



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

**An exploration of social, cultural and contextual elements surrounding
struggling readers of English as a second language in the Malaysian
classroom.**

Siti Soraya Lin binti Abdullah Kamal

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Sheffield
Faculty of Social Sciences
School of Education

July 2020

Abstract

Research Topic:

An exploration of social, cultural and contextual elements surrounding struggling readers of English as a second language in the Malaysian classroom.

The main aim of this study is to contribute to the body of knowledge pertaining to the systems surrounding Malaysian primary school students who are struggling with their English language reading. Building on cognitive and sociocultural perspectives of reading, as well as Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of human development, I offer a rich and holistic understanding of the dynamic interactions among children, parents and teachers that influence the students' learning experiences and development. First, I examine the ways in which their teacher works with the struggling readers in the classroom. Second, I identify the ways participating parents work with their children at home and, third, I gather struggling readers' own perspectives on their experience and participation in ESL reading. These perspectives are put together in order to reconstruct the dynamics within the main ecological systems surrounding the children, delivering insights for theory, policy and practice.

This was a qualitative study conducted in 2017, incorporating six ESL struggling readers studying in Year 1 of a suburban primary school, seven parents and one English teacher. I primarily employed interviews, classroom observations and document collection as research methods to garner information from the participants. Data analysis was carried out inductively, encompassing a co-construction of meaning between the participants' expressions and my own interpretation as a researcher.

The study findings delineated the ways the teacher and parents worked with the struggling readers, as well as the students' own perceptions of their ESL learning experience, highlighting their respective practices and challenges. Through this rich holistic understanding of the total learning environment of these struggling readers the research identifies a series of disconnections between the parents and the teacher and the teacher and the students. Four main areas of disconnect, among others, were:

- (1) the teacher and parents having different views about homework, with the former assuming minimising homework in the belief that parents could not engage with it, and the latter seeing more homework as central to their ability to support their children with English reading.
- (2) Lack of communication between the teacher / school and parents, with each party having little insight into the needs and circumstances of the other.
- (3) Differences in instructional techniques and utilisation of different kinds of learning resources between home and school environments.
- (4) Use of instructional techniques in the classroom that do not engage struggling readers.

The above issues imply the need for wide-ranging reform of educational policies and practice so as to provide better support for struggling readers across the school and home environments. The findings of this study now need to be verified across a wider sample within Malaysia

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT.....	I
Acknowledgments.....	XI
List of Tables	XII
List of Figures	XIII
Abbreviations	XIV
Declaration.....	XIII
1 CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Background of the Study	1
1.3 Rationale of the Study.....	4
1.4 Research Aim.....	7
1.5 Research Questions.....	8
1.6 Significance of the Study	8
1.7 Context of the Study	9
1.7.1 General Facts about Malaysia.....	10
1.7.2 Education in Malaysia.....	12
1.7.2.1 English Language Teaching.....	12
1.7.2.2 Assessment.....	16
1.8 Terminology.....	19
1.9 Overview of the Thesis	20
1.10 Conclusion	21
2 CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW	22
2.1 Introduction.....	22
2.2 Theoretical Framework.....	22
2.2.1 Introduction.....	22
2.2.2 Cognitive Perspectives of Reading	23
2.2.2.1 Bottom-up Reading Model	24

2.2.2.2	Top-down Reading Model	25
2.2.2.3	Interactive Reading Model.....	26
2.2.2.4	Schema Theory	27
2.2.3	Sociocultural Perspectives of Reading.....	28
2.2.3.1	Social Constructivist Theory.....	29
2.2.4	Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Model of Human Development	32
2.2.5	Conclusion	39
2.3	Teacher-related Literature Review	39
2.3.1	Teaching Young Struggling ESL Learners.....	40
2.3.1.1	Explicit Teaching	40
2.3.1.2	Phonemic Awareness and decoding.....	41
2.3.1.3	Vocabulary Development	41
2.3.1.4	Interactive Teaching.....	42
2.3.1.5	Promotion of English Language	43
2.3.1.6	Small Group Interactions	44
2.3.2	Reading Approaches	44
2.3.2.1	Phonics.....	44
2.3.2.2	Look-and-Say Method	46
2.3.3	English Language Teaching Method	47
2.3.3.1	Grammar Translation Method.....	48
2.3.3.2	Direct Method	50
2.3.3.3	Audio-Lingual Method	51
2.3.3.4	Communicative Language Teaching	54
2.3.4	Uses of Instructional Materials	55
2.3.4.1	Media	56
2.3.4.2	Textbooks.....	58
2.3.4.3	High Frequency Word Lists.....	59
2.3.4.4	Reading Text.....	60
2.3.5	Challenges Facing the Teacher	61
2.3.5.1	Institutional Challenges	61
2.3.5.2	Instructional Challenges.....	63

2.3.5.3	Socio-economic Challenges	64
2.3.6	Conclusion	65
2.4	Parent-related Literature Review	66
2.4.1	Components of Parental Involvement.....	66
2.4.2	The Influence of Cultural, Individual and Contextual Elements on the Parental Roles in Children’s Learning	70
2.4.3	Challenges Facing the Parents	83
2.4.4	Conclusion	87
2.5	Students’ Perceptions.....	87
2.5.1	The Importance of Exploring ESL Struggling Readers’ Perceptions.....	87
2.5.2	Perceptions of Students with Regards to Aspects Related to ESL Learning.....	90
2.5.2.1	Perceptions of ESL	90
2.5.2.2	Classroom Learning Experiences	94
2.5.2.3	Challenges Facing the Students	95
2.5.3	Conclusion	99
3	CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY	100
3.1	Introduction.....	100
3.2	Research Paradigm.....	100
3.2.1	Ontology	101
3.2.2	Epistemology	102
3.2.3	Methodology.....	103
3.3	Positionality	104
3.4	Research Design.....	104
3.5	Selection of the Research Site and the Study Participants.....	105
3.5.1	Research site	105
3.5.2	The Study Participants	106
3.5.3	Recruitment process.....	107
3.6	Data Collection Methods	110
3.6.1	Interviews.....	111
3.6.1.1	Interviews with the ESL teacher and the parent participants.....	111
3.6.1.2	Interviews with the struggling readers	113

3.6.2	Observations	115
3.6.3	Document Collection	120
3.6.4	Relationship between Research Questions and Research Methods	121
3.7	Pilot Study.....	123
3.8	Ethical Considerations	124
3.8.1	Seeking Permission.....	124
3.8.2	Informed consent	125
3.8.3	Confidentiality and Anonymity	126
3.8.4	Avoiding harm	126
3.8.5	Power relations.....	127
3.8.6	Ethical Considerations in Research with Children	127
3.9	Trustworthiness.....	129
3.9.1	Credibility	129
3.9.2	Transferability.....	130
3.9.3	Dependability.....	131
3.9.4	Confirmability.....	132
3.10	Data Analysis	133
3.10.1	Transcribing	134
3.10.2	Inductive vs Deductive Approach.....	136
3.10.3	Analysing data	137
3.10.3.1	Analysis of drawings.....	140
3.10.4	Translation	140
3.10.5	Conclusion	142
4	CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS.....	143
4.1	Introduction.....	143
4.2	Findings in Relation to the Teacher	145
4.2.1	Classroom Environment.....	146
4.2.2	Mrs. Leena’s Background.....	146
4.2.3	Mrs. Leena’s Involvement with the Struggling Readers’ Learning.....	147
4.2.3.1	Prominent Instructional Methods Applied by the teacher	147
4.2.3.2	Instructional Materials Utilised in the lessons	163

4.2.4	Challenges Affecting the Teaching of Reading	170
4.2.4.1	Managing Students' Behaviour in the Struggling Reader's Classroom	170
4.2.4.2	Perceived Parental Attitude: Low Involvement and Cooperation	171
4.2.4.3	Quality of Support and Cooperation from the District Education Office	173
4.2.4.4	Lack of Resources and Lack of Time	173
4.2.4.5	Lack of Training in Phonics Instruction	174
4.2.4.6	The Assessment System.....	174
4.2.4.7	Lack Personnel and Large Class Sizes.....	175
4.2.5	Summary of the findings related to the teacher	175
4.3	Findings in Relation to the Parents	179
4.3.1	Mrs. Ela.....	180
4.3.1.1	Mrs. Ela's Background	180
4.3.1.2	Mrs. Ela's Involvement with Ali's Learning	180
4.3.1.3	Challenges Facing Mrs. Ela	182
4.3.2	Mrs. Amina	183
4.3.2.1	Mrs. Amina's Background.....	183
4.3.2.2	Mrs. Amina's Involvement with Fairul's Learning	184
4.3.2.3	Challenges Facing Mrs. Amina.....	185
4.3.3	Mrs. Nina	186
4.3.3.1	Mrs. Nina's Background.....	186
4.3.3.2	Mrs. Nina's Involvement with Imran's Learning	187
4.3.3.3	Challenges Facing Mrs. Nina.....	189
4.3.4	Mrs. Sofia.....	191
4.3.4.1	Mrs. Sofia's Background	191
4.3.4.2	Mrs. Sofia's Involvement with Qila's Learning	191
4.3.4.3	Challenges Facing Mrs. Sofia.....	193
4.3.5	Mrs. Su.....	194
4.3.5.1	Mrs. Su's Background	194
4.3.5.2	Mrs. Su's Involvement with Tairah's Learning.....	194
4.3.5.3	Challenges Facing Mrs. Su	196
4.3.6	Mrs. Mina and Ira	197

4.3.6.1	Mrs. Mina and Ira’s Background	197
4.3.6.2	Mrs. Mina and Ira’s Involvement with Roni’s Learning	198
4.3.6.3	Challenges Facing Mrs. Mina and Ira.....	200
4.3.7	Summary of the Findings Related to the Parents.....	201
4.4	Findings in Relation to the Students	213
4.4.1	Ali	213
4.4.1.1	Ali’s Profile.....	213
4.4.1.2	Ali’s Perceptions on ESL.....	214
4.4.1.3	Challenges Facing Ali.....	214
4.4.1.4	Ali’s Perceptions on the Classroom Learning Experience	216
4.4.2	Fairul	217
4.4.2.1	Fairul’s Profile	217
4.4.2.2	Fairul Perceptions on ESL	217
4.4.2.3	Challenges Facing Fairul	218
4.4.2.4	Fairul’s Perception on the Classroom Learning Experience.....	220
4.4.3	Imran.....	221
4.4.3.1	Imran’s Profile	221
4.4.3.2	Imran’s Perceptions on ESL	221
4.4.3.3	Challenges Facing Imran	221
4.4.3.4	Imran’s Perceptions on the Classroom Learning Experience	223
4.4.4	Qila.....	224
4.4.4.1	Qila’s Profile.....	224
4.4.4.2	Qila’s Perceptions on ESL Reading.....	225
4.4.4.3	Challenges Facing Qila	225
4.4.4.4	Qila’s Perceptions on the Classroom Learning Experience.....	227
4.4.5	Tairah	227
4.4.5.1	Tairah’s Profile	227
4.4.5.2	Tairah’s Perceptions on ESL	228
4.4.5.3	Challenges Facing Tairah	228
4.4.5.4	Tairah’s Perceptions on the Classroom Learning Experience	230
4.4.6	Roni.....	231

4.4.6.1	Roni’s Profile	231
4.4.6.2	Roni’s Perceptions on ESL	231
4.4.6.3	Challenges Facing Roni	232
4.4.6.4	Roni’s Perceptions on the Classroom Learning Experience	233
4.4.7	Summary of the Findings Related to the Students	234
5	CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS	243
5.1	Introduction	243
5.2	The Ways the Teacher Works with the Struggling Readers (Sub-RQ 1.1)	244
5.2.1	Classroom Environment	244
5.2.2	Involvement of the Teacher	244
5.2.3	Challenges Facing the Teacher	251
5.3	The Ways the Parents Work with Their Children (Sub-RQ 1.2)	254
5.3.1	Involvement of the Parents	254
5.3.2	Challenges Facing the Parents	260
5.4	Struggling Readers’ Engagement with Their ESL Reading (Sub-RQ 1.3)	266
5.4.1	Perceptions of ESL	266
5.4.2	Challenges Facing the Students	267
5.4.3	Perceptions Regarding the Classroom Learning Experience	269
5.5	Discontinuities Between Home and School	271
5.6	Differences in Perspectives Expressed between Teacher and Students	273
5.7	Theoretical Discussion of the Findings	274
5.8	Implications	280
5.8.1	Implications for the Home-School Relationship	280
5.8.2	Implications for Educational Policy	283
5.8.3	Implications for Educators in Understanding Struggling Readers	285
6	CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	287
6.1	Introduction	287
6.2	Summary of the Study	288
6.3	Limitations of the Study	289
6.4	Recommendations for Future Research	290

6.5	Contribution of the Study.....	291
6.6	Reflections	292
REFERENCES.....		295
APPENDICES.....		359
	Appendix 1: Ethical approval letter	359
	Appendix 2: Approval letter for conducting research in Malaysia.....	360
	Appendix 3: Research pass for conducting research in Malaysia.....	364
	Appendix 4: Approval letter for conducting research in the selected school	365
	Appendix 5: Interview guide with the teacher	366
	Appendix 6: Interview guide with the parents	368
	Appendix 7: Interview guide with the students	370
	Appendix 8: Participation information sheet for the teacher	371
	Appendix 9: Participation information sheet for the parent.....	376
	Appendix 10: Participation information sheet and consent form for the children.....	381
	Appendix 11: Consent form for the teacher.....	382
	Appendix 12: Consent form for the parent	383
	Appendix 13: Parent’s consent for children form.....	384

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to Allah the Almighty who has granted me the grit and tenacity to complete this thesis. I would like to express my deep and sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Mark Payne, for his unwavering support and priceless guidance throughout my learning trajectory.

I am also thankful to the research participants for volunteering and for their commitment. This thesis is primarily constructed from their responses and voices.

A special appreciation goes to my husband, Dr. Muhamad Yazid, and my precious children Mus'ab Al Khair, Amir Al Aqwa, the Sheffield-born baby Khalid and the London-born baby Layyina, for their love and care and for the motivation they provide.

A special mention to my parents, Abdullah Kamal and Khadjah, my parents-in-law, Nor Hashimah and Yahya, my siblings and siblings-in-law for their continuous prayers and supports.

Thank you to all my friends especially those from School of Education at The University of Sheffield, and my Malaysian friends in the UK for their companionship and assistance that took many forms. Not to be forgotten, Jonathan and family in Paignton for their wonderful help.

Last but not least thanks are due to the Ministry of Education Malaysia and Universiti Sains Malaysia who were the principal funders of my study, and other kind contributors namely the parliamentary member for Bagan Datuk, YB Dato' Seri Dr. Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, Yayasan Perak and Majlis Zakat Negeri Perak.

List of Tables

Table 1: High frequency word list for year 1 students.....	15
Table 2: National educational assessment system	17
Table 3: Standards to measure year 1 students' reading attainment.....	18
Table 4: Student participants' demographic information	109
Table 5: Parent participants' demographic information	109
Table 6: Teacher participant demographic information.....	110
Table 7: Summary of the findings in relation to the teacher.....	179
Table 8: Summary of the findings in relation to the participating parents	205
Table 9: Summary of the findings in relation to participating students.....	237

List of Figures

Figure 1: Malaysia, a country in the South East Asian region	11
Figure 2: The Malaysian education journey	13
Figure 3: A summary of Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model of human development	34
Figure 4: Reading development emerges from literacy ecology	38
Figure 5: Conceptual framework of this study	39
Figure 6: Research questions, sub-research questions and methods.....	122
Figure 7: High frequency word list.....	164
Figure 8: Reading text - feeding ducks	165
Figure 9: Reading text - body parts.....	166
Figure 10: The Big Book	167
Figure 11: Year 1 English textbook - Be Clean.....	169
Figure 12: Picture cards	169
Figure 13: Ali’s drawing.....	215
Figure 14: Fairul’s drawing	218
Figure 15: Imran’s drawing	222
Figure 16: Qila's drawing.....	226
Figure 17: Tairah's drawing	229
Figure 18: Roni's drawing.....	232

Abbreviations

ALM	: Audiolingual Method
CLT	: Communicative Language Teaching
DSP	: <i>Dokumen Standard Prestasi</i> / Performance Standard Document
GTM	: Grammar Translation Method
EAL	: English as a second or additional language
EFL	: English as a Foreign Language
ELL	: English Language Learners
ESL	: English as a Second Language
GTP	: Government Transformation Program
HFW	: High Frequency Word
LBI	: <i>Literasi Bahasa Inggeris</i> / English literacy
LINUS	: Literacy and Numeracy Screening
MES	: Malaysian Examination Syndicate
MOE	: Ministry of Education
MYR	: Malaysian Ringgit
NKRAs	: National Key Results Areas
NEAS	: National Examination Assessment System
NEP	: National Philosophy of Education
PPPM	: <i>Panduan Perkembangan Pembelajaran Murid</i> / Student Learning Development Guide
PTA	: Parent Teacher Association
UNESCO	: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizatio

Declaration

I, the author, confirm that the Thesis is my own work. I am aware of the University's Guidance on the Use of Unfair Means (www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/unfair-means). This work has not been previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, university.

A publication arising from the thesis is acknowledged below:

- 1- Kamal, S. S. L. B. A., (2019). Research paradigm and the philosophical foundations of a qualitative study. *PEOPLE: International Journal of Social Sciences*, 4(3), 1386-1394.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This study, titled ‘An exploration of social, cultural and contextual elements surrounding struggling readers of English as a second language in the Malaysian classroom’, examines the dynamic interactions among children (at school and home), parents (at home) and teachers (in the classroom). Particularly, I highlight the different settings within which the children develop so as to attain a holistic understanding of the learning experience of Malaysian primary school children whose first language is Malay and who are struggling to read in English as their second language. It is a qualitative study involving a group of six struggling readers, seven parents and one principal teacher as research participants. To achieve the research objective, the multiple voices of different participants were sought using interviews and observations to obtain a full understanding of the social, cultural and contextual components that influence the struggling readers’ experiences; data that was supplemented by document collection and analysis. This section aims to describe the general background of the study, which includes: 1) introduction; 2) background of the study; 3) rationale of the study; 4) research aims; 5) research questions; 6) significance of the study; 7) terminology; 8) overview of the thesis; 9) context of the study and 10) conclusion of the chapter.

1.2 Background of the Study

The principles, ideas, policies and aims of education in Malaysia are conceptualised in the National Philosophy of Education (henceforth NEP). The NEP was constructed in 1988 and reviewed and affirmed in the Education Act 1996 (Zulkipli & Ali, 2018). According to the NEP:

Education in Malaysia is an on-going effort towards further developing the potential of individuals in a holistic and integrated manner, so as to produce individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically balanced and harmonious, based on a firm belief in and devotion to God. Such an effort is designed to produce Malaysian citizens who are knowledgeable and competent, who possess high moral standards, and who are responsible and capable of achieving

high level of personal well-being as well as being able to contribute to the harmony and betterment of the family, the society and the nation at large (Ministry of Education, henceforth MOE, 2015a, p. viii).

In Malaysia, the MOE (2015a) suggests, students should be “equipped with 21st century skills for them to compete globally” (p. 9). To this end, the MOE (2015a) focuses on the need of students to acquire bilingual proficiency, as one of the students’ aspirations that is in accordance with the NEP. Besides being competent in Malay (the national language of Malaysia), being competent in English is also an important attribute that students are expected to acquire. English, as a second language in Malaysia, has been made compulsory in all Malaysian primary and secondary schools in order to assist learners to obtain the language and to use it in their daily life, studies and workplaces (MOE, 2015a). The mastery of English is necessary for individuals to “keep abreast of scientific and technological developments in the world and to participate meaningfully in international trade and commerce” (Government of Malaysia, 1976, p. 391).

The Malaysian Government, under the banner of ‘1 Malaysia’ with the principle “People First Performance Now”, introduced a Government Transformation Programme (henceforth GTP) in 2010 (PEMANDU 2011, p. 2). The GTP, which is steered by the Performance Management and Delivery Unit within the Prime Minister’s Department, aims to cater for citizens’ most imperative necessities. The GTP aspires to transform the government’s previous working practices, improving them by suggesting “real solutions” to the “real issues” that are believed to afflict Malaysia, one of which is concerning the opportunities for affordable and quality education for all students (PEMANDU, 2011, p. 2). Six pillars, or National Key Results Areas (henceforth NKRAs) were highlighted in the GTP, with one of these being “Improving Students’ Outcomes” (PEMANDU, 2011, p. 2). As such, several initiatives have been adopted to realise the aspirations of the Malaysian Government in the “Improving Students’ Outcomes” agenda. These initiatives include ensuring that “every child has a high-quality head start, through early childhood education and an opportunity to be fully literate and numerate” (PEMANDU, 2011, p. 15). It is in this context that reading English as a second language has become a key educational aim for Malaysian children’s primary school learning.

As part of the improving student outcomes agenda there has been an increased focus on identifying and intervening to support students who are struggling with the learning of English. This is manifested in the implementation of the literacy intervention programme called Literacy and Numeracy Screening (henceforth LINUS), and later LINUS 2.0, to facilitate improving students' reading and writing skills. LINUS was introduced in 2010 to identify students in Years 1, 2 and 3 who required additional support in Malay literacy and numeracy. The programme has been found to have positive outcomes as its aims to raise students' proficiencies in both Malay literacy and numeracy were achieved. As a result, in 2013, LINUS was extended to encompass literacy in English, also known as *Literasi Bahasa Inggeris* (commonly abbreviated as LBI; Malay), with the programme being named LINUS 2.0. This nationwide screening programme aimed to assess students' ability to master all twelve constructs in the screening test (as explained below), with this being judged to be sufficient for students to progress through mainstream learning. The MOE aims for all students, except for special needs students, to be able to achieve the aforementioned standards by the end of Year 3 (PADU, 2015; PEMANDU, 2014).

LINUS 2.0 screening consists of twelve constructs (MOE, 2017, pp. 2-13), as listed below:

- Construct 1: Able to identify and distinguish letters of the alphabet
- Construct 2: Able to associate sounds with the letters of the alphabet
- Construct 3: Able to blend phonemes into recognisable words
- Construct 4: Able to segment words into phonemes
- Construct 5: Able to understand and use the language at word level.
- Construct 6: Able to participate in daily conversations using appropriate phrases.
- Construct 7: Able to understand and use the language at phrase level in linear texts.
- Construct 8: Able to understand and use the language at phrase level in non-linear texts.
- Construct 9: Able to read and understand sentences with guidance.
- Construct 10: Able to understand and use the language at sentence level in non-linear texts.
- Construct 11: Able to understand and use the language at paragraph level in linear texts.
- Construct 12: Able to construct sentences with guidance.

The screening instruments were developed by the Malaysian Examination Syndicate (henceforth, MES) and school teachers can then administer the screening, using an assessment manual as a guideline. Teachers administer the reading screening with students either individually, or in groups that consist of no more than three students. Students' performances are measured by their ability to master these twelve constructs in the screening and their achievements are recorded in the individual mastery reporting form.

Under LINUS 2.0, each construct was tested three to four items in the screening and students were allowed to make up to one error in each construct. Students were eligible for mainstream teaching and learning if they could master all twelve constructs. Students who did not master one or more of the constructs were taught using the remedial syllabus (MOE, 2015b). In that regard, the MOE did not mandate a particular technique for teaching reading to such struggling readers. Lessons in both the mainstream module and remedial module, however, needed to accord with the learning objectives in the Standard-Based Curriculum for Primary Schools (Bokhari, Rashid & Heng, 2015; Lee, 2015) which put a heavy emphasis on phonics instructions (MOE, 2015a). Additionally, while it is permitted to adapt the remedial module, lessons need to be taught in sequence since the module was arranged in a progressive manner based on the phonics sounds (MOE, 2013a). Moreover, struggling readers were not pulled out of the mainstream class but learn together with the students who have achieved mastery in the reading screening (if there are any).

In 2019, the MOE stopped supporting the LINUS 2.0 module formally, as part of a shift towards a more autonomous approach at school level. Schools are now being encouraged to formulate their own approaches to identifying and helping struggling readers (Chan, 2018). Although the data collection for this thesis was conducted under the LINUS 2.0 regime (hence the detailed introduction to it above), the greater autonomy now allowed to schools actually increases the relevance and importance of the findings of this study in that schools are now able to take more account of teacher, parent and child perceptions of the experiences of struggles with reading English.

1.3 Rationale of the Study

Reading is undoubtedly an essential skill for learners of a second or foreign language (Grabe, 2002; Huang, 2015). It has also been acknowledged that reading is central to success and needs to be mastered by ESL students (Anderson, 1999; Thuraisingam, Gopal, Sasidharan, Naimie & Asmawi, 2017). The ability to read will facilitate students to speak fluently (Jacob, 2016; Sadiku, 2015), attain mastery in grammar, acquire a wide range of vocabulary and develop writing ability (Mermelstein, 2015; Yaghoubi-Notash, 2015). Reading ability at the primary school level is in general an issue of concern worldwide (e.g., Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998). In Malaysia, low literacy attainment among ESL primary school students, particularly in reading and writing, has long been a concern (Yunus & Chun, 2016). Improving literacy rates has therefore become one of the priorities in the Malaysian NKRAAs (PADU, 2015). According to the MOE, the high percentage of students with low literacy performance in LINUS 2.0 has remained unresolved since the implementation of the programme (Sani & Idris, 2013). The Malaysian Government's target is to increase ESL literacy rates to 100 percent by 2020 (Harji, Balakrishnan & Letchumanan, 2016).

Reading is perceived “as a dynamic process that involves complex social relationships with members of their particular sociocultural contexts such as teachers and parents” (Li, 2004, p. 32). In other words, approaches to supporting reading need to understand and engage a range of stakeholders. Moreover, children's learning development, for example in ESL reading, cannot be separated from the social networks with which the children are surrounded (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). It has been argued that explanations about, and solutions for, struggling readers can never be straightforward and singular (Allington and Walmsley, 2007). Performance in a reading test does not simplistically equate to an assessment of the child, and the child alone (Kainz & Vernon-Feagan, 2007), because students' development, and their achievement in assessment, is influenced by their surroundings (Kainz & Vernon-Feagan, 2007). Researchers, therefore, identify that children's reading attainment is not positioned completely within the child cognitive ability, or within the family and classroom processes.

In order to understand children's experiences, one needs to consider the diverse elements of the context surrounding the children (Snow et al., 1998). The complexity of those students' experiences can also be understood by looking at the social, cultural and institutional contexts that surround the students (Frankel, Jaeger, & Pearson, 2013). “Children's reading development emerges from a literacy ecology, or system of systems” (Kainz & Vernon-Feagans, 2007, p. 421).

The authors further recommend that such a concept comprises of at least a few individuals including the children, parents at home and teachers in the classroom. Research in Malaysia to date has not touched on these multiple contexts surrounding children in relation to their reading attainment. For example, a study carried out by Ahmad and Mutalib (2015) focused on teachers' perspectives of the struggling learners' issues in Malay, ESL and Mathematics classrooms by using interviews and classroom observations. In another study which used interviews and classroom observations, Lee (2015) briefly discussed how struggling readers were taught in the ESL classroom and the problems facing the teachers in facilitating those students. Bokhari et al., (2015) also elaborated briefly on the teaching practices and obstacles that teachers faced while working with struggling readers in the ESL classroom by interviewing the teachers. Additionally, a study to investigate the benefits of phonics instruction to facilitate reading development in ESL struggling readers was conducted by Jamaludin, Alias, Khir, DeWitt & Kenayathula (2016). Another two studies examine the impacts of reading strategies towards ESL students who struggle in reading (Nordin, Rajab, Nor & Ismail, 2019; Thuraisingam et al., 2017). While these findings are informative, none of the studies incorporated all stakeholders together, namely students, parents and teachers. There is also no detailed research of the learning experiences of ESL struggling readers in the home and classroom contexts concurrently. A lack of understanding of the impacts of, and interrelations between, these contexts risks the continued marginalisation of struggling readers in the classroom environment (Garrett, 2012; Mehigan, 2016).

Examining individual development needs to consider the wider “influencing factors and the context, or ecology, of development” (Hayes, O’Toole & Halpenny, 2017, p. 3). Although informative, the kinds of studies listed above have been criticised by Bronfenbrenner, who noted that “much of developmental psychology is the science of the strange behaviour of children in strange situations with strange adults for the briefest possible period of time” (1977, p. 513). Overall, therefore, research is increasingly suggesting that examining individual development needs to consider the wider “influencing factors and the context, or ecology, of development” (Hayes et al., 2017, p. 3).

The underpinning rationale of this study, therefore, is that a full appreciation of the status of struggling' readers demands an exploration of the students' and their environmental contexts in order to gain access to understand the influential elements surrounding these children that affect

their development. In realising that rationale the study follows Creswell's (2014, p. 20) observation that the task of research is to address issues which "have been neglected in the literature" and "to lift up" the least investigated voices of participants in previous research to explore "real-life" issues discovered in settings such as homes, classrooms and schools.

Creswell (2014) also believes that a qualitative approach, such as the one that I have adopted in this study, is highly suggested for phenomena that are under-researched so as better to understand the issues investigated. A full understanding of the status of struggling readers, therefore, demands an attempt to fill the gaps left by previous studies by exploring the struggling readers' experience in the ESL classroom through interviews with students, parents and teachers, in addition to classroom observation and documentary analysis.

