

**USING KCE QUESTIONING MODEL IN ELICITING  
CRITICAL RESPONSES IN THE LITERATURE  
CLASSROOM**

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**UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA**

**2015**

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CLASSROOM**

**by**

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**Thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy**

**February 2015**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to all the people who have helped me in accomplishing my doctoral study. I owe my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Dr George Teoh Boon Sai for his constant and invaluable guidance during my PhD work in ensuring that I am on track throughout the study. I thank him for his superb supervision, the precious time he sacrificed for me, his kindness, his thorough reading and guidance in correcting my thesis. His immense knowledge, insightful comments and questions constantly challenged me to be a better thinker and writer as well as bringing the best out of me.

I would like to express my appreciation to Dr Lalitha Sinha who has been a great support in providing me valuable critics and ideas. To Professor Ghazali Mustaffa, thank you for your assistance and suggestions. I am most grateful to Professor Vincent Pang for introducing me to the academic world and for sparking my interest in research. Thank you for always being there and believing in me. You will always be my inspiration, mentor and idol.

I am indebted to my best friend and husband, Jonathan Karunagaren; for his patience and for giving me the freedom to complete my studies. To my dear children, Debrina Anne and Keagan Keith; thank you for your sacrifice and understanding. I would also like to thank my good friends Alice, Doreen, Jacquie, Anne, Kristina, Kwan Jing Pok, Gerald Chan and Beverly for their continuous support and motivation. To the teachers and students who served as the participants in this study, I appreciate your time, co-operation and understanding. Saving the best for the last, my upmost appreciation goes to God, the Almighty for all the blessings, the possibilities and the help I received throughout the study.

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**PENGGUNAAN MODEL PENYOALAN KCE BAGI MENGHASILKAN  
MAKLUMBALAS KRITIKAL DI DALAM KELAS-KELAS  
KESUSASTERAAN**

**ABSTRAK**

Kebolehan guru-guru dalam kaedah penyoalan untuk menggalakkan pemikiran maklumbalas kritis di dalam bidang pendidikan merupakan satu cabaran. Kajian ini mencadangkan satu model penyoalan yang dikenali sebagai Model Pengetahuan-Pembinaan-Pelaksanaan (Model KCE) dan bertujuan mengkaji keberkesanan model penyoalan ini dalam penghasilan maklumbalas kritis di dalam pengajaran komponen kesusasteraan Bahasa Inggeris di sekolah-sekolah menengah terpilih di Malaysia. Kajian ini melibatkan 13 orang guru dan 519 orang pelajar Tingkatan 4 dari 7 buah sekolah di negeri Pulau Pinang dan Sabah. Pelajar-pelajar Tingkatan 4 dari sekolah yang terpilih dibahagikan kepada kumpulan kawalan dan kumpulan rawatan. Guru dalam kumpulan rawatan menyoal menggunakan model penyoalan KCE yang dicadangkan. Guru-guru dalam kumpulan kawalan menggunakan kaedah penyoalan tradisional. Kajian yang berbentuk kuasi-experimental yang menggabungkan kuantitatif dan kualitatif telah dilaksanakan untuk mengumpul data kuantitatif dan kualitatif. Skor-skor maklumbalas kritis lisan dan bertulis para pelajar telah dianalisis menggunakan ujian t dan *non-parametric independent sample test*. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa pelajar dalam kumpulan rawatan menghasikan peningkatan maklumbalas kritikal lisan dan bertulis yang lebih signifikan daripada kumpulan rawatan. Data kualitatif daripada temuduga daripada para guru dan pelajar dalam kumpulan rawatan telah dianalisa menggunakan prinsip-prinsip *Grounded theory*. Hasil dapatan temuduga mendedahkan bahawa para guru dan pelajar kumpulan rawatan mempunyai persepsi

positif terhadap penggunaan model penyoalan KCE yang dicadangkan. Kajian ini telah memperkenalkan satu model penyoalan yang membantu para guru menghasilkan maklumbalas kritikal daripada para pelajar di dalam pengajaran komponen kesusasteraan Bahasa Inggeris di kelas-kelas pengajian Bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa kedua.

