

1.0 Introduction

When English language was proposed to be reintroduced as the medium of instructions for Mathematics and Science subjects at three school levels beginning January 2003, this had indeed raised many brows. This had also led to an assumption that our education system had somewhat deteriorated due to the usage of bahasa Malaysia as the sole medium of instructions.

The scenario we have here in Malaysia has much to do with the outcome of our education system. The acceptance of the New Education Policy among others provided steps to be taken in the conversion of the former English schools to national schools. The gradual implementation of the national language policy in the education system of the country took place beginning the year 1970 to 1983 with the annulment of the Lower Certificate of Education (LCE) examination in 1978, and the Malaysian Certificate of Education (MCE) examination in 1980. An estimated total of 6.3 million students (from the year 1975 to 2002 only) have gone through this national education system up to at least Form Five or SPM level.

It is undeniable that this batch has reaped its harvest. It has produced thousands of professionals, academicians, specialists, scientists, technocrats, leaders and many more who have contributed to the Malaysian state-building. But nevertheless, to a certain extent, something is still lacking. The influential wave of globalisation and information and communication technology is one good reason for a revamp of the national language policy. It is essential to keep in mind that though bahasa Malaysia plays a key political role in creating a culturally homogeneous polity out of a multi-lingual society, English language on the other hand, has a functional role by virtue of its use as an international language of communication in the economy of the nation, particularly for Malaysia to remain globally competitive.

In addition, certain problems were overlooked throughout the nationalisation of the school system. Little consideration was given to students from non-English backgrounds.

The syllabus contained the maximum items to be mastered. Being a common content syllabus arranged in a linear format, the emphasis was on complete coverage of all the items at a common pace, irrespective of the students' lack of exposure or usage to the language at home, or their immediate need to learn the language. With the switch to bahasa Malaysia as the one and only medium of instructions at all level of education, the English language, though compulsory for all pupils, is taught as just another subject in the school system.

There is a persistent need to clarify that although English has been accorded the status of a second official language in Malaysia, it is only second to bahasa Malaysia in importance and is not a second language to the definition in applied linguistics. English language may not necessarily be the second language of Malaysian students. It can be the first, second, or even a foreign language depending on among other things, the locality they live in. For most students in rural areas, English is a foreign language based on the quantity of exposure and usage to the language. As a result, those whose exposure and usage to the language were limited to the language classroom became underachievers. Sadly, they would continue to be so as the pace of teaching could not be slowed down. Bearing this situation in mind, it is unthinkable to imagine their oncoming uphill battle as they moved on in their pursuance for academic excellence.

Since that the education system has shifted to using bahasa Malaysia and English language is thus given the status of a subject in the school curriculum with the allotment of 200 minutes a week, one could expect the level of competence to drop. Carrying the status as an essential second language, the role of English language in Malaysia is fast changing from being the language for education and official proceedings to being a tool of communication in limited circumstances. Despite the fact that the role of English in the nation has changed from an official language to that of a second language, there is a continued need for Malaysians to be competent in the language. English is essential for employment opportunities and for higher education, and English is a necessity for Malaysians of various ethnics to rise up the socioeconomic ladder.

Though much has been done to enhance English as the most important language, it is neither correlative with the intensity of use of the language, nor is it with the level of proficiency attained. There is a steady decline in the standard of English language. The opinion from various quarters that there is a drop in the standard of English among Malaysian speakers is undeniably justified.

Hence, the government has taken a very drastic and radical action to reintroduce English language as the medium of instructions for Mathematics and Science subjects at three school levels to remedy this pivotal unsettling situation. The year 2003 marked the first year that Mathematics and Science subjects were conducted in the English language. By 2008, all assessment instruments for Year 6, Form 3 and Form 5 public examinations for Mathematics and Science subjects would be in English language for all national primary and secondary schools. The recurring question – Is this an appropriate and a timely prescription to address the crucial matter?

1.1 Pulau Aman, Penang

To date, Penang is one of the main attractions for tourism and the importance of English language as the main communicative tool has taken its place. Pulau Aman, however, is rather secluded from this rapid changes and development of the main island.

Pulau Aman is a remote little island covering an area of 288 acres, 2.5 nautical miles from the mainland just off the coast of Seberang Perai's southern district. It is only accessible by boat and the ride from Bukit Tambun, the nearest town, takes about 30 minutes. An idyllic, close knit agrotourism Malay community with a population of only 233, the majority of people on Pulau Aman are elderly folks and laughing, carefree children. Life on Pulau Aman is simple and traditional with man and nature co-existing in harmony with one another. Majority of them show disinterest or ignorance in the English language.

1.2 Sekolah Kebangsaan Pulau Aman

Sekolah Kebangsaan Pulau Aman is the only school on the island. It was founded in 1873 and formerly known as Sekolah Melayu. The school is situated 30 feet above sea level. As years gone by, the physical structures of the building have improved tremendously. Today, the three-storey building is the pride of the people on the island.



Sekolah Kebangsaan Pulau Aman

Sekolah Kebangsaan Pulau Aman has an enrolment of only 32 students as in 2005. Majority of them come from low socio-economic background. Since the student enrolment is small, the school practices a unique combine-class system. Thus, there are only three combined classes there; Year 1 is combined with Year 2, Year 3 is combined with Year 4, and Year 5 is combined with Year 6, as shown in the table on the next page.

Combined Class for Year 1 and 2	Year 1	3 students
	Year 2	10 students
	Total	13 students
Combined Class for Year 3 and 4	Year 3	2 students
	Year 4	11 students
	Total	13 students
Combined Class for Year 5 and 6	Year 5	2 students
	Year 6	4 students
	Total	6 students

Sekolah Kebangsaan Pulau Aman Class Enrolment 2005

SK Pulau Aman's poor performance in UPSR is a recurring problem. We could comprehend the magnitude of the problem as shown in the three tables extracted from PPD (Selatan).