1.4 Research Aim

Children's learning development occurs through interactions between the children and their environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In other words, children's development happens within their environmental systems. To capture this comprehensive process, one needs to understand the impacts of the environments in which children actively participate. As suggested by Lerner (2005, p. x), research needs to pay attention to the way children progress in the contexts illustrative of their real world, or their "ecologically valid settings". Such an approach is essential because children's development does not occur in isolation but is "embedded within and across" other settings, including home, family, school and community (Hayes et al., 2017, p. 45). Conversely, examining students' development in such a fashion will help understand "the dynamic relationships between the developing individual and the integrated, multilevel ecology of human development" (Lerner, 2005, p. ix). This study, therefore, aims to reveal an in-depth understanding of the different contexts that surround the struggling readers that play a role in influencing their perspectives and development. It does this by looking at the positions of different social members, including the teacher, the parents and the students themselves. Finally, this study aims to explore the implications of these findings for the system surrounding ESL struggling readers in the Malaysian context.

1.5 Research Questions

According to Bryman (2012), research questions need to highlight clearly what it is the researcher intends to understand. Research questions are interrelated to one another to develop a “coherent set of issues” (Bryman, 2012, p. 89). The development of research questions begins the familiarity with the topic (Haynes, 2006) which is usually obtained from the robust synthesis of literature related to the topic (Okpala, 2017). After taking these elements into considerations, I formulated an overarching research question as follows:

- 1- How do the social, cultural and contextual elements surrounding struggling ESL students influence their experiences of English language reading in the Malaysian classroom?

In order to answer this research question, I devised five sub-research questions to guide me in undertaking the research:

- 1.1 How does the teacher work with the struggling readers?
- 1.2 How do the participating parents work with their children at home?
- 1.3 How do the students themselves engage with their ESL reading?
- 1.4 How do the environmental contexts interact to influence struggling readers’ experiences of reading?
- 1.5 What are the implications for education policy and practice in Malaysia?

Although the sub-research questions appear as stand-alone questions, or as targeted for each group of participants (the students, parents and teacher), they complement one another to produce a broad understanding of the experience of the ESL struggling readers in the Malaysian setting.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it reveals a snapshot of how parents and a teacher are involved with struggling readers’ learning in the context where Malay is their first language and English is their second language. In so doing, it extends research in the field of ESL struggling readers within the Malaysian primary classroom. A particularly significant contribution is its conscious attempt

“to look beyond individual development and to take account of wider influencing factors and the context, or ecology, of development” (Hayes et al., 2017, p. 3), for the first time in the Malaysian educational literature.

This exploration is also significant because it privileges the narrative of under-researched parents of ESL students dealing with their children’s learning at home. A further significance of this study is that it includes the incorporation of young students’ voices pertinent to their learning experience with ESL reading, which has also been under-studied hitherto. By combining the investigation of students’ perspectives with parents’ and teachers’ thoughts and practices, this study produces a comprehensive approach to understanding the experience of ESL struggling readers in the Malaysian context, and uses this to suggest ways in which those students can be supported more effectively.

The findings from this investigation therefore have implications for the system surrounding struggling readers in a Malaysian context, including for how schools relate with parents, how teachers understand the needs of struggling readers, as well as for educational policymakers in Malaysia more generally. This study also follows the tradition of growing interest in research pertaining to young learners who learn English that highlights the question of “how children learn languages” and demystifies the ‘dated’ questions on whether “it is best to start learning a language early” or whether “children can learn two languages at the same time” (Garton & Copland, 2019, pp. 1-2).

1.7 Context of the Study

The preceding sections have made repeated reference to Malaysia as the context of this study. In this section, therefore, I introduce that context formally by providing a brief overview of the socio-cultural, socio-political and socio-economic aspects of Malaysia. After that, I describe the educational system in Malaysia with a focus on recent developments regarding English language education that were implemented during my data collection period in 2017.

1.7.1 General Facts about Malaysia

This section provides an overview of Malaysia, including its geography, politics and demographics (ethnic groups, religions and languages). The name ‘Malaysia’ is derived from the word ‘Malay’ and the Latin-Greek suffix ‘-sia’/’-σία’ (Room, 2004). Through the course of its history, Malaysia has been known by several other names, such as ‘*Tanah Melayu*’ (Malay land) (Din, 2011) and ‘Federation of Malaya’ (Suarez, 1999). Malaysia has a population of approximately 32,288,512 people (United Nations, 2019) and consists of thirteen states and three federal territories. The country is made up of two regions which are separated by the South China Sea: namely, Peninsular Malaysia (comprising eleven states and two federal territories) and East Malaysia, on the island of Borneo (comprising two more states and one federal territory). Malaysia is located in South East Asia and shares borders with Thailand, Singapore, Vietnam, Indonesia, Brunei and Philippines. Malaysia’s total area is about 330,345 km² (Ahmad, Lockard, Bee & Leinbach, 2020). The capital of Malaysia is Kuala Lumpur, but since 1999 Putrajaya has been its administrative centre. Malaysian households are categorised into three groups, namely B40, M40 and T20 (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2017). B40 is classified as the bottom 40% of households with a monthly income in Malaysian Ringgit (henceforth MYR) of 3900 MYR, M40 is characterised as the middle 40% of households, with a monthly income between MYR 3900 and MYR 6275. For the T20 group or the top 20% of households, the monthly income is above MYR 6275.

Malaysia is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-lingual country. The main racial groups in Malaysia are *Bumiputera*, which consists of Malays and other indigenous people (68.6%), Chinese (23.4%) and Indians (7.0%) (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2016). Each ethnic group adopts a distinct culture, tradition and language. In terms of religion and belief, Islam is declared as the religion of the federation (Bari, 2005); however, Malaysians have been granted by freedom to profess and to practise any religion (Husin & Ibrahim, 2016).



Figure 1: Malaysia, a country in the South East Asian region (Source: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2020)

The majority of Malaysians profess Islam as their religion (61.3%). Buddhism is the next most professed religion (19.8%), followed by Christianity (9.2%) and Hinduism (6.3%) (Population and Housing Census of Malaysia, 2010). The Malay language is the national language of the country and widely spoken by people from all walks of life. The Malay language has also been used for official purposes (Yaakop & Aziz, 2014) after the country gained independence. Besides that, about 134 other languages have been identified as living languages used by Malaysians across the country (Simons & Fennig, 2017). These languages include languages spoken by Chinese and Indians who make up the largest population groups after *Bumiputera*.

Latin (*Rumi*) script is the official script of Malaysia as stated in The National Language Act 1967, but people of Malaysia are allowed to use the Jawi script which is also considered to be a Malay script, and was adopted from the Arabic language. English has been positioned as an active second language in Malaysia and continues to be a significant second language in the constitution (Azman, 2016). Besides that, the language is allowed to be used in some official functions too. Globalisation has driven the widespread use of the English language in the new millennium. The language has not only been seen as a tool of communication but also a way of opening windows on the wider world. As such, the English language is regarded as a catalyst of economic progress and

development of international understanding. Mastery of the English language is therefore valued and deemed essential for Malaysians (Azman, 2016).

1.7.2 Education in Malaysia

The educational system in Malaysia consists of several stages (as shown in Figure 2): preschool education, primary education, secondary education, post-secondary education and tertiary education. Children can start preschool in government-run schools when they are four years old. Education is compulsory at primary school level (MOE, 2012) and begins when children reach seven. Schooling has been made compulsory since 2003. The primary school system is divided into level 1 for Years 1 to 3 and level 2 for Years 4 to 6. Secondary education starts when children reach thirteen. The secondary school system has two phases: lower secondary education for Forms 1 to 3 and higher secondary education for Forms 4 and 5. Students can continue their study into Form 6 or in other colleges and institutions before moving to an institute of higher education or entering the world of work. Free education is provided for students in primary and secondary schools, which includes school tuition fees and examination fees. All students are also entitled to free text books.

There are fourteen types of primary and secondary schools in Malaysia, which are controlled by the government (MOE, 2015c). The main primary schools in Malaysia, and the most attended ones, are National primary schools, Chinese national-type schools and Tamil national-type schools. While National primary school students use Malay as a medium of instruction, National-type Chinese school students use Mandarin as their medium of instruction and National-type Tamil school students use Tamil as their medium of instruction.

1.7.2.1 English Language Teaching

The objective of English language teaching for primary school students is to facilitate students interaction in diverse situations based on their developmental level (MOE, 2012). A standardised English language curriculum has been used in primary schools. The curriculum, which outlines the course objectives and syllabus, has been developed under the guidance of the NEP (MOE, 2013b).

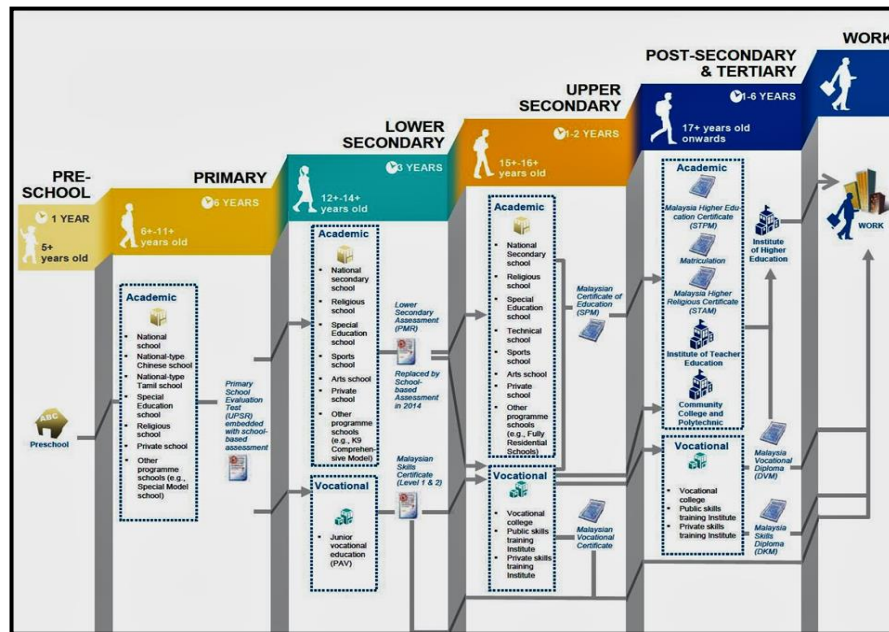


Figure 2: The Malaysian education journey (Source: MOE, 2013b)

When the data for my study were collected, teaching and learning was based on the Standards-based Curriculum for Primary School. The syllabus has been designed to provide students with the language skills to allow them to use the language in multiple contexts, in accordance with their level of development (MOE, 2015a). The core pedagogical principles of the English language curriculum are: i) back to basics; ii) fun, meaningful and purposeful learning; iii) learner-centredness in teaching and learning; iv) integration of new technology; and v) character building (MOE, 2015a, pp. 4-5).

Back to basics is highlighted as one the core pedagogical principles of the English language curriculum and represents a focus on the acquisition of basic literacy for a strong foundation of language skills (MOE, 2015a). This goal can be achieved through several activities, *inter alia* reading through phonics, to help students thrive in reading, and the use of penmanship to assist students practising their writing skills (MOE, 2015a). Fun, meaningful and purposeful learning focusses on the need for the lessons to be contextualised and significant to promote student engagement in learning. Fun learning and student-centred lessons that are meaningful is also suggested to be important in helping effective learning takes place. The methods, materials and

lessons which are planned and executed need to be tailored to students' different needs and abilities. This is essential to help realise students' full potential. Quality instructions, adequate time and appropriate learning environments also need to be provided to the students to assist their learning (MOE, 2015a). The use of electronic media, such as the Internet, is recommended to help student learning to become more engaging. Given technology's increasingly central role in communication, obtaining information and knowledge and connecting with people worldwide, it is clearly now a vital tool to assist students in their learning. The integration within teaching and learning of values is also important to help the character building of the students, so as to produce well-rounded and wholesome individuals (MOE, 2015a).

The English language curriculum has been organised in a "modular configuration" by focusing on five modules for Years 1 and 2 (MOE, 2015a, p. 15). These are listening and speaking, reading, writing and language arts. Year 3 sees the introduction of a grammar element. The aforementioned modules aim to develop the main language skills and sub-skills using activities with clear objectives in meaningful contexts. A total of 300 minutes have been allocated for students to learn English in a week. Even though the modules are taught separately, in each period teachers are expected and encouraged to organise their teaching so that all the language skills are developed in a coherent and cohesive way. The teaching contexts of English language in the primary school revolve around World of Self, Family and Friends, World of Stories and World of Knowledge which aim to make the lessons more relevant to the students (MOE, 2015a, p. 7).

A few teaching and learning strategies have been documented in the curriculum, such as constructivism, contextual learning and multiple intelligences (MOE, 2015a, pp .9-10). In constructivism, it has been suggested that the teacher facilitates the students to construct new knowledge by using the present knowledge that the students already have. In contextual learning, the teacher is expected to link the students' daily life experiences and the community which the students belong to with the content of the lessons. In multiple intelligences, teachers need to consider the different intelligences that the students have to cater for the students' learning styles and necessities. This range of teaching and learning strategies is expected to be used to facilitate the achievement of defined objectives. In relation to reading, three broad objectives have been stated in the English curriculum for Year 1 students, as follows:

- 1) Pupils will be able to apply knowledge of sounds of letters to recognise words in linear and non-linear texts.
- 2) Pupils will be able to demonstrate understanding of a variety of linear and non-linear texts in the form of print and non-print materials using a range of strategies to construct meaning.
- 3) Pupils will be able to read independently for information and enjoyment.

(MOE, 2015a, p. 35)

To this end, one of the most highlighted methods for teaching reading has been the phonics method (MOE, 2015a). This method is suggested to guide Year 1 students in reading until they become independent readers. It is essential to teach students a few skills related to the phonics method, such as blending, segmenting and the relationship between phonemes and graphemes. High frequency words have also been listed for students to master and teachers have the freedom to increase the word list depending on students' perceived abilities and understandings, and on any particular topics being taught by the teacher (MOE, 2015a). The high frequency word list that Year 1 students are expected to master is displayed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: High frequency word list for year 1 students (Source: MOE, 2015a, pp. 62-63)

I	Go	Come	Went	Up	You	Day	Was
Look	Are	The	Of	We	This	Dog	Me
Like	Going	Big	She	And	They	My	See
On	Away	Mother	It	At	Play	No	Yes
For	A	Father	Can	He	Am	All	Is
Cat	Get	Said	To	In	about	after	Again
An	Another	As	back	Ball	Be	because	Bed
Been	Boy	brother	but	By	call(ed)	came	can't
Could	Did	Do	don't	Dig	Door	down	First
From	Girl	Good	got	Had	Half	Has	Have
Help	Her	Here	Him	His	home	House	How
If	Jump	Just	Last	Laugh	Little	live(d)	Love

Made	Make	Man	many	May	more	Much	Must
Name	Mew	Next	night	Not	Now	Off	Old
Once	One	Or	Our	Out	Over	people	Push
Pull	Put	Ran	Saw	School	Seen	should	Sister
So	Some	Take	Than	That	Their	Them	Then
there	These	Three	Time	Too	Took	Tree	Two
Us	Very	Want	water	Way	Were	What	When
where	Who	Will	With	Would	Your		
common colour words	pupils' name and address	name and address of school	numbers to twenty	days of the week	months of the year		

1.7.2.2 Assessment

The assessment policy in the Malaysian classroom has recently undergone several changes. Although for a long time the system was characterised by an exam-oriented culture (Fook & Sidhu, 2012; Malakolunthu & Sim, 2010) it has now shifted to a more authentic means of assessment that is ongoing, developmental, and that measures students' abilities more accurately. The new form of assessments, namely the National Educational Assessment System (henceforth NEAS), was introduced in order to focus on students' academic and character development as well as their involvement in extra-curricular activities (MES), 2011).

NEAS is a combination of public examinations and school-based assessment. There are five forms of assessment: (i) central examination; (ii) central assessments; (iii) school assessments; (iv) psychometric tests; and (v) physical activity, sport and co-curriculum assessment (MOE, 2007). Central examination refers to the public examination (Ong, 2010). Students in primary school undergo the Primary School Evaluation Test or *Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah (UPSR)* at the end of Year 6. Central assessment is assessment conducted in schools according to guidelines provided and standards set by the MOE, such as Science Practical Tests for Year 6 students. School assessments are carried out by teachers using instruments such as tests, quizzes, observations, presentations and checklists. Psychometric tests measure students' problem-solving skills, thinking skills, personality, attitude and interest. Physical activity, sport and co-curriculum

assessment aims to obtain information about students' physical capacities and their involvement in sport and extra-curricular activities (MES, 2011). Table 2 below summarises the implementation of the NEAS in primary schools, which occurred in parallel with the period during which the data for this study was collected. Since my study focuses on Year 1 students, I will further highlight school assessment because that is the only assessment relevant to the students who study in this level.

Table 2: National educational assessment system (Source: Adapted from MOE, 2007; 2012)

	Primary School					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Central Examination (<i>UPSR</i>)						
Central Assessment						
School Assessment						
Psychometric Assessment						
Physical Activity, Sports and Co-curricular Assessment						

School assessments for primary school students are based on the Standards-based Curriculum for Primary School or *Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah (KSSR)*. Teaching and learning activities and assessment are conducted based on the Performance Standard Document or *Dokumen Standard Prestasi (DSP)*. The document is divided into Content Standard and Learning Standard parts. Content Standard refers to the knowledge and language skills that students are required to learn. The Learning Standard, meanwhile, stipulates the amount or quality of language competency students need to obtain with reference to the Content Standard. This assessment practice aims to report the learning development of students in a more unbiased way, since students are assessed according to their abilities. Grades and marks are no longer the focus; rather what students know and can do matter the most and is therefore acknowledged. Student progress must be reported online and teachers also need to keep a record of the student progress in the students' individual files. In addition to the school assessment based on *DSP*, schools in Malaysia also implement written examinations that measure students' performances by using grades and marks mainly for classroom streaming. Such assessments are carried out a few times a year which include tests in

March and September, a mid-year test and an end-of-year test. The results of these tests are recorded in an online portal. Students' families can access the results by logging in to the portal. Parents are also usually notified of their children's results during parent and teacher meeting sessions that usually happen twice a year.

In 2014, an amendment was made to the *DSP*, substituting it with the Student Learning Development Guide or *Panduan Perkembangan Pembelajaran Murid (PPPM)* (MES, 2014). *PPPM* is a less complicated and feasible guideline because it consists of just two elements: bands and descriptor. Student progress is also no longer reported online and the filing system for students has been discontinued. These changes were made because many teachers believed that it is hugely time consuming to juggle record-keeping procedures with the many other duties of teachers. Students' results are now kept in an offline form. An example of how student proficiency is assessed in reading is shown in Table 3 below. Students will be assessed three times in a year and the record must be submitted to the school administration for their reference.

Table 3: Standards to measure year 1 students' reading attainment (Source: MOE, n.d, p.3)

Skill	Band	Descriptor
Reading	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and distinguish the letters of the alphabet correctly. • Recognise and articulate initial, medial and the final sounds in single syllable words accurately. • Blend phonemes into recognisable words and read them aloud clearly. • Segment words into phonemes to spell accurately. (single syllable word)
	2	Read and recognise words by matching words with graphics and spoken words appropriately
	3	Read and understand phrases and sentences in linear and non-linear texts with guidance
	4	Follow instructions from simple linear and non-linear texts correctly
	5	Read simple fiction and non-fiction texts for information and answer WH question words correctly

	6	Choose and read simple fiction and non-fiction texts extensively
--	---	--

Apart from the School Assessment, Year 1 students also undergo a literacy screening programme (LINUS 2.0), which was highlighted in Section 1.2 above.

1.8 Terminology

A clarification of terminology is essential in any research. In this study I explain two terms that have become part of my research title and will be used throughout my research. First, the term struggling readers. ‘Struggling’ is a vague word hence there are many means to illustrate struggling readers (Wiggs, 2012). In addition, the term struggling readers has variable interpretations and can be used to describe students with different issues (Alvarez, Armstrong, Elish-Piper, Matthews & Risko, 2009). Some may find the term ‘struggling’ potentially pejorative but the term is widely utilised in professional circles and therefore widely understood in the Malaysian context (e.g. Jamaludin et al., 2016; Nordin et al., 2019; Thuraisingam et al., 2017) and internationally (e.g. Garrett, 2012; Li, 2004; Vaughn et al., 2006; Wiggs, 2012). Additionally, in my opinion, there is not really a widely-accepted alternative for this term. While I can see why it is the kind of term that some people will worry is “labelling” children, it is actually quite hard to think of short alternatives that could not also be seen as “labelling” (and ultimately if one is to discuss how to help these children one has to settle on some term to enable that discussion, even if it is not perfect). When the term ‘struggling’ readers is used in this thesis, therefore, it is not intended to convey a judgmental message regarding these children. Moreover the description of ‘struggling’ readers in my study is a little unique: they are not only ESL struggling readers, they are other things as well. Students in my study: (a) achieve non-mastery results in the reading screening (LBI); (b) score below a passing mark in the school English tests, signifying they had difficulties with reading; (c) have reading issues as reported by their teacher; and (d) studied in the low attaining class.

Second, it is also important to explain how I define the term ESL students in my study. Even though I am aware of the difference with the terms ‘second’, ‘foreign’ and ‘additional’ languages, as employed by some researchers and language teachers (Bass-Dolivan, 2011), for the purpose of this study, I do not differentiate between the terms. The idea of ESL which is utilised throughout my work takes into consideration the explanation offered by the United Nations Educational,

Scientific and Cultural Organization (henceforth UNESCO) that it represents “a language acquired by a person in addition to his [sic] mother tongue” (as cited in Cook, 2008, p. 12). ESL students in my study are defined as students who learn a second language that is “learning of languages other than the native language, in whatever situation or for whatever purpose” (Cook, 2008, p. 12).

1.9 Overview of the Thesis

This study aims to explore the learning experiences of ESL struggling readers at home and school in the Malaysian context. The findings of this study lead to implications regarding the system surrounding the struggling reader. This thesis is split into six chapters, with each chapter containing a conclusion summarising the main points and issues. The first chapter is an introduction to the study which enlightens the reader on the background and research context of the study, and its objectives and significance. The terminology and overview of the thesis is also explained in the first chapter, along with a description of the general context of Malaysia and its education system. Chapter two begins with the theoretical framework used to make sense of the findings of my study. This chapter then provides a review of the literature pertaining to the social, cultural and contextual elements surround ESL struggling readers, with a particular focus on the three broad elements identified in the sub-research questions, namely teaching instruction, parental involvement and ESL students’ perspectives on and involvement in ESL reading. The chapter also identifies issues facing parents and teachers when working with these children.

The methodology chapter is presented in the third chapter. This chapter begins with an explanation of the constructivist paradigm, along with the research design adopted for this study. Chapter three also details the data collection method, participating individuals and school, ethical considerations and the approach to data analysis. Chapter four utilises the main themes that emerged from the data to present the findings of the research according to each of the three sub-research questions. The discussion of the findings is presented in chapter five, examining the themes in the findings in relation to existing knowledge as summarised in the literature review. Theoretical discussion and implications of the study are also elaborated in this thesis.

Chapter six summarises the main findings and outlines the limitations of this study. Recommendations for future research are also offered. This chapter ends with thoughts on the

contribution of the study and reflections over the course of completing this thesis. At the end of the thesis, a list of references is found, along with appendices of relevant documents.

1.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented preliminary information to familiarise readers with the bedrock, purpose and value of this research. The chapter also offers an overview of the context of my study which encapsulates general facts and context about Malaysia and the education system in Malaysia. Specifically, I describe the English language teaching modules, the teaching of reading and the assessment which I derived from the established curriculum that was referred to by educators during my data collection period in 2017. I also outline the substance of the five subsequent chapters of this thesis in turn. Chapter two will now discuss the literature on ESL struggling readers' experiences by looking at the three main aspects revolving around the sub-research question, namely the way teachers work with their students, the way parents work with their children, and students' perceptions concerning their learning experiences.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The literature review is an integral part of the PhD process, serving to identify the existing knowledge related to the research questions (Bullock, 2014). Literature is described as “the theoretical or conceptual writing in an area (the “think” pieces) and the empirical data-based research studies in which someone has gone out and collected and analysed data” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 90). It encompasses “what has been said, who said it, and sets out prevailing theories and methodologies” (Hammond & Wellington, 2013, p. 99). In undertaking a literature review, “the researcher examines existing research to identify useful information and strategies or activities for carrying out the study” (Gay, Mill & Airasian, 2012, p. 16).

Based on the introductory discussion above, the rest of the chapter is structured as follows. Section 2.2 introduces the theoretical framework for the research, focusing on the different theoretical perspectives on the processes involved in learning to read, and then on Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model of human development as providing a conceptual framework for understanding the influences on the overall learning process. Sections 2.3 to 2.5 then build on that conceptual framework to examine in more detail the literature relating to the core contextual influences on early reading that this thesis focuses on in particular, namely teachers, parents and students themselves.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Introduction

Theories are described as lenses through which to study a phenomenon (Anfara, 2008, p. 6) or “the spectacles” that an individual researcher wears in viewing a happening (Imenda, 2014, p. 185). Although it has been acknowledged that “atheoretical research is impossible” (Schwandt, 1993, p. 7), no theories can provide an impeccable explanation of what is being investigated because theories can only cover certain elements of the event being explored, thus unavoidably concealing

other elements (Anfara, 2008). In a study, theory can be utilised wholly or partly (Imenda, 2014) to provide explanations about or to make sense of an occurrence (Anfara, 2008; Wellington & Szczerbinski, 2007).

This study aims to investigate struggling ESL primary school students' English language reading experiences in the Malaysian context by looking at the ways the teacher and parents work with those students, as well as the students' perspectives on their learning experiences. To support that, a number of established theories of language learning are presented below. The theories offer options for justifying the learning process in relation to reading in a second language. I adopt two lenses that contribute to the understanding of struggling readers' learning experiences in this study, namely cognitive or psycholinguistic perspectives of reading, and sociocultural perspectives of reading (Mokotedi, 2012; Shin & Crandell, 2019) that provide detail concerning the nature of learning second language reading from a wider viewpoint (Mokotedi, 2012). The cognitive process of reading focuses on bottom-up, top-down and interactive reading models and on schemata theory. The sociocultural process of reading is founded on social constructivist theory. Apart from language learning theories, this study also puts forward Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of human development (1979) as a theoretical framework explaining the context and system surrounding ESL struggling readers' learning experiences, and the interactions among these contexts. This section, therefore, starts by examining language learning theories and then sets out in detail the Ecological Systems theory proposed by Bronfenbrenner.

2.2.2 Cognitive Perspectives of Reading

One perspective on reading is that it is a cognitive or psycholinguistic process. Cognitive views highlight the "individual and the mental processes which are orchestrated in the act of reading" (Mokotedi, 2012, p. 16). Purcell-Gates and her colleagues define cognitive views on reading as reflective, concentrating on human aptitudes of the mind comprising of "perception and attention, representations of knowledge, memory and learning, problem solving and reasoning, and language acquisition, production and comprehension" (Purcell-Gates, Jacobson & Degener, 2006, p. 42). The perspectives also help us to understand the needs of linguistic characteristics across languages (Wyse, Sugrue, Fentiman & Moon, 2014), and more straightforwardly can be described as "the

process of understanding speech written down. The goal is to gain access to meaning” (Ziegler & Goswami, 2005, p. 3). The next sub-sections discuss reading models and theory that are related to cognitive or psycholinguistic perspectives of reading.

2.2.2.1 Bottom-up Reading Model

In this study I agree with the arguments put forth by researchers who employed reading theories interchangeably with reading models (Harries & Sipay, 1985; Maarof, 1998; Manzo & Manzo, 1990). That approach reflects the arguments by Cohen et al. (2005, p. 12) who described both theories and models as terms that are sometimes utilised interchangeably as “explanatory devices or schemes having a broadly conceptual framework”.

Three types of reading models have been discussed in the literature in relation to students who learn English as a second language (Blunden-Greef, 2014; Gunderson, 2009; Nuna, 2015; Prasad, Maarof & Yamat, 2016; Shin & Crandall, 2019). The models include bottom-up, top-down and the combination of bottom-up and top-down models. The bottom-up reading model, also known as the skilled model (Gunderson, 2009), was proposed by Gough (1972) and is regarded as a significant model that was framed during the era of information-processing. The model “portrays processing in reading as proceeding in serial fashion, from letter to sound, to words, to meaning” (Liu, 2010, p. 154). In this model, the activity of reading is directed by written text and begins from components to the whole (Boothe & Walter, 1999). Early readers create meaning from the structural units of language, including letters, words, phrases, clauses and sentences. Texts are processed into phonemic units which signify lexical definition and are created in a linear way (Hudson, 2007). The process incorporates i) eye fixation, ii) letter identification, iii) phonological representation, iv) understanding of words serially from left to right, and v) absorption of visual stimuli (Hamed, 2016, p. 25). The model reflects that reading activity involves a sequence of steps that progresses in a set order, beginning with “building phonemic awareness, which helps discriminate sounds in English, and then moving on to learning the relationship between the sounds and letters in order to decode words” (Shin & Crandall, 2019, p. 189). Meanings start from individual letters which are then constructed together into words, sentences so as ultimately to deliver significant meanings (Adams, 1990). Educators who utilise this approach in the classroom

concentrate on building phoneme and word recognition in order to lead the students towards an understanding of meaning (Brown, 2007). In this model, it is believed that learning to read demands understanding that speech sounds are represented by print which is considered as a code (Macmillan, 1997). This is the underpinning of the phonics approach that was discussed earlier in Section 2.3.2.1 (Nunan, 2015; Pardede, 2008).

