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TEACHERS' INTEGRATION OF HIGHER ORDER THINKING SKILLS IN ESL READING CLASSROOM



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AFFIKAH FAZLYNA BINTI OMAR

UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN SULTAN IDRIS
2020



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TEACHERS' INTEGRATION OF HIGHER ORDER THINKING SKILLS IN ESL
READING CLASSROOM

AFFIKAH FAZLYNA BINTI OMAR

DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT
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SECOND LANGUAGE)
(MASTER BY MIXED MODE)

FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION
UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN SULTAN IDRIS

2020



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Master by Mixed Mode

PhD

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INTEGRASI KEMAHIRAN BERFIKIR ARAS TINGGI (KBAT) DALAM PENGAJARAN DAN PEMBELAJARAN KEMAHIRAN MEMBACA DALAM KELAS BAHASA INGGERIS

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk melihat persepsi guru mengenai penerapan pengajaran Kemahiran Berfikir Aras Tinggi (KBAT) dalam kelas Bahasa Inggeris dan strategi pengajaran dan pembelajaran (PdP) yang digunakan oleh guru. Kajian ini juga bertujuan untuk melihat sejauh mana penerapan KBAT dalam PdP guru dipengaruhi oleh persepsi, andaian serta pengetahuan sedia ada mengenai KBAT. Seramai 3 orang guru dari 3 buah sekolah telah dipilih untuk tujuan kajian yang berbentuk kualitatif ini. Instrumen yang digunakan adalah berbentuk temuramah sebanyak dua kali bagi setiap guru. Pencerapan bilik darjah juga dibuat sebanyak lima kali bagi setiap guru. Hasil kajian ini didapati strategi PdP setiap guru dipengaruhi oleh persepsi, andaian dan pengetahuan masing-masing. Ini menyebabkan variasi dalam penekanan penerapan KBAT dalam bilik darjah. Kajian juga menunjukkan bahawa guru mempunyai pengetahuan mengenai KBAT tetapi tidak begitu mahir dalam mengaplikasikan serta menerapkan kemahiran tersebut dalam PdP. Oleh yang demikian, latihan yang berkaitan dengan pedagogi untuk menerapkan KBAT dalam PdP haruslah dilaksanakan untuk memastikan KBAT dapat diterapkan dengan lebih efektif.

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Last but not a bit least, to all my friends who have helped me through this tough journey. I would not be able to make it without all of you.

TEACHERS' INTEGRATION OF HIGHER ORDER THINKING SKILLS IN ESL READING CLASSROOM

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate what teachers thought about integrating the teaching of HOTS in their ESL Reading lessons and the pedagogical strategies they used. It also intended to find out if their beliefs, assumptions and knowledge of HOTS influenced their pedagogical practices. The research used qualitative data gathering methods, namely interviews and classroom observations. 3 teachers were chosen as participants via purposeful sampling. 5 classroom observations were done for each participant. They were also interviewed before the first classroom observation and after the last classroom observation. The findings revealed that teachers pedagogical practices were influenced by their beliefs, assumptions and knowledge of HOTS. Hence, the degree of integrating HOTS via their lessons varied from one teacher to another. It was also found that teachers were confident of their content knowledge of HOTS. However, they were not sure of how to integrate it in the lessons. Therefore, more trainings on pedagogical aspects of HOTS should be carried out.



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APPENDIX 1

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Opening statement:

First of all, I'd like to thank you for agreeing to take part in this research and for spending some time for this interview. This interview will take approximately 30 minutes. The purpose of this interview is to find out your understanding of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS), what you think about integrating HOTS in your lessons and how you have incorporated HOTS in your teaching. Please be open and frank with your responses as to ensure the validity of this research. There is no right or wrong answers. So, please do not hesitate to share your honest views. Please be rest assured that your responses will remain confidential and will only be used for research purposes. This interview will be recorded with your consent.

Before we proceed, would you like to ask any questions?

(allow time for questions and clarifications)

Part A

1. Could you please introduce yourself?
2. Could you please share some information about your education background?
3. How long have you been teaching English to the form 4 and form 5 students?
4. How many English classes do you teach this year?

Part B

1. Are you familiar with Higher Order Thinking Skills or often referred to as HOTS?
2. What do you know about HOTS?
3. Do you think that HOTS is something new to our education system?
4. How do you perceive HOTS in the context of our education system?
5. Do you think students should be taught HOTS? Why?

Part C

1. Have you ever integrated the teaching of HOTS in your lessons?
2. Why did you do it?
3. How did you do it?
4. Are there any challenges that you face when incorporating HOTS? Please describe.
5. How do you overcome these challenges?
6. Having faced with all these challenges, would you still try to incorporate the teaching of HOTS in your lessons?

Possible additional questions adapted from Choy and Cheah, (2009)

1. From your perspective, what is HOTS?



2. What role in your opinion does HOTS play in your classroom?
3. Do you think that HOT happens in your classroom when you are teaching your students? If so, how do you know?
4. How do you think you could bring about HOTS among students?
5. What are the problems faced by students when you are trying to teach HOTS?
6. Do you think your lessons are enjoyable to students?
7. Do you think you would be able to integrate HOTS if you must?



APPENDIX 2

LESSON OBSERVATION FORM

Class:
Enrolment:
Day:
Time:
Skill:

Descriptive

Reflective

TEACHER A LESSON OBSERVATION 1

Class: Form 4 Ibnu Sina
Enrolment: 35 pupils
Day: Tuesday
Time: 10.20-11.40 a.m.
Skill: Reading

Descriptive

1. Students stood up and greeted the teacher.
2. Teacher acknowledged and told the students to sit down.
3. **Brainstorming:** Teacher wrote 'Successful Entrepreneur' on the board and asked what they understood by the words.
4. Students randomly answered 'berjaya', 'peniaga berjaya', 'good businessman'

Teacher: What do you understand by 'successful entrepreneur'? Do you know the meaning?

Class: Berjaya, peniaga berjaya, good businessman

Teacher: Yes. Good. You're right. We are looking at a businessmen who are successful...

Berjaya.

5. Teacher distributed a reading text on Anthony Wong, a successful entrepreneur.
6. Students did **silent reading**.
7. In pairs, students read aloud to each other (half of the text each).

Teacher: Do you understand the text?

Students: Yes...

Teacher: Is there any unfamiliar words? Any word that you don't understand?

Class: (silent)

Teacher: Okay... you can highlight words that you find difficult and we'll discuss.

8. Students highlighted unfamiliar words.
9. Teacher gave synonyms of those words and students were asked to **match** them.
10. Teacher discussed the answers with the students.
11. Teacher asked **if** students understood the text they read and the students said yes.
12. Teacher ask students to **'analyse the text and discuss'**... How Anthony Wong became a successful entrepreneur and the problems he faced.
13. Students were asked to put their ideas in a **mind-map** on a poster sheet.
14. Then, they did a **Gallery Walk** activity and students were asked to write comments on their friends' poster sheets.
15. Teacher also wrote comments on the poster sheets.
16. Then. Each group were asked to **create 3 questions** based on the text.
17. Students shared their questions with the class.
18. Teacher asked students to **brainstorm** on the values they learnt from the text.
19. Students were then asked to **write a summary** as a take-home task.

Commented [AF1]: Activity: Think, recall, make connections. HOTS:

Commented [AF2]: Activity: Encourages active reading. HOTS:

Commented [AF3]: Activity: Think, make connections and predict when guessing for meaning from context.

Commented [AF4]: Question Type: closed-ended. Should check for understanding by asking more open-ended questions that encourage thinking.

Commented [AF5]: Activity: HOTS and Teach to the Test. Summary writing 1119/2 Section C

Commented [AF6]: Activity: HOTS but no template given.

Commented [AF7]: Activity: evaluate and comment. HOTS:

Commented [AF8]: Activity: think, make connections, evaluate, create. Perhaps should ask them to answer each other's questions to make it more meaningful, interesting and enjoyable.

