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APPROACHES EMPLOYED BY TEACHERS IN TEACHING THE ENGLISH LITERATURE COMPONENT

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ABSTRACT

There is a scarcity of research on the approaches employed in the teaching of literature component in Malaysia. The studies which do exist mostly describe the quality of an educational system or part of the system in terms of 'input' into the teaching process (teachers, equipment, materials, etc.) or look at students' achievement in relation to these inputs. There is very little research which uses 'process perspectives of what is really happening in the classrooms.' This research has a five-pronged purposes; therefore, it is expected that this study can contribute to the field of study especially teaching literature for school students. Research was done by way of survey questionnaire, classroom observations, interviews and expert check list. The respondents of the questionnaire were teachers who teach English in schools in Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia. These teachers were involved in teaching the Literature in English. A series of classroom observations were carried out by the researcher. This was conducted in randomly selected schools every week. Thus, the researcher observed 13 lessons with three sets of lessons each for a period of four weeks. Teachers, namely English option and non-English option from National schools and National Type schools, which consist of Chinese and Tamil schools from all the 7 districts in the state of Negeri Sembilan was observed three times each. The same sample was interviewed to ensure validity and reliability of the results obtained from the classroom observation and survey questionnaire results. To this end, the study aimed at analyzing the extent to which teachers' approaches in teaching literature is understood among teachers and students in the Malaysian schools. In addition, the study aimed at exploring, through field investigations, the manner in which teacher and school related variables mitigate against approaches employed by the teachers in teaching the literature. Ultimately, its findings are meant to help teachers, researchers, key educational policy-makers and other education experts, to explore possibilities of developing more effective ways of utilizing active learning approaches at school level. Apart from that, the study is to gather a general overview on the approaches employed by teachers in teaching the English Literature in schools. It is essential to look at the approaches the teachers use to teach literature in their respective classrooms. The findings would provide useful information for the Ministry of Education to identify the current literature teaching situation in the ESL classroom. The findings of the study will also provide valuable information for the Ministry of Education to examine and counter-act on the discrepancy, if there is any, so that the teaching of the English Literature component in schools can serve its function well. The study will also open up ways for future researchers to conduct in-depth studies on the methodological aspects of the teaching of the English Literature in schools. In doing so, it is hoped that teachers will be able to contribute to more effective teaching and learning of the teaching of the English Literature in schools in the ESL context.

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INTRODUCTION

Language policies in countries all over the world go through changes as time passes. What determines the path of these changes depends mainly on a number of issues.

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Taylor *et al.* (1997) as cited in Gill (2004) asserts that "educational changes do not occur in a void, nor do educational policies materialize out of thin air". They go on to claim that the ideological, political, social and economic climate, together influence the shape and timing of educational policies and their outcomes (Taylor *et al.*, 1997). As a result, the policies would reflect the balance between the nation's desire to retain its national identity and the unceasing pull towards global competitiveness (Gill 2004). Similarly, in Malaysia, the language policies have undergone tremendous

changes. The English Language which functions as the second language is taught as a compulsory subject in government primary and secondary classrooms in Malaysia. Ganakumaran (2003) saw the shift as a contributing factor to the declining interest of teaching and learning literature in the classroom. Edwin (1993) made a connection that the shift resulted in the decline of English standard among Malaysian students and thus, affected the popularity of opting to study literature as a subject. The issue of the declining standard of English among Malaysians has become a serious concern and is viewed as a serious issue by the Malaysian government. Its significant roles in global economy, globalization, internet and science and technology were asserted and moves towards re-establishing English were carried out (Asmah 1992). In the light of re-establishing the importance of English, changes in the education curriculum was witnessed in the following decade. These changes also affected the role of literature in the Malaysian Curriculum.

Statement of The Problem

Two factors of importance here are that firstly, the language teacher will have to become a literature teacher as well and secondly, the present language teachers have little or no experience in teaching literature (Vethamani 1991). The above scenario is further complicated as the current curriculum calls for emphasis on active learning and teaching approaches, and therefore demands teachers to employ such approaches in the teaching-learning style. Young teachers these days especially are not exposed to literature learning compared to the veteran teachers from the colonial days where they were taught literature in schools. Comparatively because the medium of teaching and learning was in English, these veteran teachers are much more fluent and well versed in the language from all aspects.

It is sad to see and hear teachers today teaching without much passion for the English language, what else can be said about literature (Interview with Dr Hannah Pillay 2006). Of course there are other constraints that have to be looked into like the school environment, whether it is situated in an urban or rural area, the students' enrolment and background, the facilities provided in the school itself, lack of materials such as the literature component books, the attitude of the students and most importantly the educational planners who fail to monitor the implementation of this programme. Thus, there is a necessity to investigate what was really happening in the literature classroom. This includes identifying its strengths and weaknesses.

Moreover, it is highly necessary for research on the supplementary approaches and activities adopted by the teachers to teach the English literature component in schools because during the training sessions conducted for the teachers, they were given modules explaining how to teach the English Literature Component and workshops were also conducted as practice. Likewise, the motivations for these supplementary approaches and activities used by the teachers also need to be investigated as well as the challenges faced by the teachers teaching English Literature. Thus a focus on the approaches employed by teachers in teaching the English Literature schools would be of great value and interest.

It would seem that this study acts as a take-off point from the research findings done in secondary schools. The researcher had a look at the study done by Ganakumaran *et al.* (2003), Gurnam Kaur (2003), Lam Mei Ching (2001), Siti Norliana (2003), Suriya (2004), Yesuiah (2003) and Zamrudah (2001). Studies on the Literature Component in English were mainly focused on students' point of views: Gurnam Kaur (2003); Siti Norliana (2003); Suriya (2004), proposing a framework of an integrated approach to teaching literature (Yesuiah 2003), whilst Ganakumaran *et al.* (2003) looked at the perceptions of teachers on the Literature Component in English and Lam Mei Ching (2001) undertook a study on the readiness of primary six students in learning the Literature Component in English based on teachers' perspectives. Yet, there are no specific studies that examine the type of approaches employed by teachers in the literature setting. Hence, this study would act as a take-off point from the studies above.

Objectives of The Study

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To identify the supplementary approaches and activities used by teachers to teach the English Literature component in schools.
2. To identify the motivations for these supplementary approaches and activities used by teachers to teach the English Literature component in schools.
3. To identify the challenges faced by teachers teaching the English Literature component in schools and the possible solutions.

Research Questions

Based on the objectives of the study, the researcher aims to address the following research questions:

1. What are the supplementary approaches and activities used by teachers to teach the English Literature component in schools?
2. What are the motivations for these supplementary approaches and activities used by teachers to teach the English Literature component in schools?
3. What are the challenges faced by teachers teaching the English Literature component in schools and the possible solutions?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study is addressed using both quantitative and qualitative measures. This method of design is vital because it allows the researcher to gain a general overview of the approaches and activities used by teachers in teaching the English literature component in schools. Substantiating and elaborating the data obtained from the questionnaire, classroom observations, focused interviews and teacher evaluation checklist are also carried out. These quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques are exercised to answer RQ 1 with a purpose to gain a deeper insight and understanding on the approaches used by teachers and also to supplement the quantitative and qualitative findings of RQ 1, 2 and 3.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Background

This study involved 300 respondents. The respondents came from different background of gender, Academic, Option, Teaching experience and Course attended to teach the children's contemporary English literature component in primary schools (see Table). The table below shows that there are 74 male (24.7%) and 226 female (75.3%) teachers who participated in the study. Looking at the teacher's academic level, it was found that 126 of the teachers' (42%) had SPM qualification, 91 teachers (30.3%) had diploma in Education, 73 teachers (24.3%) had first degree qualification and 10 teachers (3.3%) had master qualification. In the option category it shows that 200 teachers are English teachers and 100 teachers are Non English Option teachers. Out of the 300 teachers, ninety-six teachers (32%) had teaching experience less than 5 years, 37 teachers (12.3%) had teaching experience 10 to 14 years, 54 teachers (18%) had teaching experience 5 to 9 years and 113 teachers had teaching experience 15 years and above. In term of the course attended for the teaching of the children's contemporary English literature component in primary schools, it was found that 150 teachers (50%) had attended the course and another 150 teachers (50%) had not attended the course.