2.2.2.2 Top-down Reading Model

The second model, the top-down approach, is also known as the whole language approach (Prasad, et al., 2016) and was proposed by Goodman (1976). In contrast to the bottom-up approach, this model involves the process in reverse, from the whole to the components. Phonics is not commonly considered as an element in this approach (Trepanier, 2009) because the aim is to “make sense of written language rather than sounding out the print” (Smith, 1994, p. 2). This model also focuses on the readers’ roles in which the reader’s reading objectives and expectations are taken into account (Grabe & Stoller, 2001). Readers in the top-down approach are therefore not text-bound because pictures in the text and previous knowledge are deemed useful to attain meaning from the reading materials. Prior knowledge is also employed for readers to compare the currently-read text with what is previously known (Manzo and Manzo, 1995, p. 16). Smith (1994) also argued that to verify what is delivered from the text, readers sample the text rather than read each single word in the text. In this model, reading also involves the process of linking information in the text with the knowledge that readers bring to the reading action (Pardede, 2008). In short, it involves a dialogue between reader and text in which readers’ background knowledge is taken into account to create the meaning of the text (Tierney & Pearson, 1981). This model is also described as “a psycholinguistic guessing game [which] involves an interaction between thought and language... selecting the fewest, most productive cues necessary to produce guesses which are right the first time” (Goodman, 1967, p. 127). The Look-and-Say or whole word, approach introduced in Section 2.3.2.2 is a reading approach associated with the top-down model (Maddox & Feng, 2013; Nofiandari, 2016; Soler, 2016).

2.2.2.3 Interactive Reading Model

The interactive reading model is the third reading model explained by Shin & Crandall (2019). Chall (1967), author of *Learning to Read: The Great Debate*, sought to cut through the debate between bottom-up (phonics) and top-down (whole word) approaches to teaching reading to young students by combining the two into a single approach (Baumann, Hoffman, Moon & Duffy-Hester, 1998). This model is referred to, variously, as balanced reading instructions (Gunderson, 2009), the balanced literacy approach (Shin & Crandall, 2019) or the interactive reading model (Nunan, 2015).

According to Gunderson (2009), the label ‘balanced reading’ was established in the mid-1990s by researchers who understood that characteristics of both phonics and whole-language instructions were useful to learners. Present day academics recommend utilising an interactive reading model that suggests readers employ both bottom-up and top-down processing skills at the same time during the reading process in learning second languages (Shin & Crandall, 2019). Such a process employs both schematic knowledge and decoding skills at the level of the letter or word to understand text (Herrera, Perez & Escamilla, 2015). The approach has been suggested by many researchers and practitioners of ESL reading for young students (Hakimi et al., 2014; Pardede, 2008; Shin & Crandall, 2019) because it is believed to be the best way to facilitate young students to read successfully (e.g. National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000; Hakimi et al., 2014) and assists in reducing reading difficulties (August & Shanahan, 2006). Teachers are advised “to be sure to take a balanced literacy approach that helps” young students develop both their “bottom-up and top-down processing skills” (Shin & Crandall, 2019, p. 190).

In the interactive model, both the bottom-up and the top-down processes should be happening at all stages at the same time. The reader may utilise the bottom-up process as a foundation to understand the words in a text and then switch to the top-down process to accomplish higher-level understanding of the meaning (Zakaluk, 1996).

Hakimi et al. (2014) proposed that the interactive reading model should be utilised when teaching reading to young English learners in Iran. From their study, they discovered that the use of phonics

and look-and-say techniques together improved the reading development of young students. Conversely, depending too much on one technique alone may cause problems for young ESL readers (Pardede, 2008). Another study, by Prasad et al. (2016), exploring teachers' opinions of the reading models used in the ESL reading classroom in Malaysia, revealed that the study participants recommended including the whole word approach (or look-and-say) alongside phonics so as to support young ESL students' reading development. Similar findings were reported by Apandi and Nor (2019) in their study; teachers of struggling ESL readers in Malaysian classrooms believed that the use of both phonics and whole words together serves to reinforce students' progress in reading.

2.2.2.4 Schema Theory

Besides the three reading models stated earlier, schema theory is another theory related to cognitive perspectives of reading. This theory is considered to be closely associated with the top-down reading model. In schema theory, both background knowledge and past knowledge about the formation of texts are deemed important to comprehend a text (Aebersold & Field, 1997). According to Pardede (2008), in schema theory, one's knowledge and past experiences related to the world is necessary to interpret text. Schemes are defined by Smith (1994) as the "extensive representations of more general patterns or regularities that occur in our experience" or our "pre-existent knowledge of the world" (Cook, 1989, p. 69). Mokotedi (2012) further explained that prior knowledge or existing ideas about the world kept in mental images are denoted as schema. Every one of us carries mental representations of typical circumstances that we have encountered in our heads (Urquhart & Weir, 1998). For example, "one's generic scheme of an airplane will allow him to make sense of an airplane he has not previously flown with" (Pardede, 2008, p. 7). In other words, one's previous experience will be associated with new experiences which may incorporate the knowledge of "objects, situations, and events as well as knowledge of procedures for retrieving, organising and interpreting information" (Kucer, 1987, p. 31). Besides that, it is also argued that "a reader comprehends a message when he is able to bring to mind a schema that gives account of the objects and events described in the message" (Anderson, 1994, p. 469). To understand, the process involves "activating or constructing a schema that provides a coherent explanation of objects and events mentioned in a discourse" (Anderson, 1994, p. 473). The

interaction between old and new information is a process involved in comprehension (Anderson & Pearson, 1988, p. 38). Stott (2001) has claimed that, due to insufficient schema, some second language readers might have problems forming these relationships between background knowledge and text before, while and after reading. Enhancing schemata necessitates students to enhance new knowledge and add information to the present one. Schema therefore need to be constructed and stimulated throughout the process of reading (Aebersold & Field, 1997; Urquhart & Weir, 1998), which can be done by using multiple clues including pictures, book headlines or descriptions and having discussions with students that align with their cultural background so as to assist them process the text (Harmer, 2007; McDonough, 1995).

It is suggested that by dividing a lesson into three stages, pre-, while and post-reading, teachers can invent activities that help develop students' comprehension (PDST, 2014). Pre-reading activities aim to assist students to have the relevant schema and to identify students' prior knowledge. Among the recommended activities that can be utilised are: predicting the topic of the text; discussing the topic and introducing vocabularies relevant to the text, especially for new or difficult words; talking about the pictures; and modelling the right reading approach. (Caddy, 2015; Pardede, 2018). During reading, it is suggested that teachers model fluent reading, encourage students to read fluently, develop students' comprehension of the text by asking questions, encourage the use of new words and discuss about the text (Caddy, 2015). These activities aim to assist students to become active readers. In the post-reading stage, teachers are recommended to ask students to read particular sections or sentences fluently to respond to questions, and to ask students to talk about significant events and their personal views by including the new vocabularies they have learnt (Caddy, 2015).

2.2.3 Sociocultural Perspectives of Reading

Another perspective for looking at how children learn to read is from the sociocultural perspective. This view widens one's understanding of the reading process further than "linguistic skills to decode the printed page" and positions the process of reading "within a context that is bound by both cultural and social practices" (Shin & Crandall, 2019, p. 190).

2.2.3.1 Social Constructivist Theory

Social constructivist theory has been renowned in the study of sociocultural influence research related to reading (Gaffney & Anderson, 2000). Lev Vygotsky, the Russian psychologist, is regarded as the father of social constructivism (Yang & Wilson, 2006). The increasing influence of the social constructivism perspective on education in general, and on literacy studies in particular, has been palpable (Au, 1998; Azman, 2016). It is argued that studies of second and foreign language learning has also increasingly been framed by the social constructivist theory of learning (Yang & Wilson, 2006). Unlike behaviourism, which considers children to be passive learners who are knowledge receivers (Roopnarine & Johnson, 2000), social constructivist theory believes that knowledge is built in the children's minds and that the interpretation of the knowledge occurs subjectively (May, 2000). Social constructivism advocates one's own cognitive orientation (Poplin, 1995) or individual construction as being a meaning-maker in learning (Oldfather, West, White & Wilmarth, 1999). The fundamental idea of social constructivism is that human beings bring together their knowledge by actively participating in their learning (Lee, 2016; Schunk, 2008). As such, it is vital to understand, from their own perspectives, the experiences of students who go through reading activities or instructions. In addition, it is necessary to understand that knowledge construction occurs between individuals and social environments (Vygotsky, 1978). In other words, the origins of students' knowledge are dependent on the interactions with their environments and other individuals before the internalisation process happens (Roth, 1999). Such an internalisation of the experience would lead to advanced thinking (Lawton, 2017) or cognitive growth (Wiggs, 2012).

A few highlights have been discussed within the framework of social constructivism in relation to students' learning. First, Vygotsky's (1978) ideas emphasise the cognitive process that happens within the cultural and social situation (Au, 1998; Cooper, 2017; Sivan, 1986). According to social constructivist theory, "knowledge is a social product, and learning is a social process" (Pritchard & Woolard, 2010 p. 9). Street (1995) further asserted that engaging with literacy is a social act right from the onset; in essence, "the development of literacy is shaped by the structure and organisation of the social situations in which that literacy is practised" (Blackledge, 2001, p. 56).

Students' skills and abilities are not seen as "original and constitutive realities, but rather as effects that have become gradually constituted through exchanges taking place in a multi-leveled, inter-relational context" (de Castro, 2013, p. 101). Students' social environments therefore play a big role in generating knowledge, in that interactions among social group members facilitate knowledge construction (Alawiyah, 2014; Amineh & Asl, 2015; Schunk, 2012). This is because it is believed that "understanding, significance, and meaning are developed in coordination with other human beings" (Amineh and Asl, 2015, p. 13). Vygotsky has further asserted that:

"[E]very function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57).

Learning is ultimately a social phenomenon that occurs within the environment that students belong to through communication with people or objects (Kim, 2001) and "the opportunities that learners have, impacts on how literacy is achieved" (Pillay, 2018, p. 35).

With regard to reading, "the social context affects when you read, what you read, where you read, who you read with, and why and how you read" (Wilson & Lianrui, 2007, p. 52). Since learning takes place with members of society and does not happen on an individual basis, what the students learn and how they make sense of knowledge is influenced by where and when they are learning (Yang & Wilson, 2006). As such, "a higher mental function, such as literacy, is an aspect of human behavior" that must be studied in the social, cultural and historical context within which it transpires, as advocated by Vygotsky (Au, 1998, p. 300). The importance of social context has also been underscored to facilitate an explanation of students' successes and failures in their literacy education (Pritchard & Woollard, 2010; Gun & Wyatt-Smith, 2011). This context includes the functions of family members, friends and teachers in facilitating learning which affects children's achievements (Moll, 1990; Ebrahimi, 2015). Moll (1990) has examined the role of this immediate social context in great detail, breaking that context down into the function of educators, friends, and family members in facilitating learning, the dynamics of teaching and learning in the classroom, and the arrangement of the structures within which students learn.

In respect to students' cognitive development, Vygotsky (1987) placed emphasis on two types of concepts, namely everyday concepts and scientific concepts. The first concept is obtained informally through daily life, while the second concept, which is also known as academic knowledge, is obtained formally through school experience. Crucially, both concepts work to develop each other. It has been argued that studies which employ social constructivism as a framework seek to restructure the literacy learning experiences at school to facilitate students in attaining academic knowledge so that the academic knowledge that children are expected to acquire is built up from everyday concepts or personal experiences (Au, 1998). Similarly, this connection works also in the opposite direction, namely that "students may gain insights into their own lives through the application of academic knowledge" in their daily life (Au, 1998, p. 300).

The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) that assists students' cognitive functions is another important element in social constructivism. According to Vygotsky, ZPD is the "difference between the child's actual level of development and the level of performance that he achieves in collaboration with the adult" (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 209). Pritchard and Woolard (2010) further detailed ZPD as the:

level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. . . What children can do with the assistance of others might be in some sense even more indicative of their mental development than what they can do alone (pp. 14-15).

The ZPD explains the concept of individual learning, with and without support from a more knowledgeable person. It has been argued that students' level of thinking is enhanced through social interactions. Students will make progress if they are facilitated to advance just beyond their current level of knowledge (Pritchard & Woollard, 2010).

Scaffolding is a concept closely associated with ZPD in Vygotsky's social constructivist theory (Yang & Wilson, 2006). Scaffolding is likened to a structure that is erected to hold up a partially constructed building. Once the building has enough strength, the supporting structure can be taken away. Vygotsky (1978) referred to scaffolding as the assistance offered by other people such as parents, teachers, friends and reference sources like dictionaries. Such types of support may allow students to achieve more in the learning process (Yang & Wilson, 2006).

Although no strong indicators are understood with respect to motivation in social constructivist theory, the question of what motivates learning has been observed to be well-matched with the theory (Sivan, 1986; Au, 1998). One of the associations cited by Sivan (1986, p. 216) was a “discussion of context and cultural issues that influence motivation and how motivation is shown”. In so far as the social constructivist perspectives directs researchers to explore the ways in which culture influences individuals’ opinions, emotions and actions, motivation may also be perceived as a cultural construction (Sivan, 1986). From that basis, young students’ motivations are principally influenced by people concerned in or connected to their English learning, including parents, teachers and friends, and learning in the classroom setting, such as learning activities and teaching instructions or other related factors (Harmer, 2007; Li, Han & Gao, 2019).

2.2.4 Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Model of Human Development

Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory was proposed by Urie Bronfenbrenner, a developmental psychologist who was interested in “supporting the development of children and families so that all children would have opportunity to grow up healthy and competent” (Shelton, 2019, p. 2). The origins of Bronfenbrenner’s ideas on human development were rooted in his doctoral thesis back in 1942. This conception was later particularised in his most prominent book entitled ‘The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design’ in 1979. Since then, the model has been adjusted and refined, broadly in three phases. While the first account of the theory in the 1970s focused on the functions of contexts in a child’s development, the second phase of the theory, approximately between 1980 and 1994, acknowledged the active functions of the child. The latest version of the theory, meanwhile, emphasises the interacting elements of Process–Person–Context–Time (PPCT) in relation to a child’s development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). Therefore, Tudge, Mokrova, Hatfield & Karnik (2009) suggest that researchers who utilise Bronfenbrenner’s ideas in their research need to indicate whether the earlier or the later model is used, and indeed which parts of the earlier or later model are applied.

A few scholars have been perceived to be influential in the development of Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). For instance, the view of children as active participants in their own experiences was drawn from Jean Piaget, especially

from his ideas expressed in his book: *The Construction of Reality in the Child* (1954). Additionally, the concept of the ecosystem was drawn heavily from the work of Kurt Lewin (1931, 1935, and 1938). In addition, Vygotsky has also contributed to Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, particularly in respect to the emphasis on the significance of learning contexts and individual learning development (Parrish, 2014). That said, Vygotsky's theory focuses much more on the role of communication in driving individuals' development (Hayes et al., 2017).

Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of human development positions the developing child as surrounded by four systems, or levels, which are structured from those nearest to the child, to those whose impact is indirect (Greene and Moane, 2000). This, in effect, situates the child as the fundamental point of the model, revealing how the child's learning experiences are affected by the contextual factors surrounding them (Bronfenbrenner, 1995; Krishnan, 2010). In other words, the theory suggests that children's development does not progress in isolation, but within a system of relationships that involves multiple individuals and parties (Krishnan, 2010). Specifically, while these social settings are often directly related to the children, such as the teacher, parents, family and friends, as parts of the microsystem, the theory also recognises the potential impacts of indirect settings, such as the various institutions and environments that form the exosystem and macrosystem (Palts & Kalmus, 2015).

Such a conception has been referred to by Bronfenbrenner as "a nested arrangement of structures, each contained within the next" (1979; p-22). Thus, this nested arrangement has to be investigated comprehensively in order to understand the dynamics surrounding a child's development. This "hierarchically organized system" (Krishnan, 2010, p. 6) can be depicted as in Figure 3 below.

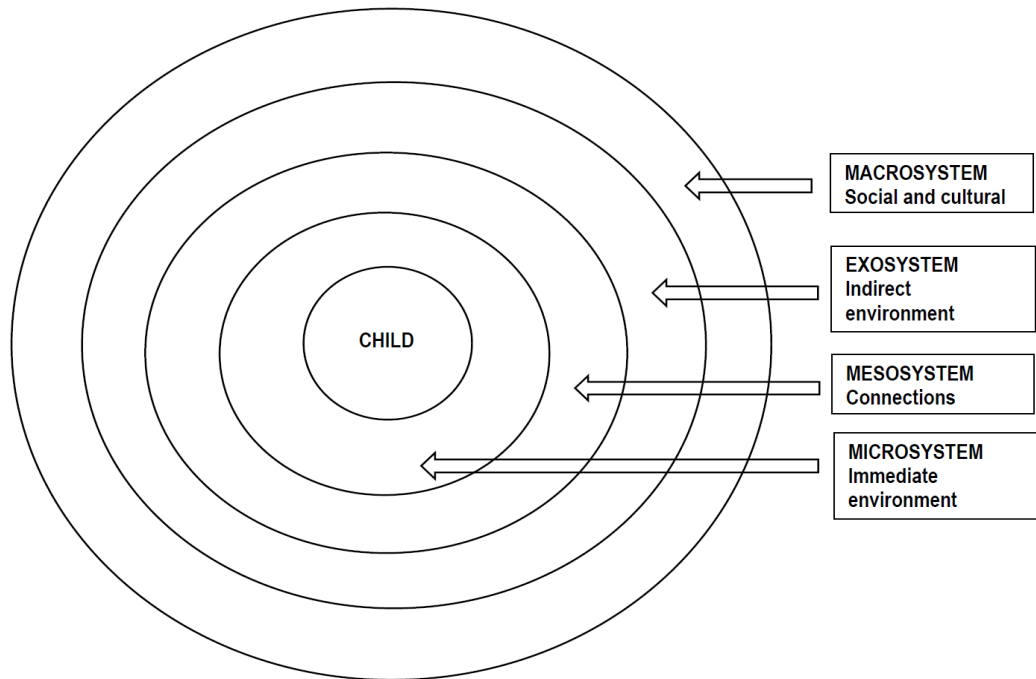


Figure 3: A summary of Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model of human development (adapted from Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Psychology Notes HQ, 2013; Stivaros, 2007).

As can be seen in the figure, Bronfenbrenner (1979) delineates four levels of ecological systems, which are also known as ‘onion rings’ (Cole, 1996, p. 84), to conceptualise the environments or settings affecting children’s development: microsystems, mesosystems, exosystems and macrosystems. The innermost ‘ring’ is the microsystem, which encompasses “systems of which the child is a member” (Frankel et al., 2015, p. 313). In essence, the microsystem involves individuals in the children’s immediate surroundings, such as parents, family members, teachers and other students (Jaeger, 2012) whom they meet, interact and spend a lot of time with (Thor, 2016). Since children as learners and their learning contexts are closely related (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) the microsystem has a strong direct influence on children’s experiences and development in learning.

The mesosystem can be defined as “the interrelations among two or more settings in which the developing person actively participates” (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 25) or, “a system of two or more microsystems” (Hayes et al., 2017, p. 15). The mesosystem, therefore, is a way of articulating

how “[A]n individual’s relationships in every setting are impacted by relationships in other settings in that individual’s life. There is . . . a chain of activity that individuals drag with them across microsystems” (Slesnick et al., 2007, p. 1238). For instance, the relationship between the child’s home and school. In this respect, researchers can identify “the communication, or lack of same, between home and school” (Frankel et al., 2015, p. 313).

Exosystems, meanwhile, are “one or more settings that do not involve the developing person as an active participant, but in which events occur that affect, or are affected by, what happens in the setting containing the developing person” (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 25), such as the parents’ workplace (Jaeger, 2012) education policy making (Ballam, 2013; Hayes et al., 2017; Stivaros, 2007) and others. In this respect, even though students are not directly involved in the interactions of the environment they can still be affected by what occurs within the settings.

Finally, “the outermost ring of the ecological environment is represented by the macrosystem” (Bronfenbrenner, 2005, p.47). The macrosystem represents the “consistencies, in the form of content lower-order systems that exist, or could exist, at the level of subculture or culture as a whole, along with any belief systems or ideology underlying such consistencies” (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 26). Krishnan further elaborates the macrosystem as “the societal blueprint that shapes all lower layers of ecosystems” (Krishnan, 2010 p. 8). Hayes et al. (2017) further provide examples such as “sociocultural beliefs about the value of” the children’s education (p. 16), or educational values and norms (Stivaros, 2007). While the macrosystem is the most distant source of ecological effect on children, that it can have a strong ultimate effect through its influence on all the other ecological layers is undeniable (Thor, 2016).

It has also been emphasised that, even though Bronfenbrenner (1989, 1999) stated that the versions of his theory from 1977 and 1979 had been changed, reviewed, and expanded, his theory was constantly (and clearly) ecological, emphasising the interconnection of person and context (Tudge, Gray & Hogan, 1997). Furthermore, “in none of his theory-related writings, even the earliest, did he focus exclusively on contextual factors.” (Tudge, Mokrova, Hatfield & Karnik, 2009, p. 199).

In other words, Bronfenbrenner from the outset, focused not just on the influence of context on individuals but also on how individuals themselves influence the other individuals and systems around them. This notion has, however, become more prominent and explicit in his theory in the 2000s. Recognising this, I include another element in Bronfenbrenner's model, namely "person". To relate the use of this concept to the context of my study, struggling readers as individuals are not just influenced by the contexts surrounding them but influence those contexts (especially others in the microsystem) in turn.

Overall, I was drawn to Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of human development (1979) because it offers a structure for interpreting the contexts influencing ESL struggling readers' learning experiences and development. While the theory has not been extensively used in research that is related to reading and writing (e.g. Frankel, Jaeger, Brooks & Randel, 2015), the dynamic relationship between the developing individual and the integrated, multilevel ecology of human development (Lerner, 2005, p. ix) that the theory constructs can be relevant in the context of understanding struggling readers' learning experiences (Jaeger, 2012).

Jaeger (2012) studied three vulnerable fourth grade readers, namely Bella, Sam and Ethan, who had experienced disruption of the ecological system supporting their literacy. The author argued that while Bronfenbrenner identified that children's literacy development is influenced by environmental factors, such as home and school settings and parental workplaces, and by factors such as gender differences and inequalities arising from race and class, components such as "texts, teachers, test publishers, language and culture" also affect development (Jaeger, 2012, p. 1).

The researcher conducted one-to-one and small group instruction as an intervention strategy with the children, with results revealing an improvement in the children's literacy throughout the intervention. A range of ecosystem elements (micro-, meso- and exo-system) also affected the children's literacy learning experience, all inside the greater macrosystem setting. For example, Bella was mainly influenced by the kinds of tasks utilised in the design of the study, by the scarcity of opportunities to use health care services, and by her position as an English learner. Sam, on the other hand, was positively impacted by the reading instructions, which were in a similar algorithmic style to that used in his preferred subject of mathematics, as well as by support from

his friends. Ethan, meanwhile, was positively influenced by the selection of text topics that interested him; although his development was challenged by his family's low economic status, which forced them to move from one place to another repeatedly. The author suggests that there is a need to establish a community of learners that reinforces risk-taking, offers help when required, and recognises success generously.

In this study, I focus on elements of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of human development (1979). Firstly my focus is on the significant individuals that surround the struggling readers in the microsystem, namely the parents and the teacher. Although the original components of the microsystem involve more parties than teachers and parents, such as neighbours and friends, in my opinion, for the young children who are the focus of this thesis, the large bulk of interactions occur in two settings; classroom and home. This is further supported by Hayes et al., (2017) who underscore the significance of both home and classroom learning environments for children's development. Furthermore, although this focus on the home and school contexts might not be sufficient to capture the full ecological system, it represents an achievable goal within the confines of PhD research (and that research in any case takes some account of influences from the other levels of the system, the meso-, exo- and macrosystems). Furthermore, "the innermost of these, referred to as the microsystem, is the one most familiar to psychologists" (Bronfenbrenner, 2005, p. 45), which reflects the importance attached to understanding the ways teachers and parents work with children in the classroom and at home, respectively. Secondly, I also look at the students themselves, drawing on the 'persons' component in Bronfenbrenner's theory to consider the influences from characteristics of these students to the contexts in which those students develop (Kainz & Vernon-Feargan, 2007). The dynamic interactions among children, teachers and parents can be represented by Kainz & Vernon-Feargan's (2007) so-called 'literacy ecology', as I have adapted in Figure 4 below.

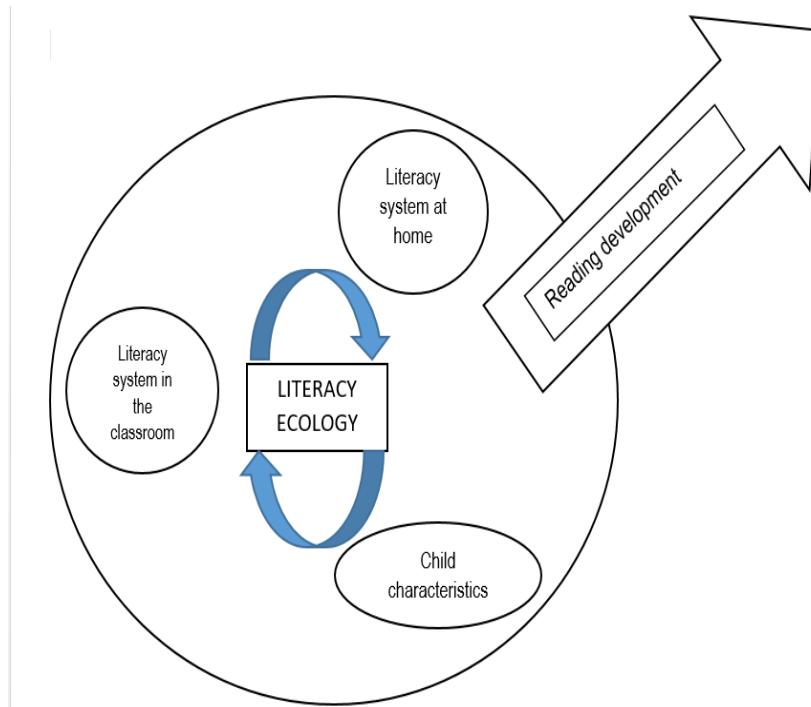


Figure 4: Reading development emerges from literacy ecology

Broadly, then, the thesis focuses on three constructs as influences on the learning experience of ESL struggling readers: i) the ways that the teacher works with the struggling readers in the classroom; ii) the ways parents work with their children at home, and; iii) students' individual characteristics and engagement with their ESL reading. These are illustrated in the conceptual framework in Figure 5 below. The subsequent sections of this chapter highlights the related theories that explain the struggling readers' learning experiences. Reviewing the pertinent literature will allow the succeeding chapters to position the findings of this study.

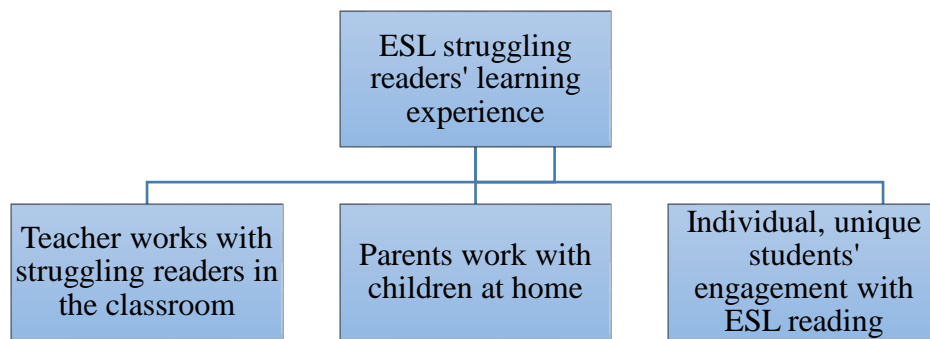


Figure 5: Conceptual framework of this study

2.2.5 Conclusion

This section has provided a discussion of the theoretical framework of this study. A combination of cognitive or psycholinguistic perspectives of language learning, sociocultural perspectives of language learning and Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model of human development have been used as lenses to understand the phenomenon in this study. Additionally, Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model of human development was also drawn upon to further understand children’s interactions within their surroundings, or the contextual elements that are interwoven within their development. Relevant aspects of the theories were taken and applied based on my understanding, in part derived from the literature review, and from my ability to link theory to aspects of this thesis in order to assist me in explaining ‘meaningful stories’ about the struggling readers’ learning experiences that I discovered in this study (Farnsworth, Kleanthous & Wenger-Trayner, 2016).

Having reviewed the theoretical literature relevant to this research, in the next section I will outline the literature related to how teachers address ESL reading, followed by the literature on parental involvement in supporting their children’s ESL reading.

2.3 Teacher-related Literature Review

In this section I will review pertinent literature on the teaching and learning of reading in the ESL classroom. The first sub-section explains briefly about reading; the second explores the literature

around instructional strategies; the third examines instructional materials and the final sub-section discusses the challenges that teachers face while working with ESL students.

2.3.1 Teaching Young Struggling ESL Learners

The teacher plays a significant role in students' reading development (Jose & Raja, 2011) through the implementation of various suitable instructional strategies in the classroom (Allington & Johnston, 2000). It is also believed that, "the principles of sound pedagogy as well as instructional techniques are closely related to the success and failure of language learning" (Murtiningsih, 2014, p. 27). While there is "no consensus on the most effective way to teach reading" (Mokotedi, 2012, p. 29), scholars agree that the choice of instructional strategy has an important influence on students in their reading (Morrison, Bachman & Connor, 2005; Mule, 2014; Snow et al., 1998). Some studies have been conducted to identify effective strategies for ESL students struggling in reading (e.g. Denton, Anthony, Parker & Hasbrouck, 2004; Jamaludin et al., 2016; Vaughn et al., 2006). These identify the following suggestions for teaching strategies to support outcomes among young ESL struggling students, including in respect to fluency and comprehension.