Commented [AF9]: Activity: Reflect, compare & contrast, make connections to real life

Commented [AF10]: SPM 1119/2 Section C clone question. End product is still exam related.



20. Teacher concluded the lesson by asking the students to share their opinions on having to create questions.

Teacher: So, when you created the 3 questions just now, how did you feel?

Students: (Silent).

Teacher: Was it difficult?

Student A: Not that difficult. But difficult also.

Teacher: (Laughing) Okay... you are confusing me now... Difficult or not?

Student B: Difficult to make difficult question... (giggling).

Teacher: Could you please explain that?

Student B: We didn't want our friends to get answers easily. So, we must make the questions difficult.

Student C: Beto... Beto... We must look smarter than them (laughing).

Student D: Difficult to think how to make difficult questions. Then we must think of the answers too.

Teacher: That's right. When you make questions, you must know the answer. It's good to know that you all really used your brains to think when creating the questions. It feels good to be able to challenge your friends, right?

Students: Yessss....



TEACHER A LESSON OBSERVATION 2

Class: Form 4 Ibnu Sina
Enrolment: 35 pupils
Day: Tuesday
Time: 10.20-11.40 a.m.
Skill: Reading

Descriptive

1. Students stood up and greeted the teacher.
2. Teacher acknowledged and told the students to sit down.
3. Students were divided into 6 groups.
4. Teacher showed pictures of people with health problems (e.g. obese, anorexia, diabetes, hypertension, kwashiorkor)
5. **Brainstorm:** Why do people suffer from these problems?
Students' responses: fast food, diet not balanced, not enough vitamins, not eating healthily, peer pressure, self-consciousness, stress
6. Teacher distributed an infographic on 'Healthy Eating Plate' and a worksheet where students were asked to transfer the information from the infographic onto the table in the worksheet (individual work).
7. Think-Pair-Share: Students discussed their answers with their face partner.
8. Then, teacher distributed 3 types of chocolate to each group (white, milk and dark). Students were asked to discuss which chocolate they think is the healthiest and why.
9. Students shared their choice and reasons with the class.
10. Each student was then given an article on reasons to eat more chocolate and asked complete an SQ3R chart in groups.
11. Survey=Record important titles and subtitles from the article
12. Question=Write 'who', 'what', 'why', 'how' questions from main topics
13. Read=Read and write answers to the questions above
14. Recite=Record key facts and phrases as needed for each question
15. Review=Create a summary for the article

Commented [AF1]: Drawing on students' general knowledge and also teaching new things. E.g. kwashiorkor

Commented [AF2]: Activity: Think, make connections and associations with previous knowledge and real life.

Commented [AF3]: Teach to the test: Information transfer SPM 1119/2 Section B.

Commented [AF4]: Activity: Discussion. Analysing, reasoning and making decisions.

Commented [AF5]: Activity: using thinking tool in reading. S=Survey, Q=Question, R=Read, R=Recite, R=Review.

Commented [AF6]: Identify the important titles/subtitles; requires HOTS.

Commented [AF7]: Asking Wh questions when reading: HOTS

Commented [AF8]: Able to process and understand the content being read

Commented [AF9]: Able to analyse and select. Summary writing: Teach to the test. SPM 1119/2 Section C.

TEACHER B LESSON OBSERVATION 1

Class: Form 4 UUM
Enrolment: 24 pupils
Day: Wednesday
Time: 7.30 - 8.40 a.m.
Skill: Reading

Descriptive

1. Lesson was carried out in a language lab.
2. Students were given a coloured popsicle stick each as they entered the room and were told to sit in groups of 4. Each group must have 4 different colours.
3. They were asked to write their name on the coloured popsicle stick while the teacher was connecting her laptop to the LCD screen.
4. Then the teacher fixed her mobile phone to a selfie stick and started taking a wefie photo with each group.
5. The mobile phone is somehow connected to the laptop and the wefie photos is reflected immediately on the LCD screen.
6. Students were giggling looking at each other's faces on the screen.
7. Then each group took turns to take a group wefie in the most creative pose. These are also reflected on the LCD screen.
8. Then...

Teacher: What did we do just now? Students: Selfie!

Teacher: Good. If it's a group, we also call it wefie. So, why do you think people take selfies?

Student A: To share on IG and FB.

Teacher: Good.

Student B: Because they perasan they so pretty.

Student A: Weiii.... Jealous ka?

Teacher: Any other reasons?

Student C: No one can help to take photo buat kenangan.

Teacher: Excellent. When there's no one to help us take photo, we have no choice but to take selfies. We want to keep the photo for memories, right? Maybe we've just met a friend whom we've never met for so long.

Student D: Saja syok syok buat ghamai.

9. Teacher distributed a card that contains questions on selfies to each group.

Who usually take selfies: adults or teenagers?

When do you take selfies?

What do you do with your selfies?

What is your favourite comment for your selfie?

Is selfie good or bad?

10. Teacher distributed a reading text prescribed in HEBAT Bacaan module on the pros and cons of selfie.

11. Jigsaw Reading: each group was asked to read different parts and discuss with the group members.

12. 1-Stray: One group member strays to other groups to share information discussed in his/her respective group. All groups will in the end able to gather information from each group.

Commented [AF1]: Teacher sets friendly and non-threatening environment

Commented [AF2]: Question type: Open-ended. HOTS: Evaluation.

Commented [AF3]: Repeat students' answer in English

Commented [AF4]: Question type: Short-answer requiring personal response. HOTS:

Commented [AF5]: Activity: Read, predict, make connections, discuss. HOTS:



13. Teacher asked each group to write in one sentence why they think selfie is good or bad.

Commented [AF6]: Activity and Question Type: Reasoning but limiting to only one sentence.



TEACHER B LESSON OBSERVATION 2

Class: Form 4 UUM
Enrolment: 24 pupils
Day: Wednesday
Time: 7.30 - 8.40 a.m.
Skill: Reading

Descriptive

- Lesson was carried out in a language lab.
- Students were given a coloured popsicle stick each as they entered the room and were told to sit in groups of 4. Each group must have 4 different colours.
- They were asked to write their names on the coloured popsicle stick while the teacher was connecting her laptop to the LCD screen. Then, the teacher collected the coloured popsicle sticks from the students in put them into a container.
- The teacher displayed an MCQ on the screen and asked students to answer it.

Which is the least important words? No/Excuse me/Yes/Thank you.
The correct answer was 'excuse me' and all students had answered correctly.

Teacher: The answer given is 'excuse me'. Do you really think so? When do you use 'excuse me'? When you need to ask for ways or directions... right? The important words you need to know when you go to other countries are No, Yes and Thank you.

Student A: Teacher, we must know to say hello also... like 'sawadikap' when we go to Thailand.

- Teacher displayed another MCQ on the screen.

Where do we go to if we want to change money to go abroad? Currency exchange outlet/supermarkets/post-office

The answer was currency exchange outlet and only 3 out of 6 groups answered correctly.

- Teacher gave the last question.

One of the basics you must learn for travelling to another country is writing/language/facilities.

The answer was language. All students answered correctly.

Teacher: Why language?

Students: To talk. To ask for ways.

Teacher: Yes, that's right. Good.

- Teacher played a video on travelling featuring people boarding their flights, doing activities while on holidays and enjoying beautiful sceneries.
- Then, students were asked to share two things that they remembered from the video.
- Each group were asked to take a laptop from the back of the classroom.
- They were given a link to a travel blog where they were asked to read an article on travelling to Singapore.
- Then, they were given a 'SWives, 1Husband' question template.

Commented [AF1]: Grouping

Commented [AF2]: Questioning

Commented [AF3]: Teacher asked and answered at the same time. Students not given the chance to think and answer.

Commented [AF4]: Students' response. HOTS. Making connections to previous knowledge of real life.

Commented [AF5]: Questioning

Commented [AF6]: Providing real life context

Commented [AF7]: LOTS

Commented [AF8]: Exploring real life context.



12. Based on the article found on the travel blog, they were required to create questions according to the template given.