Table. Respondent Profiles

	Experiment	
	N	%
Gender		
Male	74	24.7
Female	226	75.3
TOTAL	300	100.0
Academic	N	%
S.P.M	126	42.0
Diploma in Education	91	30.3
First Degree	73	24.3
Master/Ph.D	10	3.3
TOTAL	300	100.0
Option	N	%
Option English Teachers	200	66.7
Non-Option English Teachers	100	33.3
TOTAL	300	100.0
Teaching Experience	N	%
Less than 5 years	96	32.0
10 - 14 years	37	12.3
5 - 9 years	54	18.0
15 years and above	113	37.7
TOTAL	300	100.0
Course Taken	N	%
Yes	150	50.0
No	150	50.0

Descriptive Findings of The Study

Teachers were asked to state approaches, teaching activities and approaches-activities based on five-point Likert Scale. For data discussion and interpretation, the mean scores of approaches, teaching activities and approaches-activities are interpreted in 3 levels, low, medium and high level. Table 4.2 shows the interpretation of mean score.

Table. Interpretation of Mean Score

Mean Score	Interpretation
1.00 to 2.33	Low
2.34 to 3.66	Medium
3.67 to 5.00	High

The mean score of approaches, teaching activities and approaches-activities was gathered by calculating mean score of all items. The mean score was then interpreted into three new categories, as follows: mean score within 1.00 to 2.33 falls under the low level. Meanwhile, if the mean score falls within 2.34 to 3.66 would come under the medium level. If the mean score falls within 3.67 and 5.00 is interpreted as high level of approaches, teaching activities and approaches-activities.

Approaches to Teaching the Literature Component in English

Descriptive analysis towards approaches to teaching the literature component was done to answer the following research question.

RQ 1: What are the supplementary approaches activities used by teachers to teach the English literature in schools?

The table below shows mean score of approach used by teachers in teaching literature according to each statement. Teachers applied overall information based approach was at medium level (see Table below for interpretation mean score). Looking every statements of information based approach, teachers ranked statement number 1 (I ask questions to check my students' knowledge based on what they have read) as the highest mean score, followed by statement 2 (I explain the content of the literary text to my class) and 3 (I provide my students with background information about the text). While statement 4 (I elicit information from my students about the literary text) was ranked as the lowest used in teaching and learning literature.

The findings also show that teacher employed personal-response approach at medium level (mean 3.42). Guiding students to express their opinions towards a literary text (statement 5) was the most frequent used by the teacher, followed by statement 6 (I encourage my students to express their feelings towards the issues of the literary text), 7 (I encourage my students to relate the themes of the literary text to their personal experiences) and 8 (I elicit my students' response to a literary text). In relation to language based approach, teacher reported that they applied language based approach at medium level. Teacher ranked statement language based approach number 9 (I encourage students to actively participate in the process of understanding the meaning of the literary text) as the highest mean score followed by statement number 10 (I generate language practice for my students using the literary text), 11 (My students work with their classmates in the process of understanding the literary text) and 12 (I set language activities in my literature lesson). Looking at the use of paraphrastic approach in teaching literature, teacher perceived that the use the approach at high level (mean 3.72). Teacher rated that using simple terms to explain what the story

is about to the students (number 13) as the most popular one, and the second most popular was re-telling the text to my students to help them understand (statement 14) and then statement 15 (I discuss with my students what the author says in the literary text). While statement 16 (I get my students to tell me the storyline of the literary text) was used at lower frequency. Teaching approach in terms of moral-philosophical was rated at medium level (mean 3.64). Looking at every statement teacher rated approach of more-philosophical for number 17 (I ask my students the values they learn from the literary text) was at highest level, followed by statement number 18 (I incorporate moral values in my literary lesson), number 19 (I get my students to search for moral values from a literary text) and number 20 (my teaching aims at raising students' awareness of values derived from the literary text). The use of stylistics approach in overall in teaching literature was at medium level (mean 3.25). Statement 21 (I get my students to mark any linguistic feature (e.g. vocabulary / grammar / choices of word) from the text that are significant to their reading) was rated as the highest mean score, followed by statement 22 (My literature lesson looks at the language of the text, thus, encourages awareness of my students), 23 (I guide my students to interpret a text by looking at the language used by the author) and 24 (I encourage my students to discuss beyond the surface meaning of the literary text)

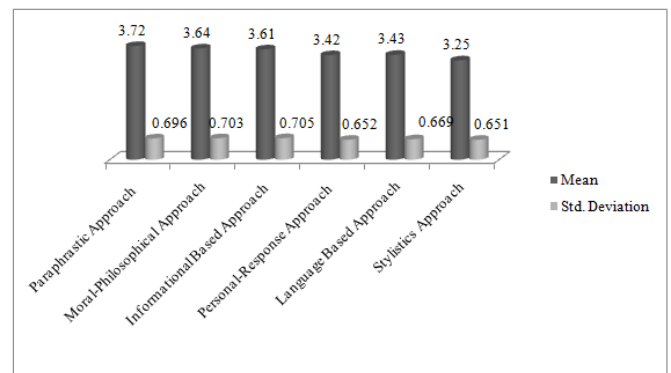


Figure. Mean scores of each approach which teacher employed in teaching literature

The table below shows that overall mean of approaches to teaching the literature is at average level (3.50). This means that teachers apply overall approaches to teaching literature is not very encourage. The result of analysis in each item of approaches to teaching the literature shows that most of items (18 items) obtain average means score (see Table). This means that teachers apply the approaches in terms of the statements were at average levels.

Table. Mean Score and Standard Deviation of Approach Used by Teachers in Teaching the Literature in English

Approach in Teaching	Mean	Std. Deviation
Informational Based Approach	3.61	.705
1. I ask questions to check my students' knowledge based on what they have read.	3.91	0.87
2. I explain the content of the literary text to my class.	3.84	0.97
3. I provide my students with background information about the text.	3.53	0.90
4. I elicit information from my students about the literary text.	3.15	0.94
Personal-Response Approach	3.42	.652
5. I guide my students to express their opinions towards a literary text.	3.48	0.92
6. I encourage my students to express their feelings towards the issues of the literary text.	3.47	0.84
7. I encourage my students to relate the themes of the literary text to their personal experiences.	3.39	0.84
8. I elicit my students' response to a literary text.	3.35	0.84
Language Based Approach	3.43	.669
9. I encourage students to actively participate in the process of understanding the meaning of the literary text.	3.65	0.88
10. I generate language practice for my students using the literary text.	3.42	0.83
11. My students work with their classmates in the process of understanding the literary text.	3.34	0.89
12. I set language activities in my literature lesson.	3.31	0.95
Paraphrastic Approach	3.72	.696
13. I use simple terms to explain what the story is about to my students.	4.07	0.89
14. I re-tell the text to my students to help them understand.	3.93	0.90
15. I discuss with my students what the author says in the literary text.	3.59	0.91
16. I get my students to tell me the storyline of the literary text.	3.30	0.91
Moral-Philosophical Approach	3.64	.703
17. I ask my students the values they learn from the literary text.	3.80	0.86
18. I incorporate moral values in my literary lesson.	3.77	0.91
19. I get my students to search for moral values from a literary text.	3.54	0.90
20. My teaching aims at raising students' awareness of values derived from the literary text.	3.44	0.78
Stylistics Approach	3.25	.651
21. I get my students to mark any linguistic feature (e.g. vocabulary / grammar / choices of word) from the text that are significant to their reading.	3.35	0.90
22. My literature lesson looks at the language of the text, thus, encourages awareness of my students.	3.27	0.83
23. I guide my students to interpret a text by looking at the language used by the author.	3.24	0.83
24. I encourage my students to discuss beyond the surface meaning of the literary text.	3.16	0.92

The figure below ranks mean scores of each approach which teacher employed in teaching literature. It shows that teacher ranked paraphrastic approach as most frequently used in teaching literature, followed by moral-philosophical approach, informational based approach, personal-response approach, language based approach and stylistics approach.

