



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

**AN EVALUATION OF THE PRE-SERVICE TESL TEACHER
EDUCATION ENGLISH STUDIES SYLLABUS CONTENT**

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**By
ABDUL MAJID BIN MOHAMED DIN**

**Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADEP	=	Asean Development Educational Project
ASEAN	=	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BPG	=	Bahagian Pendidikan Guru (TED = Teacher Education Division)
CDC	=	Curriculum Development Centre
ESL	=	English as a Second Language
EFL	=	English as a Foreign Language
EPRD	=	Educational Planning and Research Division
ISSC	=	Integrated Secondary School Curriculum
LTC	=	Language Teacher Competence
MOE	=	Ministry of Education
NPSC	=	National Primary School Curriculum
SK	=	Sekolah Kebangsaan (NPS = National Primary School)
SRK	=	Sekolah Rendah Kebangsaan (NPS = National Primary School)
SRJK	=	Sekolah Rendah Jenis Kebangsaan (NTPS = National Type Primary School)
TEFL	=	Teaching of English as a Foreign Language
TESL	=	Teaching of English as a Second Language



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**AN EVALUATION OF THE PRE-SERVICE TESL TEACHER
EDUCATION ENGLISH STUDIES SYLLABUS CONTENT**

by

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May 1994

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Faculty : Educational Studies

This study sought to evaluate the content of the TESL English Studies Syllabus. The syllabus determined the design and content of the TESL English Proficiency Course. The study is aimed at determining practising ESL teachers' and also ESL teacher educators' perceptions as to the usefulness of the skill-areas of the syllabus, the adequacy of the topics listed under the skill-areas and also the adequacy of the suggested learning and teaching activities. Two 82-item questionnaires were administered to a group of 264 ESL teachers and 39 ESL teacher educators who made up the samples of the study. An additional instrument used in this study was the interview sessions. Frequency counts, percentages and means scores were



the descriptive statistics used for this study. The mean scores of the two groups of respondents were compared using the t-test of significance.

The results showed that generally both groups of respondents perceived the content of the syllabus to be useful and adequate. However, the ESL teachers were undecided as to the adequacy of two of the suggested learning and teaching activities, i.e., debates and writing book reports. As for the ESL teacher educators, they were undecided as to the adequacy of the topics listed under two of the skill-areas, viz., the writing skill-area and the language study-area.

The t-tests of significance showed that there were no significant difference in the mean scores of the two groups of respondents pertaining to the question of the usefulness of the listening and language study-areas. But there were significant differences in the mean scores of the two groups of respondents pertaining to the question of the usefulness of the speaking, reading and writing skill-areas. As to the question of the adequacy of the topics listed under the skill-areas, it was found that there were significant differences in the perceptions of the two groups of respondents in the topics listed under all the skill-areas. It was also the same for the suggested learning and teaching activities.



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**PENILAIAN KANDUNGAN SUKATAN PELAJARAN PENGAJIAN
INGGERIS BAGI LATIHAN PRA-KHIDMAT GURU TESL**

oleh

Abdul Majid Mohamed Din

Mei 1994

Pengerusi : Dr. Jamali Ismail
Fakulti : Pengajian Pendidikan

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menilai kandungan sukatan pelajaran Pengajian Inggeris Program TESL. Sukatan pelajaran ini menentukan rangka dan kandungan Kursus Kemahiran Bahasa Inggeris Program TESL. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menentukan persepsi guru-guru ESL dan pendidik-pendidik guru ESL berhubung dengan tahap bergunanya bahagian-bahagian kemahiran yang terdapat dalam sukatan pelajaran. Selain itu, kajian ini juga bertujuan mengkaji sama ada tajuk-tajuk yang disenaraikan dalam bahagian kemahiran dan juga aktiviti pembelajaran dan pengajaran yang dicadangkan mencukupi. Dua soal selidik yang mengandungi 82 item setiap satu telah dikemukakan kepada sekumpulan 264 guru-guru ESL dan kepada 39 pendidik-pendidik guru ESL yang menjadi sampel kajian ini.



