



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

**ELEMENTAL ASSESSMENTS OF SOUTH CHINA SEA MARINE
SEDIMENTS ALONG THE EAST COAST OF PENINSULAR
MALAYSIA**

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**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
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By

KHADIJEH REZAE EBRAHIM SARAEE

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
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Philosophy**

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to:

“My Dear Lavin”

Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment
of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

**ELEMENTAL ASSESSMENTS OF SOUTH CHINA SEA MARINE
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Chair: Professor Elias Saion, PhD

Faculty: Science

Malaysia is located in the west of the South China Sea and is divided into two major land masses, i.e., Peninsular Malaysia and East Malaysia on the Island of Borneo, with a total coast line of 4675 km (Peninsular Malaysia 2068 km; East Malaysia 2607 km). As most seas, the majority of pollution occurs in the South China Sea arise from the land namely waste that comes from large cities (sewage, industrial waste and hydrocarbons) and agricultural runoff (nutrients, pesticides and fertilizers). The aim of this research is to access information on horizontal elemental distribution of coastal surface sediments and on vertical elemental distribution of offshore core sediments and to determine the status of pollution in the surface and core marine sediments. The results of this research together with experimental data from other



researches on marine sediments on the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia may be used to establish a baseline data for this region.

All together 43 elements were identified and then classified according to heavy metals (As, Cd, Cu, Cr, Ni, Pb and Zn), trace elements (B, Ba, Be, Bi, Br Co, Cs, Ga, Ge, Hf, Li, Mo, Nb, Sc, Rb, Sb, Sn, Sr, Ta, V, W, Y and Zr), rear earth elements (Ce, Dy, Eu, La, Lu, Nd, Sb, Sm and Yb), major elements (Al, Ca, K, Fe, Mg, Mn Na, P, S and Ti), and actinides elements (Th and U) depending on their physical and chemical characteristics. The elemental concentrations of the surface sediments from 10 stations and the core sediments from 5 stations have been determined using the Instrumental Nuutron Activation Analysis (INAA) at Nuclear Agency Malaysia and the Inductively Coupled Plasma-Atomic Emission Spectroscopy (ICP-AES) at Geological Survey of Iran (GSI) laboratories. To know the status of contamination in heavy metals and trace elements, the enrichment factor, geoaccumulation index (I_{geo}) and modified degree of contamination (mC_d) methods were used to interpret the results. Where appropriate the linear regression analysis, pearson's correlation factors, first and second of the principal component analysis and the cluster analysis were performed to determine the relationships between obtained results.

For the surface elemental distributions, heavy metal Pb was found to be originated from anthropogenic sources at the stations at the larger river mouths of Kelantan, Pahang and Rompin rivers, possibly due to land-based anthropogenic activities, automotive emission and gas industries. However, the average I_{geo} and mC_d values indicate that the heavy metals of the surface sediments are uncontaminated in all sampling stations. The same situation was true for trace elements, except for Hf

which has the enrichment factor greater than 2 in EC8 station. The high concentration of Hf at this station was a natural occurring because of it has negative correlation with Zn in this station similarity with those in nature. Shale averages and chondrite normalized were used to normalize rare earth elements (REEs). Ce was found anthropogenic element, possibly due to occurrence of +4 oxidation states, while other REEs are of non-anthropogenic sources. Most REEs have lower concentrations at the larger river systems and Ce and Eu anomalies occurred in samples taken from the mouths of Kelantan and Pahang rivers. For major elements, Al, Ca, Mg, Na, and Ti were of anthropogenic sources, possibility due to tropical weathering. Both actinides Th and U were non-anthropogenic for all sampling stations except for Kuala Dungun possibility due to a radioactive related factory like among in that area.