Six statements of approaches obtain high level of mean score, the statements are 'I explain the content of the literary text to my class' (mean 3.84), 'I ask questions to check my students' knowledge based on what they have read' (mean 3.91), and 'I elicit information from my students about the literary text' (mean 3.93), 'I explain the content of the literary text to my class (mean 4.07) and I encourage my students to relate the

Table. Frequency, percentage, mean and level in each item of teachers' approaches to teaching the literature

No	Statements of Approach	Frequency and Percentage					Mean	Level
		1	2	3	4	5		
1.	I elicit information from my students about the literary text	17 (5.7%)	45 (15.0%)	129 (43.0%)	92 (30.7%)	17 (5.7%)	3.15	Average
2.	I explain the content of the literary text to my class.	6 (2.0%)	21 (7.0%)	70 (23.3%)	119 (39.7%)	84 (28.0%)	3.84	High
3.	I ask questions to check my students' knowledge based on what they have read.	5 (1.7%)	11 (3.7%)	66 (22.0%)	140 (46.7%)	78 (26.0%)	3.91	High
4.	I provide my students with background information about the text.	5 (1.7%)	25 (8.3%)	119 (39.7%)	107 (35.7%)	44 (14.7%)	3.53	Average
5.	I encourage my students to relate the themes of the literary text to their personal experiences.	8 (2.7%)	22 (7.3%)	138 (46.0%)	107 (35.7%)	25 (8.3%)	3.39	Average
6.	I elicit my students' response to a literary text.	10 (3.3%)	20 (6.7%)	146 (48.7%)	102 (34.0%)	22 (7.3%)	3.35	Average
7.	I encourage my students to express their feelings towards the issues of the literary test.	4 (1.3%)	28 (9.3%)	118 (39.3%)	121 (40.3%)	29 (9.7%)	3.47	Average
8.	I guide my students to express their opinions towards a literary text.	7 (2.3%)	30 (10.0%)	113 (37.7%)	110 (36.7%)	40 (13.3%)	3.48	Average
9.	I set language activities in my literature lesson.	13 (4.3%)	36 (12.0%)	125 (41.7%)	97 (32.3%)	29 (9.7%)	3.31	Average
10.	I encourage students to actively participate in the process of understanding the meaning of the literary text.	8 (2.7%)	15 (5.0%)	92 (30.7%)	142 (47.3%)	43 (14.3%)	3.65	Average
11.	My students work with their classmates in the process of understanding the literary text.	10 (3.3%)	30 (10.0%)	133 (44.3%)	100 (33.3%)	27 (9.0%)	3.34	Average
12.	I generate language practice for my students using the literary text.	6 (2.0%)	21 (7.0%)	141 (47.0%)	103 (34.3%)	29 (9.7%)	3.42	Average
13.	I elicit information from my students about the literary text.	5 (1.7%)	12 (4.0%)	66 (22%)	132 (44%)	85 (28.3%)	3.93	High
14.	I explain the content of the literary text to my class.	5 (1.7%)	10 (3.3%)	48 (16.6%)	131 (43.7%)	106 (35.3%)	4.07	High
15.	I ask questions to check my students' knowledge based on what they have read.	7 (2.3%)	19 (6.3%)	113 (37.7%)	112 (37.3%)	49 (16.3%)	3.59	Average
16.	I provide my students with background information about the text.	8 (2.7%)	39 (13.0%)	139 (46.3%)	83 (27.7%)	31 (10.3%)	3.30	Average
17.	I encourage my students to relate the themes of the literary text to their personal experiences.	10 (3.3%)	7 (2.3%)	86 (28.7%)	136 (45.3%)	61 (20.3%)	3.77	High
18.	I elicit my students' response to a literary text.	5 (1.7%)	11 (3.7%)	83 (27.7%)	139 (46.3%)	62 (20.7%)	3.80	High
19.	I encourage my students to express their feelings towards the issues of the literary test.	7 (2.3%)	22 (7.3%)	113 (37.7%)	117 (39.0%)	41 (13.7%)	3.54	Average
20.	I guide my students to express their opinions towards a literary text.	5 (1.7%)	17 (5.7%)	141 (47.0%)	115 (38.3%)	22 (7.3%)	3.44	Average
21.	I set language activities in my literature lesson.	8 (2.7%)	33 (11%)	156 (52.0%)	84 (28.0%)	19 (6.3%)	3.24	Average
22.	I encourage students to actively participate in the process of understanding the meaning of the literary text.	11 (3.7%)	28 (9.3%)	131 (43.7%)	104 (34.7%)	26 (8.7%)	3.35	Average
23.	My students work with their classmates in the process of understanding the literary text.	8 (2.7%)	35 (11.7%)	139 (46.3%)	102 (46.35)	16 (5.3%)	3.27	Average
24.	I generate language practice for my students using the literary text	12 (4.0%)	50 (16.7%)	139 (46.3%)	76 (25.3%)	23 (7.7%)	3.16	Average
Approaches to Teaching							3.51	Average

themes of the literary text to their personal experiences' (mean 3.77) and statement 'I elicit my students' response to a literary text (mean 3.77). This indicates the teacher frequently applied the statements of approach in teaching and learning literature. Figure below shows the frequency and the percentage of approaches to teaching literature in every level.

The graph shows that 116 teachers (38.66%) applied the overall approaches to teaching literature at high level, 173 teachers (57.6%) applied the overall approaches at average level and 6 teachers (2%) applied the overall approach at low level.

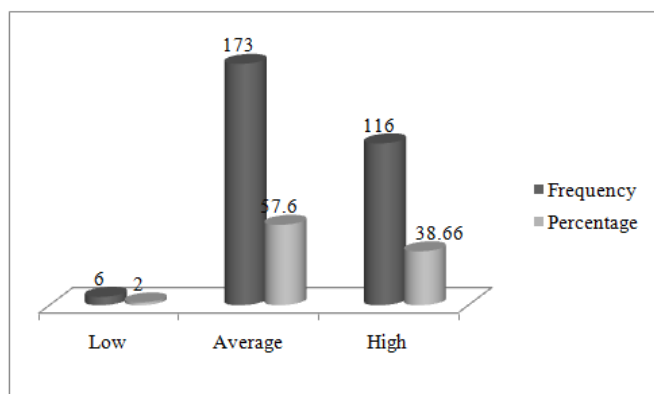


Figure. Frequency and Percentage of approaches employed by teachers in teaching the literature in every level

Teaching Activities in the Literature Lesson

The table below shows mean score of activities generated by teachers in teaching literature according to each statement. The findings show that teachers applied overall information based activities were at medium level (mean 3.40)-see Table 4.3 interpretation mean score. Looking every statements of information based activities, teachers ranked statement number 1 (explained a text to my students) as the highest mean score, followed by statement 2 (read notes from workbooks/handouts with my students) and 3 (set comprehension question exercises). While statement 4 (conduct lecture sessions) was ranked as the lowest usage of activity in teaching and learning literature. The findings also show that teacher employed personal-response activities at medium level (mean 2.85). Conducting small group discussions (statement 5) was the most frequent employed by the teacher in teaching process, followed by activities personal-response activities 6 (conduct

brainstorming sessions), 7 (get my students to write about their feelings/reactions towards an issue) and 8 (set journal writing). In relation to language based activities, teacher reported that they applied language based activities at medium level (mean 2.81). Teacher ranked statement language based activities number 9 (set group work) as the highest mean score followed by statement number 10 (conduct performance activities (e.g. drama, role play, poetry recital), 11 (conduct performance activities (e.g. drama, role play, poetry recital) and 12 (hold debates for my students). Looking at the use of paraphrastic activities in teaching literature, teacher perceived that the use the activities at medium level (mean 3.16). Teacher rated paraphrastic activity in term of 're-telling the story to my students (number 13)' as the most popular one, and the second most popular was 'getting my students to read paraphrased notes in the workbook / handouts (statement 14)' and then statement 15 (Encourage my students to re-tell the story to the class) while statement 16 (Translate a text using LI (BM / Chinese / Kadazan) was use at lower frequency. Teachers employed moral-philosophical activities at medium level (mean 3.13). In more detail, teacher rated activities of more-philosophical in term of statement number 17 (setting discussions on moral dilemmas) at highest level, followed by statement number 18 (conduct reflective sessions), number 19 (tell moral values to my students) and number 20 (conduct self-evaluation activities). The use of stylistics activities in overall in teaching literature was at medium level (mean 3.26). Statement 21 (discuss different meaning of a text) from the text that are significant to their reading) was rated as the highest mean score, followed by statement 22 (ask my students to identify linguistic features (e.g. vocabulary, tenses) in a poem / short story / novel.), 23 (get my students to identify adjective that describe a character) and 24 (get my students to extract examples from a text that describe the setting).