13. After 10 minutes, teacher pulled out the popsicle sticks and called out students' names. They were asked to read out their questions and nominate a friend to answer.

14. Teacher: One of the concerns mentioned in the article was 'to consider safety as one of the criteria in choosing places to visit. Do you agree that safety is one of the criteria?

Student B: Yes.

Teacher: Yes. You know... some places are known for kidnapping and high crime rates.... Okay.

Right now, I'd like you to open this website on places to visit, and read the article. Choose one place that you would like to visit and write at least 3 interesting facts about the place that made you want to visit it.

15. The teacher provided an example. Students were asked to jot down their notes/discussion on an A4 paper.

16. One-Stray: One group members visits other groups to share information and to convince the groups to choose his/her place of choice as a holiday destination.

17. Then teacher conducted a voting session for the place of choice. The voting result was Japan being the best holiday destination of choice.

18. Before ending the class, the teacher asked:

Teacher: When you read the articles, what did you do to understand them?

Student B: Underline important words.

Student C: Ask meaning for words from teacher.

Teacher: Okay good... what else did you do? Did you ask questions?

Class: Yes...

Student D: Like the 5Wives, 1Husband questions!

Teacher: That's right. Excellent. You ask those questions so that you can understand what the articles are about.

Commented [AF9]: Activity: creating questions. HOTS

Commented [AF10]: Questioning

Commented [AF11]: Teacher provided reasons instead of getting them from students.

Commented [AF12]: Activity: meaningful and real.

Commented [AF13]: Activity: convincing people requires HOTS

Commented [AF14]: Emphasising and raising awareness of the processes when reading which involve thinking.



TEACHER C LESSON OBSERVATION 1

Class: Form 4 Sn 2
Enrolment: 30 pupils
Day: Friday
Time: 7.20 – 8.40 a.m.
Skill: Reading

Descriptive

- Teacher greeted the students and students stood up to greet the teacher.
- Teacher asked them to open their textbook to page 99 and look at the picture. Teacher asked questions as a lead-in activity.
Teacher: I want you to study the picture... What is the picture about?
Student A: The fireman.
Teacher: A fire... okay... What about number 2?
Students A: A car.
Student B: Car terbalik.
Teacher: Accident. Okay... Number 3?
Student C: Landslide.
Teacher: Okay... and number 4?
The class: Flood.
Teacher: Okay... flood. So, from all these pictures, how do you think you would have felt had you been there?
Class: (silent)
Teacher: How you would have felt? How do you feel? If you're there? For example, in a fire... How do you feel?
Student D: Not safe.
Teacher: Okay... how about when you are in an accident?
Student E: Scared.
Teacher: Scared? You feel scared? Okay... Hisham, if you're a victim of a landslide?
Hisham: I feel fine... ha ha... Terrified.
Teacher: Terrified. Okay... Hana, if you're a victim of flood, how would you feel? Panic?
Hana: Yes.
Teacher: Okay... What about Aiman? If you're a victim of traffic accident, how do you feel?
Aiman: I feel want to pengsan. Teacher, tanya orang lain, teacher.
Teacher: What is pengsan in English?
Class: Faint.
Teacher: Alright. Who would you contact in these situations?
Aiman: Member.
Hisham: Police. 999.
Teacher: Who are the authorities involved?
Hisham: Postman.
Teacher: In a fire, Aina?
Aina: Firemen!

Commented [AF1]: Teacher practice: Questioning Technique. Scaffolding. What – surface level.

Commented [AF2]: Teacher Practice: Paraphrase answer.

Commented [AF3]: Teacher Practice: Paraphrase answer.

Commented [AF4]: Teacher Practice: Questioning Technique. How – feeling, personal response.

Commented [AF5]: Teacher practice: Paraphrase Question and Provide Example to simplify question.

Commented [AF6]: Teacher Practice: Open question but provides answer. So it became closed question of yes/no.

Commented [AF7]: Teacher practice: Questioning.

Commented [AF8]: Teacher Practice: Questioning. Narrow down the subject in order to get the answer desired.



Teacher: Fire brigade. Err... only fire brigade? Who else do you contact in case of fire?

Hisham: Ambulance... Soldier... JPam...

Teacher: Alright. What about in flood?

Hisham: JKR

Teacher: JKR what for?

Hisham: Jalan rosak.

The whole class laughed.

Teacher: In English.

Hisham: Broken road.

Teacher: Damaged road. Now, look at page 102. In case of an accident, what are the important things? If you see an accident, you are the...? What do you call it? The one who actually sees the accident happening in front of you? You are the eye...? Eye...? You are the eye-witness. What do you do as an eye-witness?

Class: Call.

Teacher: You call? You lodge a police report. The police needs an account from the eye-witness. So, what are the qualities of an eye-witness?

3. Teacher wrote the word "EYE-WITNESS" on the board and asked students to brainstorm on the qualities of an eye-witness.

Teacher: What kind of person is an eye-witness?

Student D: Responsible.

Student C: Honest.

Teacher: In what way do you need to be responsible?

Class: 'silent'

Teacher: You lodge a police report. If you're responsible, you will tell the...? The...?

Aiman: The truth.

Teacher: Yes, the truth. Alright. Apart from being responsible, what other qualities an eye-witness should have?

Diana: Trustworthy.

Teacher: What else?

Farhan: Kind-hearted.

Teacher: In what way?

Farhan: To help.

Teacher: To help the victim?

Farhan: Yes.

Student E: Bravery.

Teacher: How would the bravery of an eye-witness could help in an accident?

Student E: Do not panic.

Teacher: What happens if the eye-witness panics? Cannot help the victim? Do you need to have good memory?

Class: Yes.

Teacher: Why?

Class: You need to remember.

Teacher: Remember?

Class: Remember what happened.

Teacher: Remember what happened in the accident?

Commented [AF9]: Teacher Practice: Paraphrase answer.

Commented [AF10]: Teacher Practice: Asking for clarification. Reasoning.

Commented [AF11]: Teacher practice: Paraphrase answer.

Commented [AF12]: Teacher Practiced: Asked question. Paraphrased question. Gave answer. Students had no chance to think and respond.

Commented [AF13]: Teacher practice: Gave answers and asked more questions.

Commented [AF14]: Question Type: One-word answer.

Commented [AF15]: Teacher Practice: Asked question. Gave hints and answered the question. Time not given for students to think and respond.

Commented [AF16]: Question type: To provoke student to think. But ended up providing the answer. And student only answered Yes.

Commented [AF17]: Question Type: How? Promote thinking.

Commented [AF18]: Teacher Practice: Asked good question but gave the answer and asked another question which is not related to the previous question,

Commented [AF19]: Question type: Prompting student to think.

Commented [AF20]: Question type: prompting students to think.

Commented [AF21]: Teacher Practice: Teacher completed the answer.





Class: Yes.

Teacher: Give me one more quality.

Hisham: Bertindak cepat.

Teacher: Can an eye-witness be bias?

Class: No.

Teacher: What happens if he is bias? Do you know the meaning of bias?

Hisham: Tak kena rasuah.

Teacher: Not being fair when giving statements. Taking sides. You tend to favour one person against another.

4. Teacher wrote all the words/qualities given on the board.

5. In groups of 4 or 5, the boys were then asked to read a Text 1 on Jaspal and the girls were asked to read Text 2 on Ram Gopal.

6. When reading, students were asked to focus on the setting (place and time), the people involved, who the eye-witness is and what really happened.

7. 1-Stay: Students shared what they have gathered from the articles by going from one group to another.

8. A boy and a girl were called out to read the texts aloud.

9. Teacher asked questions to the whole class:

Teacher: Who was at fault?

Class: Taxi Driver.

Teacher: Brian was a victim. Was he moving at that time?

Class: No.

Teacher: He stopped at the traffic light. Suddenly the taxi came and...? And...? They assumed that the taxi driver beat the traffic light. The traffic light was still red. But the taxi moved and straight away hit Brian. Brian was stationary. So, according to Ram Gopal, what happened? The motorcyclist overtook the taxi. Where was he at that time? Where was Ram Gopal?