For the vertical element distribution, heavy metals As, Cd and Pb; trace elements Br, Hf, Sr and Zr; major elements Ca and Na and actinide element Th were of anthropogenic sources. However, by considering the average I_{geo} and mC_d values, most of the layers in the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia were uncontaminated. Only Hf was the most polluted in affected stations and were classified as moderately to stronger contamination. The chondrite-normalized ratios of REEs showed LREEs enrichment and flat HREE depletion. No Ce anomaly was observed in sediments of all layers in all the stations. Overall, the results showed that the normalized patterns of REEs of the core sediments followed a general pattern of REEs of the world.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**ANALISIS UNSUR ENDAPAN LAUT DARI LAUT CHINA SELATAN
SEPANJANG PESISIRAN PANTAI TIMUR SEMENJUNG MALAYSIA**

Oleh

KHADIJEH REZAE EBRAHIM SARAEE

February 2010

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Malaysia terletak di bahagian barat Laut China Selatan dan ia boleh dibahagikan kepada dua kawasan utama iaitu Semenanjung Malaysia dan Malaysia Timur di Pulau Borneo dengan panjang pantai 4675 km (2068 km di Semenanjung; 2607 km di Malaysia Timur). Seperti berlaku di kebanyakan laut, pencemaran di Laut China Selatan adalah bersumber daripada tanah dataran oleh sisa buangan daripada kotaraya (air kumbahan, sisa industri dan hidrokarbon) dan sisa pertanian (nutrien, racun serangga dan baja). Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mendapatkan maklumat tentang taburan mendatar unsur daripada endapan laut permukaan dan taburan mencancang daripada endapan laut teras dan seterusnya menentukan status pencemaran permukaan dan teras endapan laut. Keputusan daripada kajian ini bersama-sama dengan data eksperimen daripada kajian-kajian lain mengenai

endapan laut di pantai timur Semenanjung Malaysia boleh digunakan sebagai membena pengkalan data untuk kawasan ini.

Keseluruhannya 43 unsur telah dikenalpastikan dan dikelaskan menurut sebagai logam berat (As, Cd, Cu, Cr, Ni, Pb and Zn), unsur surih (B, Ba, Be, Bi, Br Co, Cs, Ga, Ge, Hf, Li, Mo, Nb, Sc, Rb, Sb, Sn, Sr, Ta, V, W, Y dan Zr), unsure nadir bumi (Ce, Dy, Eu, La, Lu, Nd, Sb, Sm dan Yb), unsur utama (Al, Ca, K, Fe, Mg, Mn Na, P, S dan Ti) dan unsur aktinides (Th dan U) yang ditentukan bergantung kepada ciri-ciri fizik dan kimia. Kepekatan unsur endapan laut permukaan daripada 10 station dan endapan laut teras daripada 5 station telah ditentukan dengan menggunakan Analisis Instrumentasi Pengaktifan Nuklear (INAA) di Agensi Nuklear Malaysia dan menggunakan Aruhan Terganding Plasma-Spektroskopi Penyinaran Atom (ICP-AES) di makmal Geological Survey of Iran (GSI). Untuk mengetahui tahap pencemaran logam berat dan unsur surih, kaedah faktor pengkayaan, indek pengumpulan geologi (I_{geo}) dan darjah pencemaran terubahsuai (mC_d) telah digunakan untuk mentafsirkan keputusan. Dimana-mana yang sesuai analisis regresi liner, faktor korelasi pearson, analisis dua komponen pertama dan analisis guggusan telah dilakukan untuk menentukan hubungan di antara keputusan-keputusan yang diperolehi.

Untuk taburan di permukaan unsur logam berat Pb adalah bersumber antropogen di station bertentangan dengan muara sungai besar iaitu sungai Kelantan, Pahang dan Rompin, kerana banyak aktiviti antropogen di dataran. Walau bagaimanapun, purata nilai I_{geo} and mC_d menunjukkan bahawa endapan di permukaan tidak mengalami pencemaran daripada logam berat di semua station. Keadaan yang sama juga berlaku kepada unsur surih, kecuali Hf yang didapati mempunyai faktor pengkayaan