Table. Mean Score and Standard Deviation of Activities Used by Teachers in Teaching the Literature in English

Activities in Teaching and Learning	Mean	Std. Deviation
Information-Based Activities	3.40	.626
1. Explain a text to my students.	3.91	0.91
2. Read notes from workbooks/handouts with my students.	3.44	0.88
3. Set comprehension question exercises.	3.34	0.91
4. Conduct lecture sessions.	2.92	0.95
Personal-Response Activities	2.85	.717
5. Conduct small group discussions.	3.80	0.69
6. Conduct brainstorming sessions.	3.12	0.71
7. Get my students to write about their feelings/reactions towards an issue.	2.94	0.79
8. Set journal writing.	2.38	1.07
Language-Based Activities	2.81	.684
9. Set group work.	3.47	0.79
10. Conduct performance activities (e.g. drama, role play, poetry recital).	3.34	0.90
11. Conduct performance activities (e.g. drama, role play, poetry recital).	3.21	1.05
12. Hold debates for my students.	2.25	0.87
Paraphrastic Activities	3.16	.532
13. Re-tell the story to my students.	4.07	0.89
14. Get my students to read paraphrased notes in the workbook / handouts.	3.59	0.91
15. Encourage my students to re-tell the story to the class.	3.30	0.91
16. Translate a text using LI (BM / Chinese / Kadazan).	2.22	0.78
Moral-Philosophical Activities	3.13	.657
17. Set discussions on moral dilemmas.	3.80	0.86
18. Conduct reflective sessions.	3.77	0.91
19. Tell moral values to my students.	3.54	0.90
20. Conduct self-evaluation activities.	3.44	0.78
Stylistics Activities	3.26	.712
21. Discuss different meaning of a text.	3.35	0.90
22. Ask my students to identify linguistic features (e.g. vocabulary, tenses) in a poem / short story / novel.	3.24	0.83
23. Get my students to identify adjective that describe a character.	3.16	0.92
24. Get my students to extract examples from a text that describe the setting.	2.92	0.95

Figure below ranks mean scores of each activity which teacher employed in teaching and learning literature. It shows that teacher ranked information-based activities as the most frequently used in teaching literature, and the second most frequent was stylistics activities followed by paraphrastic activities and moral-philosophical activities.

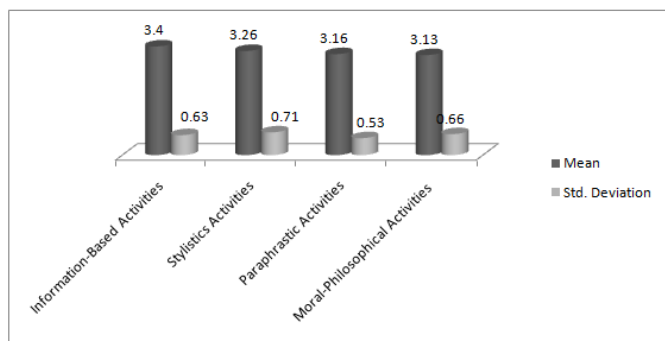


Figure. Mean scores of each activity which teacher employed in teaching literature

Table. Frequency, percentage, mean and level in each item of teaching activities in the literature lesson

No	Teaching Activities	Frequency and Percentage					Mean	Level
		1	2	3	4	5		
1.	Set comprehension question exercises.	10 (3.3%)	30 (10%)	138 (46%)	90 (30%)	32 (10.7%)	3.34	Average
2.	Conduct lecture sessions.	23 (7.7%)	67 (22.3%)	132 (44.0%)	65 (21.7%)	13 (4.3%)	2.92	Average
3.	Read notes from workbooks/handouts with my students.	7 (2.3%)	26 (8.7%)	127 (42.3%)	108 (36.0%)	32 (10.7%)	3.44	Average
4.	Explain a text to my students.	7 (2.3%)	12 (4.0%)	60 (20.0%)	142 (47.3%)	79 (26.3%)	3.91	High
5.	Set journal writing.	70 (23.3%)	100 (33.3%)	89 (29.7%)	28 (9.3%)	13 (4.3%)	2.38	Average
6.	Conduct brainstorming sessions.	14 (4.7%)	59 (19.7%)	121 (40.3%)	86 (28.7%)	20 (6.7%)	3.12	Average
7.	Conduct small group discussions.	16 (5.3%)	55 (18.3%)	133 (44.3%)	81 (27.0%)	15 (5.0%)	3.80	High
8.	Get my students to write about their feelings/reactions towards an issue.	26 (8.7%)	74 (24.7%)	137 (45.7%)	46 (15.3%)	17 (5.7%)	2.94	Average
9.	Set group work	16 (5.3%)	55 (18.3%)	133 (44.3%)	81 (27.0%)	15 (5.0%)	3.47	Average
10.	Introduce language activities (e.g. cloze, jigsaw puzzle, prediction exercises).	16 (5.3%)	40 (13.3%)	119 (39.7%)	90 (30.0%)	35 (11.7%)	3.21	Average
11.	Hold debates for my students.	114 (38.0%)	86 (28.7%)	81 (27.0%)	15 (5.0%)	4 (1.3%)	2.25	Low
12.	Conduct performance activities (e.g. drama, role play, poetry recital)	33 (11.0%)	95 (31.7%)	110 (36.7%)	51 (17.0%)	11 (3.7%)	3.34	Average
13.	Translate a text using LI (BM / Chinese / Kadazan).	51 (17.0%)	98 (32.7%)	93 (31.0%)	36 (12.0%)	22 (7.3%)	2.22	Average
14.	Re-tell the story to my students.	8 (2.7%)	25 (8.3%)	87 (29.0%)	127 (42.3%)	53 (17.7%)	4.07	High
15.	Get my students to read paraphrased notes in the workbook / handouts.	13 (4.3%)	37 (12.3%)	116 (38.7%)	106 (35.3%)	28 (9.3%)	3.59	Average
16.	Encourage my students to re-tell the story to the class.	17 (5.7%)	61 (20.3%)	126 (42.0%)	74 (24.7%)	22 (7.3%)	3.30	Average
17.	Conduct reflective sessions.	22 (7.3%)	84 (28.0%)	120 (40.0%)	61 (20.3%)	13 (4.3%)	3.77	High
18.	Set discussions on moral dilemmas.	22 (7.3%)	44 (14.7%)	134 (44.7%)	84 (28%)	16 (5.3%)	3.80	High
19.	Tell moral values to my students.	9 (3.0%)	20 (6.7%)	111 (37.0%)	114 (38.0%)	46 (15.3%)	3.54	Average
20.	Conduct self-evaluation activities.	11 (3.7%)	66 (22.0%)	143 (47.7%)	65 (21.7%)	15 (5.0%)	3.44	Average
21.	Ask my students to identify linguistic features (e.g. vocabulary, tenses) in a poem / short story / novel.	17 (5.7%)	43 (14.3%)	121 (40.3%)	90 (30.0%)	29 (9.7%)	3.24	Average
22.	Discuss different meaning of a text	14 (4.7%)	41 (13.7%)	116 (38.7%)	105 (35.0%)	24 (8.0%)	3.35	Average
23.	Get my students to extract examples from a text that describe the setting.	13 (4.3%)	63 (21.0%)	122 (40.7%)	87 (29.0%)	15 (5.0%)	2.92	Average
24.	Get my students to identify adjective that describe a character.	6 (2.0%)	30 (10.0%)	112 (37.3%)	124 (41.3%)	28 (9.3%)	3.16	Average
Teaching activities in the literature							3.10	Average

The table below displays frequency, percentage, mean and level in each item of teaching activities in the literature lesson. Overall mean scores of teaching activities in the literature is at average level (3.10). This indicates that the teacher is not strongly student activities in literature lesson. Looking at analysis in each item of activities in teaching literature shows five statements of teaching activities in the literature obtain high level of mean score, the statements are 'explain a text to my students' (mean 3.91), conduct small group discussions (mean 3.80), re-tell the story to my students (mean 4.07), conduct reflective sessions (mean 3.77), and set discussions on moral dilemmas (mean 3.80). In other words, teacher generate teaching activities according to statements are very well. However, most of items (18 items) yielded means score at average level (mean 2.67 to 3.66). This means that teachers apply teaching activities in the literature in term of the statements were at average levels, and one activity (hold debates for my students) is applied at low level (mean 2.25).

Figure below shows the frequency and the percentage of teaching activities in the literature in every level. The graph shows that 34 teachers (11.33%) managed overall teaching activities in the literature lesson at high level, 246 teachers (82%) managed overall teaching activities at average level and 14 teachers (4.66%) managed teaching activities in the literature lesson at low level.

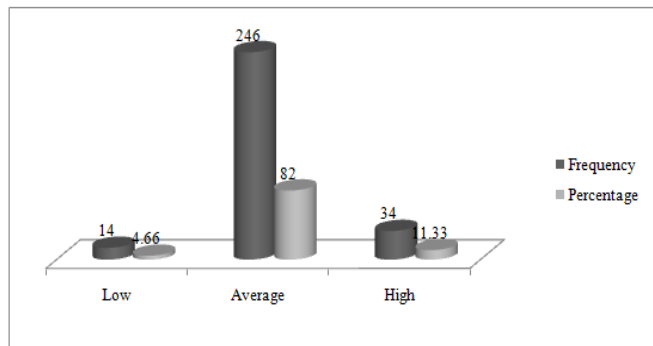


Figure. Frequency and Percentage of Activities employed by teachers in teaching the literature in every level

Approaches and Activities Employed In the Literature Lesson

RQ 2: What are the motivations for these supplementary approaches and activities used by teachers to teach the English literature component in schools?