Class: At his shop.

Teacher: At the shop. He saw the motorcyclist riding very fast. Meaning that the motorcyclist was not stationary. The motorcyclist did not stop at the traffic light. So, these are two different accounts from the eye-witnesses. Who should you believe? The taxi driver? Ram Gopal? Jaspal? What I want you to do in your groups is to compare and contrast these two statements and come up with a conclusion. Who is more trustworthy and why? Who should you believe, Jaspal or Ram Gopal? What actually happened in the accident, what's the cause and who's at fault? And give me the evidence and reasons why you say so.

10. Students presented their discussion.

Hazim: I think Ram Gopal is more trustworthy because he always... because he saw the same situation every night... and... he also... arr...arr...

Teacher: What did he say? He's tired of seeing all these, right?

Hazim: ...tired to see the motorcyclists modified their motorcycles. So, he also see the incident near. Close.

Teacher: You mean the shop? Very close to the junction?

Commented [AF22]: Teacher Practice: Ignored this answer which is correct but not in English. Student could think but couldn't express in English.

Commented [AF23]: Teacher Practice: Another correct answer ignored.

Commented [AF24]: Teacher practice: Gave the answer.

Commented [AF25]: Activity: Reading for surface content. HOTS

Commented [AF26]: Activity: One Stay. Students share information with other groups.

Commented [AF27]: Activity: Reading aloud. HOTS?

Commented [AF28]: Teacher Practice: Asked questions and gave answers before students could even make sense of the questions.

Commented [AF29]: Teacher Practice: Made conclusions and not giving the chance for students to make connections.

Commented [AF30]: Activity: Involving HOTS. Teacher provided questions to guide their discussion.

Commented [AF31]: Teacher Practice: Interrupting the student.

Commented [AF32]: Teacher Practice: Interrupting and giving the answer.





Hazim: Yes very close to the junction.

Teacher: So, do you think that he could see what happened clearly?

Hazim: Yes I think Ram Gopal saw clearly.

Teacher: Meaning that his statement is more reliable? What about Jaspal's statement? He said that Brian was not moving. He remained stationary at the junction and suddenly the taxi hit him. So, what do you have to say about that?

Hazim: Jaspal is... because Jaspal was not near by the accident.

Teacher: Where was he?

Hazim: He was behind...

Teacher: Brian's motorcycle.

Hazim: Ya... behind Brian and the taxi.

Teacher: Do you think he could see clearly what happened?

Hazim: No.

Teacher: Why?

Hazim: He was behind.

Teacher: How far? Is it mentioned?

Hazim: No.

Teacher: It's not mentioned? Okay... Furthermore, what time was it?

Hazim: 11.30

Teacher: 11.30 p.m.

Hazim: Night. It's not clear at all.

Teacher: It's not clear. Okay...and why do you think Jaspal lied?

Hazim: Brian is friend and he want to back up his friend.

Teacher: He was trying to defend him.

Hazim: Yes.

Teacher: Do you agree, class?

11. Students were asked to answer True or False questions based on the 2 texts they had read.

Commented [AF33]: Teacher practice: Teacher made the conclusion and asked other questions.

Commented [AF34]: Activity: Student able to think and make connections and conclusions. The student only needs time because he was struggling with his language. He wasn't struggling with his thinking.

Commented [AF35]: Teacher Practice: Kept on asking questions and giving the answers and making conclusions for the student.



TEACHER C LESSON OBSERVATION 2

Class: Form 4 Sn 2
Enrolment: 30 pupils
Day: Friday
Time: 7.20 – 8.40 a.m.
Skill: Reading

Descriptive

- Teacher greeted the students and students stood up to greet the teacher.
- Teacher wrote the word 'movies' on the board. Students brainstormed what the word reminds them of or how it makes them feel.
Students' responses: fun, free time, relax, stress-free, entertainment, expensive, comedy, love, action-packed, hero, block-buster, waste money and time, 'lagha', cartoon, villain.

Teacher: Why did you say movies are a waste of money and time? Don't you like to watch movies?

Student A: Ticket very expensive, teacher and cannot go to school and tuition. Lama-lama can watch astro. Same movie.

Teacher: Yes, good point. Class, can you share what your favourite movies are?

Students: Fast and Furious, Munafik, Shrek, X-Men....

Teacher: Great. Now I'd like you to sit in your groups and discuss why would you choose to watch a certain movie. I mean the criteria of a movie that you want to watch and give reasons.

- Students were then asked to share their thoughts with the whole class.

Teacher: So, Alia, what did your group discuss?

Alia: Err... my group think we watch movie first because hero is handsome and good acting. If hero is not handsome, we have no mood to watch. Not motivate. And if handsome but acting not good also not okay because boring.

Teacher: Ok good. Halim, how about your group?

Halim: We like action, teacher.

Teacher: Why is that so? Because boys are tough?

Halim: Yes... we tough... and we like to fight... and we don't like bercinta, teacher.

Teacher: You mean you don't like to watch love stories?

Halim: Yes because love story only like girls. Not fight.

Teacher: Ok, well done. How about Anisah's group?

Anisah: We are same like first group. We see actor and actress first. Usually good actors and actresses they star in good movies. Then we also watch because some movies got continuation. Like Fast and Furious and X-Men and Spiderman. These movies have many series. So, we want to watch because we want to know what happen.

Teacher: Good. So now we can see that people choose what movies to watch based on... on what? On...? Based on who the actors and actresses are.... Based on the...? The Gen...?

Gen...what? Based on the genre. Meaning whether it's horror, comedy, love story, action-packed and many more. Do you know this word? Genre. Repeat after me... Genre.

Commented [AF1]: Activity: making connections and associations and reflecting on their own feelings.

Commented [AF2]: Questioning for reasons.

Commented [AF3]: Activity: Discussion. Evaluating, reasoning, justifying.

Commented [AF4]: Questioning. To prompt and to help with the language.

Commented [AF5]: Paraphrasing student's answer

Commented [AF6]: Helping students to make conclusions on the reasons. Teacher did the talking and students not given the chance or enough wait time to respond.



Students: Genre.

Teacher: People also choose to watch movies if there are sequels to it. Like you said, the continuation. The series.

4. Teacher then distributed a reading text adapted from The New Straits Times on what moviegoers want and what producers are giving.
5. Students were given time to **read and discuss** in groups what they understood from the text.
6. Teacher went from group to group to check if they had any problem understanding the text.
7. Then students were given **comprehension questions** (questions 26 to 30 just like the exam format).
8. Students answered the questions and handed in their work at the end of the class.

Commented [AF7]: Activity: Discuss and making meaning.

Commented [AF8]: Requires thinking but still teaching to the test?

Student B: Car terbalik.

Teacher: **Accident**. Okay... Number 3?

Student C: Landslide.

Teacher: Okay... and number 4?

The class: Flood.

Teacher: Okay... flood. So, from all these pictures, **how do you think you would have felt had you been there?**

Class: (silent)

Teacher: **How you would have felt? How do you feel? If you're there?** For example, in a fire... How do you feel?

Student D: Not safe.

Teacher: Okay... how about when you are in an accident?

Student E: Scared.

Teacher: Scared? You feel scared? Okay... Hisham, if you're a victim of a landslide?

Hisham: I feel fine... ha ha... Terrified.

Teacher: Terrified. Okay... Hana, if you're a victim of flood, **how would you feel? Panic?**

Hana: Yes.

Teacher: Okay... What about Aiman? If you're a victim of traffic accident, how do you feel?

Aiman: I feel want to pengsan. Teacher, tanya orang lain, teacher.

Teacher: What is pengsan in English?

Class: Faint.

Teacher: Alright. **Who would you contact in these situations?**

Aiman: Member.

Hisham: Police. 999.

Teacher: **Who are the authorities involved?**

Hisham: Postman.

Teacher: In a fire, Aina?

Aina: Firemen!

Teacher: **Fire brigade**. Err... only fire brigade? Who else do you contact in case of fire?

