

**UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA**

**FACTORS INFLUENCING READING  
AMONG FORM 4 ESL STUDENTS**

**AIZA BT JOHARI**

Thesis submitted in part-fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of  
**Master of Education in TESL**  
**Faculty of Education**

**October 2007**

## Candidate's Declaration

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA. It is original and is the result 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 other degree or qualification.

In the event that my thesis 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.

Name of Candidate ..... **AIZA BINTI JOHARI** .....

Candidate's ID No. .... **2005669503** .....

Programme ..... **MASTER OF EDUCATION IN TESL** .....

Faculty ..... **FACULTY OF EDUCATION** .....

Thesis Title ..... **FACTORS INFLUENCING READING AMONG  
FORM 4 ESL STUDENTS** .....

Signature of Candidate ..... **Aiza** .....

Date ..... **20 OCTOBER 2007** .....

## ABSTRACT

This study investigates the factors, particularly family factors, which influence reading among Form 4 ESL students in SMK Green Road, in Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia. Most ESL teachers face various challenges in teaching reading as many students find it to be arduous and tedious; hence contributing to the lack of reading ability, interest and practice. Parental socioeconomic statuses (independent variables: occupation, income and academic achievement) and home reading environments (dependent variables: reading backgrounds and habits; attitude and motivation; exposure and support) were put forward as the affecting social factors. To identify these factors, questionnaires were distributed to 120 respondents. Although not fully generalisable, this study presents some interesting and helpful information. The findings revealed that in general, most students were from average home reading environments while their parents had low to average socioeconomic statuses. Though the students acknowledged the importance of reading in their daily lives, their average reading habits, attitude, motivation, exposure and support within the home domain had suggested otherwise. They mainly read for instrumental purposes while reading for pleasure seemed not to be given priority. On average, the correlation results suggested positive relationships between all variables, which were parallel to the hypotheses and other researchers' observations. Nonetheless, parents' occupation had negative significance values. Likewise, the regression data revealed that parental incomes were shown to be the strongest predictor towards constructive home reading environments, followed by parental academic qualifications. Notably, parental occupations also had the lowest ability to provide better home reading environments, hence refuting the hypotheses and findings in other studies. These outcomes may occur due to the low to average socioeconomic backgrounds of the majority of the students. As an implication, it is vital for students to improve their reading perceptions, abilities and practices to achieve personal, societal and national progress. On a final note, parents' early and continuous efforts to be involved in their children's literacy events in an out-of-school context are believed to be more powerful than socioeconomic statuses.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude and sincere appreciation to those who have directly and indirectly, assisted me in bringing this study to its present form.

My Supervisor

**Associate Professor Dr. Simon Faisal Hakim**

(Academy of Language Studies, UiTM Sarawak)

**My husband, Adib bin Sarkawi and my family**

The backbones of this study

En. Putit bin Haji Ped

SMK Green Road Principal

My colleagues

The teachers in SMK Green Road

And last but not least, my sincere thanks to 4S1, 4S3 and 4B (2007) students of SMK Green Road who participated in this study.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Overview

This chapter refers to the central issues concerning research into the factors which influence reading practices, interests and abilities among upper secondary students. It begins with the background of the study, the problem statement, the research objectives, research questions and research significance. Then, a concise theoretical framework is also provided, followed by the definition of terms.

### 1.1 Background of Study

Reading is supposed to be an enjoyable and rewarding experience. According to Gee (1999): “Good readers read as the pull of a book is irresistible”. Yet, many ESL students do not in fact choose to read, even though reading is currently recognized as a significant source of input for second language acquisition (Dupuy, Tse and Cook, 1996; Kim and Krashen, 1997). In addition, people invariably make an assumption that ‘everyone knows how to read’. Though the reality illustrates that not everyone reads and those who do are the ones who are often not reading as effectively as they could be (Krashen, 2004).

The challenges of reading are indeed apparent in most teaching and learning processes in ESL classrooms, in which numerous teachers face a challenging task, requiring students to read and encouraging them to have an interest in reading, as well as doing activities in relation to reading. Many common complaints are also heard by ESL teachers from students when they are required to read. Some of the complaints commonly heard are the difficulties of reading and the related reading tasks, the boredom that they felt when being asked to read, the tension aroused during reading activities and many others. Instead of having fun while reading, most students find the task to be arduous.