# **USING KCE QUESTIONING MODEL IN ELICITING CRITICAL RESPONSES IN THE LITERATURE CLASSROOMS**

## **ABSTRACT**

Teachers' ability in questioning to promote critical responses in the field of education is a challenge. This study proposes a questioning model known as the Knowledge-Construction-Execution model (KCE Model) and aims to investigate the effectiveness of the proposed model in eliciting critical responses in the teaching of the literature component in the selected secondary schools in Malaysia. This study involved 13 teachers and 519 Form 4 students from 7 schools in the states of Penang and Sabah. The form 4 students from the selected schools were divided into control and treatment groups. They were questioned using different questioning methods during the literature lessons. The teachers used the suggested KCE Model of questioning in the experimental groups. The teachers in the control groups used the traditional classroom questioning. A mixed method quasi-experimental research design was employed to obtain quantitative and qualitative data. The scores of the students' oral and written critical responses were statistically analysed using the independent t-test and the non-parametric independent sample test. The qualitative data from the interviews involving the teachers and students in the experimental groups was analysed using the principles of the Grounded theory. The findings of this study revealed that the students in the experimental groups produced a significantly higher number of oral and written critical responses than the students in the control groups. Thus, students in the experimental groups produced significantly more critical responses compared to those in the control groups. The findings of the interviews revealed that the teachers and students in the experimental groups had positive perceptions towards the suggested KCE Model of questioning. This study

has introduced a new model of questioning to help teachers elicit critical responses from their students in the teaching of literature component in ESL classrooms.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

### 1.0 Introduction

This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of a model of questioning (KCE Model) in eliciting critical responses in the teaching of the literature component in the English language subject in the selected Malaysian secondary schools. This chapter presents the background of the research, the statement of the problem, the objectives of the study, the research questions, the definition of terms, the significance of the study as well as the delimitations and limitations of the study.

### 1.1 Critical thinking and questioning in education

Critical thinking is an important issue in the teaching and learning environment of the 21<sup>st</sup> century for students to succeed in life and also as an evaluation in learning outcomes (Yang & Chou, 2008; Yang, 2012). This is due to the challenges and demands in the job market as well as the changing technologies which require a workforce that possesses high level thinking and is able to think out of the box.

As such, education systems are constantly trying to improve to produce students who are able to think critically. The educational community is already reconstructing standards, curricula and assessments to promote this enormous paradigm shift because it has become clear that the twenty-first century will increasingly require citizens who can think critically and creatively (The Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, 2007). Resnick (1987) asserts that in the new challenge to

develop educational programmes, it should be assumed that all individuals, not just elites can become competent thinkers.

The importance of thought development has long existed in the field of education when Osborne (1932, p. 402) stated that “the development of thought power is one of the major aims of education”. Developing critical thinking has become an aim of various levels of education and has sparked the interest of administrators, educators and teachers (McPeck, 1981; Brown, 2004; Paul, 2005; Rfaner, 2006, Seker & Komur, 2008). As a result, teachers are expected and challenged to produce critical thinkers among their students. This is due to the fact that teachers’ knowledge, practice and beliefs are responsible in determining the success of the educational endeavours.

## **1.2 Background of the study**

Critical thinking refers to a particular way of thinking that is not done in isolation. Critical thinking is always related to something or a subject or field and it always manifest itself in connection with some identifiable activity or subject area McPeck (1981, p. 5). He asserts that;

In isolation from a particular subject, the phrase critical thinking neither refers to nor denotes any particular skill...it makes no sense to talk about critical thinking as a distinct subject and that it therefore cannot profitably be taught as such.

Thus, in a classroom environment, critical thinking should not be taught as a subject by itself. For example, students can be taught to think critically in Science, Mathematics, History or any other subjects. It is important to note that the ability to think critically in a subject does not ensure critical thinking in other subjects. For this

reason each teacher is responsible for instilling critical thinking in the subject which he or she teaches.

The type of responses, thinking and behaviours produced by learners are closely linked to the questions asked by the teachers. Hollingsworth (1982) believes that a teacher can raise the level of critical thinking and help learners in reflective thoughts, processes with the proper use of questions. Students' learning, thinking, participation and their level of engagement depend on the kind of questions teachers formulate and use in the classroom (Wilén, 1991). Harper and Row (1966) posit that with the help of questions, teachers can lead students into all kinds of thinking through careful use of questions, problems and projects. This stresses the strong link between questions and the thinking abilities of learners. So, it is important that teachers use questions as tools to provoke cognitive growth since a question acts as a bridge between knowledge and the learner's level of thought.