Commented [AF9]: Teacher Practice: Paraphrase answer.

Commented [AF10]: Teacher Practice: Questioning Technique. How – feeling, personal response.

Commented [AF11]: Teacher practice: Paraphrase Question and Provide Example to simplify question.

Commented [AF12]: Teacher Practice: Open question but provides answer. So it became closed question of yes/no.

Commented [AF13]: Teacher practice: Questioning.

Commented [AF14]: Teacher Practice: Questioning. Narrow down the subject in order to get the answer desired.

Commented [AF15]: Teacher Practice: Paraphrase answer.





Hisham: Ambulance... Soldier... JPam...

Teacher: Alright. What about in flood?

Hisham: JKR

Teacher: JKR what for?

Hisham: Jalan rosak.

The whole class laughed.

Teacher: In English.

Hisham: Broken road.

Teacher: Damaged road. Now, look at page 102. In case of an accident, what are the important things? If you see an accident, you are the...? What do you call it? The one who actually sees the accident happening in front of you? You are the eye...? Eye...? You are the eye-witness. What do you do as an eye-witness?

Class: Call.

Teacher: You call? You lodge a police report. The police needs an account from the eye-witness. So, what are the qualities of an eye-witness?

9. Teacher wrote the word "EYE-WITNESS" on the board and asked students to brainstorm on the qualities of an eye-witness.

Teacher: What kind of person is an eye-witness?

Student D: Responsible.

Student C: Honest.

Teacher: In what way do you need to be responsible?

Class: 'silent'

Teacher: You lodge a police report. If you're responsible, you will tell the...? The...?

Aiman: The truth.

Teacher: Yes, the truth. Alright. Apart from being responsible, what other qualities an eye-witness should have?

Diana: Trustworthy.

Teacher: What else?

Farhan: Kind-hearted.

Teacher: In what way?

Farhan: To help.

Teacher: To help the victim?

Farhan: Yes.

Student E: Bravery.

Teacher: How would the bravery of an eye-witness could help in an accident?

Student E: Do not panic.

Teacher: What happens if the eye-witness panics? Cannot help the victim? Do you need to have good memory?

Class: Yes.

Teacher: Why?

Class: You need to remember.

Teacher: Remember?

Class: Remember what happened.

Teacher: Remember what happened in the accident?

Class: Yes.

Commented [AF16]: Teacher Practice: Asking for clarification. Reasoning.

Commented [AF17]: Teacher practice: Paraphrase answer.

Commented [AF18]: Teacher Practiced: Asked question. Paraphrased question. Gave answer. Students had no chance to think and respond.

Commented [AF19]: Teacher practice: Gave answers and asked more questions.

Commented [AF20]: Question Type: One-word answer.

Commented [AF21]: Teacher Practice: Asked question. Gave hints and answered the question. Time not given for students to think and respond.

Commented [AF22]: Question type: To provoke student to think. But ended up providing the answer. And student only answered Yes.

Commented [AF23]: Question Type: How? Promote thinking.

Commented [AF24]: Teacher Practice: Asked good question but gave the answer and asked another question which is not related to the previous question,

Commented [AF25]: Question type: Prompting student to think.

Commented [AF26]: Question type: prompting students to think.

Commented [AF27]: Teacher Practice: Teacher completed the answer.





Teacher: Give me one more quality.

Hisham: Bertindak cepat.

Teacher: Can an eye-witness be bias?

Class: No.

Teacher: What happens if he is bias? Do you know the meaning of bias?

Hisham: Tak kena rasuah.

Teacher: Not being fair when giving statements. Taking sides. You tend to favour one person against another.

10. Teacher wrote all the words/qualities given on the board.

11. In groups of 4 or 5, the boys were then asked to read a Text 1 on Jaspal and the girls were asked to read Text 2 on Ram Gopal.

12. When reading, students were asked to focus on the setting (place and time), the people involved, who the eye-witness is and what really happened.

13. 1-Stay, the rest-stray: Students shared what they have gathered from the article with other groups.

14. A boy and a girl were called out to read the texts aloud.

15. Teacher asked questions to the whole class:

Teacher: Who was at fault?

Class: Taxi Driver.

Teacher: Brian was a victim. Was he moving at that time?

Class: No.

05 Teacher: He stopped at the traffic light. Suddenly the taxi came and...? And...? They assumed that the taxi driver beat the traffic light. The traffic light was still red. But the taxi moved and straight away hit Brian. Brian was stationary. So, according to Ram Gopal, what happened? The motorcyclist overtook the taxi. Where was he at that time? Where was Ram Gopal?

Class: At his shop.

Teacher: At the shop. He saw the motorcyclist riding very fast. Meaning that the motorcyclist was not stationary. The motorcyclist did not stop at the traffic light. So, these are two different accounts from the eye-witnesses. Who should you believe? The taxi driver? Ram Gopal? Jaspal? What I want you to do in your groups is to compare and contrast these two statements and come up with a conclusion. Who is more trustworthy and why? Who should you believe, Jaspal or Ram Gopal? What actually happened in the accident, what's the cause and who's at fault? And give me the evidence and reasons why you say so.

16. Students presented their discussion.

Hazim: I think Ram Gopal is more trustworthy because he always... because he saw the same situation every night... and... he also... arr...arr...

Teacher: What did he say? He's tired of seeing all these, right?

Hazim: ...tired to see the motorcyclists modified their motorcycles. So, he also see the incident near. Close.

Teacher: You mean the shop? Very close to the junction?

Hazim: Yes very close to the junction.

Commented [AF28]: Teacher Practice: Ignored this answer which is correct but not in English. Student could think but couldn't express in English.

Commented [AF29]: Teacher Practice: Another correct answer ignored.

Commented [AF30]: Teacher practice: Gave the answer.

Commented [AF31]: Activity: Reading for surface content. HOTS

Commented [AF32]: Activity: Remembering and sharing.

Commented [AF33]: Activity: Reading aloud. HOTS?

Commented [AF34]: Teacher Practice: Asked questions and gave answers before students could even make sense of the questions.

Commented [AF35]: Teacher Practice: Made conclusions and not giving the chance for students to make connections.

Commented [AF36]: Activity: Involving HOTS. Teacher provided questions to guide their discussion.

Commented [AF37]: Teacher Practice: Interrupting the student.

Commented [AF38]: Teacher Practice: Interrupting and giving the answer.





Teacher: So, do you think that he could see what happened clearly?

Hazim: Yes I think Ram Gopal saw clearly.

Teacher: Meaning that his statement is more reliable? What about Jaspal's statement? He said that Brian was not moving. He remained stationary at the junction and suddenly the taxi hit him. So, what do you have to say about that?

Hazim: Jaspal is... because Jaspal was not near by the accident.

Teacher: Where was he?

Hazim: He was behind...

Teacher: Brian's motorcycle.

Hazim: Ya... behind Brian and the taxi.

Teacher: Do you think he could see clearly what happened?

Hazim: No.

Teacher: Why?

Hazim: He was behind.

Teacher: How far? Is it mentioned?

Hazim: No.

Teacher: It's not mentioned? Okay... Furthermore, what time was it?

Hazim: 11.30

Teacher: 11.30 p.m.

Hazim: Night. It's not clear at all.

Teacher: It's not clear. Okay...and why do you think Jaspal lied?

Hazim: Brian is friend and he want to back up his friend.

Teacher: He was trying to defend him.

Hazim: Yes.

Teacher: Do you agree, class?

Commented [AF39]: Teacher practice: Teacher made the conclusion and asked other questions.

Commented [AF40]: Activity: Student able to think and make connections and conclusions. The student only needs time because he was struggling with his language. He wasn't struggling with his thinking.

Commented [AF41]: Teacher Practice: Kept on asking questions and giving the answers and making conclusions for the student.

