of the Chinese respondents respectively use Malay language to communicate. Only one Indian respondent (16%) uses Malay language with parents, relatives, best friends and teacher at tuition centers/private tutors. Around 50% of Indian respondents use Malay language to communicate with their school friends, tuition friends and teachers at school and 33% of Indian respondents use Malay language to communicate with their cousins.

Table 4.2: Languages used by the respondents to communicate with others

| Language/Ethnicity | Malay | | | English | | | Mandarin | | | Tamil | | | Others | | |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| | <i>M</i> | <i>C</i> | <i>I</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>C</i> | <i>I</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>C</i> | <i>I</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>C</i> | <i>I</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>C</i> | <i>I</i> |
| <i>Parents</i> | 6 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| <i>Grandparents</i> | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| <i>Siblings</i> | 6 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| <i>Relatives</i> | 6 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| <i>Cousins</i> | 6 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 6 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| <i>Best friends</i> | 6 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>School friends</i> | 6 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Tuition friends</i> | 6 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Teachers at school</i> | 6 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 6 | 6 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Teachers at tuition centers/ Private tutors</i> | 4 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Friends at religious place</i> | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 6 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>Elders at religious place</i> | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 5 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

M – Malay respondents, C – Chinese respondents, I – Indian respondents

Malay respondents use English language to communicate with others: parents (50%), siblings (67%), relatives (50%), cousins (33%), best friends

(50%), school friends (83%), tuition friends (67%), teachers at school (33%), teachers at tuition centers/private tutors (83%). The Malay respondents do not use English language to communicate with grandparents, friends at religious place and elders at religious place. Among the Chinese respondents on the other hand, there are at least a minimum of 16% who use English language to communicate with others. All Chinese respondents (100%) use English language to communicate with elders at the religious place. Around 83% of Chinese respondents use English language to communicate with parents, siblings, cousins, school friends, tuition friends and teachers at tuition centers/private tutors. As for the Indian respondents, all of them (100%) use English language to communicate with relatives, cousins, best friends, school friends, tuition friends and teachers at school. Approximately 83% of the Indian respondents use English language to communicate with parents, siblings, teachers at tuition centers/private tutors and elders at religious place. Around 50% of Indian respondents use English language to communicate with grandparents.

None of the Malay and Indian respondents uses Mandarin language to communicate, except for the Chinese respondents. The total number of five Chinese respondents (83%) use Mandarin language to communicate with parents, grandparents, siblings, best friends and teachers at school. Around 67% of Chinese respondents communicate with relatives, cousins and tuition friends in Mandarin language and about 50% communicate with school friends, teachers at

tuition centers/private tuition, friends at religious place and elders at religious place in the Mandarin language.

Malay and Chinese respondents do not use Tamil language at all to communicate with others. All of the Indian respondents use Tamil language to communicate with cousins and elders at the religious place. About 83% of the Indian respondents communicate with parents and siblings using Tamil language, 67% of the Indian respondents communicate with relatives, best friends and friends at religious place in Tamil language and 50% of the Indian respondents use Tamil language to communicate with grandparents, school friends, tuition friends and teachers at school.

4.2 Reading task

This section of the instrument consists of five different kinds of text viz; literary, conversation, advertisement, science content and narration. Each text has around one to two multiple-choice questions except for the narration text, which has two structured questions for the respondents to answer.

Reading skills include the basic language skills, respondents will need to comprehend and understand the text before reacting/responding to the comprehension questions that follow. Respondents need to read not only those texts, but they also need to comprehend all the five different kinds of texts. In other words, each respondent needs to read, comprehend and respond. So, all the respondents read the texts, comprehended them before responding to the multiple choice and structured questions.

The table below (Table 4.3) shows the correct and wrong answers selected by the respondents for each question.

Table 4.3: Answers selected by the respondents

| Rs/Qs | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q5 | Q6 | Q7 | Q8 | Total | % |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------|----------|
| f1m | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 50 |
| f2m | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 63 |
| f3m | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 75 |
| f4c | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 7 | 88 |
| f5c | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 50 |
| f6c | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 75 |
| f7i | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 75 |
| f8i | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 75 |
| f9i | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 75 |
| m1m | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 63 |
| m2m | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 63 |
| m3m | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 63 |
| m4c | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 50 |
| m5c | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 63 |
| m6c | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 63 |
| m7i | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 75 |
| m8i | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 7 | 88 |
| m9i | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 75 |

Rs – Respondents; Qs – Questions; 1 – Correct answer; 0 – Wrong answer

The 1st and 2nd questions are associated to the literary text. A poem that consists of two stanzas was given to the respondents. For the first question, 33% of the total respondents, who are the Indian respondents, chose the correct answer and 50% of the total respondents chose the correct answer for the second question, the researcher found that 67% respondents chose the wrong answer for the first question. This percentage shows that the Malay and Chinese respondents could not comprehend the literary text. They found the literary text quite tough to identify the gist of the poem to answer the question. About 50% of the total respondents chose the wrong answer for the second question. Some respondents said that the question was tricky.

Questions 3 and 4 are related to a dialogue text. Respondents were given a text that contains a short conversation between Ranjan and Jane. From the total respondents, 50% and 94% selected the correct answer respectively. For question three, 50% of the respondents, majority are the Indian respondents, selected the wrong answer. Only one Chinese respondent selected the wrong answer for the fourth question.

Question 5 is based on an advertisement genre text. The purpose of the advertisement is to announce the celebration held for Einstein's year. For this question, all of the respondents selected the correct answer. This means, all the respondents found the advertisement easy to comprehend. Respondents found advertisement kind of texts are easy to track down the answer quickly, because

most of the important content in an advertisement is always highlighted, bold, or typed in larger fonts.

The 6th question is a science content text related to electric bikes. Around 33% of the total respondents picked the correct answer. Most of the respondents are enrolled in the science stream class at present; but they are still unable to comprehend the science content text. The respondents could not understand the scientific terms and explanations found in the text. In other words, the respondents were not able to decode the scientific terms and this resulted in selecting the wrong answer for the question.