melebihi 2 di station EC8. Kepekatan tinggi pada Hf di station tersebut berlaku secara semulajadi kerana ia mempunyai kolorasi negative terhadap Zn di station itu sama terdapat pada semulajadi. Purata nilai ternormal terhadap shale dan chondorite telah digunakan untuk unsur nadir bumi. Didapati bahawa Ce adalah antropogen kerana berkemungkinan terdapat keadaan pengoksidan +4 unsur tersebut, sedangkan unsur nadir bumi lain tidak antropogen. Kebanyakan unsur nadir bumi mempunyai kepekatan rendah dalam sistem sungai besar dan anormali Ce dan Eu hanya berlaku pada sampel bertentangan muara sungai Kelantan dan Pahang. Unsur utama Al, Ca, Mg, Na, dan Ti adalah antropogen, berkemungkinan kerana keadaan luluhhawa tropika. Kedua aktinides Th dan U adalah tidak antropogen di semua station kecuali di Kuala Dungun berkemungkinan daripada kilang berkaitan bahan radioaktif seperti among di kawasan ini.

Untuk taburan unsur seranjang logam berat As, Cd dan Pb; unsur surih Br, Hf, Sr dan Zr; unsur major Ca dan Na dan unsur aktinide Th didapati adalah antropogen. Unsur-unsur lain adalah tidak antropogen. Bagaimanapun, dengan mengambil purata nilai I_{geo} and mC_d kebanyakan lapisan sampel teras bagi pantai timur Semenanjung Malaysia sebenarnya tidak mangalami pencemaran. Kecuali Hf adalah unsur paling tercemar di station yang terlibat dan dikelaskan di antara pencemaran serdahana dan pencemaran berat. Untuk unsur nadir bumi nisbah ternormal terhadap chondrite menunjukkan pengkayaan unsur nadir bumi ringan dan pengurangan unsur nadir bumi berat. Tiada anormali Ce terdapat pada semua lapisan sampel endapan teras di semua station. Keseluruhannya daripada keputusan kajian ini menunjukkan corak unsur nadir bumi bagi endapan teras adalah sama seperti ditempat-tempat lain di dunia.

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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 11 February 2010 to conduct the final examination of Khadijeh Rezaee Ebrahim Saraee on her Doctor of Philosophy thesis entitled "Elemental Assessments of South China Sea Marine Sediments Along the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student Khadijeh Rezaee Ebrahim Saraee.

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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis is my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously, and is not concurrently, submitted for any other degree at Universiti Putra Malaysia or at any other institution.

Rezaee 

KHADIJEH REZAAE EBRAHIM SARAEE

Date: 10 February 2010

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DEDICATION	i
ABSTRACT	ii
ABSTRAK	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	viii
APPROVAL	x
DECLARATION	xii
LIST OF TABLES	xvii
LIST OF FIGURES	xxiii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xxvi

CHAPTER

1	INTRODUCTION	
	1.1 General Introduction	1
	1.2 Sources of Contamination and Pollution in Marine Sediments	4
	1.2.1 Heavy Metals	5
	1.2.2 Major elements	6
	1.2.3 Trace Elements	7
	1.2.4 Rare Earth Elements	8
	1.2.5 Actinides	9
	1.3 Dification of the Study Area	10
	1.4 Significant of the Study	12
	1.5 Problem Statement	13
	1.6 Scope of the Study	14
	1.7 Study Objectives	15
	1.8 Outline	16
2	LITERATURE REVIEW	
	2.1 Introduction	17
	2.1.1 REEs Normalized in Chondritic Meteorites	17
	2.1.2 REEs Normalized in Shale Materials	22
	2.2 Marine Sediment Studies in the Coastal of Malaysia	24
	2.2.1 Heavy Metals	25
	2.2.2 Trace Elements	33
	2.2.3 Rare Earth Elements	36
3	THEORY	
	3.1 Introduction	42