17. Students were asked to answer True or False questions based on the 2 texts they had read.



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

English is an important language to learn as it is now a global lingua franca and plays an important role in global economy and opens opportunities for job employment (Reddy & Mahavidyalaya, 2016). In fact, it has always been vital as Crystal (2003) said, the role of the English language today is expanding rapidly as many people are using the language worldwide as a tool for communication whether in written or oral form. Wyse, Andrews & Hoffman, (2010) also mentioned that English is much more favoured over other official languages as a second language. Presently, English is not only used as a tool for social communication. It is also fundamental for career development. A research done by Wan Irham, Shafinah & Azhari (2007), cited in Latisha and Surina (2010), revealed that the industrial sectors look for candidates who have the abilities to generate and express ideas verbally in English (90%), to give presentations using English (90%), to write report in English (60%), to speak English fluently (60%), to have good command of English language grammar (30%) and to have

persuasive skills in English language (30%). Therefore, considering that we are now in the era of Industrial Revolution 4.0 (IR4.0), most Malaysians are cognizant of the importance of English to advance in their career and to widen their horizon globally.

Realising the importance of the English language, the Ministry of Education, Malaysia, has produced the “Malaysia Education Blueprint (MEB) 2013-2025” (Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2012) which states that the curriculum should increase bilingual proficiency in Bahasa Malaysia (Malay Language) and the English Language. English should be embraced not as a colonial language but as an international language of communication (Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2012, pp.10).

In the Malaysian education system, English is formally taught as a compulsory subject from as early as preschool up to Form 5; focusing on the four language skills namely listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar and vocabulary. These four language skills are the pinnacles of language which will take English language learners (ELL) to greater heights. According to Sidaku (2015), these four language skills are separated yet they are bound together with an inseparable bond. For the teaching of English to be successful, the four language skills should be integrated in an effective way and grammar is embedded within each skill. With the latest inclusion of the Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFR) into the English language syllabus, language arts is also emphasised (Dokumen Standard Kurikulum dan Pentaksiran, 2017, pp.5).

However, the teaching of the English language alone is not enough in developing good, holistic citizens who are knowledgeable and able to compete globally for the betterment of the society and the nation at large as specified in the National Education Philosophy. It is clearly

stated in the Malaysia Education Blueprint (MEB) 2013-2025 (pp.E-6), that the emphasis is no longer just on the importance of knowledge, but also on developing higher-order thinking skills. In our struggle to live in this complex and sophisticated life, the ability to think critically and effectively is of utmost importance. People are often required to solve various problems and make numerous decisions from time to time. Additionally, with the advancements of technology whereby countless information is just a click away, people are often challenged to make their own decisions as to what to believe. The authenticity and validity of those information is somewhat questionable. Thus, higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) is necessary in making decisions. We certainly need to use these skills in every aspect of our lives most of the time because complex real-life problems often demand complex solutions. This requires the use of high-level thinking process. Tan and Siti Hajar (2015) claim that the commitment towards HOTS is relevant to global economic growth, development of information and communication technology (ICT), a knowledge-based economy and a fast-paced world.

Hence, the curriculum framework in the English language syllabus states that due emphasis is to be given to developing critical, creative and innovative thinking in preparing pupils to meet the challenges in real life (Dokumen Standard Kurikulum dan Pentaksiran, 2017, p.4). This is concurrent with the inclusion of critical and creative thinking in the Top 10 Super Skills for IR4.0 during the World Economic Forum (2016) as mentioned by Faizah (2018). Therefore, it can be seen that both the English language and HOTS are essential in developing globally competitive citizens.

1.1 Background of the study

The two main branches of schooling in Malaysia namely the National school (Malay medium) and the National-type school (Chinese or Tamil medium) have helped to maintain the use of mother tongues of the three major ethnicities in Malaysia: the Malays, the Chinese and the Indians. However, the English language is still a compulsory subject in all schools at every level. It is included in Shift 2 in the MEB which is to ensure every child is proficient in Bahasa Malaysia and the English language. The importance of the English language is further emphasised with the revised version of the preschool curriculum (2017) whereby 50% of the instructional language used must be the English language. This is equivalent to 600 minutes per week (Kurikulum Standard Prasekolah Kebangsaan, 2017, pp.21). In addition, the English language is taught from preschool till the tertiary level.

One of the objectives of the secondary school education in Malaysia is to “develop and enhance their (students’) intellectual capacity with respect to rational, critical and creative thinking” (Curriculum Development Centre, 1989, pp.2) which leads to the emphasis on the teaching of thinking skills in school. As further emphasised in MEB 2013-2025 (pp.E-6), it has been globally recognised that students should not leave school with only the 3Rs (Reading, wRiting and aRithmetic), but also with HOTS. As acknowledged by Tan and Siti Hajar (2015), the aim to develop and enhance students’ HOT has been a major educational goal. So, the role of teachers is to teach HOTS effectively to fulfil a national aspiration in education. Teachers are expected to apply methodologies that stimulate, encourage and develop the thinking abilities of their students.

Thinking skills is charted in the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 (pp.E-20), as one of the Six Key Attributes which consists of knowledge, thinking skills, leadership skills, bilingual proficiency, ethics and spirituality, and national identity needed to enable every student to be globally competitive. Ong and Kumutha (2019) asserted that IR4.0 has given a new momentum to the educational transformation and it is a challenge to develop individual to think creatively and innovatively.

Realising that HOTS is a skill that would benefit the students especially in their future career, numerous efforts have been done to incorporate the skill into the curriculum. The elements of critical and creative thinking skills (CCTS) have been clearly spelled out in the curriculum affecting all subjects since 1993 and it is reemphasised in the Malaysia Education Blueprint (MEB) 2013-2025 because the government has realised that HOTS is “an area where the system has historically fallen short, with students being less able than they should be in applying knowledge and thinking critically outside familiar academic contexts” (Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2015, pp.E16).

1.2 Statement of the problem

Education in Malaysia has always been heavily exam-oriented. Alla Baksh, et al., (2016) noted that the overarching examination-oriented culture had been in practice in Malaysia for over 30 years because Malaysia is one of the countries which controls its assessment through examination syndicates namely the Malaysian Examination Syndicates (MES) and the Malaysian Examinations Council (MEC). This has sadly contributed to the slump in thinking skills among students. Rosnani & Suhailah (2003) as cited in Nooraini & KhairulAzmi (2014)

claimed that, “many studies have begun to reveal symptoms of decline in students’ ability to think well, especially when schools begun to focus on the mastery of subject content rather than the processes of deriving the products”. The English Language Education Reform in Malaysia The Roadmap 2015-2025 acknowledged that teachers concentrate their efforts on getting their students through the examinations causing washback effects where examinations affect teaching and learning in the classroom as depicted in Figure 1.1 below.

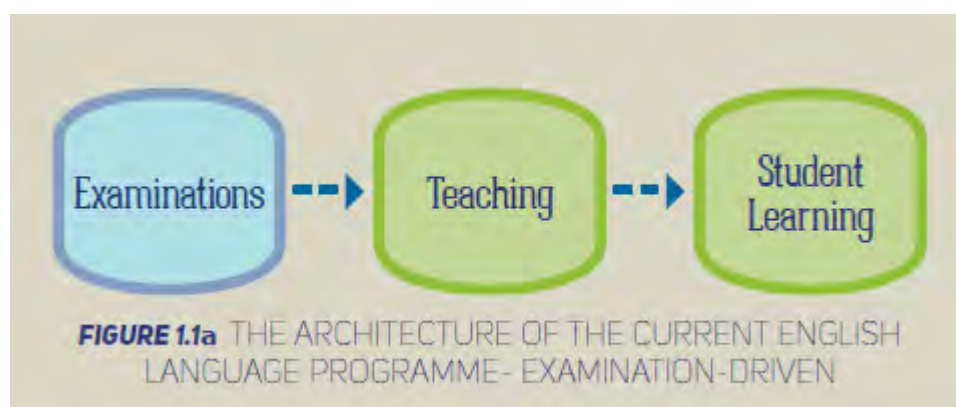


Figure 1.1. The English Language Education Reform in Malaysia The Roadmap 2015-2025 pp.10

Hence, students only learn what is to be tested. The development of critical, creative and innovative thinking in preparing students to meet the challenges in real-life as mentioned in the curriculum is not given due emphasis. This negative washback certainly does not help to realise the aspirations brought forth by the National Education Philosophy.