As for questions, 7 and 8, which are the structured questions for the narration text, approximately 94% and 89% of the total respondents, provided correct answers respectively. The respondents were able to comprehend the narration text as well as to respond correctly to the structured questions.

A text is a communicative tool, in which a reader reads the text first, comprehends the meaning by decoding the words, interpreting the message found in the text, processes the message found in the text, and finally responding or reacting to the text by answering the questions.

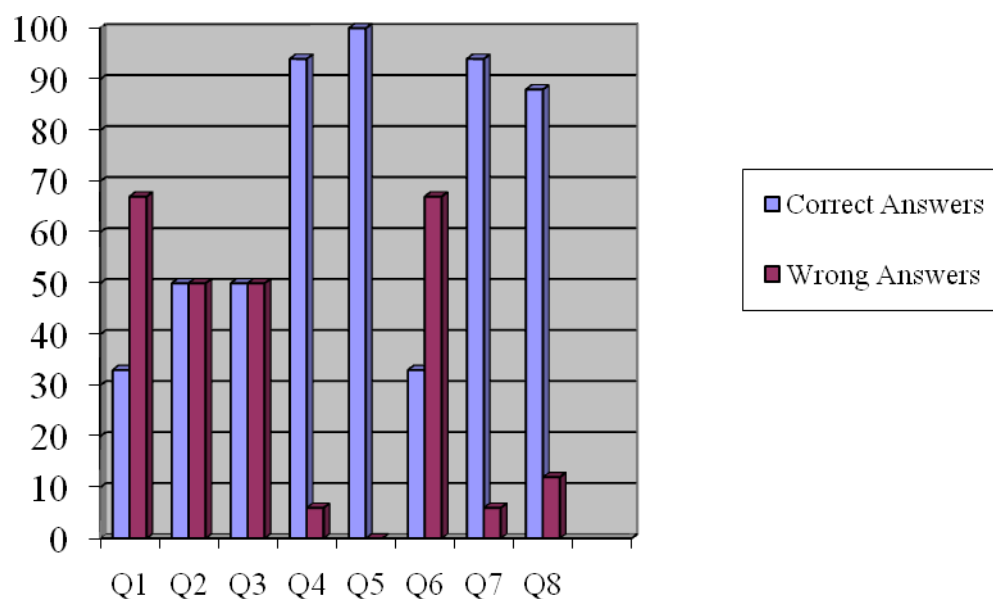


Figure 4.4: Percentage of correct and wrong answers chosen

The figure above indicates the percentage of correct and wrong answers chosen for each question. As shown in the bar chart above, question 5 has the highest percentage of correct answers, which is 100%. Next to this, questions 4 and 7, with 94% of correct answer and 6% wrong answer. Questions 1 and 6, have the lowest percentage of correct answers that is 33%, in other words, these two questions have the highest percentage of wrong answers given.

As a result, the researcher found that in a multicultural classroom setting, reading literary (Question 1) and science content (Question 6) texts are issues for the students to comprehend. Moreover, students are unable to respond to the questions asked about the message found in these two genres of text.

The researcher interpreted the respondents' scores to identify the comprehending performance of respondents. The researcher used the Malaysian Education grading system (2009) to categorize the respondents' performance in comprehension.

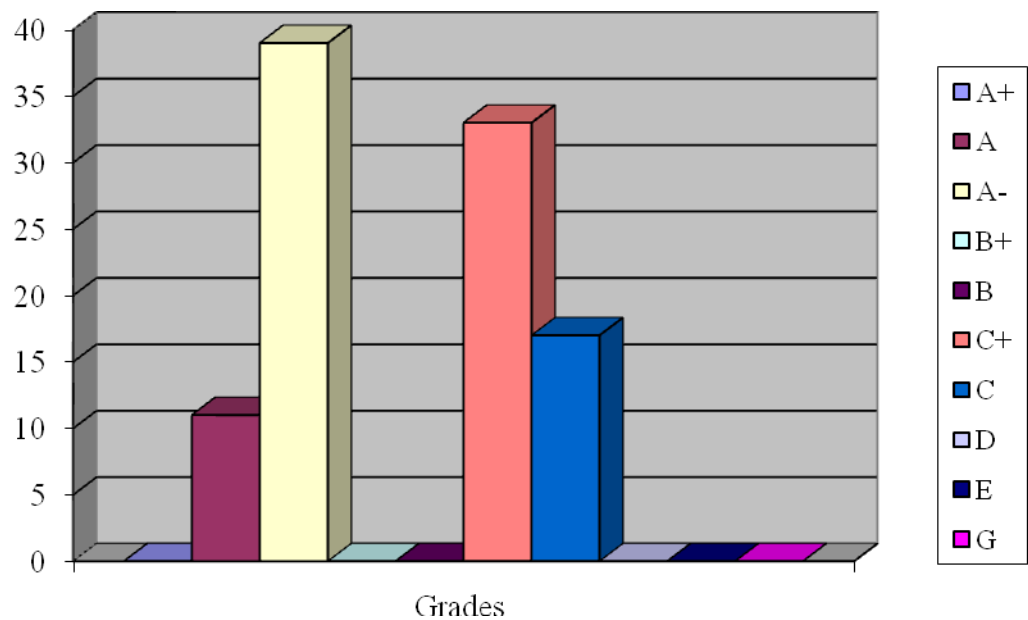


Figure 4.5: Scored grades based on the Malaysian Education grading system (2009)

As shown in the figure 4.5 above, two respondents (11%) scored grade A, seven respondents (39%) scored grade A-, six respondents (33%) scored grade C+ and three respondents (17%) scored grade C. The researcher used the interpretation of grades to categorize the comprehension performance by the respondents.