Elder and Paul (2003, p. 3) assert that "Questions define tasks and express problems and issues. Answers on the other, often signal a full stop in thoughts". As such, the achievement of the thinking process evoked by questions should not be restricted or evaluated based on the responses or answers alone. A question is just the beginning which opens a door to the thinking path while answers are the end of a cognitive process. The success of asking questions should not be assessed solely on the response obtained in the end of a question but the focus should be more on the thought process that took place. Answers should not be the sole yardstick to assess the success of questioning.

The diversity of questions is overwhelming in its features, functions and roles. Questions can be divided into various levels and categories depending on the various taxonomies and models of questioning (Bloom, 1956; Sanders, 1996;

Hyman, 1979; Wilen, 1991; Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). In relation to critical thinking, questions are best explained as productive and reproductive types. Productive questions are regarded as high-order questions as they enable students to analyse, synthesise and evaluate. On the contrary, reproductive questions are said to be low-order questions as they prompt students to recall, imitate and apply information on knowledge learnt. To develop critical thinking, productive questions which promote high-order thinking are required.

In the teaching of English as a Second Language (ESL), critical thinking is also emphasised. Asking the right kinds of questions plays a vital role in the teaching and learning process in the teaching of a second language (Sanders, 1966; Gall, 1970; Wilen, 1991). Critical thinking is closely associated with language proficiency as Muhammad Kamarul Kabilan (2000) posits that to become proficient in a language, learners need to use creative and critical thinking using the target language. Paulo Freire (1970 & 1973) proposed that the engagement of teachers and students through the Pedagogy of Question can elicit critical thinking among critical language learners. Language teachers need to have positive beliefs and attitudes towards the role of questioning in eliciting and developing cognitive development.

Besides teachers' questions, students' responses play vital roles in the second language teaching in order to promote critical thinking. Wilen (1994) explains that teachers dominate teacher-initiation, student-response and teacher-evaluation interaction cycle with their questions while students dominate with their answers. The questions asked by the teachers act as tools to produce critical thinking while the responses from learners are the product and evidence of critical thinking prevailing in the classroom instruction. Critical responses of the learners in oral or written forms can be regarded as products of high-order thinking.

Redfield and Rosseau (1981) and Blosser (1990) state that questions which do not have definite answers are more suitable than the over-used memory level and factual-based questions in eliciting critical responses. Questions with various possible answers are the best types in classroom instruction to enhance active participation, freedom in thinking, personal evaluation and judgement by the learners themselves. Thus, it is vital that the teachers ask the right type of questions in the classroom to promote critical thinking in ESL classrooms.

Teachers are expected to possess knowledge on questioning to be skilful in questioning. Wilen (1994) points out that in using questions as instructional conversations in classrooms, information on types of questions, questioning or non-questioning techniques that could be employed to increase the students' ability to think and get involved are needed. Educators need to be wise in choosing the right type of questioning models when constructing questions. Questions constructed based on a suitable taxonomy or model can serve as effective classroom instructions. There are a wide variety of questioning models available with different features and function for teachers to choose from. The choice of the question taxonomy depends very much on the subject being taught and the purpose of questioning. Some of the existing questioning models that are capable of eliciting high-order thinking among learners in ESL classrooms are Socratic Questioning, Questioning and Understanding to Improve Learning and Thinking (QUILT), Cognitive and Affective Model (Cogaff), Bloom's Taxonomy and the Question Circle.

Besides playing the role of knowledge transmitters, teachers have to be educators who stimulate higher cognitive abilities among learners by using the appropriate questions. The role of questioning must be fully used and not undermined by teachers. Teachers need to acknowledge the importance of asking the

right type of questions in classrooms and be responsible for their acts of questioning. They need to improve and master the skills of questioning and end the one-way interaction between the teacher and the learner. The act of limiting questions mainly to low-order level questions must be replaced with questions of various types, especially the high-order type in order to promote and elicit critical thinking of their students.

Teachers have to be resourceful, creative and willing to be exposed to other means of questioning. First, teachers need to ask themselves the purpose of questioning their students. Teachers need to fully comprehend the purpose of questioning at any stage of a lesson; be it before, during and after a lesson. The purpose of questioning needs to be in line with the objectives of the subject per say, the educational goals and not to forget the aims and objectives of the education system.