Bachman, 1990 as cited in Bedford (2003) said that although washback can be positive, in many cases and particularly in high stakes testing, the curriculum that is driven by assessment leads to negative washback. The practice of teaching-to-the-test is prevalent in the Malaysian schools whereby skills and content that teachers perceive will go untested in the National Examinations, are often dropped from the lesson plan in favour of content that is more



frequently tested (The Roadmap 2015-2015, p.202). Taylor (2005, pp.154) mentioned that “teachers will be influenced by the knowledge that their students are planning to take a certain test and will adapt their teaching methodology and lesson content to reflect the test’s demand.”. This teach-to-the-test strategy used by most teachers does not promote HOTS in the classroom. Students are often provided with exercises that help them practise answering exam questions instead of being given with activities that promote HOTS. Consequently, this has brought about an unfortunate situation of producing generations who are “less able than they should be in applying knowledge and thinking critically outside familiar academic contexts” (Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2015, p.E16). Accordingly, this leads to a major national problem of not having enough capable and competent graduates to meet the demands of the job market. The notion of HOTS has been a prominent issue in education especially in relation to fulfilling the demands of globalisation, the information and industrial age.



There have been reports on Malaysian graduates who failed job interviews not because they lack knowledge in the area required but they lack higher order thinking skills (HOTS); the skills that would help them to survive in the demands of the real world. Hanapi and Nordin (2013) as cited in Mohammad Imtiaz, et al., (2018), said that international graduates have higher employability compared to the Malaysian graduates in terms of the skills which include problem-solving and communication skills, particularly in the English language. In Malaysia, the unemployment rate is at 3.5% in March 2016 compared to 3.4% in the previous three months. Then, in December, the number of unemployed rose to 478,100 compared to 453,300 in the earlier month (Department of Statistics, 2016, cited in Mohammad Imtiaz, et al., 2018).

Having recognised this crucial situation, the Ministry of Education Malaysia has embarked on a way to determine the country’s international ranking with regards to students’





ability in using HOTS. Students from selected schools are requested to sit for the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMMs) and Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) tests; the latter being relevant to this study. PISA is a project by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to assess the extent to which 15-year-old students, near the end of their compulsory education, have acquired key knowledge and skills that are essential for full participation in modern societies. It tests critical thinking in Maths, Science and Reading.

Malaysia was involved in PISA in 2009, 2012 and 2015 together with 74, 64 and 71 other countries respectively. The tests involved students of the ages between 15 years 3 months and 16 years 2 months. Based on the report by the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC), Ministry of Education Malaysia (MoE), Malaysia scored below the OECD average mean score which were 494 (2009), 497 (2012) and 493 (2015). In 2012, the mean score ranked Malaysia at the 52nd place from 65 countries. According to OECD, PISA result allows policy makers to set targets against measurable goals for a better education system. Hence, this low score has alarmed the Malaysian government to place emphasis on HOTS in the Malaysia Education Blueprint (MEB) 2013-2025. The five system aspirations outlined in the MEB 2013-2025 pp.2-2, highlights that Malaysia is aspired to be the top third of countries in terms of performance in international assessments such as PISA and TIMMS in 15 years. Besides, the importance of HOTS has been highlighted by Tun Dr. Mahathir Bin Mohamed during the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) launch on as far back as August 1st 1996 when he mentioned about the need to transform our curriculum for the 21st Century Learning. He mentioned that we need to create a curriculum where people learn how to learn so they can continue their education throughout the rest of their lives. Even the MEB proposes that 21st Century Learning should encourage teamwork, reasoning, proficiency in using technology and thinking. The Rainbow or



Framework of the 21st Century Skills (see Figure 1.2) shows that critical thinking is a skill needed in ensuring that students are prepared to face the real world and be able to compete globally. This is also in line with the National Innovation Model (NIM) 2017, which states that the role of education is to shape the quality of the students in all aspects including enhancing human capital quality through innovation and intellectual capability whereby, the plan is, to transform Malaysia from a resource-based to an innovation-based economy (Nooraini Othman & Khairul Azmi Mohamad, 2014) and this requires HOTS. In addition to that, Maizatulliza and Goh (2019) highlighted that the major area of concern is to see how teachers perceive this new idea and whether or not they are willing or able to accommodate the new idea into their current practices.

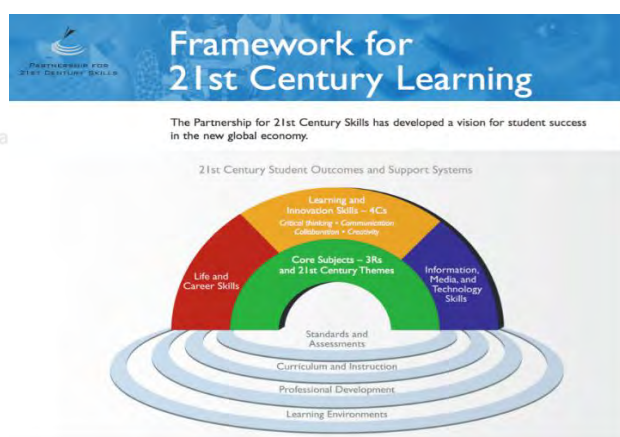


Figure 1.2. The Rainbow or Framework for 21st Century Learning (Source: P21, 2005b cited in Kivunja, 2015)

The government has seen that there is a serious need to curb the teaching-to-the-test phenomenon. Therefore, MoE has taken the initiative to reform assessment within the school system. Following this, in 2011, the MES has rolled out the new School Based Assessment format that intends to be more holistic, robust and aligned to the new standard-referenced curriculum (Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2015, p.4-4) beginning with primary schools followed by the lower secondary schools in 2012 (Alla Baksh, 2016). However, the upper

secondary students are still expected to sit for the centralised high-stake national examination *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia* (SPM) at the end of form 5. Although there have been debates on whether the high-stake examinations like SPM should be abolished, an external review by Pearson Education Group of the English examination papers noted that SPM would benefit from the inclusion of more questions testing higher-order thinking skills, such as application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation (Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013 – 2025, p.4-4). In response to this, the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC), Ministry of Education Malaysia (MoE) has made sure that SPM gradually includes a certain percentages of HOTS questions as reflected in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1. *Elements of HOTS in Assessment, CDC, MoE, 2014, pp.3*

Year	% of HOTS questions in SPM
2013	20%
2014	30%
2015	50%
2016	50%

This would perhaps help to create more positive washback. However, it is not quite safe to say that teachers as the agents of change are comfortable and ever ready to move from focussing on content and teaching-to-the-test to inculcating HOTS. According to Tajularipin, Ahmad Fauzi and Suriati (2015), teachers generally resist to change because they view change as something that requires them to do more work which adds up to their already overloaded schedule. Cope and Ward (2002) and Rahman (2018) as cited in Maizatulliza and Goh (2019) believed that teachers’ perceived views are congruent with their actual practices in the classrooms. Yoke, et al., (2015) claimed that language teachers view the integration of HOTS



in language classrooms negatively and they lack creativity in innovating their lessons. According to Noraien (2017), students' reading habits is still bad but it can be enhanced with proper guidance and encouraging activities. Therefore, it is vital to explore teachers' understanding of HOTS, their views on integrating HOTS in their lessons and their actual pedagogical practices when integrating HOTS in their lessons.

This study is therefore relevant to the teaching and learning of English in secondary schools because these students are the generation that will take on the responsibility of leading our country towards a more competitive world in this era of globalisation that needs thinking generations. This will benefit both teachers and students to become holistic individuals which would lead to a more globally competitive Malaysia.