Based on the interpretation of grades shown in table 4.4 below, the researcher concludes that the comprehending performance is at a high distinction level for 11% of respondents, distinction level for 39% of respondents, upper credit level for 33% of respondents and level of credit for 17% respondents. In other words, the comprehending performance for nine respondents are at the high level, which means they can read, comprehend and respond to the questions. The nine respondents are one from the Malay ethnicity, two from the Chinese ethnicity and all others from the Indian ethnicity.

Table 4.4: Malaysian Education grades and interpretation (2009), taken from Bil: 4/2009 Circular

| Marks | New grading | Interpretation |
|--------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 90-100 | A+ | Super Distinction |
| 80-89 | A | High Distinction |
| 75-79 | A- | Distinction |
| 70-74 | B+ | Super Credit |
| 65-69 | B | High Credit |
| 60-64 | C+ | Upper Credit |
| 50-59 | C | Credit |
| 40-49 | D | Upper Pass |
| 30-39 | E | Pass |
| 0-29 | G | Fail |

The ability to comprehend is based on the input that respondents receive. According to Krashen's input hypothesis (1985, *as quoted in* Wu, 2010), comprehending input helps learners acquire language. Before the process of comprehension starts, learners have to be familiar with the language input. A point that needs to be focused is, according to the data collected for the biographical background (refer to table 4.2), the Indian respondents communicate in English language with others. Therefore, the impact of this situation leads the Indian respondents to acquire the language easily and comprehend the input correctly.

In the present study, all the six Indian students obtained higher score (grade A) in the reading task, as they were able to comprehend the text by selecting the correct answers. Only two Chinese respondents, out of six who participated in the present study, scored grade A. Among the six Malay respondents, who participated in the present study, only one respondent scored grade A compared to the other five Malay respondents.

To sum up, for the reading task, all of the Indian respondents scored higher grades compared to the respondents from the Malay and Chinese ethnicity. Indian respondents' comprehending performance is found to be higher compared to the other two ethnicity; Malay and Chinese.

4.3 Writing task

All respondents completed the writing task by writing an essay on Malaysian multicultural situation, with particular reference to food habits, costumes, arts and leisure time/hobbies. All respondents wrote an essay not exceeding 350 words.

The researcher used Keshavarz' (1999 *as cited in* Zarei, 2011) model to analyse the linguistic features used in the essay written by the respondents. All errors found in the written essay were grouped into three types, viz, orthographic (phonological), lexical (including lexical and semantic) and grammatical (morphological and syntactic):

4.3.1 The analysis of orthographic errors is as follows:

a) Spelling errors (including syllabic)

i. **t → it**

* During *fesitival* seasons, Indians will wear their traditional costumes.

ii. **s → ss**

* Malaysia is a multicultural country
examples we have many race like Malay,
Chinesse and Indian.

iii. **as → less**

* *Whereless* for *Chinesse* girls and ladies will
wear “cong sang”.

iv. **ver → rve**

* our *gorvemen* opening 1Malaysia
event...

4.3.2 The analysis of lexical-semantic errors is as follows:

a) **Code switching** (respondents use their mother tongue instead of the target language word)

i. **use of ‘ketupat’ and ‘roti jala’**

* We have all kind of food like *ketupat*, chicken and meat gravy, and *roti jala*.

ii. **use of ‘kain pelekat’ and ‘kain batik’**

* For men, they will wear *kain pelekat* and for women they will wear *kain batik*.

iii. **use of ‘baju kurung’, ‘baju kebaya’ and ‘baju melayu’**

* On festive seasons, the Malays will wear *baju kurung* or *baju kebaya* for women and *baju melayu* for men.

- iv. use of ‘kari ayam’, ‘kari ikan’, ‘capati’ and ‘tosai masala’

* Indians do have such spicy dishes that are quite similar to Malays such as *kari ayam*, *kari ikan*, *capati*, *tosai masala*.

4.3.3 The analysis of grammatical errors (morphological and syntactic) is as follows:

a) *Errors in the use of prepositions*

➤ Omission of prepositions

- i. **in** → \emptyset

* \emptyset Malaysia there is a lot of races.

- ii. **to** → \emptyset

* Malaysia’s multicultural activities lead this country to be one of the holiday sites for the tourist \emptyset visit.

iii. **to** → \emptyset ; **at** → \emptyset

* Malay men go \emptyset the mosque during
leisure time; Malay women stay \emptyset
home.

➤ Wrong use of prepositions

i. **in** → **at**

* We conduct prayers **at** the morning.

ii. **on** → **at**

* **At** the eve of Chinese New Year, we
have family gathering.

iii. **during** → **in**

* **In** the leisure times, the men play
'thabbala', a music instrument.

iv. **on → in**

* This type of food only serves *in*
specific day just like Hari Raya.

v. **on → in**

* *In* Deepavali, we serve a lot of food.

➤ Redundant use of prepositions

i. **ø → in**

* We visit *in* our relatives and friends'
house.

b) *Errors in the use of tenses*

i. **Present tense → Past tense**

* The food we usually *prepared* on normal
days....

- ii. **Future tense → Auxiliary Verb (Future tense) +
Past tense**

* We *will celebrated* Eid at 1 Syawal.

- iii. **Future tense → Auxiliary Verb (Future tense) +
Past tense**

* We also *will visited* graves to cleaning the
graves.

- iv. **Present tense → Auxiliary Verb (Future tense) +
Paste tense**

* We *will weared* “Baju Melayu” and the girl
they *will weared* “Baju Kurung”.

c) ***Errors due to lack of concord (relationship)***

- i. **Plural → Singular (in tense form)**

* We *serves* our guest with traditional
delicacies.

ii. **Singular → Plural (in noun as subject)**

* Indian woman *wear* sari on most occasions.

iii. **Copula Verb (plural form) → Copula verb (singular form)**

* Their type of costumes *is* sari, dhoti, Punjabi suits, jippa.

d) ***Errors in the use of quantifiers***

i. **a lot of * → several †**

* Malays has *several* of foods, arts and etc.

a lot of * -- refers to a large number or amount of somebody or something: A lot of people are coming to the meeting; Black coffee with a lot of sugar (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2005).

several †-- refers to more than two but not very many: Several letters arrived this morning (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2005).

e) Errors in the use of plural forms

➤ Omission of plural form (s)

i. **Plural → Singular**

* We have all *kind* of food like 'ketupat', chicken and meat gravy.

ii. **Plural → Singular**

* One of the biggest *population* are Malays and *Indian*.