In view of this, the present study aims to investigate the elicitation of critical responses in the teaching of literature component in the Second Language Acquisition (SLA) context in Malaysia. The status of English language as the medium of instruction during the colonial period continued even after the independence. In 1970's, the Malay language was used as the medium of instruction in national schools and the gradual phasing out of English language as the medium of instruction began. However, the economic development, globalisation and the information technology era have reasserted the significance of English language in Malaysia. The importance of this second language has been revived and measures to re-establish English has culminated in new policies in the teaching of English language in schools (Asmah Haji Omar, 1992). English is seen as a tool to gain knowledge; particularly in the field of science and technology (Pillay, 1995). The

1996 Education Act further reaffirmed the role of English. Most recent is the *Memertabatkan Bahasa Melayu Memperkukuhkan Bahasa Inggeris* (MBMMBI) policy that aims to strengthen the English language so that this international language could be mastered by Malaysians. However, Nunan (2003) concluded from his survey that the deteriorating standards of English among Malaysians will hinder the aspiration that Malaysia be declared a developed nation by 2020. Hence, there is a need to reflect on the actual role of English in Malaysia. In primary schools 210 to 240 minutes is allocated for learning English in primary schools with literacy skills as focus. Other measures are the implementation of Communicative Language Teaching Approach (CLT), the teaching of Mathematics and Science in English (ETeMs) and literacy expressed in the ELT Malaysia's syllabus which includes all language skills. Teaching requires knowledge of students, knowledge of hopes, dreams, aspirations, skills, challenges, interests, preferences, intelligence and values they bring to the classroom.

The new policy in the year 2000 was the introduction and inclusion of literature as a tested component in the Malaysian secondary school ESL syllabus (Ganakumaran, 2002). The Education Ministry of Malaysia introduced the literature component through the study of prescribed texts to enhance students' proficiency in the English language, contribute to their personal development and character building as well as broaden students' outlook through reading about other cultures and world views (Curriculum Development Centre, 1999). To further understand the aims of introducing the literature component into the English language syllabus which is learner oriented, we need to refer to another of its objectives:

Students should be able to give their personal response to texts, show purpose, reflect upon and draw valuable moral lessons from the issues and concerns of life as portrayed in the literary works

and relate them to one's life and understand and appreciate other cultures

(The Ministry of Education Document, 2000)

With reference to the aims of literature teaching in Malaysia, students are expected to be assertive learners in making judgement, evaluation and reasoning based on their personal experiences and world view. Learners who are able to portray such abilities demonstrate critical thinking skills. Learning is no longer restricted to knowledge from the texts or teachers' views alone. One of the aims of the Malaysian education system is "to develop and enhance students' intellectual capacity with respect to rational, critical and creative thinking" (The Curriculum Development Centre, 1989: p. 2)

Literature is an authentic material, offering bountiful materials of linguistic, cultural, social and personal enrichment. Lee (1991) explains that literature offers not only linguistic benefits but also thought development when introduced into the ESL context. This makes it a suitable field for developing critical thinking among its learners. The wealth of information in literature offers opportunity for its learners to use it as an element to develop critical thinking in the language and literary field. Maley (1989) and McRae (1991) have listed two fundamental considerations in the teaching of literature –the study of literature (literary critical) and the use of literature as a resource (text-centred approach). In the latter, McRae (1991) distinguished the teaching of literature as small 'l' which is currently known as the literature component in the English Language subject in secondary schools in Malaysia. Literature as a resource is viewed as a mean, tool or medium to develop language, cultural awareness and critical and creative thinking.

The use of questions as a classroom instruction in a literature lesson can be manipulated to achieve the intended goals if teachers ask high-order questions and not merely text-based ones. As answering critical questions requires not only the knowledge of the text but also the students' experiences, opinions, ideas and perceptions, they learn to develop critical thinking when answering such questions. Such high-order questions can develop the personal development and character building of the learners. On the contrary, low-order questions in a literature lesson will usually produce regurgitation of information without much room for thinking especially critical thinking.

Teacher questioning obviously plays an indispensable role in fulfilling and achieving the aims of the introduction of the literature component into ESL in Malaysia. Asking good questions and using appropriate questioning skills may be able to help students respond, reflect upon and draw valuable lessons from the issues learnt from the texts.

The teaching of literature does not rely on rigid and fixed answers but more on the questions. A teacher needs to raise and induce questions which test the knowledge beyond the surface meaning of the text and with a lot of possibilities. Literature conceived of in this way contributes to both the process and purpose of language learning as well as all learning (Widdowson, 1983). The text or information from the classroom instruction is important and acts as foundation to the critical thinking process. In the teaching of critical thinking in literature, baseless and ridiculous ideas cannot be simply accepted as critical thinking since learners need to support their views or evaluation with evidences. Widdowson (1983) points out that literature should be approached from a problem-solving attitude and students learn not to say anything without evidence from the text. This also ingrains into them the

fundamental principles that nothing is to be taken for granted and opinions need to be backed by evidence or reasoning.