2.3.1.1 Explicit Teaching

Young ESL struggling readers' learning can be optimised when literacy skills are taught in a systematic and explicit way (Dubeck, Jukes & Okello, 2012; Gersten & Geva, 2003; Richards-Tutor, Baker, Gersten, Baker & Smith, 2015; PDST, 2014). Explicit instructions are also identified as direct instructions (Au, 2006; Archer & Hughes, 2011), suggesting that students are taught about the concept in a direct way with teachers modelling and demonstrating the concept to the students. When teachers utilise explicit teaching students do not have to infer the lessons that the teacher intends to deliver and can apply the concept taught independently (Au, 2006; Manset-Williamson & Nelson, 2005; Dubeck et al., 2012). The purpose of explicit teaching is also to offer the essential scaffolds students require to understand the concepts taught (Richards-Tutor et al., 2015). Explicit teaching is also explained as teaching and learning that employed focused and deliberate learning (Schmitt, 2008). For example, students' attention is drawn into characteristics of English that contrast with their native language (Fashola, Drum, Mayer & Kanget, 1996). The term systematic on the other hand is described as teaching students "in a sequence moving from easiest to most

difficult” (Dubeck et al., 2012, p. 49). According to Rosenshine (1987, p. 34), in a systematic method of teaching the emphasis is on “proceeding in small steps checking for student understanding and achieving active and successful participation by all students.”

2.3.1.2 Phonemic Awareness and decoding

Phonemes are the first reading component, referring to the smallest units comprising language that are spoken by people (National Reading Panel, 2000). Phonemic awareness is “the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate the individual sounds in spoken words” (MOE, 2015a, p. 22). It has been argued that phonemic awareness is the essential precursor to learning phonics efficiently (Savage, 2008). Phonics can be defined as a reading process that “correspondences between graphemes (letters) in written language and phonemes (sounds) in spoken language and how to use this correspondence to read and spell” (PDST, 2014, p.27). Children at the stage of just beginning to learn to read require the foundational skills of phonemic awareness and phonics (Vaughn et al., 2006). What teachers can do is to direct “children’s attention to the phonological structure of oral language and to the connections between phonemes and spellings” (Snow et al., 2008, p. 33). Students who notice the letters in separation that form words are taught the associated matching sounds. Subsequently, students are encouraged to read unfamiliar words by investigating the separate letters and sounds and blending the individual letters and sounds together (Snow et al., 2008). It has been argued, however, that students with issues in decoding skills might not be able to read fluently with phonics instructions, losing focus on comprehending the text (Hartney, 2011; Murray & Johnson, 1996; Pey, Min & Wah, 2014; Rasinki, Homan & Biggs, 2009).

2.3.1.3 Vocabulary Development

Developing students’ vocabulary serves to enrich and extend students’ knowledge of words (PDST, 2014). It is believed that developing students’ vocabulary also helps promote reading comprehension because, without adequate vocabulary, one is not able to acquire comprehension (Bartlett, 2017; Gunderson, 2009; Hartney, 2011; PDST, 2014; Shin & Crandall, 2019). Besides that, Gersten and Geva (2003) and Shin & Crandall (2019) have suggested that explicit and systematic vocabulary instruction is helpful for young ESL students. To this end, pre-teaching particular words and continually engaging the students with those words while reading is perceived

as helpful (Denton et al., 2004; Gersten & Geva, 2003). This can be done through meaningful discussions about those words with students (Gersten & Geva, 2003; Lesaux, Kieffer, Faller & Kelley, 2010) so as to integrate students' background knowledge and previous experience related to the words (Denton et al., 2004). Additionally, teachers need to provide opportunities for students to use the language, since young ESL students are more successful when they “receive meaningful exposure to language and plenty of opportunities to practice” (Shin & Crandall, 2019, p. 195). Teachers can encourage students to employ the words in sentences and to answer questions with the target words included as part of their answers (Hickman, Pollard-Durodola & Vaughn, 2006). Similarly, activities such as “crosswords, charades, sketching, and drawing to represent word meanings” (Baker et al., 2014, p. 21) can also be carried out by the teacher. Such activities aim to increase students' encounter and experiences with the words (Carlo et al., 2004; Lesaux et al., 2010). In essence, this rests on the belief that words and their definitions need to be taught in context and within the topic that they will be employed, instead of as isolated word lists and meanings (Au, 1993). Linking words are particularly important and activities such as a graphic organiser and word family associations can be used to illustrate how words are associated (Au, 1993; Baker et al., 2014). Apart from that, solid representations such as pictures, diagrams and video clips can make language that denotes abstract ideas more tangible (Baker et al., 2014).

2.3.1.4 Interactive Teaching

Students' attention needs to be secured and maintained throughout the reading lessons (Gersten & Geva, 2003). Teachers may need to amend activities to suit the needs of ESL struggling students so as to get them engaged with the learning and to extend their task behaviour (Gersten & Geva, 2003). Since children have short attention spans, they need to be exposed to a combination of appropriate activities through the course of teaching and learning sessions (Harmer, 2012; Shin, 2006). For instance, if a story-reading activity is utilised in a lesson, other activities such as those related to Total Physical Response (TPR), which promotes physical movement, can be used in tandem (Kırkgöz, 2018; Shin, 2006). Stories, songs, acting out and games are among the activities recommended by Scrivener (2010) as ways of helping young students to learn more effectively. A study by Lee (2015) revealed that when teachers of ESL struggling readers in the Malaysian classroom utilise phonics songs every day students' reading attainment is improved.

Scott and Ytreberg (1990) also recommended having a balance between activities conducted in the classroom. These include exercises which have both quiet and noisy activities, a mixture of individual, pair work, group work and whole class activities and teacher-student and student-student activities. Such an approach could possibly attract students' attention and increase the opportunities for learning to take place (Shin, 2006). The integration of writing activities within ESL reading lessons may also benefit young learners (Clay, 2001; Gersten & Geva, 2003). For example, the writing process facilitates students to write what they have verbalised and help form an association between oral and written language (Clay, 2001). According to Gersten and Geva (2003), an efficient teacher in their study utilised writing activities to strengthen the students' phonological and word attack skills. These activities included taking dictation, employing words in workbooks to build a graphic organiser and composing stories about one's individual life. It was discovered that the students appeared to love the activities that helped to illustrate their knowledge of phonics. In addition to that, Gersten and Geva (2003) further argued that another way to promote interactive teaching is by providing students with time to respond to questions posed in the lessons. Besides that, students' answers and thoughts shared in the classroom, as well as experiences known by the teacher, should be selected and incorporated into lessons (Gersten & Geva, 2003).

2.3.1.5 Promotion of English Language

Another aspect that is highlighted by Gersten & Geva is the promotion of English language while teaching reading to the children. This is supported by Harmer (2007) who mentioned that the "English-language classroom should have English in it, and as far as possible, there should be an environment in the room, where English is heard and used as much of the time as possible" (p. 38-39). During teaching and learning activities, gestures, facial expressions, actions and visual aids can be utilised to illustrate the meaning of the vocabularies (Baker et al., 2014; Gersten & Geva, 2003) which are taught in an explicit manner to promote the use of English language. In addition to that, providing a print-rich environment in the classroom as suggested by Harmer (2007) Shin and Crandall (2019) would also assist the promotion of English language. For example, by setting up a reading corner (Harmer, 2012) and putting up other suitable resources such as maps, a word wall and others (Shin & Crandall, 2019), teachers can engage the students with activities that are related to these printed materials, such as by updating the word wall as the students learn new words in the classroom.

2.3.1.6 Small Group Interactions

Small group instructional practice is also recommended while working with ESL struggling readers (Bokhari et al., 2015; Baker et al., 2014; Denton et al., 2004; Gersten & Geva, 2003; Richards-Tutor et al., 2016; Vaughn et al., 2006). The implementation of individual or small group instruction improves outcomes since students have more opportunity to interact with teachers, more time to practice, and receive more attention according to their individual needs (Richards-Tutor et al., 2016). Teachers can also check students' comprehension with the lessons by eliciting their responses. In two different studies by Bokhari et al. (2015) and Lee (2015), it was revealed that some of the teachers in the study would spend about ten minutes of each English lesson specifically with the struggling readers in the classroom of mixed-attaining students. A slight improvement was reported by the researchers when the students were taught in groups and they also appeared to be more interested when taught in small groups rather than as a whole class (Bokhari et al., 2015). In the same study by Bokhari et al., (2015), another teacher spent about twenty minutes every morning before the bell went to teach the struggling readers in a small group.

The above review illustrates some of the recommendations put forth by academics in relation to teaching reading to ESL struggling young students. The next sub-section explains more about reading approaches.

2.3.2 Reading Approaches

Two main reading approaches are discussed in this section, namely phonics and the look-and-say method.

2.3.2.1 Phonics

Phonics instruction is one of the major reading approaches that are applied by teachers in the ESL classroom (Hakimi, Abdorahimzadeh & Kargar, 2014; Nunan, 2015) which is derived from the bottom-up reading model (refer to section 2.5.1.1). This explicit approach is recommended by many practitioners as a beneficial method to teach reading to young English learners (Dubeck et

al., 2012; Shin & Crandall, 2019). Phonics can be defined as “a system of teaching reading that builds on the alphabetic principle, a system of which a central component is the teaching of correspondences between letters or groups of letters and their pronunciations” (Adams, 1990, p. 50). Phonics is widely utilised in reading classrooms because “awareness of speech sounds play an important role in reading development” (Gersten & Geva, 2003, p. 2003). Researchers also believe that phonological awareness is linked to reading achievement because “writing systems directly represent phonology” and “the segmental units in spoken sounds become better represented because the symbols are visual representations of phonological units” (Nag & Snowling, 2012, p. 17). Phonics instruction facilitates children to recognise, spell and read the words (Thompson, 1999). Dubeck et al. (2012) argue that students who do not grasp the concept of the relationship between sounds and letters will probably struggle in reading. Nunan (2015, p. 64) demonstrated how phonics works through the example of the word ‘cat’. The model begins with “matching individual letters of the alphabet with their corresponding sound and then blending these together to form words” (Nunan, 2015, p. 64). So, with ‘cat’, one needs to sound out each letter in the word ‘individually, ‘c’, ‘a’ and ‘t’ and then blend those sounds to construct the word.

Through this approach, students who learn English as a second language are able to acquire phonological awareness as quickly as first language users if suitable instructions are provided (Gersten & Geva, 2003). A study was undertaken in Malaysia to investigate the efficiency of phonics instructions to develop reading skills among ESL primary school struggling readers (Jamaludin et al., 2016). The findings revealed that students’ decoding and comprehension skills were enhanced after using the phonics method. Farokhbakht (2015) also revealed in her study that young EFL students in Iran who were exposed to phonics-based instruction had better reading achievement and higher motivations in ESL reading compared to students who were not exposed to this method.

The absence of phonics instruction in ESL reading lessons, on the one hand, will put the students at a disadvantageous position. A study by Dubeck et al. (2012) to identify instruction methods that teachers adopt in the Kenyan classroom incorporated the teachers’ thoughts on teaching reading, and methods employed in both Swahili and English reading lessons. The study found that teachers entirely utilised look-and-say instruction when teaching English to the young students because

they are not well-trained, the Grade 1 syllabus did not accommodate phonics as it is supposed to have been taught already in the kindergarten and thus was not included in their teaching materials. The researchers also discovered that those students using Swahili as their first language seemed more engaged in their Swahili class because teachers utilised phonics instruction. On the other hand, extensive dependency on the look-and-say approach seemed to have negative impacts on the young students' English literacy acquisition. Another study by Mokotedi (2012) revealed that teachers in their study believed that phonics is a good method to promote ESL young students' reading development. The teachers felt that they received insufficient training, however, therefore they had a lack of confidence to utilise phonics as a reading instruction in the classroom. Similar findings are evident in the study by Shafee (2019), who discovered that teachers in her study had insufficient training in applying phonics in the classroom. Dubeck et al. (2012) further asserts that abandoning teaching of the relationship between sounds and symbols will have a detrimental effect on reading development among young ESL students.

2.3.2.2 Look-and-Say Method

Apart from phonics, look-and say is another major approach that is employed in the ESL classroom (Nofiandari, 2016; Scott & Yterberg, 1990). Unlike phonics, which relies on letters and sounds, look-and-say is dependent on words and phrases. Look-and-say is also known as the whole language, whole word and sight word method (Maddox & Feng, 2013). This method is useful to teach young English readers through word recognition and memorisation (Scott & Yterberg, 1990). The method involves “teaching beginners to read by memorising and recognising whole words, rather than by associating letters with sounds” (Nofiandari, 2016, p. 19).

According to Nofiandari (2016), in the classroom practice, target words are shown to children and teachers sound the words out. Children then read after the teacher. The use of flashcards and pictures are necessary so that students can associate the words with their meaning. In order to make the method more effective, teachers can put the words into context. That is to say, to show how words are used in a sentence rather than teaching the words individually. For instance, teachers can describe pictures by using a sentence and reading it aloud to students while pointing to each word as the students read after the teacher.

Hakimi et al. (2014, p. 130) argues that look-and-say assists young ESL students to connect the “whole concepts in their mind with their symbolic representations in the form of whole words”. Materials such as flash cards consisting of pictures and words that describe the picture can be useful for students too. The authors also suggested that children start the lesson by introducing everyday words that the children are used to. Teachers can introduce a few new words every day. Several activities are suggested for use with the look-and-say method: for instance, word-picture matching, card object pointing and guessing games to support student recognition of a variety of words before a longer text reading activity takes place (Scott & Yterberg, 1990).

Nofiandari (2016) has illustrated a few advantages of using the look-and-say method. One such advantage is that the method is easily understood and practised because reading the whole word is more familiar to many parents than sounding out individual sounds. Students can also learn any words by using this method because not all words can be sounded out using phonics instruction. Studies by Budiana (2011), Nurnianti (2012) and Nofiandari (2016) conclude that the look-and-say method has successfully helped young ESL students improve their reading development.

The previous sub-section discusses about two main reading approaches namely phonics and the look-and-say method. The next sub-section explains about English language teaching method.

2.3.3 English Language Teaching Method

The next sub-section highlights the English language teaching methods that provide insights into language teaching and learning in the ESL classroom. Teachers can select from among a comprehensive range of teaching methods for students to learn the second language (Pardede, 2008). Since there is no definitive ‘best’ method in English language teaching (Harmer, 2012), a selection of teaching methods will be explained below on the basis of them being “either a) widely used, b) talked about a lot, or c) still have influence in modern teaching practice” (Harmer, 2012, p. 84).

2.3.3.1 Grammar Translation Method

According to Harmer (2012), for a long time, the Grammar Translation Method (henceforth GTM) has been a standard approach to language learning. The method conquered the field of foreign language teaching in Europe from the 1840s to the 1940s (Richards & Rodgers, 2002), with the aim of facilitating students to read and value foreign language literature (Larsen-Freeman, 2000, p. 11). This method “introduced the idea of presenting students with short grammar rules and word lists, and then translation exercises in which they had to make use of the same rules and words” (Harmer, 2007, p. 48). It is also believed that the “vocabulary and phraseology of a foreign language can be learnt through translating its meaning into the mother tongue and the teacher points out the grammatical point and rules” (Patel & Jain, 2008, p. 74). In GTM, the medium of instruction is the language spoken by the students as their mother tongue (Copland & Ni, 2019). GTM remains a relevant approach but needs to be applied carefully so as not to limit students’ opportunities to obtain natural language input, since this greatly assists students’ language acquisition (Harmer, 2007). One teaching technique that is connected to GTM is code switching where the first language is used to support the use of the second language in the learning classroom (Hamed, 2016; Josefsson, 2010; Simasiku, Kasanda & Smit, 2015).

2.3.3.1.1 Code Switching

Code switching can be defined as the application of additional language or code during a single speech occasion (Gumperz, 1982). Code switching is also explained as “a shift from one language to another by the speaker during the speech” (Fareed, Humayun & Akhtar, 2016, p. 1). Lin (2013) further explained that teachers who code switch in the language classroom utilise two languages which also generally serves as a translation method (Uys & van Dulm, 2011). Code switching is a regular practice in bilingual classrooms (Anselmo & Williams, 2012; Khaerunnisa, 2016), particularly with students who have minimal exposure to the target language (Yaacob, 2006). This is further supported by Shin (2006), who also argues that the use of students’ first language is appropriate for low proficiency students to encourage those students learning in English and by Lin (1996), who believed that code switching can be used as practice for underprivileged students in Hong Kong with restricted access to English resources.

Teachers recommend drawing on students' first language through code switching to gain benefits from "the wealth of linguistic and cultural knowledge that children bring to the classroom" (Kuchah, 2019, p. 83). This statement is also reinforced by other researchers who posit that the use of code switching in the classroom illustrates that students' linguistic repertoire could be utilised as an asset in the learning process (Nurhamidah, Fauziati & Supriyadi, 2018; Shin, 2006; Wei & Lin, 2019). Shin (2006, p. 6) also argues that the use of the first language is useful to explain difficult phrases such as "once upon a time" quickly and effectively with the hope that each time students come across the phrase, the students will identify the expression. Such a practice could save instructional time spent in the classroom.

Code switching is often discouraged, however, in an effort to ensure that students obtain as much exposure as possible to the target language. Code switching is not validated in the Malaysian classroom, for example, and teachers are encouraged to utilise only English in English lessons particularly when teaching young students (Low, 2016). In practice, however, "the use of a local language alongside the official language of the lesson is a well-known phenomenon (in Malaysia) and yet, for a variety of reasons, it is often lambasted as bad practice, blamed on teachers' lack of English-language competence... or put to one side and/or swept under the carpet" (Martin, 2005, p. 88). As Shin (2006) points out, the enforcement of an 'English only' approach risks making the teacher feel guilty when the first language is used and many studies do in fact support the use of code switching (Badrul & Kamaruzaman, 2009; Kamisah & Misyana, 2011; Then & Ting, 2011). Code-switching in fact "should not be considered as a sign of defect in the teacher" (Badrul & Kamaruzaman, 2009, p. 50). Moreover, Anyiendah (2017) argued that the constant use of English in the ESL primary classroom in Kenya made students anxious about participating in the classroom activity.

A few studies conducted in the ESL Malaysian primary classroom have revealed that code switching has been one of the teaching instructions utilised by the teacher (Yaacob, 2006; Azman, 1999; Maarof & Chen, 2016). Yaacob (2006) discovered that code switching was employed by the teacher in reading lessons for several reasons, such as: i) to check students' understanding on the lessons that are being taught; ii) to offer Malay equivalent of the English terms utilised; iii) to preview texts; and, iv) to provide explanations on the meaning of the words. In another study,

Azman (2006) investigated the ESL teaching instructions practised by teachers in Malaysian ESL classrooms through observing twenty primary school teachers in a rural area. Several reasons were given by the teachers for switching into their first language, Malay: i) to illustrate definitions of words, conceptions and ideas; ii) to describe rules of grammar; iii) to provide instructions on particular assignments or activities; iv) to provide motivations and encouragement to students; and, v) for classroom management so ESL lessons can be conducted more smoothly. In addition to that, the majority of teachers in the study by Maarof & Chen (2016) believed that code-switching is a useful technique to be applied in the ESL primary classroom. The technique is mainly utilised to assist low-attaining students understand the lessons being taught. Additionally, all the researchers recommend that teachers need to have knowledge about the effective use of code switching as one of the teaching techniques in the ESL classroom but not become too dependent on it (Yaacob, 2006; Azman, 2006; Maarof & Chen, 2016; Shin, 2006). This is further argued by Harmer (2007) who stated, “Although we have seen that the LI can be used as an enabling tool, English should predominate in an English lesson, especially where the teacher is concerned since, as we have seen, he or she is the best provider of comprehensible input that the students have got” (p. 39).

2.3.3.2 Direct Method

The Direct Method became widespread in response to the perception that the GTM is not very successful at getting students to employ the target language communicatively (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). The Direct Method is also identified as a natural method with underlying assumptions that the learning processes for a second language are similar to those for a first language (Richards & Rodgers, 2002). In this method, translation is not utilised (Diller, 1978) and the target language is employed as the only medium of instruction. In other words, the native language is not used. The direct method also advocates the belief that students can comprehend a language through listening to a huge amount of that language. Conversely, speaking is also acquired through frequently speaking the language (Rivers, 1968). Since there is no translation the meaning of the target language learned is expressed by using action and demonstration (Richards & Rodgers, 2002). Besides that, teachers can use pictures or other visual support to facilitate students linking the target language and its meaning. Communication is also the aim of this method and thus vocabulary is prioritised over grammar (Larsen-Freeman, 2000) and learned through full sentences

and not through memorising words separately (Mamun, 2015). Grammatical structures are found out by students inductively in the text that they read (Richards & Rodgers, 2002). Among the activities involved in the Direct Method are “reading aloud, question and answer exercise, getting students to self-correct, conversation practice, fill-in-the blank exercise and dictation” (Larsen-Freeman, 2000, pp. 30-31).

2.3.3.3 Audio-Lingual Method

This method arose in the United States around the end of the 1950s, when the teaching and learning of foreign languages became increasingly popular. In this method it is argued that the development of listening and speaking should come before reading and writing (Rivers, 1968). Harmer (2012, p. 84) stated that the audio-lingual method (henceforth ALM) places a lot of emphasis on speaking practice for students by utilising “habit-formation drills”. In this method, sentences are repeated time and again until they are learnt by heart. The method employs an approach to language learning related to a “stimulus-response-reinforcement” (Harmer, 2012, p. 84). In this respect, a teacher’s prompt is considered as the stimulus that will incite responses from students such as a sentence, and such a response is boosted by rewards including praise from the teacher or the feeling of satisfaction. If the procedure is repeated frequently, some believe that language can be acquired. Harmer (2007) argued, however, that the ALM focuses mainly at the sentence level with little focus given to language in any type of real life setting. The highlight is on accuracy and “habit-formation through constant repetition of correct utterances” which is strengthened by positive reinforcement (Harmer, 2007, p. 64)

Among the teaching techniques applicable in the ALM are demonstration, dramatisation, mimicking, verbal examples and graphical representations (Mukatel, 1998). Additionally, activities such as “dialog memorization, repetition drill, chain drill, single-slot submission drill, multiple-slot submission drill, transformation drill, question and answer drill, complete the dialog, grammar game” have also become part of ALM-related activities (Larsen-Freeman, 2000, p. 40). Accurate pronunciation, stress, rhythm and intonation are also emphasised. The teacher plays a significant role in modelling good examples of language practice for students to follow (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). As mentioned above, one method that is pertinent to the ALM is drilling. This is explained next.

2.3.3.3.1 Drilling

Drilling is a learning approach that has long been adopted by educators in second language classrooms. The method puts an emphasis on “repeating structural patterns through oral practice” (Swanto & Din, 2014, p. 74). Harmer (2007, pp. 272-273) defines drilling as “a technique where the teacher asks students to repeat words and phrases, either in chorus or individually”. In drilling, the teacher plays a dominant role in modelling the language, regulating the direction and speed of the lesson and observing and correcting students’ mistakes. This means that teachers need to pay special attention to their English pronunciation as young students are good imitators (Shen, 2006). In contrast, students may have little control over the speed, content and method of learning: interaction is mainly initiated by the teacher (Richards & Rodgers, 2002).

A number of academics argue that drilling benefits students if the method is applied effectively (Basuki, 2018; Heward, 2003; Liu, 2006; Richards & Rodgers, 2002; Swanto & Din, 2014) and the method can also represent a fun classroom activity (Higa, 2002; Yuwanda, 2017). Richards and Rodgers (2002) also suggest that the method itself cannot be claimed to be intrinsically ineffective unless teachers are properly trained to apply it in the classroom. It is further suggested that there is “no magic which eliminates the need for repetition and drill” (Patel & Jane, 2008, p. 160).

Authors have also suggested, however, that having that practice alone will not result in effective teaching. Drilling, therefore, needs to be supplemented by the use of flashcards, realia and other materials to make it more interesting (Celce-Murcia, 2001; Higa, 2002; Liu, 2006), as well as by suitable rewards and encouragement (Harmer, 2007).

Other scholars argue that drilling is an outdated and dull style that can bore students and inhibit real learning (Swanto & Din, 2014). Harmer (2007) also claims that the perceived drawback of drilling is that students may receive non-real and unnatural language use. Teachers, therefore, need to make a judgment on when to stop using the method as doing the activity for too long may detract from its usefulness. Harmer (2007) argued that drilling activities that last for half an hour can drain

students and teachers and that, therefore, teachers need to include a variety of activities in lessons in addition to drilling.

Drilling can be utilised in different ways (Lamsal, 2011, p. 14) including:

- a. Chorus level: The chorus level requires teachers to initiate the session by saying the words, phrases or sentences, with the whole class repeating after the teacher;
- b. Semi-chorus level: In this level the teacher splits the class into two groups and carries out the drilling group by group (in turn);
- c. Group level: The teacher splits the class into a few groups and carries out the drilling group by group (in turn);
- d. Row level: The drill is carried out by taking rows of students sequentially;
- e. Pair level: Normally, the teacher conducts a pair drill when practising parts of dialogues, questions and answers; and
- f. Individual level: The teacher can also drill individual students.

Drilling has long been the subject of criticism (Copland & Ni, 2019), yet is still persistently utilised by many (Arıkan, 2011; Hall, 2018). For instance, Harmer (2007) found that whole class drilling is regularly utilised with students in low attainment classes and found to be beneficial. Drilling is also utilised to practise students' language pronunciation, intonation and stress (Lamsal, 2011; Project Trust, 2016). According to Harmer (2012), drilling helps students to become familiarised with the target language and the method is beneficial for beginner learners.

Research in the ESL Malaysian primary classroom suggests that drilling is a technique that is commonly used by teachers (Lee, 2015; Md-Ali, Karim & Yusof, 2016; Yaacob, 2006). For example, a group of teachers agreed that drilling is a technique that is useful to teach primary school students reading because they believed that students learn more when they hear more (Md-Ali et al., 2016). Similarly, the study by Lee (2015) revealed that the teachers used drilling as one technique in the classroom by reading the words in the school book that is loaned to all students. In addition, drilling was also carried out by asking students to read and spell out the words that are put as name tags that the students need to wear every day. Conversely, Yaacob (2006), who examined how reading lessons are carried out by teachers in the Year 1 Malaysian ESL classroom,

discovered that it was utilised as a whole class method, in groups or led by students identified as more able readers by the teacher. From the interviews, several reasons were mentioned by the teacher for using the method. Among these were to manage the large classroom more efficiently, to assist weak students and those who had insufficient exposure in English, to make students speak up, to help students' pronunciation, to increase students' confidence, to model the language and to help students remember the words. The authors of these three studies also believed that teachers need to know about the effective ways of applying the technique in the ESL classroom because heavy dependence on drilling might impede students from learning a second language efficiently (Lee, 2015; Md-Ali, et al., 2016; Yaacob, 2006).

2.3.3.4 Communicative Language Teaching

The Communicative Language Teaching (henceforth CLT) method began to emerge in the language learning field in the 1970s to replace the older methods like GTM and ALM (Richards, 2006). Harmer (2012) stated that CLT highlighted the notion that language is acquired when people are provided with opportunities to utilise that language, in addition to the students' desire to interact and when students have a communicative goal and are not merely practising grammar items. The emphasis of CLT, therefore, is on content rather than form. As stated by Harmer (2007), two main principles underlie the CLT method. First, language does not only revolve around grammatical patterns with vocabulary inserted in. Instead, language has functions such as "inviting, agreeing and disagreeing, suggesting" and others (Harmer, 2007, p. 50) that students need to accomplish through a range of language exponents. This method also focuses on the way people utilise the language, for example in formal or informal situations; as such, it does not centre on the language alone. Second, CLT proposes that students have to get sufficient exposure to a language, and opportunities to employ the language that align with students' desires and motivations. Activities are communicative since teaching and learning emphasis is placed on how students can utilise the language suitably in a communicative way rather than teaching grammatical structures (Richards, 2006). In this method, teachers serve as the facilitator and observe the process of learning between all students. This is in contrast to other methods which places teachers as the controllers to model and correct students' speech and writing (Breen & Candlin, 1980; Richards, 2006). In addition to emphasis on the communicative aspect, CLT focuses on learning through "pair work activities, role plays, group work activities and project

work” (Richards, 2006, p. 5) which aligns with the learner-centred approach (Brown, 2000). Through small group activities students have the opportunity to communicate by practising meaningful and genuine language. Authentic materials can also be used to facilitate students’ learning processes (Richards, 2006).

The preceding sub-section has explained the various methods used to teach a second language, in accordance with relevant literature drawn from various scholars. The characteristics and possible advantages and disadvantages of the various methods were outlined. The next sub-section will explain the different instructional materials that can be utilised in the classroom.

2.3.4 Uses of Instructional Materials

“Materials are an important component within the curriculum and are often the most tangible and ‘visible’ component of pedagogy” (Nunan, 1991, p. 227). They are perceived as one prominent element to support teaching and learning of reading in the ESL classroom (Biswas, 2018; McGrath, 2013; Nurliana, 2019; Snow et al., 1998). Materials are described as supplementary aids which facilitate teaching and learning in the classroom including commercial, teacher-made and government-prescribed materials (Ghosn, 2019). Materials assist the students to feel attached (Winke, 2005) and motivated (Patel & Jain, 2008) to the target language learned. Students’ learning opportunities can also be maximised through activities organised by the teacher using quality materials (Kizildag, 2009). Instructional materials, also known as teaching aids, provide different ways in which lessons can be effectively delivered (Amadioha, 2008; Kundu, 2017; Patel & Jain, 2008). Teachers have the responsibility to exploit the materials to suit students’ needs and to help develop students’ English learning and literacy skills (Harmer, 2012; Widodo & Savova, 2010). The materials also need to be easy to deal with, that is to say that they do not affect classroom control negatively (Harmer, 2012; Patel & Jain, 2008).