There are a few examples of errors found in the written essays. The researcher has categorized the errors and presented few examples for each type of error.

Table 4.5: Number of errors found in the written essays

| Errors/Ethnicity | Malay | | Chinese | | Indian | | Total | |
|-------------------------|-------------|-----|-------------|-----|-------------|-----|-------|-----|
| | Respondents | | Respondents | | Respondents | | | |
| | N.E | % | N.E | % | N.E | % | N.E | % |
| Orthographic | | | | | | | | |
| Spelling Errors | 53 | 17 | 57 | 20 | 32 | 13 | 142 | 17 |
| Lexical-Semantic | | | | | | | | |
| Code Switching | 77 | 24 | 69 | 24 | 69 | 29 | 215 | 25 |
| Morphological | | | | | | | | |
| Preposition Errors | 48 | 15 | 42 | 15 | 27 | 11 | 117 | 14 |
| Tense Errors | 61 | 19 | 54 | 19 | 61 | 25 | 176 | 21 |
| Quantifier Errors | 33 | 10 | 28 | 10 | 17 | 7 | 78 | 10 |
| Syntactic | | | | | | | | |
| Lack of Concord | 33 | 10 | 28 | 10 | 17 | 7 | 78 | 10 |
| Plural Form Errors | 33 | 10 | 26 | 9 | 21 | 9 | 80 | 9 |
| Total | 322 | 100 | 287 | 100 | 240 | 100 | 849 | 100 |

N.E – Number of Errors; % - Percentage

The table above indicates the number and percentage of errors made by the respondents from each ethnic group. Keshavarz' model (1999 *as cited in* Zarei, 2011) was used to categorize the errors. For the orthographic type, a total of 53 errors found in the Malay respondents' written essays, 57 errors found in the

Chinese respondents' written essays and 32 errors found in the Indian respondents' written essays.

77 lexical-semantic errors were found in the Malay respondents' written essays. The Chinese and Indian respondents' made 69 lexical-semantic errors each in their written essays.

For the morphological-syntactical type, the researcher found 192 errors in the Malay respondents' written essays. The Chinese respondents' made 161 errors and the Indian respondents' made 139 errors.

Highest number of errors is found only in the grammatical level, viz, morphological and syntactic structures. That is, 492 errors compared to 142 errors for the orthographic type and 215 errors for the lexical-semantic type. Among the three ethnicities, the total number of errors made by the Malay respondents is 322, Chinese respondents is 287 and 240 errors made by the Indian respondents. The highest number of errors was found in the written essays of the Malay respondents.

4.4 Listening task

According to Rost (2002 *as cited in* Kurita, 2012), second language listening (L2) has two overlapping processes. Firstly, the respondents have to comprehend the input by understanding the message that they are listening. Secondly, respondents should learn the L2 through the oral input. The table below shows the scores respondents obtained for the listening task carried out.

Table 4.6: Scores for the listening task

| <i>Respondents</i> | <i>Scores (%)</i> | <i>Respondents</i> | <i>Scores (%)</i> |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>f1m</i> | 100 | <i>m1m</i> | 83.3 |
| <i>f2m</i> | 83.3 | <i>m2m</i> | 83.3 |
| <i>f3m</i> | 83.3 | <i>m3m</i> | 83.3 |
| <i>f4c</i> | 83.3 | <i>m4c</i> | 100 |
| <i>f5c</i> | 100 | <i>m5c</i> | 100 |
| <i>f6c</i> | 100 | <i>m6c</i> | 83.3 |
| <i>f7i</i> | 100 | <i>m7i</i> | 100 |
| <i>f8i</i> | 100 | <i>m8i</i> | 100 |
| <i>f9i</i> | 100 | <i>m9i</i> | 100 |

The table above indicates the scores each respondent scored in the listening task. All respondents could comprehend the input of the listening text

and then respond to the questions given to them. 58% of the total respondents provided all correct answers, whereas 42% wrote wrong answers for at least a minimum of one question.

Based on the new grading system (2009) of the Malaysian Education, if a student scored between 80%-89%, he/she obtains a grade A, whereas if he/she scored between 90%-100%, the student obtains a grade A+. Therefore, all the respondents scored grade A for the listening task prepared by the researcher. Most of the respondents who scored grade A+ (super distinction) are from the Indian cultural background. The results show that the Indian respondents are able to understand and comprehend the input then figure out the suitable answers for the listening task.

According to Krashen's input hypothesis (1985 *as cited in* Ellis, 2005), learners acquire language by comprehending the input addressed to them. In other words, when a learner is listening to an audio material, the learner comprehends the input and thus acquires the language. Learner, not only acquires the target language by listening to audio materials, but also acquires the intended language every time he/she listens to others speak, listen to news on the television or radio, listen to songs etc. in the target language. Once the learner listens, he/she may react or respond by writing or speaking. While learner comprehends the input by listening, language acquisition also takes place concurrently.

All the Indian respondents scored high marks in the listening task because the Indian respondents communicate with most of the people around them in English, while they do so, they listen to English almost every day from relatives, cousins, best friends, school friends tuition friends, teachers at school and friends at religious place (refer to table 4.2). This helps the Indian respondents in the process of acquiring the English language since they listen to conversations in English.

Since the Indian respondents are able to acquire the English language, the Indian respondents too are able to respond accurately by answering the listening task exercise given to them. The researcher agrees with the Krashen's input hypothesis that states comprehension of input helps learners to acquire language.