Satu lagi instrumen yang telah digunakan untuk kajian ini ialah sesi temubual. Kiraan kekerapan, peratus dan juga skor min merupakan statistik deskriptif yang digunakan untuk penganalisaan data kajian ini. Skor min antara kedua-dua kumpulan sampel telah dibandingkan dengan menggunakan ujian-t.

Hasil kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa pada keseluruhannya kedua-dua kumpulan responden menganggap bahagian-bahagian kemahiran dalam sukatan pelajaran adalah berguna dan memadai. Tetapi kumpulan guru-guru ESL tidak dapat membuat keputusan sama ada aktiviti pembelajaran dan pengajaran yang dicadangkan seperti perbincangan dan penulisan laporan buku memadai. Kumpulan pendidik-pendidik guru ESL pula tidak dapat membuat keputusan sama ada tajuk-tajuk di bawah dua daripada bahagian kemahiran, iaitu kemahiran penulisan dan kajian bahasa memadai.

Keputusan ujian-t pula menunjukkan tidak terdapat perbezaan yang signifikan dari segi min skor antara kedua-dua kumpulan responden terhadap sejauh manakah bergunanya bahagian kemahiran pendengaran dan kajian bahasa. Tetapi terdapat perbezaan yang signifikan dari segi min skor antara kedua-dua kumpulan terhadap sejauh manakah bergunanya bahagian-bahagian pertuturan, bacaan dan penulisan. Berhubung dengan persoalan sama ada tajuk-tajuk yang disenaraikan dalam sukatan pelajaran memadai, didapati bahawa ada perbezaan yang signifikan terhadap persepasi kedua-dua kumpulan responden terhadap tajuk-tajuk yang

disenaraikan di bawah semua bahagian kemahiran. Begitu juga dengan bahagian aktiviti pembelajaran dan pengajaran yang dicadangkan. Maklumat yang diperolehi melalui sesi temubual menyokong hasil kajian ini.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

An important component on training programmes for language teachers where English is a second or a foreign language (ESL/EFL) is the language improvement course (Strevens, 1977; Brumfit, 1979; Mariani, 1979; Shaw, 1979; Willis, 1983; Thomas, 1987; Edge, 1988, Berry, 1990). The objective of the course is to enable the ESL trainees to develop 'language competence', a term used by Thomas (1987) and 'language awareness', a term used by Edge (1988). In Malaysia, the training programmes for ESL teachers have also incorporated this important language improvement component which is called the TESL English Studies/Proficiency Course.

Bearing in mind that the English studies/proficiency course has a central role to play in the TESL teacher education programme, this study sets out to examine the content of the TESL English Studies Syllabus. The syllabus determines the design and content of the TESL English studies/proficiency course. The study rests on the assumption that evaluation should be an integral component of any training or professional preparation effort and it is carried out with the aim of not only providing feedback as to the efficiency of the training programme but also providing data for improving the design of



the training programme (Cronbach, 1963; Scriven, 1967; Lewy, 1977; Bell, 1981; Nevo, 1983; Ornstein and Hunkins, 1988).

This introductory chapter begins by presenting the background of the study and the problem to be researched, i.e., to ascertain the usefulness and adequacy of the contents presented in the prescribed TESL English studies syllabus. In addition, the chapter also states the objectives of the study, the research questions, the significance of the study, the definitions of key terms and the limitations of the study.

It is important to state at the outset of this report that the study is confined only to the pre-service TESL teacher education programme conducted at teacher training institutions under the direct administration of the Teacher Education Division (TED) of the Ministry of Education, Malaysia.

Background of the Study

The Role of TED in the Preparation of Teachers in Malaysia

The TED or more popularly known as Bahagian Pendidikan Guru, is largely responsible for the preparation of non-graduate teachers in Malaysia. These teachers make up the entire trained primary school language teaching force as well as a portion of the lower secondary English language teaching personnel.