This section presents findings based on the interview sessions with the 13 teachers after conducting series of classroom observations in their respective literature classrooms. The 13 teachers are namely English option and non-option. The English option teachers are labeled as Teacher Q whilst the non-option English teachers are labeled as Teacher P. Thus, 13 teachers, Teachers Q (7) and P (6) respectively will be chosen from National schools and National Type schools, which consist of Chinese and Tamil schools from all the 7 districts in the state of Negeri Sembilan. The schools were the same ones used for the experiment and interview. The aim is to probe these teachers with a view to gain a better understanding and insight into their choices of approaches in teaching literature. Thus, in an attempt to answer the above research question, analysis of data is made with specific reference to the interview transcripts.

Based on the findings, it would seem that the module shows that aims and objectives, syllabus content and methodology obtained high mean scores. Based on the findings from the questionnaire and the case study involving thirteen classroom observations, this study in general has discovered that the paraphrastic approach (mean = 3.72), the information-based (3.61) and the moral-philosophical (3.64) are popularly applied by the teachers. Ironically, the language-based approach, the personal-response and the stylistics approach were the least practiced in the literature setting. It was discovered that a significant 92% of respondents usually approach the teaching of literature by using simple terms to explain literary texts to students whilst an outstanding 91% of respondents identified that they usually explain the content of the text to the students. These are two examples of items

related to the paraphrastic approach and the information-based approach. The study found that information-based activities, the stylistics, the paraphrastic and the moral-philosophical activities yielded the highest mean scores of 3.40, 3.26, 3.16 and 3.13 respectively. Similar to the findings in RQ1, activities related to personal-response and language-based were at the bottom of the list with mean scores of 3.15 and 2.85 respectively. This is further justified through the series of classroom observations whereby there was an absence of language-based activities and personal-response activities in the thirteen teachers' literature lessons. Instead, the thirteen teachers were seen to constantly use comprehension questions exercises as the classroom activity after completion of text reading and explanation.

Three interview sessions each in the thirteen observations were held with a purpose to probe the teachers Q (English option) and P (non-English option) who were involved in the case study, so as to gain a deeper insight and understanding on their choice of approaches in teaching the Children's Contemporary Literature Component in English. Interestingly, the thirteen teachers had their own fundamental reasons as to why their literature lessons were taught in such a manner. In retrospect, the classroom observations illustrated that the teachers drew upon similar approaches and activities in teaching literature. They were seen to use reading aloud. Their teaching involved a lot of teacher dominance whereby most of the time was spent on giving explanations and paraphrase of the literary text to the entire class as well as the practice of using comprehension questions exercises as their classroom task activities. Teachers P's reasons for teaching literature in such a way were related to students' level of proficiency in the target language, in this case, English.

In addition, students' interests, attitudes, the number of students in a class and the space of the school were amongst the factors attributed to their choice of approaches and activities in the literature setting. On the other hand, from the interview feedback it was found that teachers Q showed more concern and agitation over the completion of the syllabus within a time frame given and examinations although they did acknowledge that language proficiency was also a factor that contributed to the way they taught the children's English literature in schools. These findings also show that academic qualification and gender does not give any effect to approaches, teaching activities and approaches-activities to practice similar patterns of teaching the English literature in, although it was anticipated that teachers Q (English option) would have a greater advantage concerning the knowledge and teaching of literature as compared to teachers P(non-English option).

The result of T-test between English option teachers and Non English option teachers in mean score approaches, teaching activities and approaches-activities show that there is a significant difference between English Option teachers and non-English option teachers in approaches (different mean=.268, $t=3.93$, and $\text{Sig}=.000<.05$) and teaching activities (different mean=2.01, $t=.043$, and $\text{Sig}=.04<.05$). These findings imply that English option teachers obtain higher mean score than non-English option teachers in approaches and activities. However there is no significant differences between

English Option teachers and Non English option teachers in approaches-activities (different mean=.010, $t=.131$, and Sig.=.895>.05). This means that English Option teachers and Non English option teachers obtained the same level of approaches and activities. The analyses findings of Pearson correlation show that there is a significant positive relationship between approaches and teaching activities ($r=.710$, and sig. = .00<.05). The findings mean that the higher approaches used by teachers in literature the higher teaching activities in the literature lesson. However there is no relationship between teaching activities and approaches-activities ($r=-.046$, Sig.=.428>.05) and between approaches and approaches-activities ($r=-.073$, Sig.=.208>.05).

Qualitative Data Analysis

Based on the interview sessions with the 13 teachers, the interview transcripts as evidences and notes to answering the research questions, it was noticed that the 13 teachers had several fundamental reasons for approaching the teaching of literature in such a manner. First of all, the recapitulation activity as the beginning of the lesson using elicitation aimed at generating verbal responses from the students so as to recapitulate and set a connection between what was learnt earlier in the previous lesson before the new lesson commenced. Teacher P(1)'s reason was "to check if they remember what they have learnt" [ITP(1)/Q3].

Secondly, the 13 teachers were seen to be in favour of getting students to read aloud the literary text. In the view of these teachers, this was largely due to the fact that the students had a lower proficiency in the English Language. Therefore, teacher P(3) felt that it was a good way of helping them practice reading and pronouncing words in English. Teacher P(3) clarified:

I will do some discussion, storytelling and participation in the class via discussion. [ITP(3)/Q3]

In addition, teacher Q(5) explained:

I always encourage students to participate actively in each lesson. Not any in particular but always have the habit to have interaction sessions to make the class interesting. [ITQ(5)/Q3]

In relation to this, perhaps it is wise to ponder upon the point made by Nesamalar *et al.* (1995). Nesamalar *et al.* (1995) see that the reading activity also involves utilizing previous knowledge. Hence, it is important to know that "reading involves meaning-getting not just sounding out words." After the reading aloud session, the teachers were seen to take over the scene again and attempt to explain what was read earlier. Certain terms and phrases were paraphrased into simpler words with occasional use of Bahasa Malaysia, Chinese and Tamil. The teachers had the same reason for doing so, that is to enhance students' further understanding on the literary text. Comprehension exercises were commonly given by teachers P after the completion of a chapter or a segment of a chapter. This was a way for teachers P to check their students' understanding. Teacher P(6), in her own words, stated:

I will give them comprehension questions for them to show that they understand or they don't understand what they have read. [ITP(6)/Q3]

In fact, her decision to use comprehension questions was also partly due to the attitude of her students, their language proficiency and examination purposes. Teachers P pointed out those students who were good achievers or from the good classes per se preferred a more laid back approach and activity depicting more control by the teacher which required them to sit down, listen to the teacher and answer questions in the exercise books. This may well be related to their interest in acquiring good grades in English and the sole way is through successful attempts in answering examination questions. Whilst in the case of weak students, they did not appear to show any interest when Teachers P attempted to conduct dramatization. As a result, Teachers P chose comprehension questions as "comprehension question exercises are very easy questions for the weak class so it's for them to understand the story more" [ITP(6)/Q4].

On another note, teacher Q claimed that they would carry out role play and questions and answers (another term for comprehension questions) with their class. Their reasons were that the activities enable them to "understand the text and they can express their feelings" whereas "the questions and answers are to stimulate their brains" [ITQ(1)/Q4]. The statement above seems to reflect teachers Qs' concern over examination whereby they felt that questions and answers could trigger students' thinking on the things they have studied.

Interestingly, it was noted that teachers Q appeared to show more concern over the syllabus and examinations in comparison to teachers P although the teachers were seen to conduct very similar type of approaches and activities in their classrooms. When asked why they could not carry out certain activities like debates, dramatization, games and presentation in their literature lessons, teachers Q clarified "because of the time factor, I have to finish the syllabus and then language proficiency" [ITQ(4)/Q4]. Teachers P, on the other hand, had a differing set of reasons. Teachers P stated that "because of the space of the school, the number of students, the attitude of the students, they were not trained to be that way. Not vocal" [ITP(5)/Q4].