4.5 Speaking task

Not all respondents participated in the speaking task. All three female respondents from the Malay and Chinese ethnicity took part in the speaking task. As for the Indian ethnicity, all three female respondents and one male respondent only participated in the speaking task. All respondents who participated in the speaking task were asked to speak on a wedding ceremony (including wedding rituals, activities etc) of their own ethnicity.

The researcher used Keshavarz' (1999 *as cited in* Zarei, 2011) model to analyse the errors found in the conversation among the respondents during the speaking task. The analysis is restricted to the lexical, morphological and syntactic levels.

4.5.1 The analysis of lexical-semantic errors is as follows:

a) Code switching (lexical level)

The researcher found interference of linguistic features from the respondents' mother tongue in the speaking task. The following are some of the features due to code switching found:

i. **use of ‘manavarai’**

* ...groom will sit at the *manavarai*.

ii. **use of ‘metthi’**

* ...the *metthi* for the groom

iii. **use of ‘iyer’**

* The *iyer* will say some mantras

iv. **use of ‘akad nikah’**

* ...start with *akad nikah* where the brides...

v. **use of ‘mas kahwin’**

* ...they change *mas kahwin* as well...

vi. **use of ‘angpow’**

* ...they will give *angpow* to...

The researcher found code switching more frequently among the Malay and Indian respondents while they speak.

4.5.2 The analysis of morphological-syntactic errors is as follows:

a) Error in the use of prepositions

➤ Omission of prepositions

i. **to** → **∅**

* The bride and groom will leave **∅** the groom house.

➤ Wrong use of prepositions

i. **on** → **in**

* ...place the metthi **in** her toes.

ii. $\emptyset \rightarrow$ **from**

* ...awhile ago ***from*** the wedding...

➤ Redundant use of prepositions

i. $\emptyset \rightarrow$ **for**

* ... to get ***for*** blessing...

b) *Errors in the use of tenses*

➤ Wrong use of tenses

i. **Present tense (for singular noun, verb is used with 's') \rightarrow Present tense (singular noun, verb is used without 's')**

* ...the ceremony ***take*** place.

ii. **Past tense → Present tense (Copula verb)**

- * How *is* the wedding take place from the beginning?

iii. **Past tense → Present Continuous tense**

- * ...milk is *adding* with ketchup...

➤ Omission of tenses

i. **Past tense → ∅**

- * How much ∅ you get?

c) ***Errors due to lack of concord*** (relationship)

i. **Plural form → Singular form**

- * ...priest who *conduct* the ceremony.

d) *Errors in the use of quantifiers and intensifiers*

➤ Redundant use of intensifiers

i. $\emptyset \rightarrow$ **very**

* ..very **very** interesting...

e) *Errors in the use of plural forms*

➤ Omission of plural forms

i. **prayers** \rightarrow **prayer**; **rituals** \rightarrow **ritual**

* ...conduct few **prayer** and **ritual**...

ii. **cousins** \rightarrow **cousin**

* ...to the young and unmarried
cousin.

f) Errors in the use of articles

➤ Omission of article

i. **the** → \emptyset

* ...after that \emptyset groom and the bride

ii. **a** → \emptyset

* ...such as \emptyset ring or...

➤ Redundant use of article

i. \emptyset → **the**

* ...will serve **the** tea to the elders...

ii. \emptyset → **the**

* ...on the thali and **the** bride's
forehead.

After analysing the speaking task data, the researcher found more errors in the data of the Indian respondents compared to that of the Malay and Chinese respondents' data. This is due to duration (time taken to complete) of speaking activity among the three ethnicities. The Indian respondents' conversation lasted for five minutes, the Malay respondents lasted for three minutes fifty-nine seconds and the Chinese respondents spoke for two minutes and fifteen seconds. Therefore, the Indian respondents' data is lengthier compared to the data of the Chinese and Malay respondents

Furthermore, the Indian respondents did not have any notes while participating in the speaking task, unlike the Malay respondents who had a few notes with them and the Chinese respondents had a pre-prepared dialogue with them. Since the researcher for the present study wants to find out the types of errors that occurred in the speaking task, this situation has to be taken into consideration because it affects the results obtained for the current study. To sum up, the occurrences of errors are mostly in the morphological and syntactical levels of the language.

Moreover, the researcher also evaluated the speaking data by using the model proposed by Hymes (1974 *as cited in* Lee, 2007), the S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G model. The model proposed by Hymes, is known as S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G model that consists of 8 elements that as shown in the table below:

Table 4.7: Hymes (1974 as cited in Lee, 2007) S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G model

| Elements | Explanation |
|------------------------------|--|
| Setting and scene (S) | The setting refers to the time and place (physical condition); while scene describes the environment of the situation (psychological situation/cultural definition). |
| Participants (P) | This refers to who is involved in the speech including the speaker and the audience. This includes the speaker and listener. |
| Ends (E) | This relates to the purpose and goals of the speech along with any outcome of the speech. |
| Act Sequence (A) | This element has to do with the order of events that took place during the speech. |
| Key (K) | The key is the overall tone or manner of the speech. |
| Instrumentalities (I) | The instrumentalities are the form and style of the speech that is given. |
| Norms (N) | Norms is what is socially acceptable at the event. |
| Genre (G) | Genre relates to the type of speech that is given. |

Table 4.8 shows the analysis for the Malay respondents. There were only three female Malay respondents who participated in the speaking task. Below is analysis using Hymes' S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G model (1974 as cited in Lee, 2007).