3.2	Neutron Energy Classification	42
3.3	Neutron Interaction	44
3.3.1	Neutron Cross Section	48
3.4	Neutron Sources	50
3.4.1	Triga Mark II Nuclear Research Reactor	52
3.5	Neutron Activation Analysis	55
3.5.1	Principle of NAA	57
3.5.2	INAA-Comparative Method	59
3.6	Semiconductor Detectors	62
3.6.1	HPGe Detector for Gamma Rays	63
3.6.2	Interaction of Gamma Rays with Matter	64
3.6.3	Gamma Ray Spectroscopy	67
3.7	Principle of Inductively Coupled Plasma	70
3.7.1	Interferences	73
4	MATERIALS AND METHODS	
4.1	Introduction	74
4.2	Standard Reference Material	75
4.3	Marine Sediments Sampling	76
4.3.1	Location of Sampling	76
4.3.2	Collection of Surface Sediment Samples	79
4.3.3	Collection of Core Sediment Samples	80
4.3.4	Preparation of Sediment Samples for INAA	81
4.3.5	Irradiation of Sediment Samples for INAA	82
4.3.6	Preparation of Standard Solutions	83
4.3.7	Sample Digestion for ICP-AES Equipment	86
4.3.8	ICP-AES Elemental Analysis	87
4.4	Measurement of Gamma Rays	88
4.4.1	Energy Resolution of Ge Detector	89
4.4.2	Detector Efficiency	91
4.4.3	Setup and Settings	92
4.4.4	Analysis of HPGe Detector Energy Spectra	93
4.4.5	Lower Limit of Detection	95
4.5	Photo Peak Selection	96
4.6	Statistical Analysis	100
4.6.1	Hierarchical Clustering Algorithms	100
4.6.2	Principle Component Analysis	101
4.6.3	Pearson Correlation Analysis	102
4.6.4	Post Hoc and One-Way ANOVA	102
4.7	Methods for Estimating Pollutant Impact	103
4.7.1	Enrichment Factor (EF)	104
4.7.2	Geoaccumulation Index (I_{geo})	105
4.7.3	Modified Degree of Contamination (mC_d)	106
5	RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	109
5.1	Introduction	110
5.2	Quality Assurance and Quality Control	111
5.2.1	Validity of Results	

5.2.2	Limitation of Detection	115
5.3	Heavy Metals in the Surface Sediments of the East Coast Peninsular Malaysia	116
5.3.1	Variation of Heavy Metals in the Surface Sediments	117
5.3.2	Enrichment Factor	120
5.3.3	Assessment Results Using Geoaccumulation Index and Modified Degree of Contamination	123
5.3.4	Comparison of Heavy Metal Concentrations	125
5.3.5	Classification of the Stations Using Hierarchical Cluster	128
5.3.6	Principal Component Analysis	130
5.3.7	Pearson's Correlation between Heavy Metal Concentrations	133
5.3.8	Comparison Mean and Range of Heavy Metal Concentrations in the Surface Sediments of the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia with those in other Coasts	134
5.4	Heavy Metals in the Core sediments of the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia	135
5.4.1	Enrichment Factor (<i>EF</i>)	140
5.4.2	Variation of Heavy Metals in the Core Sediment	144
5.4.3	Statistical Analyses	145
5.4.4	Comparison Heavy Metals in the Surface and Core Sediments with the International Guidelines	152
5.5	Trace Elements in the Surface Sediments of the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia	154
5.5.1	Enrichment Factor	158
5.5.2	Assessment Results using Geoaccumulation Index and Modified Degree of Contamination	160
5.5.3	Comparison of Trace Elements Concentrations in the Surface Sediment	163
5.5.4	Cluster Analysis	171
5.5.5	Principal Component Analysis	176
5.5.6	Pearson Correlation between Trace Element Concentrations	178
5.5.7	Comparison the Trace Element Concentrations of in the Surface Sediments with those in the other Coasts of Malaysia	180
5.6	Trace Elements in the Core Sediments of the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia	182
5.6.1	Total Trace Element Concentrations	182
5.6.2	Methods for Estimating Pollutant Impact	188
5.7	REEs in the Surface Sediments of the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia	193
5.7.1	Enrichment Factor	199
5.7.2	Chondrite-Normalized REE Pattern	201
5.7.3	The Shale-Normalized REE Pattern	202
5.7.4	Comparison the Mean Concentration of REEs in the Surface Sediments with that Those in the Other	205



