

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**FACTORS AFFECTING THE POOR
PERFORMANCE OF FORM SIX BIDAYUH
STUDENTS IN MUET EXAM**

MENON ANAK MATON

**Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Education
in Teaching of English as a Second Language (TESL)**

Faculty of Education

March 2012

Abstract

The study seeks to achieve three main objectives namely, to determine the students' level of attitudes and motivations towards learning English, to explore the students' views on factors that contribute to their poor performance in MUET Exam and to investigate how Bidayuh students cope with the preparation for the MUET Exam. The study involved Form Six Bidayuh students of SMK Tun Abdul Razak, situated about 40 kilometres from Kuching, the capital city of Sarawak. To assess the students' attitudes and motivations, a questionnaire was adapted from Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) (Gardner, 1985). The questionnaire is comprised of 104 items representing 12 main domains. The results of the questionnaire were analysed using SPSS for descriptive statistics for mean scores indicated that the students were 'not sure' of their attitudes and motivations, scoring within the 4.00 range. This could explain why the Bidayuh students had poor performance in the MUET Test. Quite contrary however was the results of the interview which indicated that the students were in favour of English and positive towards learning it. The students in the semi-structured interview also revealed that they did not prepare on their own for the MUET Exam and put heavy reliance on the classes only which proved insufficient.

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 to be subjected to the disciplinary rules and regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA.

Name of Candidate : Menon anak Maton
Candidate's ID No : 2008427198
Programme : ED 720 Master in Education (TESL)
Faculty : Education
Thesis Title : Factors affecting the poor performance of Form Six
Bidayuh students in MUET Exam

Signature of Candidate :



Date :

27/02/2012

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTENTS	PAGE
Title page	i
Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iv
Table of contents	v
List of tables	ix
List of figures	x

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction	1
1.1 Background to the study	2
1.2 Problem statement	4
1.3 Research Objectives	5
1.4 Research questions	5
1.5 Scope and limitations of the study	5
1.6 Significance of the study	6
1.7 Definitions of terms	6
1.8 Conclusion	8

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction	9
2.1 Second language (L2) acquisition (SLA)	9
2.2 Cognitive theory of second language acquisition	10
2.3 Language Input in the classroom	12
2.4 Affective and personal factors in L2 learning	13

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

In Malaysia today, mastery of English is necessary if the younger generation is to compete in an increasingly globalised market and workplace. English literacy is portrayed as instrumental "...to development, internationalisation and globalisation." (Hazita Azman, 2006, p.105). The government's decision to re-introduce English as a medium of instruction in 2003 for Science and Maths in the Malaysian school curriculum reflected the government's serious effort at ensuring that the newer younger generation would be competitive with a sound knowledge of English. English is viewed as the as the language widely used for businesses and research involving science and technology (Tan, 2005, p.56). The then Minister of Education, Musa Mohamad, strongly acknowledged the instrumental function of English which needs to be mastered in order for speakers to be able to communicate and build networks with foreigners (Tan, 2005). There were strong suggestions that there was a need to revive the glory of English or reclaim English. It was proposed by the Education Ministry's director-general, Datuk Abdul Rafie Mahat, that it is the responsibility of the teachers to take initiatives and make great effort in bringing back the success of language programmes that help improve the competency level in English. The director-general went on to state that teachers should welcome the effort to bring back English into the Malaysian education system as the instructional medium in schools (Tan, 2005). Therefore, English in the 21st century reclaims its importance in Malaysia as the second language, a language for globalisation and the Digital Age, with the instrumental function of enabling Malaysia to attain an industrialised country in the near future (Hazita Azman, 2006). Nonetheless, as much as English is viewed as one of the instrumental tools in