### **1.3 Statement of the problem**

Teacher questioning in education is a well-researched area. Despite being one of the most used classroom instructions, teachers face many challenges in mastering the skills of questioning. The findings of the following researches confirm that questioning is a challenging task especially in asking productive questions.

The typical teacher asks between 300 and 400 questions per day (Leven & Long, 1981). Unfortunately, of the high number of questions asked, teachers often emphasise in the asking of a particular type of question only which is the low-order type. Such emphasis on reproductive questions gives little room to high level thinking process. Galton, Simon and Croll (1980) reported that only 12 % of the teaching time was devoted to questions. During the questioning session, 29 % of the questions were devoted to factual questions, 23 % to questions on ideas while more than 47 % of the questions were on tasks provisions and routine management. When low-order questions are posed, they may hamper the development of critical thinking. Perhaps this explains why teachers are able to ask questions instantly based on their instincts without preparing them. This rapid fire and instant questioning method which creates little opportunity for thinking, certainly does not pose as a skill among teachers but more of a harm or threat to the learners.

A research in the recent decade, from 2001 to 2007 carried out on 98 teachers in thirteen schools in New York and New Jersey (Tienken, Goldberg & DiRocco, 2010) sadly revealed that once again not much has changed after almost a century in the area of teacher questioning. From the 2363 questions observed, 76 % remained to

be reproductive questions which are also known as low-order type. These fact-recalling questions are aimed to instil basic knowledge of what is learnt and nothing more. The low-order and facts-based questions are definitely easy to create, ask and administer by teachers. Students find such questions easy to answer with little effort as they required little thinking or not at all. Most recently, Dumteeb's (2009) research in Thailand as well as Hafiz and Wilayat's research (2011) in Pakistan reported that their teacher respondents also depended on low-order questions when questioning.

A varied selection of questions especially high order questions would serve a more fruitful benefit in cognitive development. Unfortunately, teachers' dependency and preference on low-order questions to high-order questions calls for concern and reasons. Some possible reasons are: lack of question taxonomy knowledge, lack of preparation, ineffective questioning techniques, rapid questioning method or insufficient wait-time. The lack of knowledge on the concept of critical thinking can hamper teachers from being able to create questions eliciting critical thinking. There is a serious gap between teachers knowing to ask high-order questions and actually asking them (Danielson, 2007; Groenke, 2008; Mazzola, 2009; Kim, 2010).

The inclusion of literature component in the English Language Teaching (ELT) policy was announced in 1999 (KPN/JPNS 2000). The literature component has been taught in the Malaysian context for exactly a decade now and the second cycle of literature materials has been introduced in 2010 in Form 1 and Form 4. A number of researches in relation to the literature component have confirmed some problems that continue to haunt it. One of such problem areas is teacher questioning.

Gurnam Kaur Sidhu (2003) reports that the students in her research expressed dislike towards literature lessons using words like 'sad', 'not interested', 'bored', 'a

drag', 'feel terrible', 'hate' and 'lack of fun'. The advanced learners shared that the activities were not challenging and the lessons were dull and boring due to the written work and hand-outs. When literature lessons are teacher-centred, expressions of thoughts and feelings among learners in the literature classes might be hampered

To make literature lessons enjoyable and alive, pupils need to be involved in the text. The learners must be asked and motivated to express their ideas and views in their own understanding and self-orientated meaning of text. Efferent reading occurs when a referential text conveys factual information to the readers while aesthetic reading takes place when a representational text requires the readers to interact emotionally and experientially with the text (Maley, 2001). Teachers must avoid asking factual questions regarding the text and treat it like another comprehension material. Questions of higher order with appreciation of the subject matters pertaining to outside world and cultures differences or moral values can be a good start to make learners think critically.

Suthagar Narasuman (2007) reviews an analysis of the students' perspectives on the literature programme. The analysis revealed that the teachers' favourite and most frequently used activities are reading aloud and comprehension questions. McRae (1991) argues the suitability and appropriateness of reading aloud activity. Teachers seem to be comfortable with their dominant role in providing explanations and asking fact-based questions which require very little effort in thinking. Such dormant activities and questions deny learners to actively interact with the text, the teacher and other learners. Teachers should adopt approaches that involve active involvement of students. Teachers should promote active interaction by asking questions which help learners to discover new meanings to the text. Asking high-order questions can encourage students to discover their own ideas as such questions

give students opportunities to explore, argue and sharpen their critical thinking skills (Christenbury & Kelly, 1983).