	Coasts of Malaysia	
5.8	REEs in the Core Sediment of the East Coast of the Peninsular Malaysia	207
5.8.1	Enrichment Factor	215
5.8.2	The Shale Normalized REE Pattern	217
5.8.3	Chondrite - Normalized REE Pattern	219
5.8.4	Comparison the Mean Concentration of REEs in the Surface Sediment of the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia with Those in the Other Coasts	220
5.9	Actinides in the Surface Sediment along the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia	222
5.10	Actinides in the Core Marine Sediment along the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia	224
5.11	Major Elements in the Surface Sediments of the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia	229
5.11.1	Enrichment Factor	235
5.11.2	Cluster Analysis	236
5.11.3	Principal Components Analysis	237
5.11.4	Pearson Correlation between Major Element Concentrations in the Surface Sediments of the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia	239
5.11.5	Comparison the Mean Concentration of Major Elements in the Surface Sediment of the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia with Those in the Other Coasts	241
5.12	Major Elements in the Core Marine Sediments along the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia	242
5.12.1	Enrichment Factor	244
6	CONCLUSION	
6.1	Conclusion and Future Works	246
6.2	Future Works and Recommendations	249
	REFERENCES	250
	APPENDICES	268
	BIODATA OF STUDENT	289

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
2.1	Concentration values (mg/kg dry weight) of rare earth elements in mg/kg	19
2.2	Comparison between the mean concentrations (mg/kg dry weight except for Al, Fe and Ti %) in the grab and core sediments of Penang Island (Data sited from Wood, et al. 2004)	32
2.3	Range and mean concentrations (mg/kg dry weight except for Al, Fe and Ti %) Trace elements of grab samples sediments of the Johor Straits (Data sited from Wood et al., 1997)	34
2.4	Elemental concentration (mg/kg dry weight except for Al, Ca, Fe K, Mg and Ti %) ranges and means of trace elements in the grab and core sediments of the Malacca straits (Data sited from Al-Zahrany et al., 2007)	35
2.5	Range and mean concentrations (mg/kg dry weight) of REEs in the grab samples sediments of the Johor Straits (Data sited from Wood et al., 1997)	37
2.6	Comparison concentration means (mg/kg dry weight) in the grab and core sediments of the Penang Island (Data sited from Wood, et al. 2004)	38
2.7	Range and mean concentrations (mg/kg dry weight) of REEs in the grab and core sediments of the Malacca straits (Data sited from Al-Zahrany et al., 2007)	39
2.8	Some literatures related to elemental distribution of different coasts of Malaysia	41
4.1	The longitude and latitude of sampling sites	77
4.2	The irradiation, cooling and counting times for first and second counting of radioactivity measurements, and the determined isotopes for each cycle by comparative method	83
4.3	Standard sources used for short-lived radionuclide	85
4.4	Standard sources used for medium-lived radionuclide	85
4.5	Standard sources used for long-lived radionuclide	86