Table 4.8: S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G model analysis for Malay respondents

| Elements | Explanation |
|----------|---|
| S | <p>The setting of the speech took place in an informal setting after school hours in the school canteen.</p> <p>The speech was among a group of 3 best friends from the Malay ethnicity, who have witnessed a Malay wedding.</p> |
| P | <p>3 female Malay respondents (f1m, f2m and f3m) participated in the speaking task. There were one active speaker, and two active listeners. The speaker spoke on the ceremonies carried out in a Malay wedding, whereas the listeners listened to the input.</p> |
| E | <p>The speaker spoke on the Malay wedding ceremonies to teach the listeners the sequence of a Malay wedding, since the listeners have not witnessed a Malay wedding for the duration of a year. They also needed further input on the ceremonies carried out during a Malay wedding.</p> |
| A | <p>The speaker structured the plots and development of the Malay wedding. There were occurrences of interruptions by the listeners because the listeners needed more information on the terms used, such as, <i>hantaran</i>, <i>wali</i>, <i>mas kahwin</i> etc. These words are culture</p> |

Table 4.8, continued

| | |
|----------|--|
| | <p>bound words. The speaker had to switch over from English to Malay (mother tongue) as there were no suitable English equivalents to replace the culture bound words.</p> <p>Based on the notes taken during observation, the researcher was aware that the conversation among the Malay respondents was informal and friendly.</p> |
| K | The speaker used hand gestures (based on the notes taken during observations) for the listeners to understand the sequence of a Malay wedding. |
| I | The speaker used quite a number of cultural bound words, such as <i>bersanding, aurat, merisik</i> etc. |
| N | The overall tone and manner of the Malay respondents' speech are more informal, a little playful with giggles and smiles. |
| G | It is a friendly chat. |

The researcher agrees with the view that the Malay respondents' speech is appropriate to the topic of discussion following the aspects in the Hymes' (1974 *as cited in* Lee, 2007) model of S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G. The Malay respondents were asked to speak on the ways a Malay wedding ceremony performed. The researcher analysed the data (refer table 4.8) using S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G model proposed by Hymes (1974 *as cited in* Lee, 2007). Three female Malay

respondents participated in the speaking task and they used culture bound words frequently.

The Malay respondents' speech can be classified as a friendly chat and their speech is appropriate to the topic of discussion. This is due to the occurrence of every element of the S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G model (Hymes, 1974 *as cited in* Lee, 2007) found in the Malay respondents' speech.

Table 4.9: S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G model analysis for Chinese respondents

| Elements | Explanation |
|-----------------|--|
| S | <p>The setting of the speech took place in an informal setting after school hours outside the school library.</p> <p>The speech was among a group of 3 best friends from the Chinese ethnicity, one of them who has witnessed a Chinese wedding.</p> |
| P | <p>3 Chinese respondents (female) participated in the speaking task.</p> <p>There were one active speaker, and two active listeners. The speakers spoke on the ceremonies carried out in a Chinese wedding, while others listened to the input. (# there were traces of one listener helping out the speaker in adding additional information)</p> |
| E | <p>The speaker spoke on the Chinese wedding ceremonies to explain to the listeners the sequence of a Chinese wedding, since the listeners did not get an opportunity to participate in a Chinese wedding for a year and so they needed further input on the ceremonies carried out</p> |

Table 4.9, continued

| | |
|----------|--|
| | during a Chinese wedding. |
| A | The speaker used a prepared structured plots and development of a Chinese wedding. There were fewer occurrences of interruptions by the listeners because they were taking turns based on the prepared dialogue. Based on the notes taken during observation, the researcher was able to find out that the conversation among the Chinese respondents was informal and friendly. |
| K | None |
| I | The speaker used only one culture bound word (<i>angpow</i>). |
| N | The overall tone and manner of the Chinese respondents' speech is an informal setting, without smiles or giggles as in the case of Indian and Malay respondents. (To take note: The respondents were referring to the prepared dialogues while the recording was on, they were seriously taking turns to read). |
| G | It is a prepared friendly chat. |

The table above shows the analysis of speaking task that was carried out with the Chinese respondents. The Chinese respondents' speech missed out an element from the S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G model (Hymes, 1974 *as cited in* Lee, 2007), which is the Key (K). This element explains the overall tone or manner of the

speech, as stated in table 4.7 presented above. The researcher is very sure that the Chinese respondents' speech lacks the 'Key' element because they were not communicating naturally since they were reading out from a pre-planned dialogue that they have prepared beforehand.

The Chinese respondents were also assigned to speak on the ways a Chinese wedding ceremony takes place. Three female Chinese respondents participated in the speaking activity. Based on the researcher's short notes, all three respondents had a piece of paper with a pre-prepared dialogue. Therefore, during the speaking task, all three respondents were taking turns in reading out their script. After the recording was over, the respondents claimed that their Indian classmates helped them to prepare the dialogue for the speaking task.

Table 4.9 shows the analysis of the Chinese respondents' speech using the S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G model proposed by Hymes (1974 *as cited in* Lee, 2007). The analysis shows that the Chinese respondents' speech is appropriate to the topic of discussion.

Table 4.10: S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G model analysis for the Indian respondents

| Elements | Explanation |
|-----------------|---|
| S | <p>The setting of the speech took place in an informal setting during the break time and in the classroom.</p> <p>The speech was among a group of 4 best friends representing the</p> |

Table 4.10, continued

| | |
|----------|--|
| | Indian ethnicity, who have and have not witnessed an Indian wedding. |
| P | There are 4 Indian respondents (1 male and 3 female). There were two active speakers, and two active listeners. They spoke on the ceremonies carried out in an Indian wedding, whereas the listeners listened to the input. |
| E | The two speakers spoke on the Indian wedding ceremonies to explain the listeners the sequence of an Indian wedding, since the listeners have not witnessed an Indian wedding before. |
| A | The speakers structured the plots and development of an Indian wedding. There were occurrences of interruptions by the listeners because they needed further clarification of some of the terms used, such as, <i>manavarai</i> , <i>iyer</i> etc. |
| K | The speakers were excited and used hand gestures (based on the notes taken during observations) for the listeners to understand the sequence of an Indian wedding. |
| I | Both the speakers used quite a number of culture bound words, such as <i>thali</i> , <i>jippa</i> , <i>vesthi</i> etc. |
| N | The overall tone and manner of the Indian respondents' speech is informal and friendly (laughs loudly, giggles) |
| G | It is a wedding genre. |

The table above indicates the analysis made with reference to the Indian respondents' speech. Three female Indian respondents and one male Indian respondent took part in the speaking task. The Indian respondents were also asked to speak on the ways an Indian wedding ceremony takes place. Code switching phenomenon is found between English and mother tongue (Tamil language) during their performance.