The inability of students to respond critically during literature lessons can create an inconducive learning environment for cognitive development. Teachers must be acquainted with a variety of techniques and activities to develop and stimulate students' interest and knowledge of literature (Whitehead, 1968). Three other researchers (Diana Hwang, 2005; Suriya Kumar, 2004 & Siti Norliana, 2003) share the same findings regarding teacher's dominant roles in literature classroom. Teachers merely ask questions at comprehension level and text-oriented questions in the literature lessons. A paradigm shift is crucially necessary in the Malaysian literature classrooms where the trend should be student-centred and student exploration on the underlying meanings of literature materials. Teachers need to learn or be trained to ask the right questions to make learners think critically about what is being taught. Teachers as educators need to realise the importance of asking quality questions to get the thinking process going among their students.

The Curriculum Development Centre in Malaysia has strived to include critical thinking skills in all subjects through the component of Creative and Critical Thinking which encompasses creative thinking, problem solving, decision making and critical thinking. Nurliza Othman (2002) in her research attempted to investigate teachers' understanding of critical thinking and its influence in their teaching practice. This study revealed that the teachers had some ideas and understanding of what critical thinking is but were unable to promote this high order thinking. Wolf (1987) points out that when a teacher is asked on how he or she teaches, the common answer received is "by asking questions". When asked about the use of questions and types of questions they use, teachers have a hard time replying. This revelation

sheds some light to why teachers keep asking non-critical questions. Their ignorance on the meaning of critical thinking poses great harm to their inability to produce critical thinking thoughts among their learners in the literature classrooms. She recommended that teachers are exposed to the methods of incorporating critical thinking skills in their teaching and guidelines on questioning techniques.

Habsah Hussin (2006) in her research on the current classroom practices in Malaysia confirms that over the years not much has improved in the field of teacher questioning. Habsah reported that generally teachers depended heavily on asking low-level, closed and convergent questions which prohibit students' response and cognitive elevation. From the sixteen observation sessions on three teachers, she found that the teachers asked 782 questions and only 67.3 % are academic based. From these academic questions, majority or 87 % were low-level while 13 % were high-level. Even these high-level questions were strictly based on the text where answers are obtained directly from the textbook. The reasons for such findings are: questions were designed to fulfil the need of examination; teachers lacked proper training in questioning and possessed little exposure to literature teaching.

Close-ended questions are unable to stimulate critical thinking but teachers seem to ignore this fact and continue with a rather unproductive method of questioning. On the contrary, open questions ask for new information, the solution to complex problems, the development of possibilities, the expression of opinion (Kaiser, 1979). Teachers still pose questions in the same way as always, mostly low-level, despite the improvement in teaching materials, curricula and methods of teaching (Nunan & Lamb, 1996). Thus, this explains the reason for this study and hopefully the KCE model of questioning is able to shed some light to help teachers in

producing questions and techniques which elicit critical responses from students in the literature component teaching though it probably marks a small contribution.

#### **1.4 Objectives of the study**

This study attempts to investigate the effectiveness of the KCE model of questioning in eliciting critical oral and written responses among the learners in the literature classrooms. The objectives of this study are:

- a) To examine the effectiveness of the oral questions constructed from the KCE model in:
  - i) helping students elicit critical oral responses in the teaching of the selected poem
  - ii) helping students elicit critical written responses in the written work in the teaching of selected poem
- b) To examine the effectiveness of the written questions constructed using the KCE model in eliciting critical written responses among the students in the teaching of selected poem
- c) To determine the effectiveness of the oral and written questions constructed from the KCE model in eliciting critical written responses in the teaching of other genres like short story and play.
- d) To investigate the teachers' perceptions regarding questioning and questions using the KCE model of questioning in eliciting critical responses from the learners in their literature classes.
- e) To investigate the students' perceptions about the questions asked in the teaching of literature component (during the research).

## **1.5 Research questions**

To achieve the aims of this study, six research questions have been formed as a frame for this investigation. The research questions are:

Research question 1:

Is there a significant difference in the number of critical oral responses received from the students in the control groups as compared to the number of critical oral responses received from the students in the experimental groups in the teaching of the selected poem?

Research question 2 (a):

Is there a significant difference in the written post-test scores of the students in the control group as compared to the students in the experimental group in each of the schools in the teaching of the selected poem?