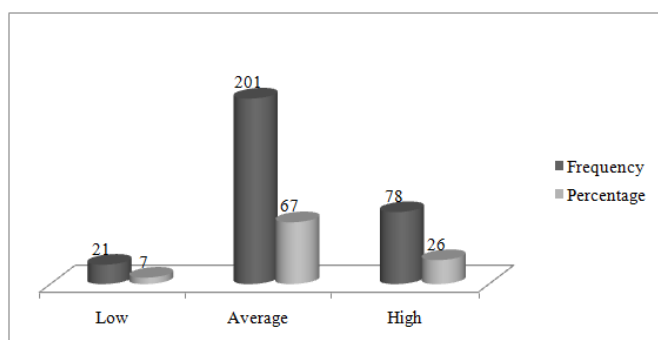
Quantitative Data Analysis

The result of analysis approaches and activities employed in the literature lesson shows that most of statements (9 items) obtain average means score (see Table). This means that teachers approach and activities employed in the literature lesson in term of the statements were at average levels. One statement of approaches and activities employed in the literature lesson obtain high level of mean score, the statement is 'determine the best approach in my teaching based on students' ability' (mean 3.80). Overall mean score of determine the best approach in my teaching based on students' ability is 3.32. This means that the teachers perceive the teaching activities in the literature lesson is at average level (see Table)

Table. Frequency, percentage, mean and level in each item of approach and activities employed in the literature lesson

No	Statements	Frequency and Percentage					Mean	Level
		1	2	3	4	5		
1.	Determine the best approach in my teaching based on my knowledge.	21 (7.0%)	6 (2.0%)	174 (58.0%)	99 (33.0%)	(%)	3.17	Average
2.	Determine the best approach in my teaching based on students' response.	3 (1.0%)	51 (17.0%)	153 (51.0%)	93 (31.0%)	(%)	3.12	Average
3.	Determine the best approach in my teaching based on students' ability.	15 (5.0%)	63 (21.0%)	189 (63.0%)	33 (11.0%)	(%)	3.80	High
4.	Determine the best approach in my teaching based on the text prescribed.	18 (6.0%)	51 (17.0%)	162 (54.0%)	69 (23.0%)	(%)	2.94	Average
5.	Determine the best approach in my teaching based on the expectation / conditions of the school.	3 (1.0%)	18 (6.0%)	144 (48.0%)	105 (35.0%)	30 (10.0%)	3.47	Average
6.	Don't have any knowledge about the teaching of literature.	9 (3.0%)	30 (10.0%)	168 (56.0%)	63 (21.0%)	30 (10.0%)	3.25	Average
7.	My students are not responsive towards learning of literature.	30 (10.0%)	36 (12.0%)	90 (30.0%)	129 (43.0%)	15 (5.0%)	3.21	Average
8.	Fine that my students don't have the ability in comprehending literature learning.	12 (4.0%)	27 (9.0%)	135 (45.0%)	99 (33.0%)	27 (9.0%)	3.34	Average
9.	Find that the text prescribed is not suitable in the teaching and learning of literature.	12 (4.0%)	6 (2.0%)	42 (14.0%)	216 (72.0%)	24 (8.0%)	2.22	Average
10.	Don't get the full cooperation based on the expectation / conditions of the school.	15 (5.0%)	48 (16.0%)	126 (42.0%)	108 (36.0%)	3 (1.0%)	3.12	Average
Overall Approach and activities employed							3.32	Average

Figure below shows the frequency and the percentage of approach and activities employed in the literature lesson in every level. The graph shows that 78 teachers (26%) perceived the overall approach and activities employed in the literature lesson at high level, 201 teachers (67%) perceived the overall approach and activities employed in the literature lesson at average level and 21 teachers (7%) perceived the overall approach and activities employed in the literature lesson at low level.



Graph. Frequency and Percentage of approaches and activities employed by teachers in teaching the literature in every level

Findings of Observation

The challenges faced by teachers teaching the English Literature in schools and the possible solutions

As mentioned previously, the researchers' main concerns of the study were to look at how teachers approached the teaching of the Literature in English. Therefore, with this purpose in mind, the researcher had decided to zoom in the

teaching-learning activities during her observations with a view to capture a segment of a lesson which she felt was important to add to the discussion of her findings. The observation report would be enrolled according to class number.

RQ 3: What are the challenges faced by teachers teaching the English Literature in primary schools and the possible solutions?

The Summary of The Observation Findings

The findings have indicated that teacher act as a dominant figure who reads the story, retells the story, explains, questions and gives answers to the students. The findings reflect a concomitant setting to earlier studies conducted by Siti Norliana (2003) and Suriya Kumar (2004), whose findings also manifested that the teacher was always in control, and they tend to spend their time to deal with students' comprehension and by spending much time in dealing with students' comprehension and clarification of the literary text discussed. Most teachers in teaching the story were seen to constantly used three main activities in their approach to teaching literature. First and foremost is listening and reading aloud by the students. Students were normally given turns to read a paragraph while other students listening. Secondly, teachers normally reread and paraphrased and explained the literary text as a way of telling the story again to the students. Teachers' main resources were literature text and workbook. In short the activities tend to be in the passive mode. Teachers were seen to use the similar type of activities throughout their literature lessons. Activities related to language and triggering students' response were not conducted in any of the classroom observations.

It can therefore be concluded that the activities witnessed throughout the 13 lessons were a less active even have the extreme tendency to passive mode. Literary texts can present teachers and learners with a number of difficulties including text selection – text need to be chosen that have relevance and interest to learners. Linguistic difficulty – texts need to be appropriate to the level of students' comprehension. Length – shorter texts may be easier to use within the class time available, but longer texts provide more contextual details, and development of character and plot. Cultural difficulty – texts should not be so culturally dense that outsiders feel excluded from understanding essential meaning. Cultural appropriacy – learners should not be offended by textual content. Duff and Maley (2007) emphasize that teachers can cope with many of the challenges that literary texts present. If these teachers are requested to respond to a series of questions to assess the suitability of the text which is used for certain group of students, the questions may cover: a) whether the subject matter is likely to interest this group, b) if the language level is appropriate, c) whether the text has the right length and can be covered in the available time, d) whether it requires much cultural or literary background knowledge, e) if the content is culturally offensive or not, f) if it can b they ask a series of questions to assess the suitability of texts for any particular easily for language learning purposes.

Teachers can creatively exploit literary texts in numerous ways in the classroom. While classroom activities with literary works may involve pre-reading tasks, interactive work on the text and follow-up activities. To support this, Pulverness (2003) provides some useful advice: the first one is by maximizing pre-reading support. In this part, teachers can introduce the topic or theme of the text, pre-teach essential vocabulary items and use prediction tasks to arouse the interest and curiosity of students. The second thing is to minimize the teacher's intervening students' reading activity. The third one is to draw attention to stylistic peculiarity followed by helping students to have literary appreciation. In this phase, the teacher helps the students to learn and understand the ways the writer use the language to give particular effects. The fifth things is to provide framework for creative person, and the last one is to invite the students to imagine themselves as the writer or to modify the text. One of the main challenges in learning literature are caused by the text itself, such as the language of the text, especially when there is a mismatch between the texts selected and students' language ability.

Most of the teachers disagreed on the type of texts that should be taught. However, they generally agree that the texts should promote intellectual development, independent thinking, are interesting to adolescents and meet certain cultural and aesthetic standards (Agee, 1998). Struggling readers share the same problems which are weak comprehension, lack of interest and confidence (Arvidson and Blanco, 2004). They spend a lot of time looking up or guessing meanings of words which might result in regressive eye movement, losing sight of the plot or the bigger picture by the time they reach the bottom of the page or the end of the story. To avoid frustration and students' lack of participation, it is vital to ensure that the language of the text match students' proficiency level and that there should not be any discrepancies between linguistic expectations in the language syllabus with those of the

literature component syllabus (Ganakumaran, 2002 p.65). Furthermore, unfamiliar vocabulary, grammar and sentence structure hamper students' understanding of texts. Students tend to misinterpret key words or fail to recognize them and focus instead on the less important part of a text (Fecteau, 1999). When faced with unfamiliar or difficult words, phrases or sentences, students use their lower-level reading skills where they look at a sentence or phrase for clues instead of using higher level skills such as inferencing or relying on the context to a guess a word's meaning (Sarjit Kaur and Rosy Thiyagarajah, 1999). Hence, Brown (2004) in her study highlight that if teachers want to be successful in incorporating literature in the classroom, the main point that must be considered is the works selected for the students. Furthermore, she emphasized that the too-easy materials will lead to students' boredom and teacher's difficulty in creating enough activities, while on the other hand the too-difficult materials will frustrate the students. Literary style and structure pose a problem for students in trying to comprehend literary texts (Davis *et al.*, 1992). If the writer is from a different background, students need to be aware of the cultural norms in the author's world to be able to identify language deviances and their significance, especially in poetry.