DETAILS	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Total of Candidates	6	10	4	9	4
Total of Passes	1	1	4	4	0
Percentage of passes	16.7	10.0	100.0	44.9	0.0

Sekolah Kebangsaan Pulau Aman UPSR Results 2000 to 2004

The issue of deteriorating standard of English in Malaysia has been pointed out, emphasised, debated and discussed repeatedly by various quarters. The standard of English in national primary schools is often measured and determined by the performance of the students by the national examination results such as in UPSR.

The percentage of passes for English language in SK Pulau Aman is alarmingly dwindling. What is more alarming is that the percentages of passes for Mathematics and Science are also affected, especially after the implementation of the English medium of instructions for the two respective subjects. But the most alarming is the fact that there

has not been any English language teacher in the school for the past seven months, and there is no sign of getting one substitute teacher still.

DETAILS	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
<i>Bahasa Melayu(Kefahaman)</i>					
<i>Number of Candidate</i>	6	10	4	9	4
<i>Percentage of passes</i>	66.7	90.0	100.0	77.8	100.0
<i>Bahasa Melayu (Penulisan)</i>					
<i>Number of Candidate</i>	6	10	4	9	4
<i>Percentage of passes</i>	66.7	80.0	100.0	88.9	100.0
English Language					
Number of Candidate	6	10	4	9	4
Percentage of passes	16.7	20.0	100.0	44.4	25.0
No. of passes	1	2	4	4	1
<i>Mathematics</i>					
<i>Number of Candidate</i>	6	10	4	9	4
<i>Percentage of passes</i>	66.7	60.0	100.0	77.8	25.0
<i>Science</i>					
<i>Number of Candidate</i>	6	10	4	9	4
<i>Percentage of passes</i>	66.7	60.0	100.0	44.9	75.0

Sekolah Kebangsaan Pulau Aman UPSR Results (By Subject) 2000 to 2004

Although statistics cannot be taken at face value, it nevertheless provided us with an indication and a starting point to probe deeper into the case of Pulau Aman. Nonetheless, the results show the symptoms of the problems the school is facing with regards to students achievement in UPSR in general, and English language proficiency in particular.

It cannot be ruled out that one thing for certain is that the students' performance in the English language is not only poor, but it is affecting their overall UPSR results as well. With the given environment and condition as such there, it is a wishful thinking to expect a drastic change in a fortnight. But there is still room for improvement. Therefore, the

Subject	Results Detail
Bahasa Malaysia (Penulisan)	3A 1D
Bahasa Malaysia (Kefahaman)	3B 1C
English Language	1C 2D 1E
Mathematics	1C 1D 2E
Science	3C 1D
No. of Candidates	4
No. of Passes	0
% of Passes	0
No. of Failures	4
% of Failures	100

Sekolah Kebangsaan Pulau Aman UPSR Results 2004

English Language Section Corporate Unit of Pusat Bahasa dan Terjemahan, USM, as a form of community service for the people of Pulau Aman, has proposed an English Language Programme to aid the students there. This programme which is a brain-child of our VC and fully funded by the VC's office, will be managed voluntarily and entirely by the staff of Pusat Bahasa dan Terjemahan, USM.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

It is a fact acknowledged by all linguistic academia that the acquisition and mastery of the native language by all normal individuals is a certainty. However, the same cannot be said for the learning of a second or even a third language.

Researchers investigating on second language acquisition asserts that language usage of the learners will influence their performance. Usage to the target language is not only necessary but vital to the acquisition of the target language. If one is exposed to the usage of L2 (Second Language) in the same way as he or she is exposed to the usage of L1 (First Language), greater gain will be expected.

Usage enhances language learning. This is linked by assessing the linguistic nature of one's home community, early experiences in second language learning and current attitudes and beliefs about language learning and bilingualism (Masgoret, 1999). The more one listens to the target language, reads or speaks in the language, receives more contact to the target language, the more competent one is likely to become in the target language. A causal model indicated that early language usage will influence one's cultural attitudes, motivation to learn a second language, and self-perceptions of second language proficiency (Gardner, 1990).

Research has demonstrated relationships between language usage contextual factors and performance such as second language classroom situation (Dornyei, 1994; Gardner, Ginsberg & Smythe, 1976; Julkunen, 1989) and level of parental encouragement (Colleta, Clement & Edwards, 1983; Skehan, 1989), whereas other research has found relationships between usage and language proficiency (Gardner, 1985; Gardner & Lambert, 1959; Gardner, Smythe, Clement & Glikzman, 1976). The present research directs attention to the role of early environmental usage characteristics and language learning motivation on subsequent language attitudes and perceptions of second language competencies.

The importance of usage to the target language as an aid in language learning cannot therefore be dismissed. But the problem with assessing the role of usage in improving proficiency is that it is difficult to ascertain whether it is contact with the target language that increases proficiency or whether it is better proficiency that motivates such contact (Chandrasegaran, 1981).

As in the case of SK Pulau Aman, even at the onset we can safely assure that the probable outcomes from the usage of the target language is low. The unfortunate absence of an English language teacher there for quite a substantial period of time will definitely magnify the problem, and also have a deep impact on the students' level of motivation and self-esteem. Hence, something has to be done to elevate the standard of the deteriorating English language there.

1.4 Significance of the Language Programme

From our observations and from the interviews with teachers and the people on the island, it is clear that the students do not know how to manage their free time after school. This language programme which will be carried out daily, inclusive of weekends, for three months, will be held after schools hours on the school ground itself with permission from the school authority.

Basically, the significance of this programme is to enable the students to have more practice to the usage of the target language. Also, this programme will enable the Teachers of Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), especially in the Malaysian context to gain a better understanding on the role of usage in helping second language learners improve their language proficiency. By understanding the importance of usage, they would be able to emphatically aid the students to learn English more effectively. This will also help teachers in finding ways and formulating strategies to assist the students to overcome the problem with regard to usage to the target language.