4.6	Gamma-Ray energy lines used for analysis, half-life, and intensity of gamma-ray energy, nuclear reaction and thermal cross section of reaction for short-lived radio nuclides (Browne, E., et. al., 1978; IAEA-TCS-4, 1992; Vertes, A., et. al., 2003a)	97
4.7	Gamma-Ray energy lines used for analysis, half-life, and intensity of gamma-ray energy, nuclear reaction and thermal cross section of reaction for medium-lived radio nuclides (Browne, E., et. al., 1978; IAEA-TCS-4, 1992; Vertes, A., et. al., 2003a)	98
4.8	Gamma-Ray energy lines used for analysis, half-life, and intensity of gamma-ray energy, nuclear reaction and thermal cross section of reaction for long-lived radio nuclides (Browne, E., et. al., 1978; IAEA-TCS-4, 1992; Vertes, A., et. al., 2003a)	99
4.9	Muller's classification for geoaccumulation index	106
4.10	Hakanson (1980) classification of the modified degree of contamination (Abraham et al., 2007)	108
5.1	Comparison of determined concentrations of elements in the IAEA-Soil-7 by two INAA and ICP-AES methods with the certified values	112
5.2	Comparison of determined concentrations of elements in the IAEA-SL-1 by INAA method with the certified values	114
5.3	Limitation of detection (LOD) for each element in mg/kg	115
5.4	Heavy metal concentrations, in mg/kg, measured in the surface sediments of the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia	116
5.5	Enrichment factors (EF) of heavy metals in the surface sediments of the east coast of peninsular Malaysia, normalized with respected to the iron content in the continental shales	121
5.6	Enrichment factors (EF) of heavy metals in the surface sediments of the east coast of peninsular Malaysia, normalized with respected to the iron content in the EC8 station	122
5.7	Contamination factors, modified degree of contamination (mC_d) using average shale baseline values for heavy metals in the surface sediments of the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia	123
5.8	Index of geoaccumulation (I_{geo}) of heavy metals in the surface sediments compared to the average shale baseline values	124
5.9	Separations of significant mean As concentrations (mg/kg) in the	126



	sediment samples using LSD test (Least Significant Difference)	
5.10	Separations of significant mean Cu concentrations (mg/kg) in the sediment samples using LSD test (Least Significant Difference)	127
5.11	Separations of significant mean Pb concentrations (mg/kg) in the sediment samples using LSD test (Least Significant Difference)	127
5.12	Separations of significant mean Zn concentrations (mg/kg) in the sediment samples using LSD test (Least Significant Difference)	127
5.13	Correlation matrix (r) for heavy metals in the surface sediments (n=10) (significant values are expressed in bold)	132
5.14	Mean and range of heavy metal concentrations (mg/kg dry weight) in the surface sediments of the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia with those in Straits of Malacca, Straits of Johor, Pinang Island, average shales and crustal material	134
5.15	Heavy metal concentrations (mg/kg dry weight) measured in the core sediments of the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia	136
5.16	Enrichment factors (EF) of anthropogenic heavy metals in the core sediments of the east coast of peninsular Malaysia, normalized with respect to the iron content in the continental shales	141
5.17	Correlation matrix (r) for heavy metals in the core sediments (n=47) (significant values are expressed in bold)	144
5.18	Regression equations of Fe with heavy metals As, Cd, Cr, Cu, Hg, Ni, Pb and Zn	148
5.19	Regression equations of Al with heavy metals As, Cd, Cr, Cu, Hg, Ni, Pb and Zn	149
5.20	Mean and range of heavy metal concentrations in the core sediments of the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia with those in Straits of Malacca, Straits of Johor, Pinang Island, average shales and crustal material	150
5.21	Comparison between heavy metals in the studied area with Canadian Sediment Quality Guidelines for the Protection of Aquatic Life	151
5.22	Comparison between heavy metals in the studied area with Technical Guidance for Screening Contaminated Sediments (New York)	152