Research question 2 (b):

Is there a significant difference in the written post-test scores of the students in the control groups of all the schools as compared to the written post-test scores of the students in the experimental groups of all the schools in the teaching of the selected poem?

Research question 3 (a):

Is there a significant difference in the written pre-test scores as compared to the post-test scores of the students in the experimental group in each of the schools in the teaching of the selected poem?

Research question 3 (b):

Is there a significant difference in the written pre-test scores as compared to the post-test scores of the students in the experimental groups of all the schools in the teaching of the selected poem?

Research question 4:

Is there a significant difference in the experimental group students' post-test scores for poem, short story and play?

Research question 5:

What are the perceptions of the teachers in the experimental groups regarding questioning in the teaching of the literature component and the proposed KCE model of questioning in eliciting critical responses from the students?

Research question 6:

What are the perceptions of the students in the experimental group regarding the questions asked by their teachers during the study?

The following null hypotheses have been formulated from the research questions 1-4.

Null hypotheses

Research question 1:

H<sub>o1</sub> There is no significant difference in the number of critical oral responses received from the students in the control groups as compared to number of critical oral responses received from the students in the experimental groups in the teaching of the selected poem.

Research question 2 (a):

H<sub>o2a</sub> There is no significant difference in the written post-test scores of the students in the control group as compared to the written post-test scores of the students in the experimental group in each of the schools in the teaching of selected poem.

Research question 2 (b):

H<sub>o2b</sub> There is no significant difference in the written post-test scores of the students in the control groups of all the schools as compared to the written post-test scores of the students in the experimental groups of all the schools in the teaching of the selected poem.

Research question 3 (a):

H<sub>o3a</sub> There is no significant difference in the written pre-test scores as compared to the post-test scores of the students in the experimental group in each of the schools in the teaching of the selected poem.

Research question 3 (b):

H<sub>A3b</sub> There is a significant difference in the written pre-test scores as compared to the post-test scores of the students in the experimental groups of all the schools in the teaching of the selected poem.

Research question 4:

H<sub>o4</sub> There is no significant difference in the experimental group students' post-test scores for poem, short story and play.

## **1.6 Definition of terms**

This section provides some of the operational definitions of the key words and concepts according to their usage in the study.

### **English as Second Language (ESL)**

It is an acronym or abbreviation which stands for English as second language. It refers to the use or study of English by speakers with different native languages. It refers to second language acquisition where language plays institutional and social role in a community among members who speak other language as mother tongue (Ellis, 2003). The subject of English is taught by teachers who help non-English native speakers to develop listening, writing, reading and speaking skills.

## Question

It refers to an interrogation sentence, expression or clause asked in order to evaluate knowledge. It is a sentence addressed at someone in order to get a response or reply. A question acts as a functional or speech act label and an utterance that seeks information (Wu, 1993).

## Questioning

Questioning is a process of forming, asking and wielding questions to develop answers and insight. It also refers to the act of using certain skills, methods, techniques or mechanisms to complete the process of inquiry (Cunningham, 1977; Som & Mohd Dahlan, 1998). It is one of the best ways to express humanistic attitudes involving respect for (pupils') ideas, freedom of choice, self-expression and honesty. Humanistic attitudes include the ability to understand each other more clearly through interpersonal communication. They are fundamental to a successful communication.

## Traditional classroom questioning

In the traditional classroom, knowledge is static, inert, and independent of learners. Learning involves listening to the teacher, reading, and studying in order to recall information on demand. Teachers use classroom questions primarily to evaluate students' ability to remember information (Wolf, 1987). The teacher seeks to transfer thoughts and meanings to the passive student leaving little room for student-initiated questions, independent thought or interaction between students (VAST, 1998).

## Critical Thinking

It refers to the use of cognitive skills and strategies in order to produce desirable outcomes (Halpern, 1996). It is high-order thinking which is sought after by various educational fields and also nation building. The traits of critical thinking are development of logical reasoning (Stahl & Stahl, 1991), formation of logical inference (Simon & Kaplan, 1989), reflective thinking (Ennis, 1991), ability of making judgement systematic and purposeful thinking (Paul, 1995). In this study, critical thinking is defined as an active thought process in relation to a subject being learnt which involves skills of problem solving, decision making, conceptualizing, recalling, interpretation, application, synthesis, evaluation, reasoning and reasoned judgements (McPeck, 1981; Scriven & Paul, 1987).