1.5 Rationale of the Language Programme

This programme is to establish the relationship between usage and language proficiency. As its focus is on primary school students, the findings thus in many instances will indicate the various elements of usage that contribute to language learning for that particular level. Hence, this would be relevant to language teachers and as well as the policy makers who are involved in the task of improving the standard of English language.

1.6 Aims and Objectives of the Language Programme

This programme is to provide some room for improvement to the students' English language proficiency. Ideally, the usage of English language may be explored in three areas such as the usage gained in class, outside class (but still within the school compound), and outside school in the surrounding milieu. However, with regard to SK Pulau Aman, since there is minimal usage that transpires in the surrounding milieu and even in school (outside the classroom), thus, the objective of this language programme is to concentrate mainly on the English language usage in the classroom.

This will include:

- a. Instruction
 - i. Instructional facilities and materials
 - ii. Instructional planning
 - iii. Instructional Process
- b. Practice
 - i. Types of activities
 - ii. Role of teachers/students
 - iii. Practice process – classroom task/homework

c. Evaluation

- i. Types of evaluation
- ii. Remediation process

2.0 The Conceptual Framework

The foundation of the conceptual framework is based primarily on Krashen's acquisition theory (Krashen, 1982 & 1985). The acquisition theory argues that the ability to acquire a language is gained through participation or experience in using it. Ideally, it fosters language acquisition in the broadest sense by providing maximum amounts of comprehensible input. Comprehensible input asserts that students acquiring English language need to use the language in order to understand, especially about topics which have meanings to them, something which they can associate with their surroundings.

Bright and McGregor (1970) also emphasised that there is no learning without usage. Usage need not be limited to classroom situations alone, what happens outside may be important for language acquisition as well.

The two main components of usage are the curriculum and the environment. The curriculum is seen as the official usage, and the environment as the unofficial usage. Both types of usage are needed. English is taught as a second language but the environment of a second language acquisition may not exist in a setting like SK Pulau Aman. As such, it should be further asserted that much of the usage ought to come from the official source.

In addressing the issue of language usage, the model by Bialystok (1978) shows a distinction between explicit and implicit linguistic knowledge (Please refer to page 13). Explicit knowledge are facts that one knows about the language and the ability to articulate those facts in some way. Implicit knowledge is the information that is automatically and spontaneously used in language tasks. The lines show the processes

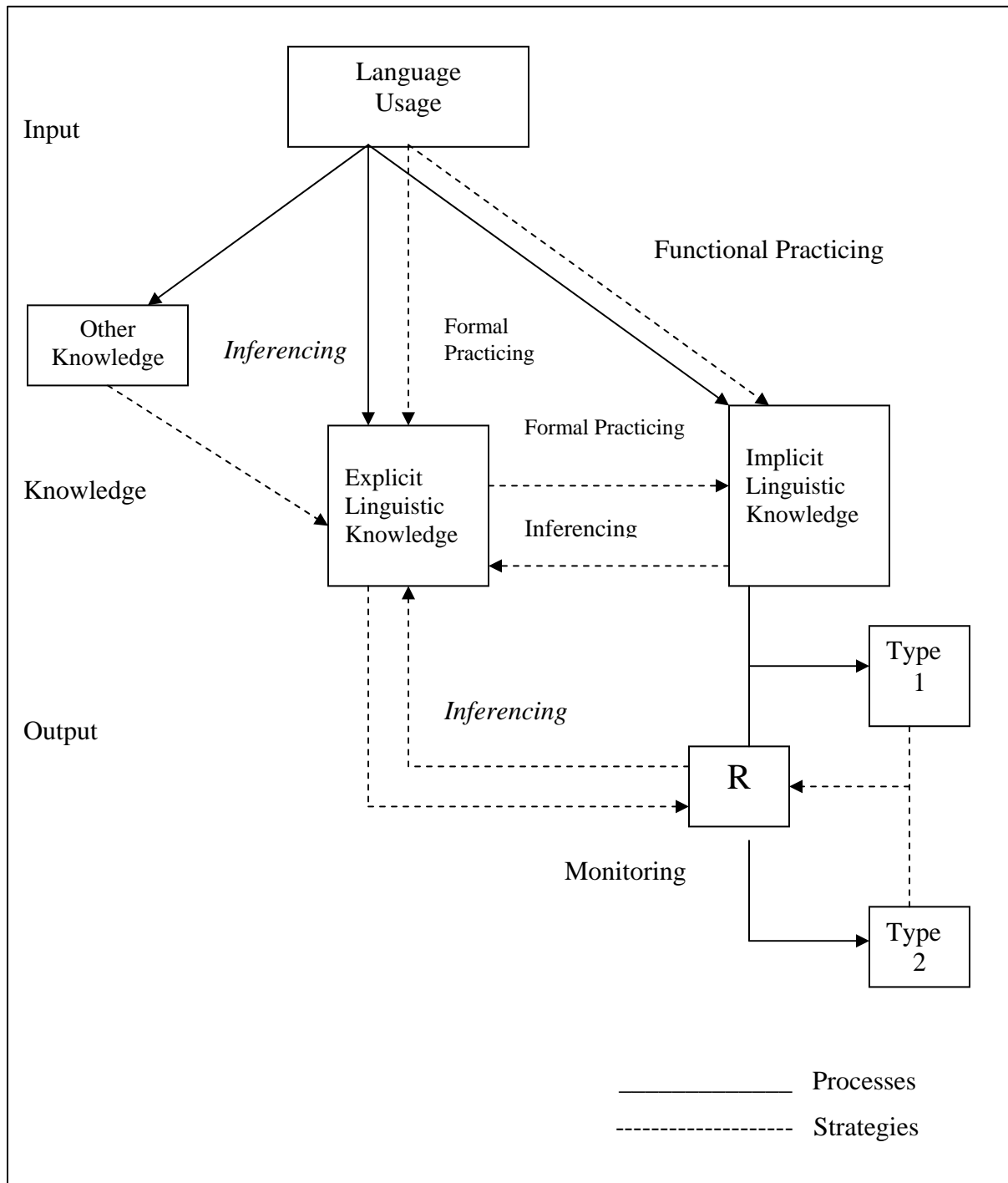
and they are universal. The strategies are optional and vary among individuals. The 'R' is the response that a person makes to another person upon receiving some sort of linguistic message. Type 1 responses are spontaneous, whereas Type 2 responses are time delayed.