Many recommendations have been put forth with regards to what constitutes good materials in English Language teaching to young students (e.g. Ghosn, 2019; Harmer, 2012; Shin, 2006). In brief, materials need to acknowledge students’ contextual and cultural backgrounds so that they become familiar with the lessons, and find them meaningful and relevant to their own lives and experiences (Richard-Amato, 1998; Shin, 2006; Watt & Foscolos 1998). This is due to the fact

that one's comprehension is influenced by one's background knowledge which functions as an enabling factor that is useful to connect with the instructional content of the lessons (Bartlett, 2017; Shin & Crandall, 2019)

Students' proficiency level and age are also among the things that need to be considered (Ghosn, 2013; Harmer, 2012; Shin, 2006). This is because young students may have limited experience or exposure with the target language (Shin, 2006). The content and expectations of the materials must therefore align with the students' age and level (Ghosn, 2019). Materials also need to be interesting (Ghosn, 2019; Richard-Amato, 1998; Shin, 2006) to get students engaged with the reading activities (Watt & Foscolos 1998). Several materials are commonly used in the ESL young students' classroom and are recommended for their benefits. Within the scope of this study, I choose to review a few materials relevant to my research findings. These are media (Brinton, 2001; Harmer, 2001), textbook and reading texts (Harmer, 2012) and high frequency word lists (Shin & Crendall, 2019).

2.3.4.1 Media

There are two types of media used in the language classroom as explained by Brinton (2001, p. 462), namely non-technical and technical media. On the one hand, non-technical media refers to resources that do not require electricity, apart from having characteristics such as being user friendly, easy to access, inexpensive and available for use in most classroom settings. Technical media, on the other hand, are pricier and less user-friendly than non-technical media because they require some skill to handle particular equipment. Media is also regarded as visual aids (Patesan, Balagiu & Alibec, 2018), and are perceived as exceptionally vital for young students learning in the language classroom (Imaniah & Nargis 2017). Many benefits are identified from incorporating visual materials into the language lesson. For example, they can help to explain either abstract ideas such as prepositions (e.g. above and opposite) or non-abstract concepts such as parts of the body (Imaniah & Nargis, 2017). They can also help describe complex knowledge in a comprehensible way, attract and maintain students' attention and motivate them to take part in the learning (Patesan et al., 2018). Language teachers need to utilise a combination of both technical

and non-technical media to deliver teaching and learning successfully in the ESL classroom (Brinton, 2001).

Examples of non-technical media include pictures, flash cards and paper strips (Harmer, 2012). These items are significant in ESL classrooms as they offer many benefits. Teachers can use pictures to explain definitions of words (Syandri, 2015) and students can understand the information more easily than in their absence (Harmer, 2012; Syandri, 2015). Zewary (2011, p. 2) further believes that pictures assist students to unite their first language and “the target language objects, concepts, and experiences”, thus assisting them to connect what they already know with new things that they learn. Additionally, students can keep information in their mind better if the concept taught by the teacher is attached to mental descriptions. This is highlighted by Canning-Wilson (2001) who proposed that seeing precedes thinking. The use of pictures also favours students with visual inclination in relation to their multiple intelligences (Harmer, 2007).

According to Harmer (2012), the teacher can hold pictures or cards so that students can see them. The items are useful to represent words that are introduced in the language classroom and can be used as a prompt in drilling activities and when seeking responses from students. Pictures and cards should be big enough to be seen by all students and cards need to be small enough for the teacher to put them up in different learning series and change them from one hand to the other if necessary. Teachers can use cards with a picture on one side and a word that describes the picture on the other side. A few activities can be used with pictures and cards, including describing and drawing, matching games, guessing games, and information gap activities. Paper strips, in contrast, can be used in rearranging sentence activities. Teachers can cut up the sentences and guide students to arrange the jumbled words in the correct order.

Examples of technical media include tablet computers (Harmer, 2012) and televisions (Brinton, 2001) that can help display videos comprising TV shows, movies and YouTube clips (Zewary, 2011) that are retrieved from the Internet and from CDs and DVDs (Harmer, 2012) in the language classroom by projecting them onto the screen. Young students these days are surrounded by technology in their daily lives and they may expect to have an encounter with such a tool in the classroom too (Brinton, 2001). Videos can help increase young students’ motivations to learn and

encourage them to learn new words (Ramirez-Garcia, 2012) in which teachers can choose appropriate video content to meet the students' levels, needs and interests (Shrosbree, 2008). Video can be presented in sections (Snelson and Perkins, 2009) or in one piece (Tomalin, 1991). This can be done by displaying the video between 30 seconds to 4 minutes at a time so that students do not lose focus (Tomalin, 1991). In addition to that, the use of audiobooks and interactive tablet applications could enhance reading instruction. These materials also encourage a balance between top-down and bottom-up methods (Shin & Crandall, 2014).

2.3.4.2 Textbooks

Textbooks are a significant tool employed by teachers in the ESL classroom (Mukundan & Aziz, 2009; Nurliana, 2019). A textbook is largely pre-determined and designed for a specific socio-cultural background (Zewary, 2011). According to Arnold and Rixon (2008), a textbook is either prescribed for every classroom level by the government or picked by schools from the selection of textbooks on the market or from a list approved by the government. A textbook that is appropriately prepared benefits both teacher(s) and students in a number of ways. Apart from providing a complete manual for the teacher through its course outline (Harmer, 2001), a well-designed textbook also saves the teacher's time in planning the lessons by providing multiple learning foundations or ideas for teachers (Halliwell, 2006; Richards, 2001).

Teachers need to utilise textbooks skilfully in the classroom, however, since some negative effects of using a textbook have been identified. For example, the content may not be suitable to the students' needs (Richards, 2001). Harmer (2012) recommends that following a textbook religiously word-by-word without varying the approach may result in students becoming disengaged. Harmer (2012) also believes that the textbook can serve as a foundation for a conversation about the topic learned. Although textbooks can be substituted with other materials deemed more suitable, a better option is that of the teacher adapting the lessons in the textbook by presenting their own material related to the topic. The teacher can also rewrite part of the textbook and simplify the content or employ their own questions (Harmer, 2012). In general, therefore, textbooks should be utilised together with additional teaching materials to aid the teaching of ESL students (Nurliana, 2019; Spratt, Pulverness & Williams, 2011).

2.3.4.3 High Frequency Word Lists

High frequency words (henceforth HFW) are words that are familiar and commonly utilised in the English written text (Eldredge, 2005; Hestetræet, 2019; Schmitt, 2000). Those words are normally short and encountered frequently by students (Thornbury, 2002). Nation (2000, p. 21) describes HFW as “very important because these words cover a very large proportion of the running words in spoken and written texts and occur in all kinds of uses of the language”.

HFW are normally employed to develop ESL students’ vocabulary (Cameron, 2001, Hestetræet, 2019; Nation, 2000; Johns & Wilke, 2018) and aim to facilitate students to “recognize the words automatically (by sight)” (Johns & Wilke 2018, p.4). Developing the automatic recognition of HFW is perceived as one of the most meaningful ways to increase literacy among young students who learn English (Shin & Crandall, 2019). Students need repeated exposure to the words (Thornbury, 2002) to help develop their automatic recognition of them (Eldredge, 2005). The number of expositions of such words vary over spaced intervals (Nation, 2000; Nunan, 2015; Thornbury, 2002). HFW lists should therefore match with the text materials being used throughout the academic school year so that students can obtain the greatest benefits from frequent encounters with the HFWs. Johns and Wilke (2018) have suggested a few ways in which HFWs can be utilised in the language classroom for primary students. These include, firstly, through explicit instruction. The teacher can choose a number of words, write them on the board and model the words for the students so that the students can demonstrate the similar process afterwards. Words can also be written on flash cards (Nation, 2013) and be passed around and read by students. Students can also circle the words within a text. Secondly, HFW lists can be taught through repetition activities. In this method, the teacher identifies words that students are yet to recognise and present these words to them repetitively, passing them around while students read them so that automatic recognition can be developed. Thirdly, HFW lists can be taught by using seeing, hearing, writing and chanting. In this method the teacher writes a few words on the board and says them while pointing to the words. After that students can write the words down and chant them individually or in groups. Hands clapping and foot tapping can be included to make the process more fun. Fourthly, many games and interesting activities can be integrated into the teaching of HFW lists. These may include completing worksheets with exercises such as word search puzzles and word families, as

suggested by (Imaniah & Nargis, 2017). Apart from that, activities such as treasure hunts where students look for hidden words, and creating word walls in the classroom are also recommended (Johns & Wilke, 2018).

2.3.4.4 Reading Text

In choosing suitable texts to read with young students, Gibbons (2015) outlines several helpful criteria. These include the teacher using text with repetitive language. The repeated words in the text facilitate the students to become familiar with the words and boost student participation in the reading activity. Besides that, illustrations used in the text need to be clear and signify the gist of the text so as to aid the students' understanding of the lesson being taught. The page upon which the text is written should not be too cluttered (busy) and must be designed properly. The content and the language used in the text should also be an authentic representation of language, engaging and acknowledged students' backgrounds, thereby allowing young ESL students to make sense of the text by drawing on their background knowledge (Shin & Crandall, 2019). To introduce letters, words or sentences while reading a text, students can follow the teacher's reading by using their finger. Students can point to the words on their own reading text while teachers read to them at a suitable pace (Harmer, 2012). Graded readers books are examples of good reading texts recommended for ESL young students (e.g. Shin and Crandall, 2019) because the texts are based on stories that facilitate young students to become familiar with the words commonly used in English. The book also systematically presents new words in a meaningful setting and the story reuses words presented in the earlier books. Books for young students or beginners typically contain more colourful images and less words than books for older or more experienced students.

Having explained the benefits of instructional materials, their attributes and the ways they can be employed in the classroom, the next sub-section will discuss the challenges that can influence efficient teaching and learning from the teacher's perspective (e.g. Dubeck et al., 2012).

2.3.5 Challenges Facing the Teacher

Previous research indicates that teachers face many challenges while working with ESL students at primary school. Although not many studies touch on ESL struggling readers or students with low attainment in English in the Malaysian context, there are various studies of primary school ESL teaching in other contexts that can offer relevant insights. In particular, several challenges were discovered by Kizildag (2009) in his study with English language teachers at Turkey primary schools. Those challenges are organised into three main strands: institutional, instructional and socio-economic.

2.3.5.1 Institutional Challenges

According to Kizildag (2009), institutional challenges incorporate problems caused by insufficient support and lack of organisation from the school administration or the Ministry of Education. With regards to institutional challenges, Kizildag (2009) reported that there are two main issues reported by the teachers in his study, namely inadequate support and insufficient understanding of the nature of teaching and learning English.

In respect to the first of these, lack of teaching materials and facilities are consistent issues in the literature. In Kizildag's (2009) study, it was discovered that the Ministry of Education and the school could not provide the infrastructure or facilities necessary to assist the teacher to implement the student-centred communicative computer module that had been installed. The shortage of computer labs and Internet connections were the main problems facing the teachers. Similar problems were faced by other primary school English language teachers in Turkey (Arikan, 2011). Teachers in the study revealed that they had inadequate facilities such as computers and teaching resources. A lack of materials such as textbooks for students were also reported by teachers in Anyiendah's (2017) Kenyan-based study as contributing to the inefficiency in teaching practices. Abrar (2016), Biswas (2018) and Salahuddin, Khan and Rahman (2013) also discovered similar problems as teachers in their studies (in Indonesia and Bangladesh) were not equipped with enough materials to teach ESL students. Another study by Lee (2015) identified a few issues facing the teacher who taught struggling readers in an ESL classroom in Malaysia. Among the challenges

that were reported were lack of materials and facilities. According to the author, time constraints made it difficult for the teacher to produce good teaching materials such as flash cards to facilitate struggling readers in the ESL classroom. Materials such as suitable worksheets and materials for phonics instruction were also deemed insufficient, and teachers identified a need for more LCD projectors to display videos that could be used to help teach the struggling readers. Bokhari et al., (2015) also reported that time constraints to develop materials was one of the main challenges that the teachers faced when attempting to assist struggling readers in the ESL classroom in Malaysia.

School administrations can also be perceived as not willing to provide assistance politically, failing to forward the problems faced by teachers to the designated officers within the Ministry of Education, due to concerns about maintaining the school's reputation, winning awards and avoiding dismissal (Kizildag, 2009).

Apart from inadequate support, teachers in Kizildag's (2009) study believed that the school administration had insufficient understanding regarding the nature of English language teaching and learning, with teachers not receiving sufficient training on professional development since the school management believed that English is not a vital subject. Similar problems have also been reported in studies by Arikan (2011) in Turkish primary schools, Pathan, Khaiyali and Marayi (2016) in Libyan primary schools, Salahuddin et al. (2013) and Biswas (2018) in Bangladeshi primary schools and Bokhari et al. (2015), Lee (2015) and Shafee (2019) in Malaysian classrooms. Teachers in these studies recounted that they did not have access to the professional development courses and training which were supposed to be provided by the Ministry of Education, and this led to a lack of confidence or efficiency in teaching students.

The teachers in the study by Kizildag (2009) also claimed that they experienced burnout from their high workload. Besides teaching duties, they also had to run extra-curricular activities. Bokhari et al. (2015) similarly revealed that teachers had to spend substantial time planning and preparing teaching materials, carrying out record-keeping tasks, and focusing on students who needed additional help. The teachers in the study by Bokhari et al. (2015) also stated that the absence of teaching assistants dedicated to looking after struggling readers' learning made the situation more complicated for the class teachers. Similar responses were reported from teachers in the study by

Hadzir, Alias, Kamaruzaman and Yusof (2016), who stated that the lack of specialised teachers to facilitate struggling readers' learning was a challenge they faced. Teachers in the studies carried out in Bangladesh by Salahuddin et al. (2013) and Biswas (2018) also commented that they were required to teach eight classes and six classes on different subjects at a minimum, respectively, and that this contributed to their difficulties preparing effectively for their ESL primary classes. Large class sizes are also a factor limiting teacher's ability to deliver their instructions effectively (Kizildag, 2009). This challenge was also reported by Abrar (2016), Apandi and Nor (2019), Arikan (2011), Erkan (2012), Garton (2014) and Lee (2015) in their respective studies.

2.3.5.2 Instructional Challenges

Instructional challenges are described by Kizildag (2009) as problems that deter teachers from delivering helpful learning environments. Three major issues identified by Kizildag (2009) fall under this category: a busy curriculum, unsuitable textbooks and a poor placement test. The teachers believed that the curriculum set by the Ministry of Education imposed impractical learning objectives. Although the curriculum is "theoretically and philosophically ideal" (Kizildag, 2009, p. 196), teachers thought that learners were expected to achieve too much given the limited number of weekly English language periods. Teachers also commented that they had little flexibility in how they could carry out lessons since they had to follow the designated syllabus. This remark echoed research by Anyiendah (2017), who found that the English primary curriculum in Kenya hindered successful classroom practice. Teachers in that study commented that completing the syllabus within the allocated time-frame was a pressure and had negative effects on instructional practices. Apandi and Nor (2019) further argued that the demand for teachers to teach two things at the same time, namely a remedial curriculum to ESL struggling readers and a mainstream curriculum, contributed to the confusion of both teachers and students.

Additionally, text-books have also been found to be inappropriate both on account of unsuitable content and a lack of materials to support their use in the classroom (Kizildag, 2009). Issues related to textbooks were also mentioned by teachers in a study by Abrar (2016) in Indonesian English primary classrooms. The teachers there commented that the content of the lessons within textbooks was difficult, inappropriate to the students' level, and hence confused students. Anyiendah (2017)

further revealed that textbooks were under-supplied in the context of an ESL classroom in Kenya and that this hindered the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

The last issue under the instructional category is poor placement tests (Kizildag, 2009). Teachers can often complain that they are forced to teach for the test to ensure students' high achievement and to satisfy parents and school management. In addition, the content of the test papers can be questioned by teachers. For instance, in Kizildag's study, the images included were deemed unclear and not in colour, thus making the students confused. Lee (2019) arrived at similar findings in Malaysia, when discovering that teachers needed to juggle completing the syllabus, getting the students through reading screening, and ensuring that they were prepared for the school mid-year test. The successive tests were therefore deemed as demanding because teachers needed to accommodate the needs of two assessments concurrently.

2.3.5.3 Socio-economic Challenges

The next category of challenge reported by the teachers in Kizildag's (2009) study was socio-economic. The teachers complained that students who came from a low-socio economic background received insufficient support from their parents in respect to learning English. The parents did not understand why their children needed to learn English, and therefore homework was often not completed by the students. A study by Azman (1999) found that teachers did not provide students with homework because they believed that the students lacked sufficient resources at home to help them complete it. Yukich (2013) also put forth that teachers commented that socio-economic factors made it difficult for them to establish good communication with the parents of their students. Some families were struggling to make ends meet and thus spent most of the time working and were thus unable to make time or locate transport to meet the teachers at school to discuss student progress. A study conducted by Al-Fadley, Al-Holy and Al-Adwani (2018) revealed that teachers in Kuwait also claimed that some parents of low socio-economic status did not care about their children's learning. Those parents who lived in suburban areas had low educational attainment and needed to work hard to support their large families, thus neglecting their role in facilitating their children's ESL learning.

In addition to the framework of challenges identified by Kizildag (2009), the literature highlights challenges that teachers face in respect to students themselves. In a study by Pandian (2006), teachers reported that low achieving students did not have motivation and interest in ESL lessons. Similar findings were also reported by Abrar (2016), Anyiendah (2017), Garton (2014), Mokotedi (2012) and Salahuddin et al. (2013), all of whom cited teachers' comments about students' negative attitudes and low motivation regarding learning English as contributing to the ineffectiveness of the teaching and learning process. This could possibly be because students perceived English as a terrifying subject (Salahuddin et al., 2013) or because they had little exposure to the language in daily life (Garton, 2014; Lee, 2015). Garton (2014) further elaborated teachers' concerns regarding managing students' behaviour, especially male students. These findings echo Abrar (2016), who noted teachers commenting about their students' poor behaviour including playing, talking and laughing with their friends. Abrar (2016) further reported that students' shyness, having little confidence and fear of making mistakes were part of the attitude problems inhibiting participation in the classroom. The findings echo those of Mokotedi (2012) who found that the teachers believed that students were shy and had low self-confidence or interest in respect to learning and that this prohibited them from participating fully in reading activities.

From the literature review in this sub-section, I have discussed challenges facing the teacher while working with students in the classroom (from the teachers' perspectives). Three major areas reported were institutional, instructional and socio-economic. I also reviewed another commonly-reported area of challenge facing the teacher, namely the student factor.

2.3.6 Conclusion

This section reviewed the literature on one of the immediate surroundings of the child, namely the teacher. Specifically, the section explained how teachers work with struggling readers in the classroom, encompassing instructional methods, use of instructional materials and the challenges facing teachers when working with ESL students. The following section reviews the literature on another close context within the child's microsystem, namely parents. Specifically, the literature will elaborate the ways in which parents work with their children at home.

2.4 Parent-related Literature Review

In this section I elaborate on the issues pertaining to parental participation in supporting their children's ESL learning. The section starts by surveying the theoretical understandings of parental involvement, demonstrating that this remains an area where there is not yet a consensus approach. Then, the influence of some specific influences on parental participation in children's learning are examined in depth; namely, cultural, individual and contextual elements. The review then finishes by surveying the challenges facing the parents while taking part in their children's ESL learning.

2.4.1 Components of Parental Involvement

Children's learning begins at home. Parents are children's first teachers and are central to their education (Parlindungan, 2017) and to their motivation and attitude towards learning (Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler, 1997). Accordingly, parents also have significant roles in children's early literacy growth (Lee, 2010; Reglin, Cameron & Losike-Sedimo, 2012) and are potential aides in children's literacy learning (Torress & Castañeda-Peña, 2016). Regardless of the degree of contribution, parental participation has also been shown to be beneficial to children's second language learning (Al-Fadley et al., 2018; Hosseinpour, Yazdani & Yarahmadi, 2015).

While parental roles in supporting children's education has been the focus of much research interest, very little is known about it in the ESL literacy learning context in Asia (e.g. Lee, 2010; Li, 2004; Li, 2006) let alone in Malaysia (e.g. Majid et al., 2005). To date, research in Malaysia has only reported how parents are involved with children of low-attainment from the point of view of non-parents (e.g. Cheng et al., 2016; Misbah et al., 2017). Furthermore, obtaining an insight into parents' naturalistic settings, rather than depending solely on secondary information is deemed beneficial to gain a complete view of children's learning experiences (Latunde, 2017).

A review of the extant literature discovered a number of ways in which parental participation in children's learning is examined and discussed. The way parents work with their children which can be simply termed as 'parental involvement' has been examined and discussed as a single domain (Fan & Chen, 2001) or as multiple constructs with numerous meanings, defined differently

by different researchers (Bullock, 2014; Fan & Chen, 2001; Jeynes, 2007; Tekin, 2011). For instance, the concept of involvement is defined as “parental participation in the educational processes and experiences of their children” (Jeynes, 2007, p. 83). More often than not, “involvement” is understood interchangeably with “participation”, “cooperation”, “partnership” “collaboration” (Hosseinpour et al., 2015, p. 1371) and “influence” (Majid et al., 2005, p. 25), contributing to the establishment of various models of parental involvement (e.g. Epstein et al., 2002; Grolnick, 1994; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997) and the identification of various categories of involvement (Bullock, 2014).

For instance, Epstein et al. (2002) proposed a model consisting of six types of parental involvement, namely: (1) parenting; (2) communicating; (3) volunteering; (4) learning at home; (5) decision making; and (6) collaborating with the community. In parenting, schools are encouraged to assist parents to establish conducive home environments for children to learn. The communicating aspect regards the school creating a two-way communication discussing students’ progress and school programmes. In volunteering, the school can engage parents as volunteers and facilitators of teachers and other parents in the children’s education. In learning at home, schools are recommended to provide parents with information about the educational activities that parents can carry out with their children at home. Having parents become representatives in Parent Teacher Associations (henceforth PTA) is an example of how the decision-making aspect of involvement can be realised. Collaborating with the wider community requires schools to locate the ways the community can assist with school programmes. This comprehensive model is widely to explain how schools, families and communities can collaborate with one another for to improve student learning outcomes (Sheldon & Epstein, 2005). Epstein’s model, however, tends to focus most on the teachers’ and schools’ side of the process than on what parents and communities themselves might be doing, and it is therefore perceived as more of a professional practitioners’ manual (Tekin, 2011).

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) work, which was later revised in Walker, Wilkings, Dallaire, Sandler and Hoover-Dempsey (2005), offers another articulation of the factors that influence parental involvement in children’s education, this time coming more from parents’ viewpoints (Tekin, 2011). According to Walker et al. (2005, p. 88), the three main factors are:

- (a) “Parents’ motivational beliefs” including “parental role construction and parents’ sense of efficacy” in respect to assisting children to do well at school,
- (b) “Parents’ perceptions of invitations for involvements with others”, including opportunities and requests from children, their school and their teacher to get involved in children’s learning.
- (c) “Parents’ perceived life contexts” including their time, energy, skills and knowledge that could be invested for students’ learning.

The involvement of parents in children’s learning has also been discussed from the continuum of home-based and school-based and academic socialisation (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Vellymalay, 2012; Zong, Zhang & Yao, 2017) as well as in terms of academic socialisation (Zong et al., 2017). While home-based involvement refers to parent-actions that encourage their children’s learning at home, school-based involvement refers to parental presence or participation at school events. Academic socialisation, in contrast, is described as parents’ expectations of their children’s success.

The multiplicity of constructs regarding parental participation means that there is no consensus among scholars as to how to engage theoretically with parents’ involvement in their children’s ESL literacy learning. Approaches, however, can include elements which are linked to parents’ engagement in home reading “practices”, (e.g. Forey, Besser & Sampson, 2015; Li, 2004; Pendleton, 2017; Wati, 2015), which-are sometimes denoted as “activities”, “experiences” and “strategies” (Shi, 2013, p. 30). Another framework for understanding parental participation with students’ ESL learning incorporates parents’ attitudes, awareness and home environment (e.g. Emmanuel, 2000; Li, 2004; Majid et al., 2005). Conversely, Lee (2010, p. 4) utilises two broad categories namely “abstract constructs such as beliefs, values, and attitudes” and “concrete involvement practices” to discuss the way in which parents are involved in children’s ESL literacy learning.

This lack of theoretical consensus, is reflected in different research designs to study parental involvement in ESL learning. For instance, a number of research studies focused on the disparity of circumstances experienced by children at home and in the classroom, seeking to understand how these differences affect children’s learning at school (Heath, 1983; Heath, 1986; Li, 2004).

Other studies have focused on the importance of parental involvement in supporting children's learning at home (Fantuzzo, McWayen, Perry & Childs, 2004; Weigel, Martin & Bennett, 2006; Se'ne'chal & LeFevre, 2002; Snow et al., 1998).

In terms of methodology, applying a qualitative method to discover how parents engage with their children's ESL literacy encourages findings to be inclusive (Zwass, 2018). Such an approach allows for the recognition of many different kinds of parental participation, incorporating those who are normally underrepresented which might also reflect their cultural circumstances (Bailey & Osipova, 2016; Isik-Ercan, 2010). The qualitative method also provides a more complete depiction of the parental involvement process in children's literacy learning (Lee, 2010). The use of in-depth interviews, for example, will lead to detailed explanations of the ways parents are involved with their children's ESL literacy at home (Latunde, 2017; Lee, 2010; Pendleton, 2017), which is unlikely to be discovered in a quantitative study. Although both designs are undeniably needed, the types of involvement surveyed have to be pre-determined in a quantitative study thus limiting the accessibility of different kinds of involvement (Hosseinpour et al., 2015; Howard et al., 2014). It is also worth noting that studies on home literacy practices in which the engagement of parents and children in particular literacy activities are explored have often adopted an ethnographic approach (e.g. Reyes, Alexandra & Azuara, 2007; Azuara & Reyes, 2011; Rodriguez, 2005). A combination of instruments, namely participant observations, informal interviews, field notes and collection of artefacts are utilised in those studies to obtain an in-depth understanding of the children's literacy experiences in the participants' homes. Those investigations include determining the existence of literacy materials at home, how those materials are utilised, and how children are involved directly and indirectly with the literacy activities, either alone or with their custodian. Most ethnographic studies, however, require extensive time or "long-term study of a social or cultural group" (Green & Bloome, 1997, p. 4) which is not always practical for all research projects.

2.4.2 The Influence of Cultural, Individual and Contextual Elements on the Parental Roles in Children's Learning

Parental involvement can be influenced by cultural and social background. Li (2004) investigated the home and school literacy learning experience of two young Chinese students in Canada who were struggling to learn English. The study revealed that a large amount of time was dedicated by Billy's parents, especially his mother Mei, to help him in English reading and writing. Mei supervised Billy's reading tasks and assisted him with spelling quiz preparation. Mei also asked Billy to check the dictionary meanings of new English words found each time that Billy read, and put a great emphasis on Billy's homework. At home, Billy utilised mostly Cantonese with his family members and sometimes English with his sister when they talked about school. The second participant, Jake was instructed to do his homework every day by his parents before he could play and watch television. Jake was helped by his sister as his parents were unable to understand English. Jake's sister was not permitted to correct Jake's mistakes so that the teacher would see Jake's weaknesses. Sometimes, Jake's sister would help him with reading. At home, both Jake and his parents utilised mostly Cantonese and they also hired a private tutor to teach Jake reading and Mathematics subjects. Despite the challenges faced by the parents, they still put significant effort into supporting their children's literacy learning. One of the challenges that the parents admitted facing was that they had limited English language knowledge. The parents also experienced difficulty in managing the children's behaviour.

In the study, Billy's mother (Mei) faced a few constraints that, according to her, affected Billy's literacy attainment. Her child's attitude to learning was one reason why he struggled to learn. Mei regarded Billy as uninterested in learning in comparison to his love of playing games. Mei also believed that Billy did not pay enough attention in the classroom and tended to play with his friends. Mei was also dissatisfied with the teacher who taught Billy at school. She thought that the school did not play a good role in facilitating Billy in his learning and made him a failure. She was disappointed with the school for not giving Billy a lot of homework and teaching her son a lot of academic content. She felt that the instructions given in reading to her child were insufficient. For example, her son was unable to read the story book provided by the school for home reading. It was left to Mei and her husband to read for their son. Mei also believed that Billy's school teacher

was not strict enough with her son, making it difficult to discipline him at home. Influence from friends were also significant for Mei. For instance, she thought that Billy's friends contributed to his worsening attitude.

Similar to Billy's mother, Jake's mother, named Lan, felt dissatisfied with the small amount of homework assigned by the school teacher. She also thought that the school had not given enough help to Jake. In addition, Lan sent her daughter to communicate with Jake's teacher because Lan had problems understanding English. Lan also perceived Jake to be a slow learner. Moreover she thought that the teacher did not teach Jake in a proper sequence. For example, Lan expected the teacher to teach Jake to read word by word, sentence by sentence and to ask about Jake's understanding of the lesson taught.