The TED is one of many professional divisions in the Ministry of Education (MOE) and it is responsible for conducting

both the pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes in the teacher training colleges in Malaysia. It is headed by a Director who is assisted by two Deputy Directors and seven Principal Directors who head the various units in the division. The structure and organization of the TED are presented in this report as Appendix D. The seven units of the TED are Administration and Management, Curriculum, Recruitment and Placement, Training and Staff Development, Examination and Evaluation, Planning and Development and Students' Affairs. The units are collectively responsible for organising the various aspects of the pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes in Malaysia such as student selection procedures, courses of study, duration of training, curriculum structure and content, examinations, certification, staffing and development. The TED also works in close collaboration with other professional divisions in the MOE such as Educational Planning and Research Division (EPRD), Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) and the Schools Division (Ministry of Education, 1986).

At the time the study was carried out, there were 28 teacher training colleges in Malaysia - 21 in Peninsular Malaysia, 4 in Sabah and 3 in Sarawak. Out of these colleges, 23 colleges conduct TESL teacher education programmes for primary schools. After successful completion of the training programme and being awarded the Certificate of Education, these college-trained teachers will be assigned to teach in primary schools.

The trend today is for the teacher training colleges to conduct teacher education courses for primary school teachers. Only colleges in Sabah and Sarawak are still conducting courses for primary and secondary school teachers. In addition, some colleges have been given the task of conducting in-service and diploma courses for trained teachers and also courses aimed at converting graduates (degree holders) of various disciplines of studies who wish to become teachers. This recently introduced post-graduate teacher education course or popularly known as Kursus Perguruan Lepas Ijazah (KPLI) is aimed at helping the MOE to overcome the shortage of trained graduate teachers in Malaysian secondary schools.

Pre-Service Teacher Education Programme At Teacher Training Colleges

The current pre-service teacher education programme conducted by the teacher training colleges is for a duration of two and a half years or five semesters. The structure of the present five-semester pre-service teacher education programmes implemented in all the teacher training colleges in Malaysia is presented as Appendix E in this report. The programme comprises four semesters of lectures and coursework. At the time the study was carried out, the practicum (previously known as teaching practice) is for one whole semester which is in the fifth or the final semester. Prior to their posting to schools, the trainees undergo a course on service procedures for a week.

Altogether, the trainees spend 2,160 hours, divided into 82 weeks of academic work in the colleges. The 82 weeks include lectures, tutorials, all examinations, coursework and assignments and also participation in co-curricular activities. Attendance is compulsory and trainees must at all times maintain 90% attendance in order to graduate.

The curriculum of the teacher education programme is designed specially to train teachers for the primary schools and also for lower secondary schools. Teachers trained for primary schools are general purpose teachers while those trained for lower secondary schools are more specialized. This is reflected in the time allocation for the course components in the two programmes as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Course Components and Time Allocations

Component	Primary School	Secondary School
Core subjects	777 hours	777 hours
Specialization	178 hours	464 hours
School subjects	592 hours	218 hours
Self enrichment	37 hours	107 hours
Teaching practice	one semester	one semester
Co-curricular	216 hours	216 hours
Sub-total	1,800 hours	1,782 hours
Individual studies and other academic activities	360 hours	378 hours
Total	2,160 hours	2,160 hours

Source: Ministry of Education, 1989:30



The TESL Teacher Education Programme

The pre-service TESL teacher education programme (previously known as 'teacher training programme') has been in existence for more than two decades. Since its inception, the programme has undergone several changes in aspects such as duration of training, structure of training, curriculum structure and content, student evaluation procedures and also in student selection procedures (Ministry of Education, 1986). All these changes were made with the aim of improving the quality of the pre-service teacher education programme, to fulfill the national needs and aspirations and also to accommodate the changes made in the school curricula, viz., the New Primary School Curriculum (NPSC) and the Integrated Secondary School Curriculum (ISSC).

