



UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE 'TREE-DIAGRAM' METHOD
IN ENHANCING STUDENTS' DESCRIPTIVE ESSAYS**

AB. AZIZ BIN HUSAIN

**Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement For
The Degree of**

Master of Education (Teaching English as a Second Language)

Faculty of Education

APRIL 2009

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In the Name of ALLAH The Most Benevolent and The Most Merciful. Alhamdulillah, All Praise to ALLAH, the Creator of the Universe and Peace Be Upon His Messenger, s. a.w”.

No words could I spill to the greatest people around me who also being dedicated, committed, willing to sacrifice and give as well as spare and share all the might and effort that they have. I really need to record my sincere and deepest appreciation to these greatest people as who had some ways or another contributed to the whole research process from the beginning of its conception to the finalization of the report.

I am deeply indebt with my supervisor Mr. Gopala Krishnan a/l Sakaran Nair for all his guidance, comments, suggestions and efforts during this course of study.

Also to Associate Professor, Dr. Fatima Dinna my previous supervisor for all the precious moments and her professionalism guidance in bringing this course of study into a reality.

Not to forget, Dr. Faizah Mohamad, who also gives me words of wisdoms as well as never give up to support me

To all my course mates, with whom I have shared most of my greatest moments in encounter with difficulties and obstacles throughout in completing this study. To my friends in SMK Rantau Panjang who always supported me and understood my situation.

Last but not least, to my beloved wife Pn. Siti Rohani Bt Haron, and my children who have sacrificed a lot in seeing me run to complete this course smoothly and always motivated me to move forward with my career. Also to my mother, Pn. Azizah Bt Yusoff who always be there in the time I needed her most.

ABSTRACT

The study is experimental in nature. Both the experimental group and the control group comprised 30 respondents who are sixth form students of SMK Rantau Panjang, Kelantan. The experimental group was exposed to the 'tree-diagram' writing strategy for a period of one month. This meant a total exposure of sixteen 40-minute period for the duration of the month. Both the groups were subjected to a pre-test at the onset of the experiment and a post-test one month later. A t-test showed that there was a significant difference between the pre-test and the post-test writing marks of the experimental group whereas no significant difference was found in the control group. A similar t-test showed that there was a significant difference in the grammar scores of the experimental group but none for the control group. There was also a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test motivation score of the experimental group. However, a t-test indicated that there was no significant difference in the motivational scores of the males and females at the conclusion at the experimental period.

CHAPTER 1

Research Problem

1.0 Introduction.

English has become more and more important since the advent of IT. Indeed for Malaysia, English language has also become a matter of economic survival. In the sixties, Malaysia, then Malaya, was a commodity economy. Malaysia's was one of the world's leading producer and exporter of rubber, tin, and oil palm. These commodities form the corner stone of the economy then. Even now, the nation is dependant on its petroleum resources and other commodities, to an extent.

The government has always been aware that it is unsafe for the country to depend entirely on its non replenishable commodity for its economic survival. There have been efforts to shift to a manufacturing industry during the era of Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohamad. Knowing that competition with the more advanced countries like Japan is going to be very stiff the government has also emphasized building up the service sector. In the last decade, there has been a lot of emphasis on the creation of knowledge economy or K-economy. The K-economy is an economy where the most valuable resource will be the highly trained human resource. The driving force of the economy will be the skills and knowledge of the population rather than the natural resources. The government has made efforts towards this direction. The kind of K-economy envisaged, is the kind prevalent in Singapore.

Since the onset of globalization, governments have found it hard to subsidize their industries and exercise protectionism in trade. Trade organizations such as WTO and AFTA have called for the removal of trade barriers and subsidies. This makes it difficult for newly emerging industrial economies such as Malaysia. This makes it more imperative that Malaysia should develop its service sector and upgrade the knowledge and skills of its populace.

To build up the K-economy and expand the knowledge of the human resource, English is a vital asset. Lee Kuan Yew, ex-Prime Minister of Singapore mentioned that besides the tenacity of its people, the English language had a large role to play in the development of Singapore. An English speaking, highly skilled population attracts more foreign direct investment (FDI), Jayasankaran (1998). Since the colonial masters left, there has been a steady decline in the standard of English in the country. The government has made many efforts to rectify this problem so that Malaysia remains a competitive economy.

1.1 Background of the Study

Throughout the last decade, the Ministry of Education Malaysia has been trying various means of upgrading the proficiency level of the students so that they will leave the education system with the satisfactory command of English. Among the efforts by the ministry are the inclusion of English literature as an exam component in all school level and national level exams. Earlier, they were programs like ELRP (English Language