The study by Li (2004) further discussed cultural discontinuities between home and school, an issue perceived to be a factor underlying the children's struggles with English literacy learning. One example underlined is the different way(s) that homework is seen by the parents compared to the teacher. While the parents were expecting homework to be something related to a "pencil-paper drill" (p.61), teachers assigned "reading stories or parent-child shared reading" (p. 61) to the child as homework. This led to the parents either perceiving the homework to be insufficient or not really getting involved with the reading homework. On the one hand, these parents perceived that reading has to involve decoding words and favoured instruction that involved the drilling and memorisation technique. On the other hand, reading instructions at school focused on "semantic connections between pages" (Li, 2004, p. 31), reading the texts of a number of pages and connecting those pages together. Both parents in the study also thought that the lack of homework provided, and the instructional methods of teachers caused the children to struggle while the teacher felt that the struggling was caused by insufficient attention given to homework and the children's inherent abilities. Another discontinuity discussed was deficiency of communication between parents and teachers, which was particularly evident. As a result, both parties seemed to misunderstand one another. While the teacher had little understanding of how these children were helped at home, parents also scarcely understood the teachers' practices at school. This small scale study provided me with some insights into the intense importance of the home-school connection for ESL children to thrive in their literacy learning.

The findings in Li's (2004) study reinforced those of Shirley Heath's ethnographic work which was recorded in her 1983 book *Ways with Words*. In the study, she provided descriptions about the literacy beliefs and practices of parents in two towns: Trackton (a black working class group of people) and Brookville (a white working class group of people) and the impacts of these home practices on children's literacy experiences and academic attainment. It was found that the Brookville parents facilitated their children's literacy learning by buying books and toys for their children in addition to asking questions, telling bedtime stories and involving them in conversation. On the other hands, children in Trackton were talked to rather than read to and trained to tell the story creatively. Books were not provided for children in Trackton and reading was employed as a competition and a means to discover the greater world that they reside in. The mismatch that existed between home and school in terms of cultural beliefs and practices resulted in the struggles that the children faced with respect to their learning. Specifically, children from Trackton were confused by hypothetical queries or questions from teachers, based on cultural knowledge known to the teachers but not necessarily to the students. They responded abnormally at school and a lot of them did not respond well as their language form was not encouraged at school.

Another discrepancy in perspectives between teachers and parents is also reported in a study by Ruzane (2013) involving English as a second or additional language (henceforth EAL) students and their parents at an infant school in England. Ruzane discovered that while teachers expected parents to act as co-teachers, the parents were unaware of such a responsibility. Some parents stated that the onus was on the teacher because they were trained to do the job. Apart from that, the teacher expected the parents to be talked to the teacher about any problems they faced while supporting the children. The parents, however, were influenced by their cultural beliefs that parents should not come close to the teacher or interfere the teacher's duties at school. The teachers in the study also assume that the parents were able to support their children in doing homework yet the parents were themselves not proficient with English and were not familiar with ways to facilitate their children. This meant that other family members were involved in the homework to the extent they wrote the answers for the children, which the teacher considered negligent. Ruzane (2013) concluded that these findings demonstrated the need for more dialogue between teachers and parents.

Reyes et al. (2007) investigated the literacy and language experiences of two children and their principal caregivers at home with eighteen Mexican children and their immigrant families in Arizona. The study utilised ethnographic tools such as observations, field notes, informal interviews and the collection of examples of the children's written work. These revealed several methods that the parents employed to support their children to develop both Spanish and English, which the parents deemed to be vital for educational purposes and better job opportunities. In their article, the researchers reported about two families' home literacy experiences. It was discovered that both families had many writing resources used for children's learning such as paper, crayons, notebooks, colouring books, markers and pencils. Apart from that, computers and games were also used to facilitate children's literacy education. The authors determined ten domains to summarise the literacy practices that children partook in with their main custodian, and the ways support was provided for their children's bilingual needs. I include four of these that I considered relevant to my study:

- i- School-related activity: The activity in this domain is related to the child's schooling. For instance, doing homework given by the teacher;
- ii- Entertainment: The activity in this domain is related to choosing or finding out about interesting activities or related to assisting or maintaining the child's involvement in the enjoyable activities; for instance reading novels, reading TV guides and subtitles or printed signs from cartoon shows
- iii- Storybook time: The activity in this domain is related to someone in the family reading the story to the child at any time of the day;
- iv- Literacy for the Sake of Teaching/Learning Literacy: The activity in this domain is related to the child who reads or writes, or the child who tries to read or write "for the sake of learning about reading or writing" (p. 474) and the activity can be done with someone in the family for example a child writing his own name.

The authors suggest that their findings can inform educators about how the family literacy activities and resources found at home can be utilised as an input to "better serve the needs of a linguistically and culturally diverse student population" (Reyes et al., 2007, p.463). Reyes et al.'s (2007) study is quite comprehensive and details many instances illustrating the fundamental

purposes of children's and parents' biliteracy activities since the research is largely based on observations in the home. In my opinion, however, different results may be obtained if other research instruments, such as in-depth interviews, were to be utilised to discover the type(s) of support that parents offered to help their children's literacy growth (Pendleton, 2017). Additionally, the purpose of Reyes et al.'s study was to examine the presence of all literacy practices at home that facilitate children's bilingual development, a similar study might yield different results if it focused more narrowly on English-related literacy activities alone.

Another study conducted by Pendleton (2017) explored the literacy practices of Dominican families, a growing minority group of Latino immigrants to the United States (US). Ten parents participated in the study which mainly used interviews to gather data. The aims of the study was to identify what literacy practices and what methods the parents used to facilitate young children's learning in both Spanish and English. All the participants in the study stated that their aim was to ensure that their children became professional and contributed to the community. The parents also hoped that their children would be more successful than them. Additionally, the parents in the study suggested that parents, as well as teachers, are responsible for their children's learning. The author presented five prominent themes in relation to home literacy practices discovered in the study. First, the parents helped the children with their homework. Homework is deemed a paramount activity among parents. Although parents confided they had difficulty helping since the homework was in English, they sat together with their child at the table to accompany the child. A few parents also employed a computer or tablet as a resource for their children when performing their homework, while a few others utilised school books to refer to while doing their homework. Second, the parents read with the children at home, using a range of materials such as story books, dictionaries and others. During the sessions, the parents posed questions to children. Among the purposes of the reading activity was to help their children acquire vocabulary and practise speaking. Third, conversation and pronunciation practice was used to get the children to pronounce words correctly and speak professional Spanish. For instance, the parents would correct the students if they pronounced the word incorrectly in their conversation. Fourth, songs and music were employed as a method to help develop children's language by talking about the words in the song. Fifth, technology was offered to the children by the parents as a tool for literacy development. Such tools include computers, televisions, tablets and smart-phones. Similar to the

study by Reyes et al. (2007) that I discussed earlier, this study incorporate activities that parents and children engage in to develop literacy in both English and Spanish.

In another study, Rodriguez (2005, p. 133) reported that parents took their children to libraries and involved themselves in school-related activities such as doing homework and reading books. In addition, parents and children engaged in “unconventional literacy activities such as telling stories through illustration and narration, playing, singing songs, and watching both commercial and educational TV.” Those parents also had high expectations of their children’s education and believed that parents have a role in children’s learning, particularly in the following three aspects:

- 1 Ensuring children went to school;
- 2 Ensuring children did their homework; and
- 3 Explaining to children why they need to perform well at school.

All mothers participating in the study also desired to work with their children but found it difficult to encourage them and maintain their concentration. The parents also found that facilitating children in English, a language that they were not competent with was another challenge. The parents also needed more input on how to manage their children with special needs. They also struggled to understand the system of administration, how children were assessed and how to make their wishes recognised and valued by school staff. The parents were aware of their difficulties and expressed their wish to be assisted. The study involved Latino parents with children diagnosed with disabilities who received special education services in New York city.

Furthermore, Lynch (2008) investigated print literacy activities that parents reported they undertook with their pre-school children, namely reading and writing. Lynch’s study was with low-income, low-educational-attainment families from three backgrounds: urban, rural and migrants in the US. The participants were chosen because they were from groups perceived as being the least likely to take part in children’s literacy learning. Those students who learned at pre-school took part in Head Start, a programme designed to support the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual growth of children from low-income families. Some of those students who were migrants spoke Spanish as their first language and English as their second language. The study

discovered that parents were interested in their children's education and engaged in a variety of activities with them to support literacy. Among the most prominent of these was reading individual alphabetical letters to children, including reading letters that are written down by the children or pointing to the letters on the commercial boards or signage outside the house. The parents also read stories to the children, read words that the children themselves wrote and other text such as messages on birthday cards and cakes, text on labels, information given by school, trade cards, cereal boxes, directions and menus. Additionally, the study evidenced that low-income parents should not be seen as deficient or lacking in capacity.

The author also concluded that it was vital for the teacher to support the parents to continue to get engaged with their children's home learning practices. In relation to this, some parents in the study were surprised to learn that reading menus or advertisements from shopping malls can be considered as activities that help their children to read, reflecting limited understanding of the ways open to them to assist their children to engage in literacy learning. A further finding was that some of the above activities were in fact initiated by children themselves.

Parental involvement can be influenced by individual and contextual factors too. Majid et al. (2005) carried out research on 78 Malay parents from rural Malaysia to determine types of parental involvement in relation to their children's ESL literacy learning. Most of the parents (70%) in the study were considered low income, earning RM 1000 and below. Many parents also did a part time job after working hours which made them tired and meant that they had little time to spend with their children. The majority of the parents (93.6%) in the study were aware that their children needed to learn and master English. All of them (100%) also wanted their children to be more successful than they were. Many parents in the study also believed their children's weaknesses in the subject can be improved (87.5%) and accepted that they had a role in helping their children achieve this (85.9%). The study also revealed that parental support was offered in many forms, such as inspiring their children to learn English, talking to their children about the importance of learning English (85.9%) and encouraging their children to watch English programmes (83.4%) on television, despite the parents' own limitations in understanding English, which was perceived as a hindrance to directly helping their ESL children's learning. Apart from that, many parents (61.5%) were reported giving rewards to their children if they scored well in English exams. Many

parents (80.7%) also provided facilities such as a study table and English reading materials including story books, exercise books and magazines to facilitate their ESL reading (71.8%) besides assigning time for the children to study at home (75.7%). Although many parents admitted that they had difficulties understanding English and did not know how to assist their children (64.1%) they involved older children to help (75.6%). The author also found out that a computer was not available in almost all of the children's houses. Participating children whose family did have a computer at home, however, tended to make use of it for playing games and thus parents did not see the computer as an educational tool. The authors concluded that the parents in the study tried to get involved and assist their children's ESL learning process to the best of their knowledge and ability. The study mainly collected data by means of a questionnaire but interviews were also conducted with selected parents.

Additionally, Emmanuel (2000) carried out a study with 58 low-income Indian families in Malaysia where the children were demonstrating low ESL reading attainment. In this study, a questionnaire was utilised as the main research instrument followed up by interviews with selected parents. Findings showed that while most of the Tamil primary school children were given exposure to the alphabet and English reading material at school, none of the students had been taken to the public library. The majority of participating children had five or less English books and all books were school books. 81.3% of parents never bought books for their children and 86.8% of parents never utilised English language material with their children. 65% of parents also never provided reading materials. 68.7% of parents admitted that they did not provide a learning space for their children. 70% of parents never provided a table, 87.5% of them never talked to their children about how to improve their English and 45% of parents never told their children to study hard. All the parents however agreed that they required assistance to help raise their children's social status, yet they did not know where to seek for relevant help. Emmanuel (2000) further revealed that parents in her study were unable to expose their children to English reading resources because they themselves (i.e. the parents) were not competent in English. In addition, since the majority of the families earned less than RM1000 a month it was difficult for them to buy educational materials, and the parents did not realise the need to expose their children to relevant reading materials from a young age. This combination of poor parental command of English and financial constraints meant that little ESL help was available for the children at home. Further,

parents did not really encourage the children and did not have high expectations because of the home conditions and the prevalence of social problems. Other parents felt that their children's lack of progress resulted from witch-craft from family members envious of their children. Karma was another reason mentioned by parents for their current life condition. The parents also had to work long hours, and moreover they felt inferior to their children for having limited knowledge; they worried in-case they taught them wrongly. The findings of Emmanuel's (2000) study contrast with those Majid et al.'s (2005) study which identified the positive involvement of parents in their children's literacy learning.

Another study involving low income parents was conducted by Forey et al. (2015). It was reported that the majority of the 500 participating Hong Kong parents believed that parental involvement was necessary for children's English as a Foreign Language (henceforth EFL) progress. 88.2% of the parents taught their children to read vocabulary in English which became the most prominent English activity conducted at home. This was followed by parents watching English videos or programmes with their children (79.6%). Reading English stories to children was the third most popular option (69.5%) that the parents reported. Additionally, 54.3% of the respondents took their children to the English section of a library twice in a month, but 31.4% did not visit the section at all. Forey et al. (2015) also examined the difficulties parents encountered while attempting to support their children's English literacy at home. These included lack of time due to long working hours, lack of skills, lack of knowledge in English, lack of resources, lack of knowledge about children's development in English and children's lack of interest. This further leads to their awkward position as the main supporter of their children. They felt unsecured and lost face for being unable to assist their children. Parents also reported that they did not have much time to read together with their children as they were tired and also found it difficult to divide their attention between more than one child. Children's lack of interest was reported as another hindrance in parental involvement. Children were said to be too tired and unresponsive after school, as well as frustrated and not having the motivation to learn. These findings are interesting because, although parents had low income, and faced many challenges, and had to work full time, the authors found that they were nonetheless making many efforts to facilitate the children's EFL learning.

In addition, Lee (2010) revealed that parents' judgment about their roles and the way they were involved in their children's EFL learning was dependent largely on their social background, socio-economic status, educational background and perceived English competency. Nineteen parents with different educational backgrounds took part in the study, and all of them expressed a strong readiness and aspiration to assist their children's EFL learning and had common targets for their children's EFL education, namely oral language competency and the importance of having an attraction towards learning the language.

The findings of the study revealed that twelve parents, regardless of educational and financial background, and even some with very restricted English capacity, deemed themselves to be assistants to their child's learning, partnering with the teacher and contributing indirectly to the children's learning by providing resources, facilitating homework, showing cartoons in English and playing English songs.

Five other parents with slightly higher educational attainment compared to other participants (college graduate level), and who believed in their own English capability, took part directly and indirectly in the children's EFL learning. They perceived themselves as facilitating their children's learning, as being collaborative partners with the teacher and as providers of resources. In those roles, they taught their children vocabulary including in respect to numbers and colours, as well as utilising any suitable opportunities to teach English, such as when they saw things on the road.

In contrast, two parents who only had primary education and who struggled economically, thought that EFL learning should be the responsibility of the teacher. Although they voiced interest in supporting their children's learning, they only participated a little compared to the other parents. Both parents tried to find free English materials from other relatives, but they could not engage their children in English activities since their financial limitations prevented them from buying materials to help their children. These parents therefore hoped that the school could assist their children more. Another concern reported by one of the parents was the nature of their job, which required them to undertake shift-work. This hindered their capacity to devote much attention to their children's learning. School was therefore perceived as the only resource these parents could depend on to support their children and get them involved in learning.

In relation to the strategies utilised by the parents, ten sent their children to after-school programmes of different types, such as after-school centres and small English teaching studios for between two and five hours a week. The participating parents reported that these programmes were tailored to their children's needs and that children received more focused help, with less than twenty students in each class. These programmes also gave parents guidance on how to help their children. For example, the textbook included instructions in the Chinese language so that the parents could be more involved in their children's learning. Interactions between parents and teachers occurred in the programme, unlike at the school the children attended.

Besides sending children to the after school programme, a number of other approaches were employed by the parents to facilitate the children. With regard to strategies utilised at home, almost all parents were involved in helping with their children's homework, as provided by the school and after-school programme teachers. While nine parents checked the finished homework and identified mistakes or checked comments provided by teachers when homework was given back, six other parents only ensured that the homework was completed on time.

A majority of the families also had multimedia materials, but the type and the number of the materials present depended on the parents' socio-economic status. The two parents who had primary education and who struggled economically relied on children's decisions to use or not to use the materials. Thirteen parents only played the supplied CD and DVD to their children and three others incorporated activities with the use of those materials. Most parents also had written materials such as picture dictionaries, flash cards, work books and big books. A majority of the parents who provided written materials also occasionally took their children to the library and book-store. It was also highlighted that five families who did not have English written materials had children with lower English attainment. Lee (2010, p. 30) concurred that:

While it would be misleading to suggest a relationship between the availability of English written materials and children's English learning outcomes, information on the language and literacy environment in which the English learning of low performing children took place is crucial in understanding the learning process of these children.

Lee (2010) also highlighted that seven parents with high attaining children practised shared book reading activities with their children. Four of these, however, perceived themselves as having limited capacity in English thus they selected books that could be read by children and provided appropriate feedback and scaffolding to their ability. They also believed that they needed to show their children the importance and value of EFL reading. Three other parents with higher competency were able to teach their children directly by placing emphasis on placing emphasis on decoding skills. In contrast, they talked less about pictures and the content of the book.

Lee (2010) subsequently outlined a few characteristics that parents of high-performing students had, regardless of their educational background and economic status. These included sending children to out of school programmes, participating significantly in homework activities, regular interactions with the teachers of the after school programme, and providing a rich literacy home environment with resources and activities. Interestingly, most of these parents (with three exceptions), they did not perceive themselves as competent in English and, even some of those with financial restraints were able to overcome such challenges by giving the best that they could.

Nine parents in the study also shared how they invented activities to assist their children' ESL learning. For instance, a few parents hid the Chinese captions when their children were watching English-language cartoons in an effort to improve their children's listening skills. Another activity involved using simple computer software that permits the child to build a bank of English words and phrases, and travelled to English-speaking places with their children.

In summary, Lee (2010) concluded that a few factors such as parents' English language competency, financial limitations, time restrictions and access to English resources affected the types and times of involvement of the parents in the study.

Wati (2015) conducted a study of parents with young English language learners in Aceh, Indonesia, discovering that, regardless of their educational level and economic status, parents had positive attitudes towards the language, and used many methods to engage with their children's EFL learning. By using semi-structured in-depth interviews, the author determined that all participating parents agreed that English was important and that their children needed to learn

English in order to facilitate their later tertiary education, acquire knowledge, access information and communicate when they went overseas, thereby enhancing their quality of life through access to better employment. Hence, the parents believed that the language should be taught since the first year of primary school. The parents also hoped that their children could do well in English since they themselves were not good at it. The parents in the study also felt that parents had a paramount role in assisting their children's learning, to motivate them and to discipline them. All parents illustrated their interest in their children's EFL education by being directly involved in the EFL learning. For instance, one parent dedicated 30 minutes every day to carrying out revision with her child. Some parents provided a number of pictures of English vocabulary in their child's room, bought English stories, English DVD cartoons and sent the child to extra lessons. A parent who had low income and low education and could not send their children to courses helped by reviewing the topic and providing some drilling. Another parent with a similar background encouraged his son and his neighbour's son to join the free English course operated by outside volunteers at their village. One other parent who often picked up his son at school would sometimes ask what was learned at school and asked his elder daughter to help his son with any difficulties faced.

As explained earlier, the findings from Majid et al.'s large study in Malaysia revealed that media and technology is not considered as material for learning literacy in this environment (Majid et al., 2005). Other research in the Malaysian context by Boivin, AlBakri, Yunus, Mohammed and Muniandy (2014) confirmed this an idea, noting that parents with children between two and eight years of age associated literacy with reading and writing and did not feel that other forms of resources derived from technology, such as songs, YouTube, movies and games, would help their children develop their literacy. Nonetheless, the parents in this study seemed very interested in participating in their children's literacy learning. Similar findings were also determined in the study by Emmanuel (2000) from participating Malaysian Indian parents. Specifically, large majorities of this group never showed English videos (93.7%) or English TV programmes (63.7%) to their children. This represents a striking difference to findings from international studies such as those of Forey et al. (2015), Lee (2010), Li (2004), Pendleton (2017) and Rodriguez (2005), all of whom discovered that parents considered English videos, programmes or channels as tools to facilitate their children's ESL learning.

Homework has been found to be highly valued by a majority of parents in several previous studies (Lee, 2010; Li, 2004; Pendleton, 2017; Reyes et al., 2007; Rodriguez, 1999; Rodriguez, 2005; Xiaoyi, 2017), but the method and extent of parental involvement with homework differed. For example, parents in the study by Xiaoyi (2017) accompanied and supervised their children when doing their homework. Besides that, in a study of Latino parents with children diagnosed with learning disabilities, Rodriguez (2005) discovered that homework was either done by children immediately upon coming home from school or after doing other activities such as playing and watching TV. Rodriguez (1999) also found that Dominican mothers got involved with their children's learning by asking about the existence of homework, checking notebooks and facilitating their children. The authors of all the studies mentioned above believed that being actively involved in English homework was indicative of a good parental contribution to their children's English learning. It was believed that a parent's role in facilitating children to complete homework will help children to become confident in completing tasks and improve their English learning attainment. It was further argued that children who obtain assistance with schoolwork have more capability in reading (Majid et al., 2005).

2.4.3 Challenges Facing the Parents

A disjunction has been reported between, on the one hand, parents' consciousness of the importance of their involvement, and its potential to have a substantial impact on children's achievement in English learning (Al-Mahrooqi Denman & Al-Maamari, 2016; Mahmoud, 2018) while, on the other hand, their conscious that their participation remained inadequate to deliver those benefits (Al-Mahrooqi et al., 2016). Thus, while parental participation is advocated, it is equally important to recognise how the limitations of parents while working to support their children's ESL literacy learning pervades throughout the entire involvement (Ruzane, 2013). This is because not all parents possess similar resources and opportunities to participate in their children's literacy learning, and many also face real barriers that make it less possible for the parents to get more actively involved in their children's learning (Adheisat, 2014). The challenges that have been reported by parents themselves in previous research related to ESL learning and literacy are therefore explored further in this section.

Studies such as that of Kavanagh and Hickey (2013) have reported the challenges that parents face in relation to their participation with children's language learning, while parts of the study by Ruzane (2013) also highlight the challenges facing parents. Kavanagh and Hickey (2013) investigated the barriers to parental involvement in children who studied in an Irish medium primary school. These parents utilised English as their first language and sent their children to Irish immersion schools. From interviews conducted with the parents, the authors generated a few main themes in relation to issues facing the parents in respect to participating in their children's Irish language learning, namely parents and family factors, child factors and school and community factors.

In respect to the parents' factor, parents reported a lack of proficiency in the Irish language, and resulting lack of confidence in helping their children learn language. Their lack of proficiency also led to emotional issues including feeling anxious and embarrassed to speak with their children's teacher. The parents further felt uncomfortable when going to school premises when surrounded with more fluent Irish speakers. Parents also articulated their worries about using inappropriate Irish in the presence of their children. Parents felt that their lack of capability undermined their authority as parents, especially when their children corrected their flaws in using the language. Parents were also concerned about teaching their children words and grammar incorrectly. Another aspect stated in regard to the parents' factor was practical issues related to time constraints, child management and conflicting commitments. Parents reported being time-poor, and thus having virtually no opportunity to participate in their children's learning. This circumstance was reported by a single mother with three children and other working mothers. As such, these parents were unable to spend time getting involved with their children's school activities. Due to their busy life, parents perceived their 'rushing' as a barrier to them speaking Irish with children at home.

Another aspect of the challenges discussed in Kavanagh and Hickey (2013) was in respect to family factors. It was reported by some parents that since family members, such as their spouse and other children, were not proficient in the language, they did not want to exclude those family members in conversation and therefore resorted to using English. Additionally, the parents also

reported that other children who attended an English medium school reacted negatively when the parents conversed in Irish with the child who attended an Irish medium school.

In relation to children's factors, Kavanagh and Hickey (2013) also commented that some parents with good Irish proficiency found it challenging to promote Irish to their children at home because the children did not respond well. According to the parents, their children preferred to use English at home because Irish is associated with school and not with home or play. Additionally, the parents seemed to have given up in their attempts to get involved in their children's learning, for example, by supporting children with reading, due to their perception of their own limitations. The parents thought that they were unable to support children correctly and thus were not useful to them. Specifically, they reported that their children laughed at them when they made mistakes as they were better in reading than their parents. Another issue in relation to the children's factor was a lack of invitation from their children. The parents mentioned that as their children got older they were less expressive in asking for help from their parents, and parents did not increase their participation by approaching students directly to offer help. For instance, one parent stated that her child did her homework all by herself and never asked for help.

School and community factors were perceived as another challenge by the parents involved with their children's Irish learning (Kavanagh & Hickey, 2013). One aspect discussed by the parents was that of lack of resources and inability to locate the resources, specifically reading materials. Parents also commented that they could not find engaging and suitable interactive online learning resources to encourage their children's learning. Other parents also searched for classes to learn Irish so that they could become better involved with their children. They expected that the community and school could play a role in helping them by providing such classes.

Another aspect under school and family factors is that of parents' disappointment with the level of support received (Kavanagh & Hickey, 2013). It was reported that some parents had attended Irish classes organised by the school at some point in time. Based on their experience, it was discovered that the class size was too big, resulting in difficulty in asking questions. Parents also noted that they were turned off from attending classes due to an unfamiliar regional Irish accent used by the teachers. Additionally, the classes also did not meet the parents' expectations. One final aspect

with regards to school and family factors was a lack of invitations or opportunities for involvement. Parents commented that invitations for parents to help in the classroom had decreased compared to previous occasions. Other parents stated that they wanted to help in the classroom but that they did not know how to get the message across to the teacher. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler commented on the issue by stating that “the knowledge of parental involvement and its influence on educational outcomes for children is likely to be enhanced as researchers and policy makers’ focus on the benefit it may create for all involved in the process – child, parent, school, and the community as a whole.” (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, p.6).

The parents in the study by Ruzane (2013) admitted that they had problems in assisting their children’s learning since English was not their first language. Their inability to read and understand English hindered their capacity to help. For instance, while the parents were trying to assist their children in doing homework assigned by the teacher, parents could not understand the instructions. They felt that the teachers should understand their conditions and provide easier instructions or clear examples in their children’s homework so that they could better assist their children. Some parents reported that they were unfamiliar with the methods utilised by the teachers nowadays, reducing their confidence in helping their children. For example, phonics is utilised in reading but parents did not know about phonics instructions. One parent also stated that he neither knew the right words to use nor the content of the lesson. Another parent mentioned that their child’s English was better than theirs. Thus, the parents asked their other children to help the child who required assistance in learning. Several parents mentioned that they felt that the teachers knew best about their child’s education and that they did not want to meddle with the teachers’ duty. The parents in this study hoped that the school would provide extra teaching sessions for their children as the teacher knew their children better in this respect. Some parents also hoped that the school could provide an English course for them and expose them to the teaching methods employed at school so that they could better support their children’s learning at home.

In short, the reviewed literature revealed that, generally, parents are interested and feel a responsibility to get involved in their children’s ESL learning, regardless of their background. The degree or extent of parental participation is, however, dependent on aspects such as parents’ cultural and social backgrounds (e.g. Lee, 2010; Li, 1999; Pendleton, 2017), and on their individual

and contextual influences (e.g. Lee, 2010; Walker et al., 2005). What is critical for this study though is that, to my knowledge, little research can be found within the context of the Malaysian primary classroom that highlights the parents of ESL struggling readers.

2.4.4 Conclusion

This section reviewed the literature on some aspects related to the way parents work with children at home. As discussed in the theoretical framework of this study, parents are part of a child's immediate context (their microsystem) (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and thus have a deep influence on that child's development. Particularly, this section reviewed the importance of parental involvement, the constructions of involvement, cultural, individual and contextual elements in relation to involvement, various examples of how parents participate with their children's ESL learning, and the challenges faced by parents in respect to their efforts while working with their children. The subsequent section explains existing literature related to students, who are positioned at the central point of the ecological framework (Chai, Koh, Lim & Tsai, 2014), both influencing and being influenced by the contexts surrounding them. Particularly, this section discusses work on accessing and interpreting the perceptions of students themselves about their learning experience in the ESL classroom as a way ultimately to gain access to an understanding of how individual students engage with their ESL learning.

2.5 Students' Perceptions

In this section I will review the literature pertinent to the importance of exploring ESL struggling readers' own perceptions and what those perceptions are with regards to ESL learning.

2.5.1 The Importance of Exploring ESL Struggling Readers' Perceptions

Perceptions can also be regarded as 'attitudes' (Barkhuizen 1998, p. 88; Mamun, 2015, p. 28), 'views', 'opinions', (Mamun, 2015, p. 28) 'beliefs', 'understandings' and 'experience' (Noursi, 2013, p. 22). In the educational field, research concerning students' perceptions are typically related to perceptions towards school, and subjects taught in school, such as learning a second

language (Rahimi & Hassani, 2011), and towards educators and other students (Navarro-Villarroel, 2011). Rudduck (1996, p. 15) argued that among the things that we can learn from children are “what helps them to work hard, what switches them off, what kinds of teaching do they value and what kind of support they need? They are, after all, our “expert witnesses”. It is further believed that students’ perceptions are just as important as teachers’ in facilitating the process of defining and improving the instructional methods in the ESL classroom (Mamun, 2015). Kumaravadivelu (1991, p. 107) stated that “the more we know about the learner’s personal approaches and personal concepts, the better and more productive our intervention will be”. Apart from that, students have distinct needs, likings and learning preferences (Noursi, 2013). If teachers are aware of their students’ feelings and perceptions, as well as their actions towards these feelings, teachers will be able to plan and conduct activities that are more tailored to the children’s needs and thus more likely to achieve the desired learning outcomes (Barkhuizen, 1998, p. 18; Breen, 1989; Fanselow, 1992; Nunan, 1988). Since the aim of teaching methods is to assist and develop student learning, it is vital to place focus on those who are meant to obtain the benefits, the students, who are one of the most important stakeholders in the education system (Wiggs, 2012).