Jakobovits (1971) offers another model in second language learning (Please refer to page 14). This model indicates that the language instruction a learner gets (I) is a function of both teaching (T) and method (M), which in turn are functions of Curriculum and Language Policy operating not only in the field of education but in all other activities in which the Government may exert its influence, such as administration and communications. The language policy may determine the curriculum directly or indirectly, or both, by being inserted into a general Education Policy. The language policy may decide which and what language is to be taught. It may consciously promote an early training in the use of a second language. The curriculum can hence determine what, how much, and how the learner learns through the methods and materials with which he comes in contact. Both what the teacher does and the learner does determine the instructional activity to which the learner must comply.

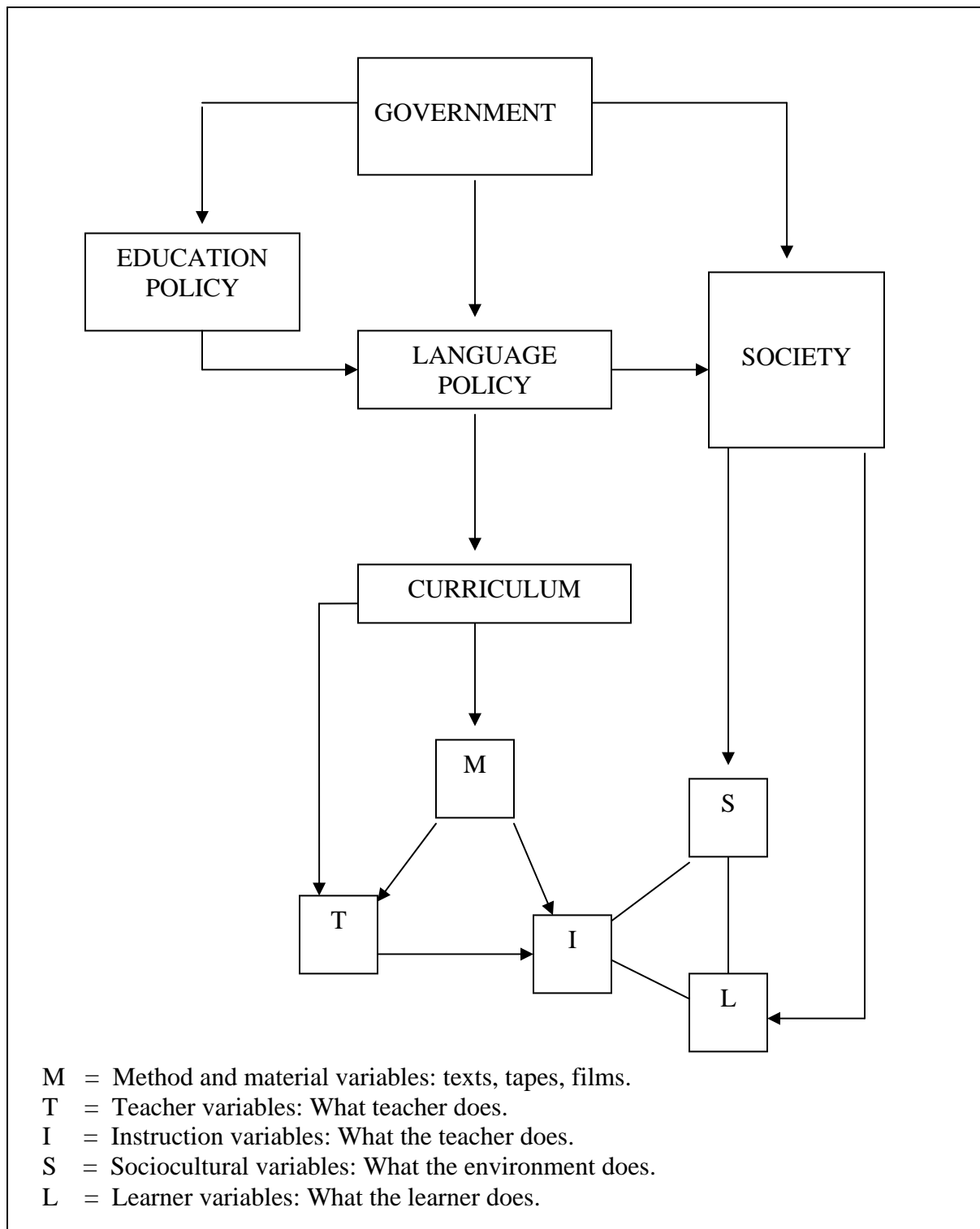
2.1 The Theoretical Framework

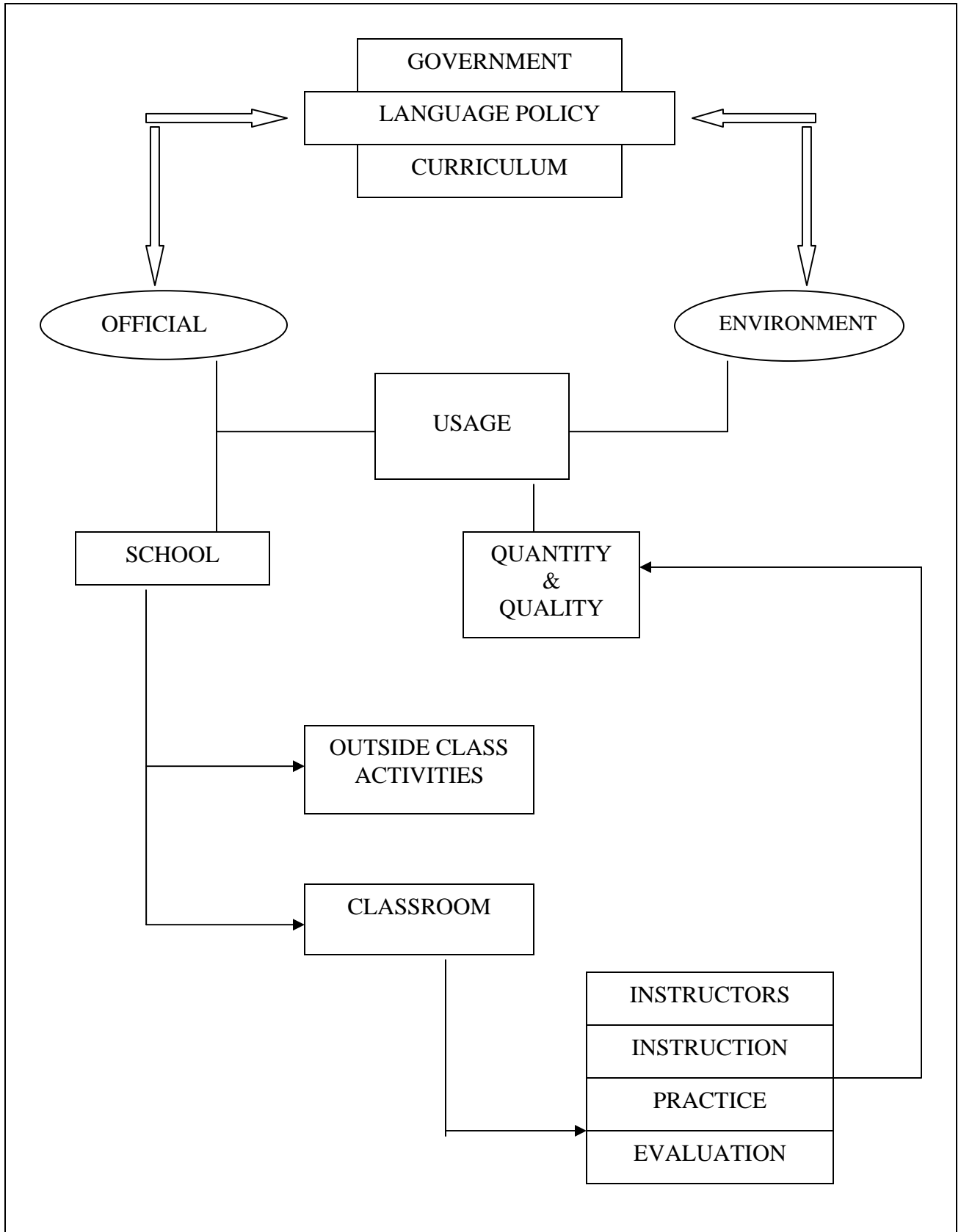
The theoretical framework as on page 15 is derived from a combination, adaptation and modification of the Models of Second Language Learning by Bialystok (1978) and Jakobovits (1971). The main thrust in the implementation of a second language in a nation is almost always the government. If the government deems a second language besides an official first language is necessary, then it would implement this through its policy, law and regulations. This policy would then be followed by a specific curriculum, syllabus and guidelines. If it is implemented as a second language, then usage to the language would and should be both through official and unofficial means. The usage of the language is important, but the quality and quantity of the usage should

Model of Second Language Learning – Biaylstok's Automacity Model (1978)



Language Learning, Teaching and Policy: An interaction Model of Jakobovits
(1971)





The Theoretical Framework

not be neglected too. In the case of SK Pulau Aman, the usage through the unofficial means is almost negligible. As such, the official means which is mainly through the school, is the only scene of usage to the language. The framework also demonstrates how crucial it is to focus on the language being taught and used in the classroom. However, it is also acknowledged that what is taught in the classroom would not necessarily be acquired by the students.

2.2 The Curriculum Theory

MacDonald's Scope and Function of Curriculum in Education, and Johnson's Dynamics of Curriculum and Instruction Systems, as shown on the next page, explain closely the layout of the theoretical framework. MacDonald's model shows curriculum as one of four interacting systems; teaching is defined as a personality system (the teacher) acting in a professional role; learning is defined as a personality system (the student) performing task-related (learning) behaviours; instruction is defined as the social system within which formal teaching and learning take place; and curriculum is defined as the social system which eventuates in a plan for instruction.