5.23	Comparison between heavy metals in the studied area with Australian and New Zealand Guidelines for Fresh and Marine Water Quality	153
5.24	Trace element concentrations (mg/kg dry weight) measured in the surface sediments of the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia	155
5.25	Enrichment factors (EF) of trace elements in the surface marine sediments of the east coast of peninsular Malaysia, normalized with respected to the iron content in the continental shales	158
5.26	Contamination factors, modified degree of contamination (mC_d) using average shale baseline values for trace elements in the surface sediments of the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia	160
5.27	Index of geoaccumulation (I_{geo}) of trace elements in the surface sediments compared to the average shale baseline values	161
5.28	Separations of significant mean Co concentrations (mg/kg) in the sediment samples using LSD test (Least Significant Difference)	165
5.29	Separations of significant mean Cs concentrations (mg/kg) in the sediment samples using LSD test (Least Significant Difference)	165
5.30	Separations of significant mean Ga concentrations (mg/kg) in the sediment samples using LSD test (Least Significant Difference)	166
5.31	Separations of significant mean Sc concentrations (mg/kg) in the sediment samples using LSD test (Least Significant Difference)	166
5.32	Separations of significant mean Li concentrations (mg/kg) in the sediment samples using LSD test (Least Significant Difference)	167
5.33	Separations of significant mean Nb concentrations (mg/kg) in the sediment samples using LSD test (Least Significant Difference)	167
5.34	Separations of significant mean Ta concentrations (mg/kg) in the sediment samples using LSD test (Least Significant Difference)	168
5.35	Separations of significant mean V concentrations (mg/kg) in the sediment samples using LSD test (Least Significant Difference)	168
5.36	Separations of significant mean W concentrations (mg/kg) in the sediment samples using LSD test (Least Significant Difference)	169
5.37	Separations of significant mean Zr concentrations (mg/kg) in the sediment samples using LSD test (Least Significant Difference)	169
5.38	Correlation matrix (r) for trace elements in the surface sediments	178



(n=10)

5.39	Mean and range of trace element concentrations (mg/ kg dry weight) in the surface sediments of the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia with those in Straits of Malacca, Straits of Johor, Pinang Island, average shales and crustal material	180
5.40	Trace element concentrations (mg/kg dry weight), measured in the core sediments of the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia	182
5.41	Enrichment factors (EF) of anthropogenic trace elements in the core sediments of the east coast of peninsular Malaysia, normalized with respected to the iron content in the continental shales	190
5.42	Modified degree of contamination using shale average baseline values for trace elements in core sediments from the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia	191
5.43	Total concentration (mg/kg) of \sum REE, \sum LREE, \sum HREE, and ratios of, La/Sm, La/Yb, Ce/La, Eu/Sm, Yb/Sm, and Ce/Ce* in the surface sediments of the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia and corresponding average values	193
5.44	Enrichment factors (EF) of REEs in the surface sediments of the east coast of peninsular Malaysia, normalized with respected to the scandium content in the continental shales	199
5.45	Mean and range of REE concentrations (mg/kg dry weight) in the surface sediments of the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia with those in Straits of Malacca, Straits of Johor, Pinang Island, average shales and crustal material	205
5.46	REE concentrations (mg/kg dry weight) measured in the core sediments of the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia	207
5.47	Total concentration (mg/kg dry weight) of \sum LREE, \sum HREE, and ratios of \sum LREE/ \sum HREE, Eu/Sm, Ce/La, La/Yb and Ce/Ce* in the core sediments and corresponding average values	212
5.48	Mean and range of REE concentrations (mg/kg dry weight) in the core sediments of the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia with those in Straits of Malacca, Straits of Johor, Pinang Island, average shales and crustal material	220
5.49	Total concentration (mg/kg) of U and Th, and ratios of (U/Al)/U/Al) _{Shale} , (Th/Al)/(Th/Al) _{Shale} and Th/U in the surface sediments corresponding average values	222



5.50	Mean and range of Th and U concentrations (mg/kg dry weight) in the surface sediments of the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia with those in Straits of Malacca, Straits of Johor, Pinang Island, average shales and crustal material	223
5.51	Total concentration of U and Th, and ratios of $(U/Al)_{Shale}$, $(Th/Al)_{Shale}$ and Th/U in the core sediments corresponding average values	225
5.52	Major element concentrations, in mg/kg, measured in the surface sediments of the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia	230
5.53	Enrichment factors (EF) of major elements in the surface sediments of the east coast of peninsular Malaysia, normalized with respected to the iron content in the continental shales	235
5.54	Correlation matrix (r) for major elements in the surface sediments (n=10)	239
5.55	Mean and range of major element concentrations in the surface sediments of the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia with those in Straits of Malacca, Straits of Johor, Pinang Island, average shales and crustal material	241
5.56	Major element concentrations (mg/kg dry weight), measured in the core sediments of the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia	242