There has been a lack of research into students’ perceptions of instructional methods and students as readers (Garrett, 2012; Wiggs, 2012). In the context of ESL students, Muñoz (2014) asserted that there has been little research looking at young students’ perceptions of learning a foreign language, let alone students who are identified as low attainment students or struggling readers. Furthermore, Jin and Cortazzi (2019, p. 487) stated that “despite huge interest and the millions of learners involved at ever younger ages”, researching young students in English language in East Asian “remains one of the least researched areas in ELT.”

In Malaysia specifically, research investigating Year 1 struggling readers (as in my study) is yet to be found. This is probably because researchers may not be very confident with children’s awareness of their own experiences and children’s ability to clearly express their experiences, particularly those prior to or in primary school (Kissau, Adams & Algozzine, 2015; Iwaniec, 2014). Nonetheless, studies conducted outside Malaysia by Einarsdottir, Dockett and Perry (2005), Hsieh (2011), Li (2004) and Ma (2011) have revealed that “children are knowledgeable about their learning environment” from a very young age and able to express their experiences (Hsieh, 2011,

p. 256). Additionally, Block (1994) believed that, regardless of age, students are mindful about what transpires in the class, and thus their feelings and thoughts can be explored and studied.

Oldfather (1995, p. 14) recommended that, “students are a rich but often untapped resource for teachers”. Erickson and Schultz (1992, p. 467) assert that “If the student is visible at all in a research study, he is usually viewed from the perspective of... educators’ interests and ways of seeing... Rarely is the perspective of the student herself explored”. Since students’ perceptions are rarely sought, assumptions are made by teachers about the students and their learning experience which are not similar to what students really experience (Wray & Medwell, 2006). More study is therefore required to comprehend how struggling readers perceive the subject they learn, how they perceive themselves as readers and how they experience instructional methods from their own viewpoints “which could then help guide reading instructional decisions, shed insight into how and where communications break down, and in turn potentially help close the learning gap for struggling readers” (Wiggs, 2012, p. 6).

A range of approaches can be used to explore students’ perceptions in relation to their language learning (Barcelos, 2000). These include questionnaires listing a self-determined set of statements, students’ self-reports, interviews and a combination of approaches that normally involve classroom observations. Zakir (2017) further mentioned that observing students in the classroom, and interviewing them about their experience, can help inform researchers about students’ thoughts and emotions in relation to their learning. It is further agreed by Stuvland (2019) that observing students offers some insight into existing perceptions, while listening to the students’ statements can offer a comprehensive understanding of their learning experience. Innovative methods also take place in the qualitative research field with young students (Jin & Cortazzi, 2019), such as using pictures, cards, toys or objects that can be combined with interviews to help yield fascinating perceptions, attitudes and feelings on students’ learning experiences (Jin et al., 2014, 2016). Whichever research method is applied, the relative lack of prior work with young students in this area means that they all help to build the foundations of a more robust understanding of their thoughts and viewpoints on their English learning experience (Pinter 2006, 2011, 2015).

2.5.2 Perceptions of Students with Regards to Aspects Related to ESL Learning

Since a very limited number of studies are available in relation to the perceptions of struggling readers in the ESL and non-ESL context, I will also review past studies on perceptions of ESL students in general since reading is just one part of the language learning experience. These perceptions include perceptions of ESL, perceptions of the learning experience in the classroom, and the difficulties that ESL students face while learning English.

2.5.2.1 Perceptions of ESL

As shown by a number of studies, English is valued and perceived as important by a lot of students for multiple reasons (Araos, 2015; Betty, 2016; Inostroza, 2018; Jin et al., 2014; Nikolov, 1999; Ruzane, 2013). In the study carried out by Araos (2015), participating students deemed that learning English was valuable because it can be used in the future, in addition to what the language can offer them in terms of personal contentment. English is also deemed necessary because it is used as a communications tool with people from different countries if they travel or meet other nationalities. Other children also reported that they are pleased to be able to use English and to share English knowledge with their friends and family members. The study by Araos (2015) utilised focus groups to garner information from nine-year-old Chilean EFL students. Similarly, Inostroza (2018), in another focus group study with nine-year-old Chilean EFL students, discovered that the students perceived English as valuable because it is used for immediate practical purposes that offer personal satisfaction, such as listening to music, and for future use. Similar findings were also yielded in the study by Ruzane (2013) who discovered that young EAL students in her research expressed a positive attitude towards English. The students agreed that it was necessary for them to learn English to acquire jobs in the future and to further their study at the higher level of education. The students believed that English is essential whenever they need to interact with other people apart from assisting them in increasing their self-esteem and confidence and making them feel significant. All the students also viewed English as important because the language is ubiquitous in this modern era, with a presence in shops, newspapers and books. A few students expressed beliefs that seemed to be influenced by what their parents told them. For instance, the students elaborated that English is important because their parents told

them so. The study involved thirty students using classroom observation and twelve students in focus group discussions.

Jin et al. (2014), meanwhile, conducted a questionnaire-based study of Primary Years one and three students in China. The results showed that the majority of the participants expressed their enjoyment at learning English and described English as valuable and beneficial for their academic endeavours with practical uses in the future such as for travelling. Furthermore, the ability to speak English made students feel proud of themselves (Betty, 2016). Indeed, many students in previous studies have expressed that they like to learn English (Betty, 2016; Hashim, 2016; Hsieh, 2001; Inostroza, 2018; Nikolov, 1999). For example, in the study by Hashim (2016), a lot of students in the study (78.6% of the 262) stated that learning English was fun and not so hard. Many students also stated that they liked studying English and regarded English as their favourite subject (Betty, 2016) or positioned English as among their first and second preference subjects (Nikolov, 1999).

In addition, Cheng et al. (2016) carried out a study with two low attaining and two high attaining ESL Malaysian primary students using interviews. The findings showed that the high performing students were highly motivated to learn English because they wanted to go overseas and to become an international singer. Another reason mentioned was that the students were interested in English songs and movies, hence they wanted to really understand them. In contrast, the low performing students believed that English had no use in their life. One student stated that he would discontinue study after primary school and join his father's job as a construction worker. He therefore felt that English would not play a role in his future life or help him to enhance his livelihood. The other student expressed his dislike towards English, feeling that English is difficult and stating that he often failed the tests at school. In relation to the perceptions of students towards their English teacher, on the one hand, high performing students perceived their teachers as humorous and inspiring and looked forward to having a similar teacher teaching them in the following year. On the other hand, low performing students were scared of the teacher and preferred to have a different teacher to teach them next year.

A contrasting finding was discovered in the study by Mat and Yunus (2014) with average and low attaining Malaysian primary school students, that a majority of them were highly motivated in

learning and expressed positive attitudes towards learning English. Most of the students (96% of 40 participants) expressed liking and having an interest in learning English, and 88% stated that learning English was great. A majority of the students (93%) indicated that learning English was vital because to secure a good job and be respected by others. The jobs that they thought required English proficiency included doctors, engineers, pilots and bankers. Most of the students (93%) in this study also agreed that they had a strong aspiration to learn English and 90% also indicated that they wanted to become fluent in English and many of them (63%) wanted to speak many languages well. The reasons for their desire to become multilingual is because they want to make more friends who speak different languages and to make them understand what other people said, particularly on radio and televisions.

Besides that, the roles of adults, such as teachers and family members, in students' learning processes was also mentioned in the study by Mat and Yunus (2014). Many participants (73%) stated that they wanted to learn English because their English teachers were nice and 80% of the students also perceived their teacher as an inspiration. This was further commented on by the respondents when they said that their teacher cared about them and did not embarrass them in the class. Other children explained that the teacher was able to teach them well and taught new words every day. In contrast, students felt that they did not receive much support at home. Over half of participating students (56%) did not favour watching cartoons and listening to English songs. One of the reasons given was because their parents listened to Malay radio and did not allow their children to tune into English programmes. The study utilised a questionnaire and interviews to garner information from forty students aged between 10-12 years old.

Similarly, in other findings, 71.2% of the 262 student participants in Hashim's (2016) study stated that the English teacher made learning English fun and enjoyable. The students believed that the teacher utilised different materials that surprised them and encouraged them to use English during school time. Conversely, students in Betty's (2016) study agreed that they had the best English teachers and also felt that the available teaching aids made the learning sessions friendly. In addition, students also believed that their teachers were sensitive to their individual needs and were committed to helping the students. Moreover, the students allied their success in learning English to the help they received from their teachers when they were struggling (Muñoz, 2014).

Nikolov (1999) and Ruzane (2013) further associated learning English as a second or foreign language with getting assistance from adults. Nikolov (1999), in her study, revealed that 6-8 year old children in her study learned EFL because of their teachers and parents. For example, students mentioned that the teachers were kind and nice, had long hair, and primarily because they felt loved by the teacher. Other responses were connected to family-related reasons. For example, students wanted to teach their family members and their family members also learned English. Besides that, children felt that their understanding improved when teachers explained things in the children's first language (Ruzane, 2013). Furthermore, Ruzane (2013) revealed that, besides teachers, adults such as uncles and aunts, were also among those who played a role in helping language learning. Additionally, most of the children found that the support received through encouragement, library visits and learning resources supported their language learning. On the one hand, six children particularly commented that their English improved because their parents provided them with resources such as books, computers and toys. As such, they were helped directly by their parents. On the other hand, three children confided that resources such as books and computers were not available at home. They also said that they had little opportunity to use the school computers as these had to be shared with other students across the entire school, meaning that they had limited exposure to interactive educational activities on computers. Seven out of twelve children obtained support in reading homework, while the others were upset about not getting help from their parents, who could not speak English or spoke very little. The children did, however, receive help from older sisters or brothers and relatives like uncles and aunts. Sometimes they were not able to complete their homework as they were unable to understand the instructions, or their parents had other commitments. It was also reported that some students' homework was done by their siblings and children. Children in the study also confided that the presence of an English-speaking environment in the house helped in their English language development. Six of the students believed that using English at home and school helped one's fluency in the language more than using English only at school. Seven children stated that they wished that they could speak English with adults at home as they had access to very few people with whom they could converse in the language.

In another study by Cheng et al. (2016), involving low attaining and high attaining ESL primary school students in Malaysia, it was discovered that low attaining students stated that their family members did not supervise their homework completion. Family members also did not ask students to record the homework given by the teacher. Further, English was not entirely utilised at home. In contrast, students with high attainment reported that their family members ensured that their homework was completed and that they sat down with their mother to perform the homework. The use of English at home was also present in this group, although only very minimally.

2.5.2.2 Classroom Learning Experiences

Preferred teaching methods were also discussed by students in previous research. For example, the students in the study by Araos (2015) felt that they enjoy doing activities which are challenging but motivating and fun. They are inspired to become attentive and participative in the lesson when the teacher said something that they cannot really understand. The findings concur with Inostroza (2018) who found that the EFL students in his study liked the challenging activities, which made them engaged in the learning. Besides that, Ruzane (2013) also illustrated that EAL students in her study preferred to learn English in a range of different ways. These included through seeing, feeling and touching real things, having interactive learning using computers, learning by looking at examples shown by the teacher, doing diverse activities like drawing and painting, talking to others like friends, listening to stories, listening to and singing music, and acting out the stories. Another finding discovered in the study by Ruzane (2013) was that some of the students liked to learn through repetition because this activity helped them to memorise what they learned in the classroom. In contrast, EFL Chinese students in the study by Jin et al., (2016) stated that they disliked reciting and memorising English words. Besides that one child in Ruzane (2013)'s study also reported that he enjoyed the interesting lessons planned and executed by the teacher who also gave praise and rewards to the children with stickers, similar to the children in the study by Nikolov (1999).

In another study by Hsieh (2011), the findings revealed that children reported that activities that they found interesting were singing, dancing, and playing games. Similar findings were discovered in a study by Nikolov (1999), where children aged 6-8 years old cited playing games as the most enjoyable activity in the EFL classroom. In contrast to the studies by Hsieh (2011) and Nikolov

(1999), which showed that students liked hands-on activities, participants in the study by Muñoz (2014) preferred traditional types of learning, where all students could see the board and hear the teacher's voice, over group work activities or play.

Studies have also revealed negative experiences of ESL students in English language classrooms. For instance, students had restricted opportunities to take part in the English lessons, including not being picked by their teacher although they were excited to answer the questions. This is similar to findings by Inostroza (2018), that students felt that they had limited opportunity for involvement in lessons, such as experiencing a narrow chance to answer the teacher's questions. Some participants felt that the teacher's use of English words that they did not understand made learning complicated and difficult (Araos, 2015). Additionally, some children in a study by Inostroza (2018) also mentioned they sometimes disliked the lesson as it involved difficult to understand words. Students in the study by Muñoz (2014) similarly revealed that students found spelling activities challenging. Mat and Yunus (2014) also explored negative experiences of ESL students, citing how a small number of intermediate and low-achieving students in their study admitted that they paid little attention in class for reasons such as being distracted by other students' noises and students' passing the classroom. Two participants said that they did not understand what was being taught by the teacher while another two students stated that the lessons were uninteresting and dull.

A few studies, such as those of Araos (2015) and Inostroza (2018) also discuss students' ideal ESL lessons. Students in the study by Araos (2015) felt that they preferred lessons that integrated acting, playing and handicrafts activities to make the learning more fun. Similar responses were garnered from EFL students in the study by Inostroza (2018) who mentioned that students preferred a classroom with hands-on activities, such as acting, games, handicrafts and oral activities.

2.5.2.3 Challenges Facing the Students

Difficulties experienced and reported by students are also illustrated in a few studies. For instance, Ruzane (2013) reported that of the thirty participating students, seven said that learning English was enjoyable but difficult, five admitted that they did not enjoy learning English, and two mentioned that learning English was boring. All five children also admitted that they would find learning the language easier when they were older. One child also reported that she was uncertain

to answer the questions posed by the teacher in the classroom as she might be ridiculed by her friends for providing wrong answers and that made her get embarrassed and angry at herself. Another child confided that she could not remember what she wanted to say because English words were still strange to her. She also worried that her teacher would consider her lazy and as not putting enough effort in class because she would take a long time to think before producing the answer. Problems related to self-confidence and concern over people's judgment were also reported in the study by Tepfenhart (2011), who discovered that students were reluctant to participate in classroom learning because they were afraid of making mistakes that would embarrass them in front of their friends. Students also did not feel that they were good enough, or had sufficient knowledge, regarding foreign language learning.

Besides that, Mat and Yunus (2014) also revealed that in relation to the problems that ESL students faced in learning English, 73% of the participants reported that they felt nervous when speaking English in the classroom. This is because they did not understand the lesson, did not have sufficient vocabulary to answer the teacher's questions, had problems pronouncing words correctly in English, and were worried about being laughed at by other students.

In addition, three participating students in the study by Hsieh (2011) mentioned that, although learning English was fun, they also felt that it was challenging. For instance, one student, named Bon, said that he could not understand English because he did not speak much of the language. Another student, Wen, stated that learning and speaking English was hard for him. Another student, Yi, also expressed a negative reaction towards learning the language as she said that she could not understand the language at all. Although the teacher taught her, she still felt that the language was difficult and she did not know how to learn the language.

In another study, Li (2004) exposed the difficulties that Chinese ESL struggling learners faced while learning in the classroom in a Canadian school, focusing on two children, Billy and Jake. Billy reported he was interested in learning at school, but felt that speaking English was not easy since he had a very limited vocabulary. He also admitted that he needed to work on his spelling and believed that writing was important. He also commented that learning can be fun, as he learns many things, but less so if he needs to write boring stuff. He was also upset that his friends in his

group did not do their homework and this affected his engagement with the group discussions. Billy also aimed to read more books throughout the year and chose simple books despite imagining himself as reading the more complex Harry Potter book series in his drawing. He commented that reading can be fun and has many details, but sometimes he disliked reading because it was tedious. He also realised that he would have to read a lot in high school later, thus he needed to start reading now.

The other participant, Jake, expressed that although he read a lot at home if he liked the books, when he disliked the books he disliked reading. He said that he liked reading when he was small as he loved looking at the pictures in books, but as he grew up, he found that simply looking at pictures was no longer any fun. He also admitted his difficulty comprehending the vocabulary used in subjects such as Science and Mathematics. He also detested learning vocabularies, spelling and grammar, instead preferring writing, which he described as a fun and educational activity, including doing crosswords and Scrabble.

Furthermore, a study about struggling readers in primary school in a non-ESL context by Wiggs (2012) focused on the reading experiences of three third-grade struggling readers in an elementary school in a town in the Midwest of the USA. The three participants were Anthony, Suzie and Damon. One of the themes discussed in the study was students' reading perceptions revolving around hard words. For Anthony, hard words were those that were difficult to decode or words which cannot be sounded out. Anthony referred to these words as big words that he was still learning. Anthony was, however, able to mark the correct answers if the teacher read the words aloud to him because he could understand the meaning. Suzie perceived hard words as the many words which she had problems decoding and understanding; for example, in the storybook that she read or in the questions posed by the teacher. From Damon's perspective, he was having difficulty decoding the words, understanding words in the vocabulary lists, and he simply did not comprehend what he read. He also associated his lack of comprehension with forgetfulness as he said he forgot what he read. Despite this, he had the ability to pronounce hard words, including how words fit together to construct a meaningful text.

The second theme discussed in the study by Wiggs (2012) was that struggling readers experience internal barriers. For example, when Anthony read he felt pressured to read fast and the pressure intensified when he read aloud such that he would sweat and feel anxious. Suzie felt that she did not have adequate time to read the task given by the teacher and to decode the words. Damon felt shy when reading aloud but felt happy when he read alone. He also enjoyed recreational reading at home compared to academic reading at school. The final theme elaborated in the study is that the students were sensitive towards others' perceptions of them. For example, Anthony was influenced by the way his friend described him as an okay reader. He was also afraid of his friends laughing at him for still working on a task that others had already completed. Suzie felt that her friends thought she was strange and giggled at her for stopping when reading while trying to figure out words. In addition, Damon felt that his friends did not like him reading because he was slow at it.

In another research, Garrett (2012) explored the English learning experiences of twelve-year-old students using a questionnaire and interviews. The participants encompassed the two highest performing students in their class (Gavin and Kole), two middle performing students (Calvin and Jessica) and the two lowest performing students (Miranda and Destiny). In relation to feelings related to reading, all the students expressed that they liked reading, and four of them (the highest and middle performing students) provided positive experiences while reading, with the most recurring words mentioned being interest and choice. Garrett (2012) also revealed that three of the four highest and middle performing students provided negative experiences associated with reading. For example, Jessica and Calvin stated they felt unhappy when they were unable to understand things they read in the classroom. Gavin, in contrast, seemed to feel successful in reading as he only gave a comical example of negative experience. All of the highest and middle performing four students showed that they were successful readers since they chose to do reading as their preferred activity when asked by the researcher. As for the two lowest performing students, although they enjoyed reading, sometimes they felt lazy and found it boring. Further, they could articulate the positive and negative experiences they faced when they read. This was probably because they did not read in extra time and had insufficient experience of the reading process. Both of them did however mention that their favourite books were 'Sport Illustrated' and 'Twilight'.

From the study by Garrett (2012), students considered as struggling readers (Destiny, Mirinda and Calvin) regarded themselves as poor readers, having problems in reading and in understanding what they read. In contrast, non-struggling readers (Gavin, Kole and Jessica) acknowledged themselves as good readers and highlighted in detail elements of taking ownership of their own reading, such as rereading, asking questions to oneself, figuring out the meaning of words and focusing on comprehension as an important aspect that a good reader should possess.

2.5.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, researchers have outlined important features of students' perceptions of various aspects of ESL learning, including overall perceptions towards English, towards ESL lessons in the classroom and towards the difficulties that students face. Although relatively few studies touched specifically on ESL struggling readers, related studies have helped reveal the voices of students in respect to perceptions about learning English or reading in ESL and non-ESL contexts. To fill the gap, my study contributes to the literature with regard to young struggling readers in the ESL context in Malaysia.

Having covered all aspects that I underlined in Section 2.1 as comprising the conceptual framework for my study, that is the teacher, parent and student dimensions of struggling ESL readers, the next section sets out the theories that are associated with this study.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will set out and discuss the research methodology adopted for this study here. As such, it is divided into several sections which begins with the research paradigm that illustrates my worldview to “inform the meaning or interpretation of research data” (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017, p.26). This is followed by the research design, which highlights the information regarding the participants of the study, research site and pilot study. The data collection methods will then be explained, followed by the ethical considerations relevant to that data collection. Finally, the chapter will explain in detail the process followed for analysing the collected data. To reiterate, I attempt to answer an overarching research question of:

What are struggling ESL primary school students’ English language reading experiences in the Malaysian context?

Based on this main research question, five sub-questions were devised:

- 1.1 How does the teacher work with the struggling readers in the classroom?
- 1.2 How do the participating parents work with their children at home?
- 1.3 How do the students perceive their ESL learning experiences?
- 1.4 How do the environmental contexts interact to influence struggling readers’ experiences of reading?
- 1.5 What are the implications for education policy and practice in Malaysia?

3.2 Research Paradigm

Paradigms are embedded in all educational study (Brooke, 2013). The topic being investigated in a study is seen from the researcher’s beliefs and perspectives on the world (Guba, 1990; Hughes,

2010). Such perspectives essentially lead to the “actions”, or the way the topic in the study is approached or examined (Guba, 1990, p.17; Fraser & Robinson, 2004). In this study, I adopted a constructivist paradigm, which is alternatively known as a naturalistic (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) or interpretive paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The constructivist paradigm is applied in this study because, according to Creswell (2014), social constructivism deals with the development of subjective meanings and understandings of one’s personal experiences concerning specific topics based on one’s social and historical background. In this study, I investigated the struggling ESL primary school students’ English language reading experiences at a primary school in a Malaysian context. To this end, I explored the voices of the students themselves, their parents and their ESL teacher. I also observed the reading instructions in the ESL classroom. I believe that the experiences that these struggling readers had could be constructed into knowledge through interpretation and reflection. Even though interactions with multiple participants in this study is important in understanding the struggling readers’ experiences, my personal opinions and judgments play a role too. How I perceive the world and the way I view how knowledge is constructed are echoed within the constructivist paradigm.

Guba and Lincoln (1989) noted that a study’s research paradigm is founded on the researcher’s ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions. This was reiterated by Hitchcock and Hughes (1995, p.21), who stated that, “ontological assumptions will give rise to epistemological assumptions which have methodological implications for the choice of particular data collection techniques”. In other words, the epistemological explanation is limited by the ontological explanation of a research. The methodological explanation is further dependent on the epistemological and ontological understanding of the research (Lincoln & Guba, 2013). This means that the different ontology and epistemology positions that a researcher adopts imply the use of different kinds of methodologies (Cohen et al., 2005).

3.2.1 Ontology

Ontology is concerned with the nature of existence (Crotty, 1998), or social entities (Bryman, 2012) or reality (Hammersley, 1992). In discussing ontology, Cohen et al. (2005, p.5) posed questions for us to ponder, “Is social reality external to individuals – imposing itself on their

consciousness from without – or is it the product of individual consciousness?” Other explanations have been offered. For example, Antwi and Hamza (2015) described ontology as the approach that the researcher utilises to describe truth. Ontology, according to Lincoln and Guba (2013, p.39), deals with the following questions: “What is there that can be known?” and “What is the nature of reality?”

The constructivist paradigm posits that realities are multiple (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). The truth is regarded as not existing and reality is subjective and changing (Bunnis & Kelly, 2010). Constructivism also posits that “entities exist only in the minds of the persons contemplating them” (Lincoln & Guba, 2013, p.39). According to Creswell (2014), constructivism deals with the development of subjective meanings and understandings of one’s personal experiences concerning specific topics based on their social and historical background. Understandings about the world are constructed and interpreted by people (Crotty, 1998). In contrast, the positivist paradigm states that reality is “hard, real and external” (Cohen et al., 2005, p.6). Reality is also claimed as “objectively given and measurable” or “objective and quantifiable” (Antwi & Hamza, 2015, p.218). Reality is perceived as unchanging and dependent on universal laws (Hughes, 2010), or put another way, “static and fixed” (Bunnis & Kelly, 2010).

3.2.2 Epistemology

Epistemology deals with sufficient and valid kinds of knowledge (Gray, 2014). The question related to epistemology is, “Is knowledge something which can be acquired on the one hand, or, is it something which has to be personally experienced” (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017, p.27). Epistemology examines the relationship between the inquirer and the inquired into (Guba, 1990, p. 27). Since reality under the constructivist paradigm is relative, as described in the previous ontology section, the multiple realities that exist are built between the researcher and participants (Bunnis & Kelly, 2010): i.e. varied interpretations of the world are “constructed and not discovered” (Gray, 2014, p.20) between both parties. Crotty (1998) further claimed that meaning is generated through social interaction among people. On the one hand, the generated meanings of the world could be influenced by many factors such as “one’s prior experience and knowledge, political and social status, gender, race, class, sexual orientation, nationality, personal and cultural

values” (Lincoln & Guba, 2013, p.40). On the other hand, positivism argues that “truth is possible to discover” (Mukherji & Albon, 2015, p.24). This is because “Human behaviour is predictable, caused and subject to both internal pressures (for behaviourist psychologists) and external forces (for positivistic sociologists)” (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995 p.22). Positivists also “assume the possibility of some kind of unmediated, direct grasp of the empirical world and that knowledge... simply reflects or mirrors what is ‘out there’” (Schwandt, 2007, p. 38).

3.2.3 Methodology

Methodology is defined as “the method used in conducting the investigation” (Antwi & Hamza, 2015, p. 2180). Methodology is also described as, “How should we study the world?” (Kawulich, 2012, p.1), and the fundamental question related to methodology is “How does one go about acquiring knowledge?” (Lincoln & Guba, 2013, p.39). The methodological aspect of a piece of research must agree with the ontological and epistemological stances of that research. According to the constructivist paradigm, there is no single reality and the construction of multiple realities is made through interactions. In addition, social, cultural and historical perspectives play an important role in shaping people’s sense about the world (Crotty, 1998). The constructivist paradigm therefore posits that the methodology utilised in a piece of research should explore “the minds and meaning-making, sense-making activities” (Lincoln & Guba, 2013, p.40), as is often practised in qualitative research (Creswell, 2014) such as case studies. Positivism, however, argues that reality is examined by utilising scientific approaches (Frewan, 2015). The paradigm is also “characterized by the use of the quantitative methodological approach which emphasizes the need to make generalizations about the world and the need for accurate measurement” (Mukherji & Albon, 2015, p.24). As human behaviour can be “observed”, “identified”, “predicted” and “measured” (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995 p.22), the use of surveys and experiments have been suggested by Cohen et al. (2005) as examples of methodologies appropriate to quantitative research.

As stated previously, I associate myself with the constructivist paradigm. With that view in mind, “I refer to myself in the first person to recognise my role” (Vickers, 2016, p.10) in constructing of

the knowledge that I transform into the content written in this dissertation. At the same time “every effort was made to value the participants [perspectives]” (Ferrara, 2005, p.230).

3.3 Positionality

Positionality “...reflects the position that the researcher has chosen to adopt within a given research study” (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p.71). The positionality of a researcher can influence aspects of the research as a whole and the stages of its development. This is supported by Foote and Bartell (2011, p.46) who ascertained that, “The positionality that researchers bring to their work, and the personal experiences through which positionality is shaped, may influence what researchers may bring to research encounters, their choice of processes, and their interpretation of outcomes”. For these reasons, Wellington (2015) recommends that a brief account of the researcher’s positionality, encompassing information that is pertinent for readers, should be indicated in a thesis.

My positionality in this study is primarily influenced by my previous career as an ESL teacher in a primary school. From 2010 to 2016 I taught within a number of government primary schools in Malaysia. I was also appointed in one year to teach young ESL students who had difficulties in reading. I adopted phonics instructions as a main method to teach the students and did my best to get them engaged in their learning. Since I did not have much opportunity to talk to my students and examine their experience in detail when I myself was a teacher, I was motivated to use this PhD research to investigate and learn more about these students. I intended to understand the involvement of teacher and parents with the students and to explore students’ perceptions in relation to their learning experiences. To this end I listened to voices of multiple participants to get an in-depth understanding on the struggling readers’ experiences in a comprehensive way.

3.4 Research Design

A qualitative research approach is utilised to undertake this study. Particularly, I adopt a case study approach, which is a type of qualitative study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) which focuses on an existing occurrence of a group of people (Gustafsson, 2017). A case study is also a valuable design to examine a specific situation about which little is known (Kumar, 2011). Since the experience of

struggling readers in the Malaysian primary classroom context is very under-researched, a case study is therefore highly appropriate for this research. In addition, a case study design is applicable in my study as I aim to discover “a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case)... over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information... and reports a case description and case themes” (Creswell, 2013, p.97). In this study, I utilised a range of data collection methods to investigate the learning experiences of the struggling readers and describe the findings and the themes after analysing the data (observations, interviews and documents collections). My study in the research site spanned ten weeks and involved three groups: the struggling readers, their parents and a principal teacher (who was the class English teacher).

3.5 Selection of the Research Site and the Study Participants

This section presents where the study took place, its participants, how these were recruited.