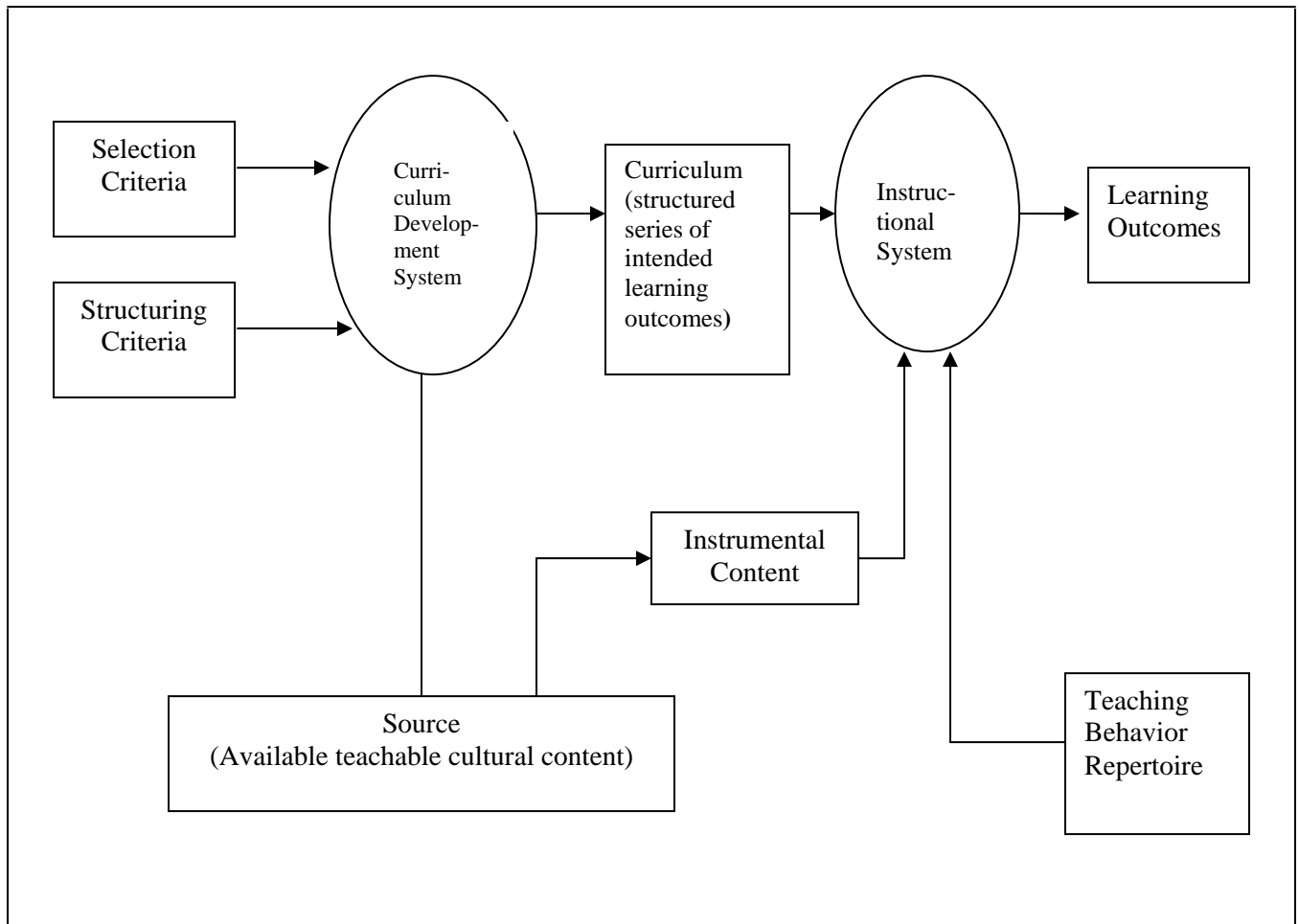
Johnson's model as on page 17, on the other hand, shows the curriculum as the output of a curriculum-development system. The curriculum, defined as a structured series of intended learning outcomes, subsequently becomes input for the instructional system. Guided by the curriculum, the instructional system employs instrumental content and teachers' behaviour to actualise learning outcomes.

Both MacDonald and Johnson appear to agree on the role of curriculum as a plan or document that guides instruction. Johnson's model clearly indicates the dynamics of the process of curriculum construction, development, and implementation and it is helpful in enabling us to conceptualise processes in sequential terms. MacDonald's model, nevertheless, attempts to grapple with the complex relationships that in fact exist among teaching, learning, instruction, and curriculum.

3.0 Review of Related Literature

In order to provide a background of related theories, this review discusses on language learning and usage, practice and usage, L2 acquisition and learning in contrasted linguistic environmental usage and its relationship to language proficiency, usage in formal linguistic environment, usage in informal linguistic environment, a theoretical perspective of motivation, evaluation and usage, remediation and usage, and finally, the relationship between language proficiency and its performance.

The Dynamics of Curriculum and Instruction Systems : Johnson's Model



3.1 Language Learning and Usage

In general, Malaysians are exposed to at least a minimum of two languages, but in some cases, they are exposed to three or more languages. In our country, a language is expected to be learned either as the medium of instruction, as a second language or a foreign language.

For the Malays, bahasa Malaysia is not only the medium of instruction but also the mother tongue. However, the colloquial bahasa Malaysia used is not the same dialect or variety of the standard version. In many instances, the dialect they use (mother tongue) varies greatly from the standard version. As such, they would have to relearn their 'own language' thus making this their second language. This would eventually make English a foreign language to a handful Malay population.

From this theoretical viewpoint, the similar situation applies to other ethnics in Malaysia too. English is more of a foreign language to them, and not as a second language as in the definition of applied linguistics.

3.2 Practice and Usage

Language learning is most likely to occur when learners have access to usage and the opportunity to practice using that exposure. Seliger (1977) defined practice as any verbal interaction between the learner and others in his or her environment. Usually such interaction consists of an output speech act by the learner and an input speech act from other speaker. Practice also consists of covert activity such as listening to the radio, watching television and reading (Sabariah Morad, 2002).

3.3 Second Language Acquisition and Language Learning in Contrasted Linguistic Environmental Usage

Usage is very important in acquiring a second language. Lado (1964) stated that a child can learn a second language by usage in much the same way that he or she learns his or her first language by bringing the child in contact with appropriate situations in which the second language is used as the medium of communication.

In general, there are formal usage and informal usage in the process of learning the English language. Formal usage would be the convention of learning the English language in the classroom through instruction, practice, evaluation and remediation by the English language teachers. On the other hand, informal usage would be interactions with the language apart from the formal convention. In the last few years, a number of studies have been carried out to address the question of optimal linguistic environmental usage for second language acquisition to occur.