All the elements of S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G model (Hymes, 1974 *as cited in* Lee, 2007) are found in the Indian respondents' speech. The researcher concludes that the Indian respondents' speech is appropriate to the topic of discussion.

All respondents' speech is appropriate to the topic of discussion. However, it is also found that even if the Chinese respondents' speech lacks the element of 'Key', still their speech is appropriate to the topic of discussion.

4.6 Conclusion

To conclude, the research on the comprehension performance for the reading skill showed that all Indian respondents scored higher marks compared to Malay and Chinese respondents. The research on comprehension performance for listening skill obtained shows that all the Indian respondents scored high marks compared to the Malay and Chinese respondents. In general, all the Indian students obtained grade A (distinction) in both the reading and listening skills.

The analysis with reference to the types of errors in writing and speaking skills shows that most errors occur in the morphology and syntax levels. The research on the appropriateness of respondents' spoken discourse to the topic of discussion shows that all respondents' spoken discourses from the three ethnicities are found to be appropriate to topic of discussion. However, the Chinese respondents' speech lacks the element 'K' (key) found in the S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G model (Hymes, 1974 *as cited in* Lee, 2007).

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter offers a conclusion of the study in relation to the Form 4 secondary school students' English language performance in a multicultural classroom setting. This chapter will conclude and provide some of the implications of the study. This study was conducted in a secondary school in Klang Valley.

5.1 Summary of the study

This study has brought to light English language performance in a multicultural classroom setting among Form 4 secondary school students. In Malaysia, English language was introduced as the compulsory second language in the secondary schools (Asmah Hj. Omar, 1979 *as quoted in* Solomon, 1988). The development of the four skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking, is the central focus of the Secondary School English Language Programme in KBSM (Hassan and Selamat, 2002).

This research hopefully would help teachers to analyze the issues in English language learning in a multicultural classroom setting and have a better view to select effective teaching strategies to overcome the issues. It is also expected to motivate and help the students to develop their learning skills and establish learning autonomy in a multicultural classroom setting. The data were collected using a set of questionnaire that consists of five sections and with the help of 18 respondents from three different ethnic groups viz; Malay, Chinese and Indian. The questionnaire was a task based activity, in which the respondents needed to complete the entire task that focused on each language skill (reading, writing, listening and speaking).

The findings were reported in the form of tables, figures and textual analysis. The researcher made a detailed explanation for the performance of comprehension in reading and listening skills using the Malaysian Education grading system (2009) along with the Krashen's comprehensible input (1985), classification of types of errors in writing and speaking skills with reference to Keshavarz' model (1999 *as cited in* Zarei, 2011) and appropriateness of speech to the topic of discussion by adopting a model proposed by Hymes (1974 *as cited in* Lee, 2007) which is the S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G model.

The methodology used in this study helped the researcher to discover students' comprehending performance for the reading skill. Respondents were asked to read 5 genres of texts and choose answers for the comprehension

questions. It was found that for the reading skill, all six students from the Indian ethnic who participated in this study scored higher marks (75%-88%) and grades (grade A- and A; distinction and high distinction) as compared to the Chinese and Malay students (refer table 4.3 and 4.4). So, the comprehension performance of the Indian students for the reading skill is at a high level as compared to the Chinese and Malay students.

The researcher classified errors found in the essay that was written by 18 students who participated in the study. The errors found were classified into three types viz, orthographic, lexical (lexical and semantic) and grammatical (morphological and syntactic). Out of the three types of errors found in the written essays, the highest occurrence of errors was mainly in the grammatical types, viz, morphological and syntactic. Thus, there are three types of errors, viz, orthographic type, lexical type and grammatical type, found in the process of development in the writing skill.

For the listening skill, all 18 students who participated in the study listened to an audio CD and then wrote answers for the questions asked. It was found that all the 18 students scored grades A and A+ (refer table 4.5). All of the Indian respondents scored grade A+ (high distinction) for the listening skill. Therefore, the comprehending performance of the Indian students is higher when compared to the Chinese and Malay students.

The 10 students who volunteered for the speaking activity were engaged in a small conversation. They were given a topic to discuss by the researcher and their conversations were recorded. There were two types of errors found in the speaking skill. The two types of errors are found in the lexical and grammatical levels. As far as the speaking skill is concerned, most of the errors were found in the grammatical level. Hence, there are two types of errors (lexical and grammatical) found in the process of development in the speaking skill. Furthermore, the methodology used helped the researcher in analyzing the speech of the students. Students' speech was found to be appropriate to the topic of discussion. All elements of the S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G model (Hymes, 1974 *as cited in* Lee, 2007) were found in the Malay and Indian students' speech. The Chinese students' speech lacked an element 'Key'; nevertheless, their speech was also appropriate to the topic of discussion.

5.2 Discussion of the research findings

Krashen's input hypothesis (1985 as quoted in Wu, 2010), comprehending input helps learners acquire language. In other words, the learner needs to be familiar with the language input or language used before the starting of the comprehension. All respondents answered the entire comprehension questions for the reading and listening skills. The scores of each respondent were transformed using the Malaysian Education grading system (2009). For the reading skill, all six Indian respondents scored the higher grade (grade A). Two Chinese

respondents and a Malay respondent also scored grade A for the reading skill. As for the listening skill, all of the respondents scored grade A. Even though all respondents scored grade A, all the six Indian respondents and three Chinese respondents scored a super distinction as compared to the other respondents who scored high distinction. The Indian respondents' comprehending performance is much higher when compared to the Chinese and Malay respondents in reading and listening skills. This is so, because both in the reading and listening tasks, all six Indian respondents scored higher grades (grade A for reading task and grade A+; super distinction for listening task).

