

**UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA**

**STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES ON  
LITERARY TEXTS USED IN  
MALAYSIAN ESL CLASSROOM**

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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 it 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

Literature was introduced in the Malaysian ESL classrooms with the aspiration to develop proficiency in the learners with adequate capacity to respond personally to literary texts provided by the English syllabus besides interpreting and appreciating the texts appropriately and instil the love for reading and improve language acquisition. In 2010, a new set of literary texts were introduced in the ESL classroom. Therefore, the aim of this study is to explore Form Four students' perspectives of the literary texts with regards to layout, content and language used in the texts. Specifically, the study examined the perspectives based on the variables such as gender and locality of the school. This study employed a mixed- method approach using both qualitative and quantitative instruments such as a questionnaire and semi – structured interviews. This study involved a total of 80 Form Four students of which 45 students were from an urban school while the remaining 35 students were from a rural school. Both schools were located in the district of Kota Setar, Kedah. The two teachers teaching literature in the two selected ESL classrooms were also involved in the study. Overall, the findings show that majority of students think that the literary texts have encouraged them to read more English books, the topics discussed are interesting and varied but they also think that current literary texts are biased towards western culture. They also felt that the language was rather difficult. With regards to layout, students pointed out that the text is well organized with appropriate use of print size and font and they felt that the layout is interesting as it helped them to visualize the context of the story, poem or drama. Furthermore, the findings revealed that a majority of students are able to relate to the moral values in the texts but felt that the issues discussed in the texts were rather adult and hence they could not relate well to them. The findings further showed that a majority of the students felt the language used was good, accurate and precise and could help them to improve their language proficiency. The urban students' felt that the vocabulary is within their level of proficiency but the rural student' felt the vocabulary used in the text is rather difficult and beyond their grasp. Additionally, the findings also showed that there was no significant difference in students' perspectives of literary texts with regards to layout, content and language used based on gender and locality of the schools. These findings imply that ESL teachers and other stake holders should assist the students to build a strong foundation of understanding the current texts so that the students will be more prepared and confident to learn and understand the texts. Considering all the challenges faced by the students when dealing with the texts in ESL classroom such as failing to interpret and analyse the text, feeling that there is no linkage between learning literature and ESL learning and could not relate well with past experiences, it is helpful if the stakeholders could select appropriate texts for the students' based on their language proficiency, gender, background knowledge and locality of the school. Finally, it can be said that there is still room for improvement in ensuring that the literary texts will give benefits for both teachers and students alike.

## ABSTRAK

Sastera Bahasa Inggeris telah diperkenalkan dalam kelas Bahasa Inggeris di Malaysia dengan harapan dapat membangunkan kecekapan para pelajar tersebut dengan kapasiti yang mencukupi untuk bertindak balas secara peribadi kepada teks-teks sastera Bahasa Inggeris yang disediakan dalam huraian sukatan pelajaran Bahasa Inggeris selain pentafsiran dan menghargai teks-teks yang sesuai di samping dapat memupuk minat membaca dan meningkatkan penguasaan Bahasa. Pada tahun 2010, satu set baru dalam teks Sastera Bahasa Inggeris telah diperkenalkan dalam kelas. Oleh yang demikian, kajian ini dilakukan bertujuan untuk meneroka perspektif para pelajar tingkatan empat dalam teks-teks Sastera Bahasa Inggeris dari segi susun atur, kandungan dan bahasa yang digunakan dalam teks. Secara khususnya, kajian ini mengkaji perspektif yang berdasarkan pembolehubah seperti jantina dan kawasan sekolah. Kajian ini digunakan pendekatan kaedah bercampur-campur yang menggunakan kedua-dua kualitatif dan kuantitatif instrumen seperti soal selidik dan semi-berstruktur temubual. Kajian ini melibatkan seramai 80 orang para pelajar tingkatan empat yang terdiri daripada 45 orang pelajar tersebut dari sebuah sekolah bandar manakala 35 orang para pelajar lain dari sekolah luar bandar. Kedua-dua sekolah ini terletak di daerah Kota Setar, Kedah. Dua orang guru yang mengajar Sastera dalam Bahasa Inggeris terpilih dalam kajian ini. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa majoriti para pelajar berfikir bahawa teks-teks yang dipelajari dalam Sastera Bahasa Inggeris telah menggalakkan mereka untuk membaca buku-buku Bahasa Inggeris, topik-topik yang dibincangkan adalah menarik dan berbeza tetapi mereka juga berfikir bahawa sesetengah teks sastera Bahasa Inggeris yang digunakan agak berat sebelah ke arah budaya Barat. Mereka juga merasakan bahawa bahasa yang digunakan adalah agak sukar. Dari segi susun atur teks, para pelajar merasakan bahawa saiz cetakan dan penulisan adalah menarik kerana ia membantu mereka untuk menggambarkan konteks cerita, puisi dan drama. Selain itu, dapatan kajian mendedahkan bahawa majoriti para pelajar dapat mengaitkan dengan nilai-nilai murni dalam teks-teks tetapi merasakan bahawa isu-isu yang dibincangkan agak dewasa dan oleh itu mereka tidak memahaminya dengan baik. Hasil kajian seterusnya menunjukkan bahawa majoriti pelajar-pelajar merasa bahasa yang digunakan adalah baik, tepat dan dapat membantu mereka untuk meningkatkan kemahiran bahasa mereka. Walau bagaimanapun, pelajar-pelajar bandar merasakan bahawa perbendaharaan kata berada dalam tahap kecekapan mereka tetapi pelajar luar bandar merasakan kosa-kata yang digunakan dalam teks adalah agak sukar dan di luar genggaman mereka. Di samping itu, dapatan kajian juga menunjukkan bahawa terdapat perbezaan yang 'signifikan' dalam perspektif pelajar daripada teks-teks Sastera dari segi susun atur, kandungan dan bahasa yang digunakan berdasarkan jantina dan kawasan sekolah. Secara kesimpulannya, melalui hasil dapatan ini, guru-guru dan pihak lain yang bertanggungjawab harus berganding bahu membantu para pelajar untuk membina asas yang kukuh kepada pemahaman teks-teks dalam Sastera Bahasa Inggeris supaya pelajar akan lebih bersedia dan berkeyakinan untuk belajar dan memahami teks-teks tersebut. Antara cabaran yang dihadapi oleh para pelajar dalam memahami teks sastera Bahasa Inggeris seperti kegagalan untuk mentafsir dan menganalisis teks, dan tidak memahami teks dengan baik, adalah berguna jika pihak berkepentingan dapat memilih teks yang sesuai untuk para pelajar berdasarkan kecekapan bahasa mereka, jantina, latar belakang, pengetahuan,

kemahiran dan kawasan sekolah. Akhirnya, masih terdapat ruang untuk penambahbaikan dalam memastikan bahawa teks-teks sastera Bahasa Inggeris dapat memberi manfaat untuk kedua-dua guru dan pelajar sama.