Artificial or formal learning environments, as apparently shown in several studies, are said to be the best in attaining second language proficiency. Formal study or its essential characteristics is hypothesised to be significantly more efficient than informal usage in increasing second language proficiency. It is thus asserted that formal environment has the potential for encouraging both acquisition and learning of the learner.

Nevertheless, other studies appear to show that informal environmental exposure is more effective. It is argued that informal environments encourage real communicative language use and are conducive to acquisition. Hence, it is forwarded that the informal environment can be efficiently utilised by the second language learners.

Though these studies are not definitive, they indeed carry weight to the fact that both formal and informal environmental usage do contribute to different aspects of second language competence.

3.3.1 Usage in Formal Linguistic Environments

Formal linguistic environments, which are usually found for the most part in the classroom, make practical use of all language system for activities. Formal usage is based on oracy and literacy skills. The oracy skills would involve listening and speaking, and literacy skills involve reading and writing. Linguistic rules in which some sort of feedback, for instance, error correction or error detection, or other features of formal instructions such as deductive presentation of rules are presented. While these may to a certain extent be a help to a learner, yet are not necessary for learning to take place (Krashen and Seliger, 1975)

Research has demonstrated relationships between usage contextual factors and performance such as second language classroom situation (Dornyei, 1994; Gardner, Ginsberg & Smythe, 1976; Julkunen, 1989). A causal model indicated that early language usage will influence one's cultural motivation to learn a second language, and self-perceptions of second language proficiency (Gardner, 1990).

In his study, Carroll (1967) observed that ESL (English as a Second Language) learners who started learning the second language early in grade school achieved better scores. Learners who studied the target language in high school did better than those who started in college. He noted that the attainment of skill in a second language is a function of the amount of time spent in its study. His measure of the amount of formal instruction was the learners' report on the number of years he or she had studied in a school institution. Carroll insists that more usage means more proficiency, and more instructions, indeed, means more proficiency. He affirms that years of formal instruction is a better predictor of English proficiency than is time spent in an English-speaking environment.

Rowe (1998) illustrates in his qualitative studies of educational effectiveness relate to fitting models that adequately reflect the complex inter-relationships among multi-variate, multi-level factors affecting learners' language progress, particularly those that operate within classrooms. He asserts that there is an inter-relationship between L2

(Second Language) performance and social background factors together with their affective schooling experiences in the classroom.

Ellis (1987) views a more indirect role in the L2 learning process. He established that one important distinction in this context is the difference between natural and classroom settings for language learning. Classroom settings can vary. Submersion classrooms are notable for the fact that L2 learners are taught in a class where L1 (First Language) speakers are the majority. In immersion classrooms on the other hand, learners with a high status L1 receive their teaching through the medium of the L2. An example of this might be a group of American businessmen learning French in this way (Shumann, 1978). It has been recorded that learners who regard themselves as being distant from the target language culture tend to pidginise and stop short of developing anything remotely resembling native-like fluency. On the other hand, there are learners who readily desire to assimilate themselves as closely as possible into target language community. These learners acculturate to a much greater extent with more advanced proficiency as a result.

Classroom or formal environment can be of value in language acquisition as well as in language learning. It helps in increasing learned competence. Classroom focuses on conscious linguistic knowledge of the target language, that the target language is used realistically to that extent will acquisition occur. Learning exists and thus may increase proficiency. Learning may also increase performed accuracy by supplementing the acquired output.

The classroom can contribute in two ways. First, as a formal linguistic environment, providing rule isolation and feedback for development. And secondly, to the extent language use is emphasised, simultaneously, as a source of primary linguistic data for language acquisition.

3.3.2 Usage in Informal Linguistic Environments

Informal usage can be classified into two types. The first would be usage based on the oracy skills and the second is the literacy skills. The oracy skills would involve listening and speaking. Speaking and literacy skills involve reading and writing.

L2 learners are usually influenced by the sounds, rhythm and stress of their mother tongue. Therefore, it is essential for them to be engaged in conversations or to listen to anything that could aid them to hear and produce the correct sounds, rhythm and stress which are found in the English language according to the phonic rules.

One of the purposes of a listening activity is to expose one to as much as possible to spontaneous language. In giving exposure, listening activities are important as they provide context, vocabulary and structure. Watching an English programme on television or listening to an English radio station would simulate the listening found in the real world as far as possible. In addition to usage, it is vitally important for the listeners to become engaged in the process of listening and verbal interactions and develop the desire to understand (Rost, 1991)

Natural or informal linguistic environment can provide learners with the necessary input for the operation for the language acquisition device and it does contribute to second language proficiency. There is a relationship found between attainment and measures of time spent in different linguistic environments. Though rule isolation and feedback do not seem to be present in informal environments, several studies suggest that learners can increase not only their second language proficiency in informal environments but may perform as well as or better than those who have spent a comparable amount of time in formal situations (Krashen and Seliger, 1975)

Learner external factors focus on the role played by the learner's surroundings and social context on the learning process. Behaviorism had previously placed great stress on the role of the environment whereas mentalist theories of Chomsky which superseded them attempted to look inside the mind of the learner.

The study by McNiece (1998) on cross-cultural studies reveals the existent differences in the proficiency attainments of learners from differing social background. Davies (2002) has identified the social association as one of the factors influencing the L2 attainments. The assumption that the more the learner interact in the language, the more competent he is in the target language is confirmed by Seliger (1977) who worked among sample of ESL learners in an intensive programme. He observed that given the time constraint, formal instruction did not permit much practice in the target language. Therefore, additional interaction outside class is of vital importance in acquiring L2 competence. This means that given an optimal teaching system, much of what must be learnt must be acquired outside class hours. In short, the sufficiency of interaction is dependent upon the availability of opportunity to interact in the target language.

Upshur (1968) in his statistical analysis divulged that there is no significant effects on language attributable to amount of language instruction. He concluded that foreign language courses for ESL students is less effective means for producing language learning than the use of language in other activities. Krashen and Seliger (1976) defined usage as the product of the number of years the learners reported having spent in an English-speaking environment and how much English the learner spoke in a day on scale of 1 to 10. Hence, the informal environment can be effectively utilised by second language learning.