According to Yoke, et al., (2015), many researches have proven the idea that critical thinking and reading are interrelated. Nani, Protomo, and Margana (2019) said that the teaching of reading is essential for students so they could acquire information for their studies and make sense of the texts that they read. They also claimed that there is a mutual relationship between students' academic reading skills and developing higher order thinking skills. However, it is disheartening to know that the majority of students in Malaysia have little motivation to read books especially in English (Noraien, 2017). Noraien also claimed that no constructive effort has been truly implemented to encourage Malaysian students to read more materials in English because teachers are more concerned over completing the syllabus for examination purposes. Therefore, it is pertinent that this study examines how HOTS can be developed in ESL reading lessons and henceforth assist students in comprehending texts.



1.3 Research Objectives

The purpose of the study is to investigate teachers' perceptions on the integration of HOTS in the teaching of reading in ESL classrooms for Form 4 students. This study also intends to explore the teachers' integration of HOTS in their reading lessons. Apart from that, this study aspires to see whether the strategies used to integrate HOTS diverge or converge with their beliefs, assumptions and knowledge.

The objectives of this study as follows:

- i. To investigate how teachers perceive the integration of HOTS in ESL Reading lessons.
- ii. To investigate how HOTS is integrated in ESL Reading lessons.
- iii. To explore how the strategies used by the teachers to integrate HOTS converge or diverge with their beliefs, assumptions and knowledge on the integration of HOTS.

1.4 Research Questions

This study addresses three research questions:

1. How do teachers perceive the integration of HOTS in ESL Reading lessons?
2. How do teachers integrate HOTS in their ESL Reading lessons?
3. How do the strategies used diverge or converge with their beliefs, assumptions and knowledge on the integration of HOTS?

1.5 Significance of the study

The findings of this study may bring about some valuable insights for several relevant parties with regards to the integration of HOTS in English language reading classrooms.

Teachers are the practitioners who relate the aims and objectives of MEB (2013-2015) through their daily classroom practices. Therefore, the result of this study can be a useful reference for ESL teachers to ensure that their pedagogical approaches deliver the aim of equipping students with HOTS.

Besides, the findings of this study can also be used by the Department of Professional Staff Development as a guideline to provide relevant trainings for ESL teachers.

The Teacher Training Institutes can also use the findings of this study to outline courses that would help pre-service teachers prepare themselves with the knowledge and skills required of them in integrating HOTS in their English Language reading classrooms. The English Language Teaching Centre (ELTC) can also benefit from this study whereby the data can help the centre to offer suitable courses for in-service ESL teachers.

Above all, the findings will benefit students the most as they are the end products of the school system. Everything that is done by the stakeholders will have an impact on students. It is hoped that they would leave school equipped with the necessary skills, particularly HOTS for them to sail through their life.

1.6 Scope and Limitations of the study

This study is limited to the qualitative opinion of only the selected three teachers from one district in Penang. Therefore, the findings cannot be acknowledged as a representation of all schools. However, it can be used as a replicable model as stated by Marshall and Rossman (2006) that qualitative studies are transferable and can help to establish replicable models.

This study is also limited to the teaching of HOTS in English language Form 4 reading classroom. Findings may be different with other language skills. The schools chosen are sub-urban schools and therefore the findings cannot be generalised to urban and rural schools. Studies focusing on sub-urban schools in relation to HOTS in ESL reading classroom is rather scant.

1.7 Definition of Terms

There are various key terms used in this research and they are given the following operational definitions.

1.7.1 Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS)

HOTS is defined as the potential use of mind to deal with new challenges where one must understand, interpret, analyse and manipulate information (Onosko & Newmann (1994). HOT encompasses any thinking skills which require more than mere recall or memorisation of information (Ivie, 1998; Underbakke, Borg & Peterson, 1993;



cited in Tan & Siti Hajar, 2015). HOTS also require students to critically evaluate information, make inferences, produce original communication, make predictions, suggest solutions, create, solve problems, evaluate ideas, express opinions, and make choices and decisions (Rajendran, 2001). HOTS involve the concept of formation, critical thinking, creativity/brainstorming, problem solving, mental representation, rule use, reasoning and logical thinking (Kruger, K., 2013 cited in Shukla and Dungsungnoen, 2016). In Malaysia, the Curriculum Development Division draws upon Blooms Taxonomy when defining thinking skills (BPK, 2014).

In this study, HOTS refer to the use of the top three cognitive levels of Blooms Taxonomy which are analysis, synthesis and evaluation by drawing upon their prior knowledge of subject matter content and their experiences in completing reading activities. Students are also required to interpret, analyse and manipulate information in order to make inferences and predictions, to produce original communication and suggest solutions. HOTS is also a part of employability skills that will fulfil the demands of IR4.0.

1.7.2 Integration of HOTS

Integration refers to the idea of making connections and applying learning in multiple contexts (AAC&U, 2001; Brown Leonard, 2007; Huber, Brown, Hutchings Gale, Miller, & Breen, 2007a; Huber & Hutchings, 2004; cited in Barber, 2009). Therefore, in this study, the integration of HOTS would mean connecting HOTS to the ESL reading lessons by means of applying it via strategies and activities employed by teachers in order to help students develop HOTS.





1.7.3 Reading

According to Schoenbach, R. et al., (2000), reading is not just a basic simple process of decoding each word in a text. Reading involves mental processing which involves making reference to a particular world of knowledge and experience related to the text. She also mentions that as people read, they begin to generate a mental representation, or gist of the text, which serves as an evolving framework for understanding subsequent parts of the text.

Goodman (1976) regarded reading as a psycholinguistic guessing game that involves “an interaction between thoughts and language”. According to Spiro (1977), Brewer and Treyns (1981) cited in Ibrahim (2011), reading is “a multilevel interactive process; that is, the text must be analysed at various levels, with units of analysis going from the letter to the text as a whole”. Nuttall (1982) described reading as a communicative process between the text and the reader. Reading requires an interaction between the reader and the text in order to make meaning. Grabe (2002) claimed that, reading is a process of negotiating meaning between the reader and the written text while Ruddell (2005) said that, reading is an act of constructing meaning while transacting with text. Anderson (2013) asserted that, reading is a fluent process of reader combining information from a text and their own knowledge to build meaning.

The definitions given above show that reading is not merely a basic, simple activity. It is a complex process of problem solving in which the reader works to make sense of the text not just from the words and sentences on the page but also from the ideas, memories and knowledge evoked by those words and sentences (Schoenbach, R.





et al., 2000). The intent of reading is for one to understand the intended message that a writer wants to deliver. Roe and Smith (2012) mentioned that the outcome of the reading act is comprehension with its various types of literal understanding of stated ideas as well as higher-order types which include interpretive, critical, and creative comprehension. This certainly involves a lot of mental processes and a large cognitive load on the reader where HOTS are needed in making meaning.

In this study, reading refers to the readers looking at a written text, cognitively making connections and interacting with the text to negotiate both literal meaning as well as implied meaning which requires the use of HOTS. It requires students to be creative and critical. They need to analyse the reading text to interpret meaning.

1.8 Summary



This chapter highlights the important roles of the English language not only as a global lingua franca but also a language of the global economy making it an important subject to learn in Malaysian schools. However, being fluent in the language alone is not going to help the students once they embark on their career journey. The global market needs speakers of English who are also equipped with 21st Century skills especially HOTS for them to be competitive especially in the era of IR4.0. Since reading is seen as a cognitive activity that stimulates thinking especially HOT, there is a need to integrate the teaching of HOTS in ESL reading lessons. The society is always very dependent on knowledge and information for future advancements and there is an overflow of information from various multimedia sources digitally or even from traditionally printed materials like books, magazines and newspapers for people to read. Reading is so important that reading literacy is one of the components being



assessed when countries are being internationally ranked through PISA. This shows that there is more to reading. Hence, this study looks into how reading stimulates HOTS which then helps to achieve the national aspirations of producing balanced, holistic individuals who are ready to face real life challenges of the 21st Century.

This chapter also provides the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose and objectives of the study. It also outlines four research questions and provides the significance of the study. The review of relevant literature and the theories underlying the study are discussed in the next chapter.