Keshavarz' error analysis model (1999 *as cited in* Zarei, 2011) suggested four categories of errors, namely, orthographic type, phonological type, lexico-semantic type and syntactic-morphological type. The researcher analysed the written essay for errors made in the orthographic level, lexical level (lexical and semantic) and grammatical level (morphology and semantic). The researcher used Keshavarz' error analysis model (1999 *as cited in* Zarei, 2011) to classify the types of errors. The total number of errors made by all the respondents is 849 that includes all the three types of errors. Among the three ethnic groups, the highest number of errors was made by the Malay respondents, 322 errors. The total number of errors made by the Chinese respondents is 287 and the Indian respondents made 240 errors for the writing of an essay. So, Malay respondents had made more errors in the written essay than the Chinese and Indian respondents. Most of the occurrences of errors were in the grammatical level

(morphological and syntactic). In the analysis of the speaking task, the researcher restricted the analysis to the lexical level (lexical and semantic) and grammatical level (morphological and syntactic). From the classification of errors for the listening task, it was found that most of the occurrences of errors were made in the grammatical level (morphological and syntactic).

To sum up, there are three types of errors found in the writing skill and two types of errors found in the speaking skill. With reference to the writing skill, errors were found in the orthographic, lexical and grammatical levels. Among the three types of errors, grammatical errors (morphology and syntax) are found to be high. With reference to the speaking skill, most occurrences of errors were in the grammatical level viz, morphological and syntactic. So, most of occurrences of errors were made in the grammatical level.

The researcher used the Hymes' S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G model (1974 *as cited in* Lee, 2007) to analyse the spoken discourse as to find the relationship between the respondents' speech and the topic of discussion. All the three groups voluntarily participated in the speaking task. The researcher was just a passive participant who recorded the respondents' conversation. The analysis showed that all the respondents' speech was appropriate to the topic of discussion. All the elements found in the S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G model (Hymes, 1974 *as cited in* Lee, 2007) were all tested in the Malay and Indian respondents' speech. In the Chinese respondents' speech, there was a lack of an element from the S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G

model (Hymes, 1974 *as cited in* Lee, 2007), which is the ‘Key’ element. The ‘Key’ element explains the overall tone or the manner of the speech. There was no natural communication among the three Chinese respondents who volunteered to participate in the speaking task. This is so, because the Chinese respondents were reading out their prepared dialogue. However, even though they Chinese respondents’ speech lacks the ‘Key’ element of the S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G model (Hymes, 1974 *as cited in* Lee, 2007), their speech is still appropriate to the topic of discussion. To sum up, all the three groups of respondents’ speech who represented the three ethnic groups, are appropriate to the topic of discussion.

The study concluded that, all Indian respondents’ comprehending performance in reading and listening skills are at a distinction level (as interpreted in Malaysian Education grading system, 2010) compared to the Malay and Chinese respondents. Following the Keshavarz’ error analysis model (1999 *as cited in* Zarei, 2011), the types of errors found in the writing and speaking skills are at the grammatical level (morphological and syntactic). Finally, all respondents’ speech is appropriate to the topic of discussion as analysed using S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G model (Hymes, 1974 *as cited in* Lee, 2007).

5.3 Conclusion of the research findings

Through the findings obtained, it is possible to observe the fact that Indian respondents scored higher marks and grades in the reading and listening tasks. All

six Indian respondents scored grade A (high distinction) for the reading task and grade A+ (super distinction) for the listening task, as illustrated by the Malaysian Education grading system (2009). The Indian respondents' comprehending performance is also found to be high when compared to the Malay and Chinese in both the reading and listening skills.

The findings of the study showed that there are three different types of errors found in the writing skill and two different types of errors found in the speaking skill. Errors made in the writing task are found in the orthographic, lexical (lexical and semantic) and grammatical levels (morphological and syntactic), as explained in Keshavarz' error analysis model (1999 *as cited in* Zarei, 2011). Errors made in the speaking task are found in the lexical (lexical and semantic) and grammatical levels (morphological and syntactic), as explained in the Keshavarz' error analysis model (1999 *as cited in* Zarei, 2011). Mostly, errors were found in the morphological level (morphological and syntactic) as for the both writing and speaking tasks. Therefore errors made in the grammatical level (morphological and syntactic) are frequent and high with reference to the writing and listening skills.

The findings also show that all respondents' speech is appropriate to the topic of discussion. The Malay and Indian respondents had all the elements of the S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G model (Hymes, 1974 *as cited in* Lee, 2007), except for the Chinese respondents; they lacked the 'Key' element. Even though the 'Key'

element could not be found in the Chinese respondents' speech, their speech is still appropriate to the topic of discussion.

5.4 Recommendations for future research

Malaysia is well-known for its multicultural society (Renganathan, 2005). In a multicultural society like Malaysia, English plays a vital role in connecting the three different ethnicities: the Malays, the Chinese and the Indians, in which these groups rely on English to communicate outside their ethnic groups (Murugesan, 2003).

The Malaysian's National Language Policy (1981) defines English as the second most important language and should be taught in schools as a second language (Asmah Hj. Omar, 1985). Hence, English language is learned as a second language in the context of education in the secondary schools in Malaysia.

The present research on 'Students' English Language Performance in a Multicultural Classroom Setting' is in its' initial stage that needs further research to be carried out as a follow-up study in the domain of higher education. The issues and explanation given above just focuses on the prevailing language use in secondary school education. Therefore, further research needs to be carried out to obtain more reliable and valid results.

It would be more meaningful and useful if a systematic and more adequate study is undertaken in future to present students' performance related to the learning of English language in a multicultural classroom setting.