Prior to 1971, the English language teacher training programme, like other programmes in teacher training colleges, was implemented on an ad hoc basis. There were no proper syllabus documents; instead notes were given to the teacher educators to assist them in discharging their duties and responsibilities. However, as the demand for quality trained ESL teachers increased, a more systematic and organised training programme emerged. The following sections of this chapter highlight some important aspects of the current TESL teacher education programme being implemented in the Malaysian teacher training colleges.

The Structure and Content of TESL Teacher Education Curriculum

The TESL pre-service teacher education curriculum adopted by all teacher training colleges is centrally prescribed by the Curriculum Unit of TED after it has been presented to and approved by the Education Ministry's Central Curriculum Committee (Ministry of Education, 1986). The curriculum comprises five important components. Figure 1 presented below highlights the structure and curriculum components of the TESL teacher education programme in Malaysia.

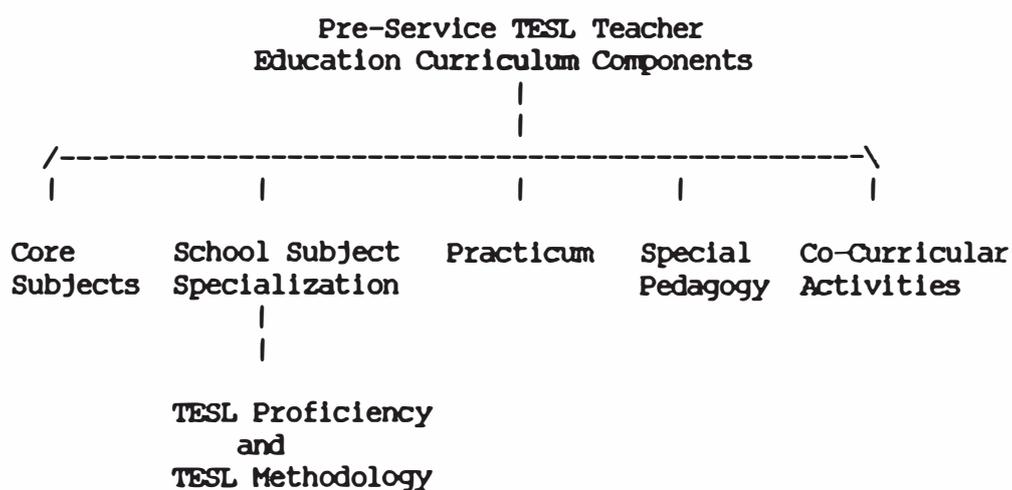


Figure 1: The Structure and Curriculum Components of TESL Teacher Education Programme in Malaysia

Further information about the structure and the breakdown of subjects in each of the five components is given in Appendix F of this report. In the case of TESL teacher education programme, the School Subject Specialization component comprises two courses, viz., TESL Proficiency and TESL Methodology. At

the time the study was carried out, there were two syllabuses which determined the design and contents of the two courses and they were TESL English Studies Syllabus and TESL Methodology Syllabus. An examination of the two syllabuses highlights the fact that the overall emphasis of the training programme moves from the language improvement component to methodology but the designs and contents of the two syllabuses are closely integrated (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 1988 (a)). Since the focus of this study is to ascertain the usefulness and adequacy of the content listed in the TESL English studies syllabus, a brief discussion of the design and content of the syllabus is necessary in order to give a clearer picture of the problem to be investigated.

The Content of the TESL English Studies Syllabus

The main concern of this study is to evaluate the the usefulness and adequacy of the content listed in the centrally prescribed TESL English studies syllabus as viewed by the ESL teachers who were graduates of the TESL teacher education programme and also their TESL teacher educators. Since the content of the syllabus is listed under five different components or skill-areas i.e., listening, speaking, reading, writing and language study, this researcher feels that the usefulness of the five skill-areas and the adequacy of the topics listed under each of the five skill-areas identified in the syllabus should be evaluated. In addition, this researcher