Students also need a good grasp of the target language to appreciate choices and deviances in the text. Poems are generally disliked due to the abundance of figurative language and images which students fail to interpret (Wan Kamariah, 2009). Linguistic structure in poems can be especially confusing such as the use of irregular punctuation capital letters and organization. Students generally feel that poetry does not help their language development compared to other genres such as short stories and novels. Although literary texts provides contexts in which ESL students can learn more about the L2 culture (McCafferty, 2002), unsuitable texts can create distance between the text and the readers, especially culturally (Saraceni, 2003). Besides linguistic skills, students also need background knowledge to fully comprehend literary texts (Horowitz, 2002) which are written by authors who assume their readers share the same background knowledge, similar values and norms. When students encounter unfamiliar cultural aspects, they tend to interpret the meaning based on their own culture, which might results in inappropriate cultural representation.

Sometimes students are faced with a cultural reference that is totally alien to them, which has no parallel in their own culture, such as the notion of the African background to the Malaysian students, as found in Fatou Keita-Danalis Distributors, *The Little Blue Boy*. At other times, students come across something familiar to them which might represent something else in another culture, such as death which is symbolized by the colour black in Western society but associated with white among Muslims. Understanding culture is made even more difficult as the values which shape and influence characters and their point of views are not explicitly portrayed in literary texts. Students' misunderstanding is due to the teachers' lack of cultural awareness, the lack of support material that address cultural issues and introductory classes that pay minimal attention to the cultural elements of the texts (Gurnam Kaur, 2002 and Ganakumaran *et al.*, 2003).

Besides cultural values, the topic of the texts can be remote to the students, not only in terms of experience but also historically, geographically or socially. Students prefer reading texts that address issues of youth, relationship and changes in social values. Texts favoured are those with clear language, careful organization and thought-provoking themes. Students feel more motivated to read literature if they are given a choice or allowed to negotiate the texts that are to be included in literature classes (Davis *et al*, 1992). Although teachers might feel that students do not select 'quality' works, it is important to make sure the texts suit students' interest. Good grasp of content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and understanding students' interests and needs are some of the requirements needed to teach literature competently (Agee, 1998). Students favour teaching techniques that encourage them to respond personally, give their own opinion, and concentrate on the content of the text as opposed to analyzing details of language structure as well as having class discussions (Davis *et al*, 1992). Students enjoy imagining themselves as the characters, writing letters as one of the characters and retelling the story from others' point of view.

Students indicate negative attitudes towards activities that require them to memorize facts, answered multiple-choice questions, read aloud, drilling and teacher-centred classes where interpretations are provided only by the teacher (Wan Kamariah, 2009). Studies on teaching methods in Malaysia found conflicting results. Fauziah and Jamaluddin (2009) found that teachers used more students-centred approach in class compared to teacher-centred strategies which created a better learning atmosphere and improved students' perception and motivation towards literature. However, Daimah (2001) found the methods used by teachers in literature classes are mostly teacher-centred. Teachers agreed that their classes were usually divided into three stages which started with explanation by the teachers, followed by discussions in groups or with the whole class and concluded with some form of exercises. A teacher-centred approach is necessary in order to save time and finish the syllabus in time. Another reason cited was students' low proficiency level which prevented teachers from using students-centred techniques like group discussion, debates and role plays. Students' unwillingness and anxiety to speak or answer questions about the text for fear of providing the wrong replies also did not help.

Gurnam Kaur (2003) found that students viewed teaching strategies used by their teachers as boring, dull and uninspiring as it involved mainly doing written work, especially among students with higher proficiency level. Students with lower proficiency could not understand the texts and therefore found literature lessons boring. This could be due to teachers who had very little experience and knowledge in teaching literature. Ganakumaran *et al* (2003) found that 48% of the teachers surveyed said that they lack knowledge about literature teaching methodology while only 51% indicated they had enough knowledge of literature. Language teachers also lack confidence to teach literature as they perceive as only competent to teach language due to their training (Katz, 2001). Teachers usually explained "about the text", referring to the writer's life or his purpose for writing the text. Teachers did not seem to emphasize on the cultural elements of the texts, perhaps due to time constraint or the lack of supplementary

materials. There did not seem to be a variety of activities during literature classes. Almost all the classes had similar sequence of activities during literature. For weaker classes, the teacher would read aloud and sometimes asked students to take turns to read. Teachers then asked questions and checked if students had any queries about the text. Then, there would be an explanation by the teacher, followed by note taking. For very weak classes, teacher apparently "always translated word by word" while for average class, teachers only translated unfamiliar words. Finally, students were given exercises and sometime asked to do these in groups.

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this study is to gain a general overview on the approaches employed by teachers in teaching the Children's Contemporary English Literature Component in Primary Schools. The Ministry of Education's major shift in the English Language syllabus for Malaysian Primary schools that introduced the children's contemporary English literature component in 2004 has motivated the study. Since 2004, the children's contemporary English literature component has been a compulsory part of the English language syllabus in schools. For this purpose the Ministry of Education has produced texts for the use of the teachers and students. The researcher identified literature as a base for teaching thinking skills due to the inherent characteristic of the subject itself that cuts across all areas of studies. This is indicated through the diversified contents of literary texts that touch on universal themes. The literature review also identified the various approaches to the teaching of literary texts. These approaches have been discussed in depth in Chapter 2 to show their strengths and weaknesses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This will be introduced by reiterating the research questions. The interpretations of the findings for each of the research question will be discussed in relation to issues taken from the literature review and data from the research.

1. What are the key components of the current module? There are several important key components found in this study. The first key component is the selection of materials covering setting of story and the genre. For the setting of the story, it was found that Malaysian setting with its diverse cultural of multiracial community must be used. Whereas for the genre, it should be drama or play because the teachers have to conduct a real literature lessons in the classroom. The second key component is the content of the modules. It must be able to enhance the students' language proficiency.

2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the current module of Children's Contemporary English Literature component in primary schools' in terms of teaching the children's contemporary English Literature component in primary schools?

This part presents the result of evaluation of the current module according to respondents. The respondent consist

of 4 university lecturers, 3 lecturers of teachers' training institution, 3 'Guru Cemerlang', 2 English Language Officers and 3 state trainers. Descriptive analysis was conducted to see the mean score of the module. The 15 professionals comprising of 4 university lecturers, 3 lecturers of teachers' training institution, 3 'Guru Cemerlang (Bright Teachers)', 2 English Language Officers and 3 state trainers asserts that the content, organization and approach used in the module is appropriate to be used for the students because it incorporates moral values, uses simple language, symbolizes Malaysian way of life and fulfills the literature elements for fun learning.

3. What are the supplementary approaches and activities used by teachers to teach the children's contemporary English Literature component in primary schools?

Based on the findings from the questionnaire and the case study involving thirteen classroom observations, this study in general has discovered that the paraphrastic approach (mean = 3.72), the information-based (3.61) and the moral-philosophical (3.64) are popularly applied by the teachers. Ironically, the language-based approach, the personal-response and the stylistics approach were the least practiced in the literature setting. It was discovered that a significant 92% of respondents usually approach the teaching of literature by using simple terms to explain literary texts to students whilst an outstanding 91% of respondents identified that they usually explain the content of the text to the students. These are two examples of items related to the paraphrastic approach and the information-based approach.

The study found that information-based activities, the stylistics, the paraphrastic and the moral-philosophical activities yielded the highest mean scores of 3.40, 3.26, 3.16 and 3.13 respectively. Similar to the findings in RQ1, activities related to personal-response and language-based were at the bottom of the list with mean scores of 3.15 and 2.85 respectively. This is further justified through the series of classroom observations whereby there was an absence of language-based activities and personal-response activities in the thirteen teachers' literature lessons. Instead, the thirteen teachers were seen to constantly use comprehension questions exercises as the classroom activity after completion of text reading and explanation. Pearson correlation was used to analyze the relationship strength between two variables. The analyses findings show that there is a significant positive relationship between approaches and teaching activities ($r=.710$, and $sig. = .00 < 0.05$). The findings mean that the higher approaches used by teachers in literature the higher teaching activities in the literature lesson. However there is no relationship between teaching activities and approaches-activities ($r=-.046$, $Sig.=.428 > .05$) and between approaches and approaches-activities ($r=-.073$, $Sig.=.208 > .05$).

4. What are the motivations for these supplementary approaches and activities used by teachers to teach the children's contemporary English Literature component in primary schools?