#### Critical Response

Gall (1970) acknowledged that one of the unsolved problems in teacher questioning is the limited knowledge of what a good response is. Unlike low-order questions or responses which require the simple criterion of correctness, answers to high-order questions need to have these criteria to measure its quality: a) complexity of the response; (b) use of data to justify or defend the response; (c) plausibility of the response; (d) originality of the response; (e) clarity of the phrasing; and (f) the extent to which the response is directed at the question actually asked. It refers to an answer or response to a question which features high-order cognitive process. It goes beyond the known, surface or learned knowledge and involves an analysis of ideas. The critical response is the outcome of the interaction of ideas which are sourced from the personal experience and of those related to what is being learnt. This type of response has elements of critical thinking which involves high level cognitive process. Critical response is personal and allows multiple possible answers which are justified.

## English Literature Component

It is the teaching of literary genres or known as the teaching of small “l” as part of the English language syllabus in the secondary schools in Malaysian curriculum. It refers to the use of literature as a resource of teaching in ESL context unlike the big “L” which is the study of literature per say (McRae, 1991). In 2000, the inclusion of the literature component in the English language subject included poem, short stories and novel (The Ministry of Education, 2000). In the second cycle, a new genre was added, the play as addition to the three other literary work (The Ministry of Education, 2010).

## High-order questions

These are questions which require answers beyond the simple recalling of information and involve a more complex thinking process. According to Bloom’s Taxonomy (1956), high-order questions are questions that require learners to analyse, synthesise and evaluate. The integration of Krathwohl’s Affective Taxonomy with Bloom’s Taxonomy in the Cognitive-Affective Taxonomy (Cogaff ) by Ghazali Mustapha (1997) has created another high-order level thinking, affective level, the highest among all the seven levels. Christenbury and Kelly’s Question Circle model evaluates questions using three domains of cognition, presented in the three intersecting circles - the knowledge of text (The Matter), the personal experience (Personal Reality) and the world knowledge (External Reality). According to Christenbury and Kelly (1983), high-order questions are developed from areas where circles overlap. The overlapping areas are known as shaded (where two circles overlap) and dense (where three circles overlap). This will be further discussed in Chapter 2.

### Low-order questions

These are questions which produce simple answers and involve less thinking. Such questions depend on mere recalling or memorization of facts. From Bloom's Taxonomy (1956), questions at knowledge, comprehension and application levels are considered as low-order questions. According to Christenbury and Kelly (1983), in the Question Circle Model, questions asked from any single circle are low-order types.

### Open questions

Questions that require more than one word answer and designed to encourage a fully meaningful answer. They anticipate a wide range of acceptable answers (Blosser, 1990).

### Divergent questions

Questions with no specific answer but rather exercises one's ability to think broadly about a certain topic. They allow exploration of different avenues of answers and creation of variation of answers.

## **1.7 Significance of the study**

This study has the potential of contributing to the field of education, particularly in a very important classroom instruction namely teacher questioning. It proposes a model of questioning which aims to enhance students' critical thinking as shown in their critical responses during the literature component classes of our ESL classrooms.

The KCE model of questioning was used to construct high-order questions that were used by the teachers in the experimental groups to elicit critical responses from their students. Besides that, the KCE model of questioning also exposed the

teachers to the techniques of questioning. Questioning through the KCE model aims to create a learning environment which promotes critical responses to develop critical thinking among learners. Most importantly, this study attempts to help teachers achieve the objectives of literature teaching.

In this study, the construction of high-order questions integrates two models of questioning, namely Cognitive-Affective (Cogaff) Taxonomy (Ghazali, 1997) and the Question Circle Model (Christenbury & Kelly, 1983). Consideration is also given to the other related literary theories and productive questions in forming the questions. The adaptation theory is also adopted to execute or administer the questions effectively. All the elements are tested to determine their usefulness and potential in enhancing critical thinking among the learners of the literature component. Hopefully, new windows on the theories and their usefulness in the area of questioning will be opened. The study shed some more light on the theories and the area of questioning.

This study has the potential to investigate the relationship between types of question and the cognitive levels of students. The study depicts how questions from different cognitive level produce different types of thinking among students. Besides that, the study also aims to justify the types of questions that promote critical responses and critical thinking. This research will also reveal the importance of questioning techniques in the practice of questioning by teachers to elicit critical responses.

This study is able to instil awareness among the teachers on the importance of asking the right types of questions especially in fostering critical responses in the teaching of literature. With this knowledge, the teachers will be aware of their responsibilities in using questions in a classroom purposefully. The outcome of this