

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**CULTURAL AWARENESS IN THE MALAYSIAN
ESL LITERATURE CLASSROOM**

SITI HAJAR AISHAH MOHD AZKAH

M. Ed (TESL)

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA. It is original and is the results of my own work, unless otherwise indicated or acknowledged as referenced work. This topic has not been submitted to any other academic institution or non-academic institution for any degree or qualification.

In the event that my dissertation be found to violate the conditions mentioned above, I voluntarily waive the right of conferment of my degree and agree be subjected to the disciplinary rules and regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA.

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Abstract

This study was conducted with the aim to investigate cultural awareness in the Malaysian ESL literature classroom. The descriptive study comprised 30 ESL teachers from 6 public secondary schools from Selangor and Kelantan. The study employed a mixed-methods research design where data were collected using a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The quantitative data were statistically analysed using SPSS version 20 while the qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis to trace emerging themes. The validity and reliability of instruments were established through experts' opinions and a pilot study. The overall reliability was established at 0.887 alpha level. The findings revealed that teachers think cultural content in the current literary texts is suitable. However, the integration of cultural awareness was at a minimal level. Teachers highlighted that they were not trained and it was not a tested component in the major public examinations. Among challenges faced are students' low proficiency of English, followed by students' and teachers' lack of cultural knowledge, students' negative perceptions and lastly, time constraint. The findings imply that the integration of cultural awareness in the Malaysian ESL literature classroom leaves much to be desired. Therefore, more local texts reflecting Malaysian diverse ethnic groups ought to be included in the KBSM English Literature Component. More importantly, the Ministry of Education (MOE) needs to provide appropriate training and teaching and learning materials to help teachers address cultural awareness. Such a move may serve as a platform to improve the integration of cultural awareness in the Malaysian ESL literature classroom.

Abstrak

Kajian deskriptif ini dijalankan untuk megkaji kesedaran budaya di dalam kelas sastera Bahasa Inggeris di Malaysia. Ia melibatkan 30 guru Bahasa Inggeris dari 6 buah sekolah menengah di Selangor dan Kelantan. Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah campuran di mana data dikumpul menggunakan kedah kaji selidik dan temuduga. Data kuantitatif dianalisis menggunakan SPSS versi 20 manakala data kualitatif pula dianalisis menggunakan kaedah tema analisis. Kesahihan dan kebolehpercayaan instrumen dalam kajian ini diperolehi melalui pendapat pakar dan kajian perintis. Kebolehpercayaan keseluruhan instrumen berada pada tahap .887. Penemuan kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa kandungan budaya di dalam teks sastera yang digunakan sekarang adalah sesuai. Bagaimanapun, usaha untuk menggabungkan kesedaran budaya di dalam kelas sastera Bahasa Inggeris berada di tahap minimal. Para guru menyatakan bahawa mereka tidak diberi pendedahan dan latihan yang secukupnya serta elemen budaya tidak diuji di dalam periksaan. Selain itu, antara halangan yang mereka hadapi adalah tahap penguasaan Bahasa Inggeris yang lemah dalam kalangan pelajar, pengetahuan budaya yang cetek dalam kalangan pelajar dan guru, pandangan negatif pelajar serta kekangan masa. Hasil kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa usaha untuk meningkatkan kesedaran dalam mengintegrasikan budaya dalam kalangan pelajar dalam kelas sastera perlu dipertingkatkan. Dengan itu, lebih banyak hasil karya tempatan mencerminkan masyarakat Malaysia yang majmuk perlu dimasukkan dalam komponen sastera Bahasa Inggeris KBSM. Yang lebih penting adalah, Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia perlu meningkatkan latihan yang bersesuaian dan juga bahan-bahan mengajar yang berkesan dalam membantu guru menanam unsur kesedaran budaya kepada para pelajar melalui sastera. Mereka perlu disediakan ruang dan peluang yang secukupnya dalam meningkatkan kesedaran dalam mengintegrasikan budaya dalam kalangan pelajar dalam kelas sastera.