Three interview sessions each in the thirteen observations were held with a purpose to probe the teachers Q (English option) and P (non English option) who were involved in the

case study, so as to gain a deeper insight and understanding on their choice of approaches in teaching the Children's Contemporary Literature Component in English. Interestingly, the thirteen teachers had their own fundamental reasons as to why their literature lessons were taught in such a manner. In retrospect, the classroom observations illustrated that the teachers drew upon similar approaches and activities in teaching literature. They were seen to use reading aloud. Their teaching involved a lot of teacher dominance whereby most of the time was spent on giving explanation and paraphrase of the literary text to the entire class as well as the practice of using comprehension questions exercises as their classroom task activities. Teachers P's reasons for teaching literature in such a way were related to students' level of proficiency in the target language, in this case, English. In addition, students' interests, attitudes, the number of students in a class and the space of the school were amongst the factors attributed to their choice of approaches and activities in the literature setting. On the other hand, as discussed in the previous chapter, teachers Q showed more concern and agitation over the completion of the Year 5 syllabus within a time frame given and examinations like UPSR although they did acknowledge that language proficiency was also a factor that contributed to the way they taught the Children's Contemporary Literature Component in English.

5. What are the challenges faced by teachers teaching the children's contemporary English Literature component in primary schools and the possible solutions?

From her findings the researcher gain an insight from her respondents that the best material to be used for young minds would be in a Malaysian context and a genre that can further develop their creativity and enhance their language learning in their own setting.

To assert further these young minds should be taught about the Malaysian way of life, its diverse cultures with multi racial community. They should be taught about the ways of the culture of other races within Malaysia and to fully ingrain and make them understand about the uniqueness of Malaysia because its unity among multi cultured races from our forefathers.

From the findings of the teacher checklist evaluation, the researcher found that for the Primary school students' level at least the choice of materials used for literature should be in Malaysian setting and the genre, should be drama/play because then the teachers will be 'forced' to conduct a real literature lesson in classroom rather than the routine or mundane English language teaching and learning. This means students are seen to shift their focus beyond the mechanical aspects of the language (Collie and Slater 2001). In addition to this point, Rosli (1995) points out that although language and literature complement each other, there is actually a difference as to how language and literature lessons are taught. Rosli (1995) argues that in a language lesson, the language is usually part of a real life activity such as asking for and giving directions whereas in the literature lesson, he claims that "the action in literature, however, takes place in the imagination and the reader is expected to contemplate it and to emotionally involved by it". The comparison between "what happens" in a

language lesson and a literature lesson illustrates the fact that literature creates opportunities for students to use their own imaginations, emotions and feelings and this proves to be a valuable language learning experience for them.

Implications of Findings

The Exam-Oriented Culture

The findings of the study reveal that teachers have shown a preference of using a more dominant way of teaching literature, for example the paraphrastic approach and the information-based approach. The main agenda in every lesson was to help students to gain a good grasp of the literary texts by giving ample explanation, information “feeding”, clarification and paraphrase of the literary text whilst “fun” yet enriching activities exemplifying language-based and personal-response were almost neglected. Instead, comprehension questions that exemplify the examination format were constantly practiced and drilled. This is perhaps largely attributed to the exam oriented culture in the Malaysian school setting. As a result, English lessons for Primary schools become tedious, boring and exam-oriented as echoed in the findings of Siti Norliana (2003), Suriya Kumar (2004) and Zamrudah (2001).

Owing to this factor, students do not seem to see or enjoy the beauty and the aesthetic nature of literature. Therefore, in order to preserve these elements as well as to attend to the core business of the Literature Component in English, perhaps it would be a good idea to introduce formative assessments instead of deciding on students’ destiny based on a public examination. The formative assessments instead of deciding on students’ destiny based on a public examination. The formative assessments would involve fun yet enriching language activities like poetry recital, quizzes, a short drama, a mini or even group projects involving research into other cultures or Malaysian peoples’ way of life. In this way, the teaching of literature is carried out in a more relaxed manner and students are given the autonomy to be engaged personally in their learning.

Students’ Language Proficiency

The teachers involved in the case study have mentioned that students’ language proficiency as a contributing factor to the choice of their approaches. Often, it is heard that students especially in less privileged areas may likely face problems even in reading. The scenario is worsened when they are expected to understand the language of Shakespeare’s sonnet which depicts archaic English. Thus, when teachers encounter with students of low language proficiency, it is often that they themselves need to ‘feed’ them with information or re-tell and explain a literary text using Bahasa Melayu or other mother tongues. To elaborate further, in many cases of teaching students of low language proficiency, these English teachers are usually non-option teachers who majored in other fields especially in under privileged or rural areas. Therefore, it would be worthwhile to conduct trainings especially on language and literature teaching methodology and language enrichment courses to cater for the needs of this set of teachers. On another note, there is a need to revive Teacher-

Support-Teacher (TST) whereby qualified English teachers and resource personnel from nearby areas can offer their support and help for this group of teachers.

Selection of Literary Texts

The selection of literary reading texts is a crucial factor that needs to be looked into seriously. In relation to this, Nesamalar *et al.* (1995) highlights major concerns such as text balance, suitability of language, the concepts in the text, levels of reasoning, the content of the text and its pedagogic suitability need to be taken into consideration when selecting a particular reading material. In the context of this study, teacher P has uttered her concerns over the selection of text due to factors like lack of knowledge of foreign culture which may possibly impede students from comprehending a literary text [ITP/Q5] whereas teacher Q has expressed her concerns over the language and “dryness” in “Clever Katya” and “Dan’s Secret Weapon” because students were not seen to enjoy the text at all [ITP/Q5]. In short, it is perhaps worthwhile to select a text based on the criteria listed by Nesamalar *et al.* (1995) so that students’ interest in language and literature teaching and learning are not jeopardized.

Large Group Classes

Teachers would agree that it is not uncommon to teach a large class of 40 – 50 students. As acknowledged by Nolasco and Arthur (1988), it would then be unrealistic to expect something more than a blackboard and a supply of chalk in a large class. Yet, whilst acknowledging the constraints of a large class, Nolasco and Arthur (1988) point out that the constraints should act as challenges rather than impediments to action in the teaching – learning agenda in the language classroom. In relation to this, the resources available in the school must be carefully planned and utilized so as to maximize their uses. These resources can be the language laboratory, the library, the radio, CDs, supplementary reading materials and even the classroom setting arrangement. This requires good planning and co-operation among the English Panel teachers as well as the flexibility of the school administration in general.

Attitude of Students

It is also important to note the attitudes of students per se. In the discussion of the research findings, it was revealed that students’ attitudes towards literature were influenced by the instrumental aspect that is the examination. In other words, it can be said that literature is studied with a purpose to gain good grades in examination. The exam-oriented culture has molded them to see that anything not related to examination is pointless. This is exemplified in the case of teacher P who stated that one reason for not being able to conduct dramatization in a good class was that students were not keen in anything except for “absorbing” information from the teacher and practicing questions related to examination. Therefore, Malaysian students in general should be guided to show a more positive attitude towards the other beneficial aspects of learning such as character development and the appreciation of other cultures through literature. The curriculum itself should be formed in such a way that it does

not place too much emphasis on the instrumental value of examinations.

Training

One of the findings that has brought significant attention to this study is the methodology used by English option teachers and non-option English teachers in teaching literature. Although it is anticipated that English option teachers would have greater advantage in terms of knowledge and the methodology in literature teaching, results have shown that they did not differ from their non-option counterparts in terms of teaching. In reflection, this aspect needs to be taken into serious consideration. To what extent is a student or trainee exposed to literature during their course of study? Are universities and teacher training colleges playing their respective roles? Are lecturers disseminating their knowledge and teaching skills to these future teachers? Is there a need to re-examine the literature syllabus?

Furthermore, the Ministry of Education through the State Education Department and the District Education Office should provide trainings and exposing teachers to different literature teaching methodologies. Similarly, this view is also echoed by Yesuiah (2003) who proposed that teachers should be exposed to different approaches to teaching literature. In addition, teachers should be encouraged to gain access to the internet and other library resources so as to obtain literary materials, lesson plans and interesting tasks and activities that could provide teachers with valuable ideas and suggestions for their teaching approaches.

Conclusion

In concluding, it can be understood that there are many factors involved and to be considered in planning and designing a textbook that caters for a school population. The Ministry of Education and Curriculum Development Centre play vital roles in ensuring all students throughout Malaysia are availed similar teaching and learning opportunities and the foremost form of education to meet learners' needs as Reynolds J. and Skillbeck, 1976 state, "An educational policy is an attempt to institutionalize the whole process of curriculum change and seeks to explore the full implication of making the curriculum into a legitimate object of social policy. Curriculum is what should be planned and taught to be learned" (Reynolds and Skillbeck, 1976). Furthermore, the educational authorities have to constantly scrutinize and monitor the texts and prescribed texts and carry out changes or adaptations to meet the current learning needs to produce a more progressive, educated and intellectual community.

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