3.4 Motivation

One of the most important psychological concepts in education is certainly that of motivation. Indeed, much research has shown that motivation is related to various outcomes such as curiosity, persistence, learning and performance (Deci and Ryan, 1985). Krashen and Seliger (1975) suggest that motivation plays a vital role in acquiring a second language. In light of the importance of these consequences for education, one can easily understand the interest of researches for motivation in educational setting.

The philosophy of many educators is that all students can learn. When translated into instructional activities and learning strategies, teachers must know what motivates people. Classroom teachers have direct influence on students' achievement. This is coupled with the influence of the home as well as the students' level of motivation (Oliver, 1995). Expectancy Theory (Vroom, 1964) states that motivated individuals put forth the greatest effort, believe that effort will lead to good performance, and that good performance will lead to preferred outcomes. It appears that motivation is the key in getting students involved in their learning and in getting them to improve their level of academic performance. Therefore, in order to improve students' performance, teachers must know what motivates students.

3.5 Evaluation and Usage

Evaluation can be defined as an instrument for gathering and measuring data about language ability. Once the data has been gathered and measured, judgement shall be made based on it. The judgement is known as evaluation. Not all evaluation needs to be or should be conducted by paper and pencil tests. Oral questioning, classroom interviews, students' exercise books, participation on project and activities are a few alternative methods of evaluating learning.

As teachers it is necessary to evaluate all the time. In order to do this fairly and well, data is needed. Fortunately, in language classroom, there is an abundance of data. The students are required to perform in the language taught in the class activities and as homework. And whenever the students perform in the language, they can be correct or they can make errors; they can communicate or fail to communicate, they can be understood or be misunderstood. In these terms therefore, any activity where the students are required to perform is a language evaluation.

Language evaluation can be classified into formative evaluation and summative evaluation. Formative evaluation is an on-going process which can be an integral part of classroom teaching in which the content and methodology of the teaching is in response to the information revealed by the formative evaluation. It can be carried out formally or informally, for example, as part of a particular project. Conversely, summative evaluation is often formal and carried out when a certain portion of the syllabus has been covered, for example, at the end of primary school during UPSR.

In formative evaluation, the purpose is not to judge the learner in terms of good or bad, clever or stupid, slow or fast. The purpose is to find out if mastery has taken place, and if not, to make judgements and decisions about teaching, materials, methods being used and about the need for more practice, remediation, consolidation and so forth.

While in summative evaluation such as in the UPSR, students are tested on a total syllabus. After the examination the students are evaluated. There is nothing more the teacher can do, the students will either pass or fail, and perhaps no longer in the teacher's hand to mould, praise and correct.

Clearly both types of evaluation are important. However, as teachers, formative evaluation seems to take on crucial importance. Teachers have to test the students constantly, both formally and informally, and evaluate to make judgements and decisions for the benefit of the students.

3.6 Remediation and Usage

In every class, there are students of different abilities. Their differences must be given consideration in any lesson preparation. There must be a variety of tasks to cater for the needs of the students. Apart from that, students sometimes have learning problems. Teachers must explore every suitable activity and aid to help solve the problems. The teacher has to:

- a. identify their problems and categorise them (aural-oral or writing)
- b. list down each problem as it is detected
- c. determine whether it is personal or a learning problem
- d. plan and choose proper techniques and suitable teaching aids for remedial work

Remedial activities designed for slow-learners or students suffering from learning disadvantages can be effectively carried out after a problem is detected. One such problem of language interference in spelling, for example 'beg' in bahasa Malaysia and 'bag' in English. This problem may be overcome by giving the students spelling activities such as looking for little words in big words and word formation. Another problem has to do with wrong pronunciation leading to errors in writing

3.7 English Language Proficiency and Performance

Language use is the predominant means by which we make sense of our world (Gavalek & Raphael, 1996). One topic that has enormous impact on the opportunities to learn for second language learners is their actual level of English proficiency (Williams, 2001). According to research in language development, there is a continuum of development beginning with basic conversational skills and continuing academic language proficiency (Cummins, 1981).

Language proficiency is defined as mastering the structures of a language and possessing the language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) in order to use the language effectively. It also involves knowing the rules of the language and the ability to apply those rules in communication. As Gee (1996) pointed out, literacy cannot be defined as simply reading and writing. Literacy instruction also involves talking, interacting, valuing and believing.

According to Collier (1989), learners who have attained English proficiency at levels comparable to native English speakers were labelled by educators as learners with high

English proficiency (HEP). On the other hand, learners who have limited English proficiency (LEP) are associated with the linguistically and culturally diversified language minority status (Singh & Hernandez-Gantes, 1996). They have difficulty comprehending, speaking, reading or writing in English which will affect their performance in English language.

Therefore, understanding the relation of language proficiency to performance could be vital in providing meaningful insights in designing effective teaching and learning strategies especially for students with low levels of proficiency in the English language.

4.0 Conclusion

Studies have shown that usage plays a dominant role in predicting language performance. The degree of usage to the target language could be determined by the environment. Usage to a given language environment provides the learners opportunities to practise the target language. The literature review has also indicated that students who have vast usage to the English language will be more proficient, and those who are more proficient will perform better in the language. It is important to comprehend the relationship of usage to language proficiency, and hence to language performance, in order to provide meaningful knowledge in creating useful teaching and learning strategies especially for students with limited English proficiency.

It is also taken note that motivation is also important in second language learning, no matter which underlying motivation learners have, it cannot be disputed that motivation too plays a role in the acquisition of the language. The findings will hopefully provide new insights into the importance of usage in language proficiency and its performance.

It is our hope that this English Language Programme will be the first step for the students' better future.

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