

**A STUDY OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ENGLISH FOR SCIENCE
AND TECHNOLOGY (EST) IN PROMOTING CONTENT
KNOWLEDGE, LANGUAGE COMPETENCY AND INDEPENDENT
STUDY SKILLS AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN
THREE DISTRICTS IN PERAK**



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ABSTRACT

The research was undertaken to establish the effects of English for Science and Technology(EST) in promoting content knowledge, language competency and independent study skills in schools in the Central Perak, Manjung and Kinta Districts. The findings reveal that EST had improved students' proficiency in English Language skills especially in the areas of reading skills and vocabulary enhancement. There was also sufficient evidence to conclude that it had helped learners to cope better with their mainstream subjects especially in the pure sciences. Both teachers and students believed that EST had improved students' content knowledge but the manifestation of students' improvement in content knowledge based on their performance in these subjects is not highly significant. As for the development of independent learning skills, it was discovered that the methodology used in the teaching of this subject did not promote learner autonomy. The findings revealed that the teaching of this subject is still very much teacher dominated. The traditional lecture- style method was the more dominant mode of teaching used in the classroom and whole classroom individual work was more often preferred to small group work or pair work. Some of the problems faced by teachers are:- lack of expertise in integrating content with language teaching which was aggravated by the fact that they had not undergone any relevant training in this area. Besides, the lack of facilities like computer labs limited the manner in which the subject is taught. Finally the lack of confidence to use the spoken language amongst learners had limited student participation in the classroom.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	i
Table of Content	iii
List of Tables	viii
List of Figures	ix

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0	Background Of The Study	1
1.1	Statement Of Problem	5
1.2	Aims Of The Study	6
1.3	Significance Of The Study	6
1.4	Scope Of Project	7
1.5	Definitions Of Terms/Concepts Used In Objectives	7
1.6	Limitations Of The Study	8

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0	Introduction	9
2.1	Science And Language	12
2.1.1	Selection of Content	12
2.1.2	Teacher Training	12
2.1.3	Ethnoscience and Language	14
2.2	Language and Content – Integration	15

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background Of The Study

Globalisation and rapid advancement in technology has led to a wealth of information available in various fields. In the field of Science and Technology a certain level of English language proficiency is essential as most of the information available in resources such as books, journals and the Internet is in English language. In addition books and papers, essential for the intensive and extensive study of an academic subject, are also mostly available in English Language. In Malaysia, according to Hazita. A (2003), the mastery of English language as a vehicle for knowledge is essential as it is reported that 85% of all information in the field of science and technology is written in English language. In a seminar on English for Specific Purposes held in Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Professor Swales, a language expert said that English language is becoming the medium of instruction in the teaching of science and technology subjects worldwide and stressed that “more ESP lecturers are needed to overcome the low standard of English language among students enrolling in universities nowadays, especially in the field of science and technology” (Swales, 2006). This situation