3.5.1 Research site

The school that I chose to carry out my study in was a suburban school in Malaysia. The rationale for choosing the school is because, according to the school headmaster, whom I have been contacting through phone calls, the school usually has many Year 1 students who are identified as struggling readers. This meant that I could potentially gain a lot of relevant information about the phenomenon that I intend to investigate (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006, p.319). I also selected this school because I have never worked at the school so this factor will minimise bias throughout the research process. The school consists of 1,309 students from Years 1 to 6, 83 teachers and seven other members of staff. There are seven classes in each Year and the Year 1 students were streamed dependent on the students’ general ability in the particular subjects. The number of the students varied from one class to another but a smaller class size was arranged for low attaining students. All students are Malay with Malay as their first language. The majority of teachers are also Malays; only a few are non-Malay but these can speak and write Malay well. The school has two sessions, morning and afternoon: Years 1, 4, 5 and 6 study in the morning session, and Years 2 and 3 in the afternoon.

The three-storey school has three blocks: blocks A, B and C. School administration affairs mainly run in block A, together with the school office, teachers' room and meeting room. There are also a few classrooms located in the same block. Many other classrooms are located in blocks B and C. Year 1 classes are placed in block B adjacent to the school library and school computer lab. The bell goes at 7.30 am to mark the beginning of the assembly. Students learn several subjects every day and each lesson lasts from 30 minutes to one hour, depending on the class timetable. Year 1 students have their recess as early as 9.10 am, with the other Years (4, 5 and 6) having recess at different times. The school was rated as a good school or 'Sekolah Harapan' (just below excellent) by school inspectors after achieving 74.58% in their overall performance score (School document, 2017). The ethos of the school is to produce individuals who are responsible towards family, religion, race and nation.

The classroom consisted of 24 students, 18 boys and 6 girls, and is considered as a low attaining classroom. Each student has a table and chair and the students are seated in groups of six. The selected classroom is a very standard primary school classroom in Malaysia, with a mix of children from medium to low socioeconomic status that could be found in many other Malaysian primary schools in suburban areas. The students needed to learn a number of subjects: Malay, English, Islamic Education, Mathematics, Science, Physical Education, Health Education and Art Education. Each subject was taught by a different teacher. Students learned English every day for 60 minutes, broken down into two slots of 30 minutes per lesson on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Since there is no rigid criteria on how teaching and learning must be conducted in the struggling readers' classroom, teachers who teach struggling readers are expected to pick and choose the content of the lesson from both the textbook and the struggling readers' module that must be done according to the objectives of the lesson. Mrs. Leela who was the English teacher of the classroom typically dedicated each day to teach the students different language skills, as recommended in the National Curriculum, including listening and speaking, reading, writing and language art.

3.5.2 The Study Participants

Research in an educational field is described as "the collection and analysis of information on the world of education so as to understand and explain it better" (Opie, 2004, p.3). As such, I selected

as participants in this study different stakeholders (MOE, 2013b) that are directly engaged with the focal students' world of education so as to maximise my opportunity to attain a comprehensive and rich understanding of the experience of the struggling readers. These include the struggling readers themselves, their parents and their classroom English teacher. According to Creswell (2012a), the number of participants in qualitative research differs between one project to another. Patton (2002) also argued, "There are no rules for sample size in a qualitative inquiry. Sample size depends on what you want to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what's at stake, what will be useful, what will have credibility and what can be done with available time and resources" (pp. 242-243)

Morse, Lowery and Steury (2014) discovered that, in most theses they examined, the sample size was selected for convenient reasons. In my case, I decided to have a small sample of participants so that I could develop individualised relationships and get to know the participants better (Dallas, 2013, p. 49). Having a relatively small number of participants also helped me to give a detailed account of what happened in the research site (Creswell, 2012a).

3.5.3 Recruitment process

In terms of sampling technique, these participants (the struggling readers and their parents, as well as the English teacher) were recruited mainly by using purposive sampling (Bryman, 2012). The main criteria that I used to choose the student participants in this study was those who achieved non-mastery results in the reading screening and who studied in the low-attaining class. Bryman (2012) asserts that purposive sampling can be used to help the researcher in selecting participants who are relevant to the study. These participants were intentionally chosen to meet the research objectives and research questions (Bryman, 2012). Convenience sampling was also employed to a certain extent because, among a few schools that I contacted, only this particular school agreed to participate in my study. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016, p.98), convenience sampling deals with choosing a sample "based on time, money, location, availability of sites or respondents, and so on".

In order to approach young students, the researcher needed first to make contact with their gatekeepers (Heptinstall, 2000). This is because it is often more realistic for the school staff, such

as the headteacher and class teacher, to be contacted at the outset to obtain permission to seek consent from the students (Hill, 2005). Further, it would be challenging to contact the students without authorisation from either parents or the school administration (Heptinstall, 2000). In this study, the school headteacher, the class teacher and the class English teacher acted as the main gatekeepers, and they introduced me to the potential student participants. They identified a class which consisted of struggling readers who did not achieve a “mastery” result in reading screening. The headmaster and teacher took into account the possible benefits and harms that the children and parents may receive upon their agreement in my study. Six children were shortlisted by the class teacher and English teacher as potential research participants of my study: four boys and two girls were named from a total of 18 boys and six girls in the struggling readers’ classroom. It is not my aim to recognise the differences between male and female participants’ responses. Hence, gender selection is not an issue in this study. The teacher also suggested that the students were to be seated in the same group to ease the observation process.

The value of the information teachers have concerning their students is undeniable in assisting the researcher when identifying suitable participants for the study and to facilitate the smoothness of the study process (McFadyen & Rankin, 2016). This gatekeeper role, however, might influence the research outcomes because the children who are going to partake in the study are recommended by them (Flewitt, 2005), even though in this case I had put forward the general characteristics that I was looking for, which were: 1) students who achieved non-mastery results in the reading screening; and, 2) students studying in the low-attaining class. Based on the teacher’s report, the participants in this study also: (3) scored below the passing mark in the school English tests, signifying that they had difficulties with reading; (4) had reading issues as reported by their teacher. Besides that, also according to the teacher, the chosen students had the verbal capacity to respond to the researcher’s questions, therefore could contribute to the research findings. In addition, students in the study come from low-income family which classified them as in the bottom 40% of households, with a monthly income of MYR 3,900 and below (which is equivalent to approximately 710 British Pound Sterling (henceforth GBP)). In terms of the parent participants, I decided to choose the mothers of struggling readers, as advised by the teacher. The suggestion was given because the teachers believed that in the Malay culture, mothers are usually more closely involved with the children’s learning.

It has been argued that “Ideally, your sampling strategy should be something that evolves over time that emerges through a mutual relationship with desk, field and analytic work” (Rapley, 2014, p.62). This account revealed that sampling of a study is finalised from what is there in the site after discussing, agreeing and considering the availability of the participants. In my case, I started with six struggling readers, their mothers and their classroom English teacher, but in the middle of study I included a sibling participant on the suggestion of a parent, who thought that more information would be obtained through the sibling. In total, number of “parent” participants in the study were therefore seven individuals.

Tables 4 to 6 below summarise the basic demographic information of the participants involved in this study.

Table 4: Student participants’ demographic information

No.	Name (pseudonym)	Age (years old)	Gender
1.	Ali	7	Male
2.	Fairul	7	Male
3.	Imran	7	Male
4.	Roni	7	Male
5.	Qila	7	Female
6.	Tairah	7	Female

Table 5: Parent participants’ demographic information

No.	Name (pseudonym)	Age (years old)	Relationship	No. of children	Educational attainment
1.	Mrs. Ela	44	Mother to Ali	4	Secondary school
2.	Mrs. Amina	41	Mother to Fairul	5	Secondary school

3.	Mrs. Nina	49	Mother to Imran	3	Secondary school
4.	Mrs. Mina	40	Mother to Roni	5	Secondary school
5.	Ira	25	Sister to Roni		BA
6.	Mrs. Sofia	34	Mother to Qila	5	Secondary school
7.	Mrs. Su	38	Mother to Tairah	3	Secondary school

Table 6: Teacher participant demographic information

No.	Name (pseudonym)	Age (years old)	Gender	Qualification	Teaching experience
1.	Mrs. Leena	37	Female	BA Hons (Translations and Interpretation) Teaching Certificate	4 years in Secondary school 5 years in primary school

3.6 Data Collection Methods

Method is defined as the “range of approaches employed in a research to gather data which are to be used as a basis for inference and interpretation, for explanation and prediction” (Cohen et al., 2005, p.44). Yin (2009) suggested that a good case study needs to incorporate multiple sources. Greene and Hill (2005) argued that methods are selected based on their suitability to collect data relevant to the objectives and the nature of the research. In this study, struggling readers’

experiences in learning were sought by involving different participants in different locations (school and home-based). This clearly influenced the selection of data collection methods. Furthermore, as Garbarino and Stott (1992, p.15) argue, “the more sources of information an adult has about a child, the more likely that the adult is to receive the child’s messages properly”. A number of different instruments were therefore used in this study to understand the ESL primary school struggling readers’ experiences, namely interviews, observations and the collection of documents.

3.6.1 Interviews

In qualitative research, interviews are probably the most commonly-used method to obtain information (Bryman, 2012). Wellington (2015) highlighted that we can probe interviewees’ thoughts, values, prejudices, perceptions, views, feelings and perspectives” (p. 71). In this study, all the interviews were conducted in Malay, the first language of the students and their parents, since English is not widely employed in their daily life. As for the ESL teacher, the interviews were also carried out in Malay, as requested by the teacher, so as to make the sessions less formal and to help articulate her thoughts better. Although the interview guides were prepared beforehand I did not really follow the order of the questions precisely as responses and interactions of the participants’ influence the way the questions were asked (Wellington, 2015).

Besides that, before finalising the interview questions, opinions were obtained from experts in the field of educational research, such as my supervisor and another senior lecturer of a Malaysian university.

3.6.1.1 Interviews with the ESL teacher and the parent participants

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) suggested three types of interviews which vary in terms of structure ranging from highly structured to unstructured interviews. Highly structured interviews are also known as standardised interviews. This type of interview is characterised by “rigidly adhering to predetermined questions may not allow you to access participants’ perspectives and understandings of the world” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p.109). Such a strictly controlled

interview, with the same wording and order of questions, presented to all interviewees (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), might limit the naturalness of both the questions and the responses (Cohen et al., 2005). Furthermore, with structured interviews, researchers do not have flexibility to probe further into the interviewee's responses, thereby potentially limiting the richness of the data. Highly structured interviews could be useful when researchers are seeking the demographic data of the respondents in a qualitative study. It is regarded as an "oral form of written survey", as described by Merriam & Tisdell (2016, p.109).

Semi-structured interviews are positioned between structured and unstructured interviews. This type of interview is conducted using a list of themes and questions to be covered, "and neither the exact wording nor the order of the questions is determined ahead of time" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, pp.110-111). This style of interview offers flexibility to the way both questions and answers are presented, allowing discussion and dialogue to ensue (Edwards & Hollands, 2013). Such conversation allows researchers to clarify the information supplied by the interviewee (Patton, 2002; Wellington, 2015), for example, whether the issues are "at hand", "emerging" ideas of the interviewee or "new ideas" related to the subject discussed (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p.111). Semi-structured interviews also provide a structure that can be used to facilitate the comparison and analysis of interviewees' responses (Edwards & Hollands, 2013). On the other hand, unstructured interview is perceived as "more like a conversation" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 110) which do not have specific questions in advanced. The researcher instead asks questions based on notes or particular topics (Berg & Lune, 2012).

This study adopted interviews containing a highly-structured interview component, an unstructured interview component and a more substantial, semi-structured component. A highly-structured interview format was employed at the beginning of the interview session with the parent and ESL teacher participants. This approach was utilised to break the ice and make the participants feel at ease as the questions revolved around the participants' demographic information. Based on their responses I also engaged in small talk to let the participants feel more comfortable to open up with me. In the semi-structured part of the interview I followed the recommendation of Robson (2011) to utilise probes. Probes are helpful to facilitate the participants to expand on their answers when I judged that they appeared to have more to talk about. Examples of probes that I employed

in this study were “What is your own personal view on this?” and “Anything more?” (Robson, 2011, p.283). During the interview sessions, a digital recorder was utilised to record the participants’ responses after informed consent was granted.

With the teacher, I had a formal interview before the classroom observation was carried out. The session lasted about sixty minutes. The questions covered in the interview were related to the demographic information of the teacher, such as questions about her age, educational qualification, working experience and teaching experience, teaching aspirations, typical ways of working with struggling readers in the reading classroom, curriculum and syllabus, teaching materials and assessment, as well as questions associated to the teacher’s perceptions in respect to the struggling readers. The interviews were conducted in a room suggested by the teacher. Having an interview before the observations also provided some ideas as to what to take note of during the observations. Additionally, I conducted a post-observation interview which adopted unstructured interview format with the teacher after each classroom observation (Dubeck et al., 2012). This was intended to confirm the objectives of the lesson, to ascertain the teacher’s feelings regarding the lesson and to explore any particular issues that attracted my interest during the observation. These interviews were conducted briefly and informally, as a natural conversation, because the teacher had other work commitments. This conversation took place in the school corridor or school canteen. The interview guide is attached in Appendix 5.

With the parents, the interviews lasted between forty and fifty minutes and took place at various settings requested by the parents, such as at their house, their work place, mosque and their children’s school. The initial structured part highlighted the participants’ demographic data such as their age, place of birth, marital status, number of children, educational attainment and history of employment. In the semi-structured part I posed questions related to the way parents got involved with their children’s learning. The interview guide is attached in Appendix 6.

3.6.1.2 Interviews with the struggling readers

I had focus group sessions with the struggling readers. Focus groups are an additional type of qualitative interview apart from the three types of one-to-one interviews explained in the previous

section. According to Bryman (2012), the focus group is a group discussion which talks over a particular situation that has been experienced by all the participants. The researcher plays the role as a facilitator to moderate the discussion (Denscombe, 2007). In my study, the focus group was utilised because the process provides “a valuable, versatile, interactive, fun and developmentally effective method for use with children” (Gibson, 2007, p.473). To enhance my understanding regarding the use of focus group with struggling readers, I referred to the article by Gibson (2012) which provided essential guidelines for conducting focus groups with children. Although Gibson uses the term focus group, I am more comfortable to use a less formal term, reading conversation (Ferrara, 2005) to refer to talking with children about their experience in ESL reading.

Each conversation session lasted about 15 to 20 minutes. The conversations were held after each of the observed reading lessons in the ESL classroom in order to obtain insights into students’ perceptions of those lessons. They aimed to obtain immediate feedback from the students regarding the characteristics of the reading lessons they identified as easy, challenging, interesting or unexciting (Wiggs, 2012). I also used some of the materials from the reading lesson to facilitate their recollection about the lesson that they just had. I further probed students’ thoughts about particular behaviour(s) that I observed in the reading classroom so as to obtain in-depth information about the observed phenomenon. In the final conversation session (the fifth session) which lasted about 45 minutes, I included several other questions that are related the children’s perceptions towards ESL reading experiences. I employed explicit questions (e.g. Can you read in English?) rather than less explicit questions (What kind of reader are you?) to garner “more complete and productive responses” (Aukerman & Schuldt, 2015, p.125). The interviews took place outside the classroom, in a room proposed by the teacher. According to the teacher the room is normally visited by the students while learning the Malay language subject.

Before the final conversation began, I invited the students to do a drawing activity in which they drew a picture about the ESL reading that they experienced at home or in the classroom. This drawing was set up as an introductory or a “fun warm-up” session (Gibson, 2007, p.480) but it also formed a basis for questions later in the interview. The medium of drawing was chosen because it is considered to be a task-centred activity (Grieg & Taylor, 1999) which was found to be helpful to garner students’ views and experiences (Clark, 2005; Duncan, 2013). As suggested

by Gibson (2007; 2012), the integration of activities such as drawing into a focus group is perceived as helpful in promoting enjoyment during the whole session and further enables a relaxed atmosphere (Yuen, 2004). The focus group was carried out after the students had drawn their reading experiences since this allowed the interview session to “flow in a natural way” (Zakir, 2017, p.101) because the children talked about their drawing right after the drawing was produced.

In this study, I had three struggling readers in each group. The decision to conduct the focus groups with a very small number of children was based on three considerations: my experience of conducting the pilot study (section 3.7); the work of Koçyiğit (2014), who carried out small group interviews with groups of two or three children to elicit their views about primary school experience; a recognition that such small groups imitate the usual practice of how children communicate together with their friends (Eder & Fingerson, 2002; Mauthner, 1997; Gibson, 2012). I asked opinions from the English teacher about the dynamics of each group. The teacher suggested how the groups should be divided based on her experience in dealing with the children on a daily basis. The interview guide with the children is attached in Appendix 7.

3.6.2 Observations

One of the methods that I employed in my study was observation, which is argued to be one of the principal techniques employed in qualitative research (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008). This method, “also allows researchers to obtain a detailed description of social settings or events in order to situate people’s behaviour within their socio-cultural context” (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011, p.170). During observation, the researchers directly observe the participants’ behaviour in a particular setting (Bryman, 2012; Hammond & Wellington, 2013). Observation also allows participants “to see things that might otherwise be unconsciously missed, to discover things that participants might not freely talk about in interview situations” (Patton, 1990, p.203) and discover what the participants actually do (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008).

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), the researcher can assume a position when gathering data as an observer. Gold (1958) offers a well-known classification of researcher roles in observation, which lie on a continuum in respect to the “relationship between observer and

observed” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p.144). These include complete participant, participant as observer, observer as participant, and complete observer.

My role in this study was that of observer as participant because my “observer activities are known to the group” and my “participation in the group is definitely secondary to the role of information gatherer” (Merriam & Tisdell, 1026, pp.144-145). Adler and Adler (1994, p.380) mentioned, “This peripheral membership role” allows the investigator to “observe and interact closely enough with members to establish an insider's identity without participating in those activities constituting the core of group membership”. I was largely an information gatherer and less a participant during the classroom observation. The people under my study were aware of my observation activities. I wanted to know what actually happened in the classroom. During the observation, I sometimes assisted the teacher to distribute particular materials to the students in the classroom. My engagement with the students in the observation was passive and limited, however (Ugol, 2015). I observed what was happening in the reading lesson without taking part explicitly. I chose to sit quite close to the focal group students, to assist my observation (Kayser, 2019). I realised that if I sat at the corner or at the back of the classroom, I would not be able to hear them clearly. Although the students seemed to be aware of my presence at first, they soon became less self-conscious with my presence. This was probably because I had developed a good rapport with them before the research began and throughout the research process.

According to Gold (1958), one of the drawbacks of adopting the observer as participant role is that such brief contact with the research participants could be seen as superficial. Misunderstandings between the participants and myself as researcher might occur. To counteract that, before the formal observations took place, as recommended by Hassan (1998), I visited the classroom a few times during ESL lessons to get to know the students and to make my presence as an outsider less awkward. Through this, I was able to develop a good rapport with the teacher and students. We also spent time together either in formal or informal ways. This included during school events such as sport's day, during school recess and during the formal teaching and learning sessions. Research has claimed that the existence of the observer in the research site may give a negative implication to the research participants. They may behave differently with the presence of others such as the researcher (Patton, 2002), which is known as The Hawthorne Effect (Bolduc, 2008). It was hoped,

however, that the rapport that had been built and maintained throughout the research journey might help reduce the non-natural portrayal of the participants.

In this study I observed five reading lessons in the ESL classroom which lasted between approximately thirty and sixty minutes. This was recommended by Merriam and Tisdell (2016) who stated that each observation should take an hour or less because it involves much energy and focus. They added that although observation is perhaps more properly carried out through an extended period of time, “shorter periodic observations make the most sense, given the purpose of the study and practical constraints” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p.142). They further added that the total time devoted at the research site, the quantity of visits, and the quantity of observations carried out in each visit cannot be decided precisely in advance. In my study, classroom observation was conducted on five occasions after taking into consideration factors such as the availability of the teacher, the teacher’s schedule and the school activity.

My original proposal was to have eight observations. The teacher, however, was initially quite reluctant to allow me to observe the classroom as she might see me as an “external observers represent[ing] an intrusion into classrooms” who “can disrupt the regular classroom routine” (Shih, 2013, p.42). I had to make do with what was achievable at that particular time. Furthermore, the busy school schedule and the holiday term affected the original plan for the observation. Although the accuracy of the data that I employed to encapsulate the teaching and learning of reading through classroom observation might be challenged due to the small number of observations (Hiebert & Grouws, 2007), my aim was to garner information about reading instructions which seemed to be the teacher’s habitual practice (Shih, 2013). Given that I managed to have five periods of classroom observation through the course of the study, my data collection was broadly in line with other similar studies. Thus, Farrel and Guz (2019) conducted four classroom observation which lasted for fifty minutes, each to examine the beliefs and practice of reading instructions of one particular teacher, and Mutlu (2017) had five classroom observations lasting about forty minutes each to understand teachers’ and students’ use of tablets. In addition to that, the other methods utilised, namely interviews with the teachers and students and the collection of documents, helped to add further richness to the observational data that I obtained. During the observation, I observed the teacher and struggling readers in the reading classroom, with some specific focuses. These were:

- i- The physical setting of the classroom
- ii- The teaching methods that the teacher utilised
- iii- The objectives of the lessons
- iv- The materials that were employed by the teacher
- v- The students' behaviours, participations and interactions in the classroom with the teacher and among their friends.

I also devoted attention to things that the teacher and students mentioned in the interviews. My decisions as to what to observe was particularly guided by my interests, the research problems (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) and what I found in the literature, recognising, as Denicolo, Long and Bradley-Cole (2016, p.39) claim, that “different individuals might view things differently under similar or the same circumstances”. Hence what I chose to observe, describe and explain might be dissimilar to other researchers conducting similar research. To reiterate, the approach that I took was in line with constructivist paradigm that I adopted in this study.

A few methods are commonly employed in qualitative observations, which include “writing down information verbatim, in summary or in key words, tape recording conversations, video recording events and taking photographs” (Sarantakos, 2013, p.239). Hatch (2002) suggested that field notes can also be used to record observational data. Field notes are defined as “text (words) recorded by the researcher during an observation in a qualitative study” (Creswell, 2012a, p.216), even though “writing field notes is an onerous task, but field notes constitute the basis for data upon which the study is based: no field notes, no data” (Schensul & LeCompte, 2013, p.20). The choice of field notes to record what was happening in the reading classroom in this study highlights that my report was not based on behaviour counting of the participants or length and frequency of the activity or instructions in numeric forms (Yaacob, 2006). The qualitative observation approach (Adler & Adler, 1994) that I decided to employ is supported by Patton (2002, p.302), who argued that there are “no universal prescriptions about the mechanics of and the procedures of taking field notes”. I admit that while notes were being taken, I made subjective decisions as to what I perceived as significant to me as an observer (Ugol, 2015). I also spent some time to reflect on what I observed so as to add more detail in the field notes at the end of the day. I devoted time to a holistic reflection

on what I saw in respect to each student and the teacher to report general findings of my overall impression of their learning. I based this on my confidence in my judgement, my expertise and my feelings in reporting my findings in respect to my observations on that basis. Since I knew the environment and these specific subject-teacher and children I felt confident in expressing what I observed in the classroom. The field notes were typed out more properly within a couple of days of returning home to avoid forgetting the important details.

I was also aware of Sarantakos' caution regarding the challenge a researcher might experience when taking notes from the observation. For example, the number of people being observed can make the process a little difficult. Further, taking notes while observing what happened may divert the focus of the researcher (Sarantakos, 2013) resulting in a 'superficial' and 'unreliable account' (Wragg, 1999, p.17). To minimise such possibilities, I followed Sarantakos' suggestion to write only key words or phrases during the observation and to complete the notes after each observation (Sarantakos, 2013, p.229). The fact that all the focal struggling readers sat in the same group facilitated my observation and note taking process. I did not face many problems as I managed to identify the 'rhythm and flow of the class' (Elmore, 2017, p.114) which is largely characterised by: i) times when the teacher was talking; and ii) times when the students performed their task (if any) adapted from Rightmyer, McIntyre and Petrosko (2006).

Additionally, I also tried to learn the students' names according to their seating arrangement. This was to ensure that I would be able to write the field notes more efficiently.

The video recording was also useful. As suggested by Hackling (2014), two digital camcorders can be used in when observing a teacher and students in the classroom. Two mounted on floor-standing tripods were utilised to record what happened in the classroom. One device pointed to the teacher's place or desk and the other device was directed to the six focal students who sat in the same group (Hackling, 2014). This approach prevented me from deliberately videoing other students who did not participate in the study (Hackling, 2014). Focusing the camcorders to where the teacher is usually positioned was somewhat limiting, however, because sometimes the teacher moved and went to the students' place (Gibson & Brown, 2009). The voice of the teacher was recorded in the video, however, and the fact that field notes were also being taken helped mitigate

this problem. Video recording assisted me not to miss any important details (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008). Video recording also “provides an archive for substantiating and revisiting” my findings (Fasse & Kolodner, 2000, p.196) which was useful during the analysis process. To get the participants acclimatised to the presence of the video recording device, I showed them how the video worked and talked to them about its uses during the first few visits that I made in the classroom, as recommended by Hassan (1998). By doing this, the teacher and students seemed to have become accustomed to the use of the video by the time of the first observation.

3.6.3 Document Collection

In this study I gathered and utilised several kinds of documents from the research site and from the Internet which were helpful in explaining the issues under investigation. Documents are a non-human resource (Lincoln & Guba 1985) which are factual and often accessible with no or little cost (Cohen et. al., 2005; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). An extensive range of documents can be involved in social research, which can be in both written and non-written form (Coffey, 2014; Margaret, 2017). Merriam & Tisdell (2016, p.162) defined documents as “an umbrella term to refer to a wide range of written, visual, digital, and physical material relevant to the study (including visual images)”.

In this study, collected materials included those employed as teaching resources in the struggling readers’ reading lessons. Among these materials were high frequency word lists, textbooks, big books, reading texts and picture cards. I made copies of all the documents collected in the classroom for permanent record (Yaacob, 2006). Other documents that I collected included students’ work in the reading lessons that I observed and students’ drawings produced in the final focus group.

I collected formal school documents, which included the school profile, the struggling readers’ profile, their results in the school English tests, the school’s reading assessment and literacy screening. I also collected the school’s English test papers. In addition to that, I gathered the documents prepared by the MOE, such as the Year 1 English text books and the literacy screening paper. This type of document, also referred to as ‘public documents’, revealed information about

the education system that surrounds the struggling readers, which has been described as “things that cannot be observed,” or “things that have taken place before the study began” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p.164). Other public documents, such as the Year 1 English standard curriculum, the students learning development guidance, the Malaysian education blueprint, circulation letters and particular documents relevant to the study were retrieved from the Internet through websites such as those of the MOE, Educational State Department and District Education Office. As a teacher myself, I am privileged to be able to identify documents which are valuable and reliable. I also double checked the validity of the documents through a circle of friends who have been teaching in primary schools for the past several years.

In this study, “The reviewed documents augmented the interview and observational data and thus served a useful purpose” (Bowen, 2009, p.32).

3.6.4 Relationship between Research Questions and Research Methods

Wellington (2015, p.108) suggested a “question-methods matrix (horses for courses)” strategy to help the researcher to address research questions clearly. My overarching research question and the sub-research questions are shown alongside a summary of the data collection methods in Figure 6 below:

Main research question:		
How do the social, cultural and contextual elements surrounding struggling ESL students influence their experiences of English language reading in the Malaysian classroom?		
No.	Sub-research questions	Research methods
1.1)	How does the teacher work with the struggling readers in the classroom?	Interviews, Observations, Document collection.

1.2)	How does the participating parent work with their child at home?	Interviews.
1.3)	How do the students themselves engage with their ESL reading?	Interviews, Observations. Document collection.
1.4)	How do the environmental contexts interact to influence struggling readers' experiences of reading?	Theoretical analysis of findings in respect to 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3.
1.5)	What are the implications for education policy and practice in Malaysia?	Practice-based analysis of findings in respect to 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3.

Figure 6: Research questions, sub-research questions and methods

To answer research question 1.1, I studied the way the teacher worked with the struggling readers in the ESL reading classroom. I made several classroom observations to identify how the teacher worked with the struggling readers. I noted down the methods and strategies that the teacher employed and the materials utilised. I referred to the public documents to understand more about the methods used in the classroom. I also conducted a pre- and post-observation interview with the teacher and two interview sessions with her.

To answer sub-research question 1.2, I explored parents' perceptions regarding their children and investigated parental involvement in their children's learning in the ESL reading classroom. In order to achieve the objective, I had two interview sessions with the parents to identify how they engaged with their children's learning.

To answer sub-research question 1.3, I studied students' perceptions in respect to ESL reading based on their experience at home and in the classroom. To this end, I explored their feelings and opinions after each classroom observation through the focus group. I also investigated their perceptions and feelings on ESL reading through drawings and the focus group. I made

observations in the ESL reading lessons to see how struggling readers participated in lessons so as to complement data from the interviews.

Moreover, the sub-research question 1.4 is answered through the theoretical or analytical analysis of findings in respect to sub-research questions 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3, that it is pulling all those individual elements of my findings together in an analytical or theoretical way to answer the core element in my overall research question. Although no separate findings section is necessary (or can even be attempted), answering sub-research question 1.4 becomes a vital part of my discussion chapter. That then is what the earlier sections of the discussion chapter are all building up to, and what I ultimately deliver in section 5.7

Additionally, sub-research question 1.5 is answered through the practice-based analysis of findings in respect to sub research questions 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 which I discuss in section 5.8 and reiterate in section 6.5 of this study.

3.7 Pilot Study

A small-scale preliminary study was conducted in order to identify any inadequacies in the research instruments. The instruments were later modified and improved based on feedback received from the participants (Hartney, 2011). The pilot study took place in a different school located in the same area where the main study was carried out. The participants were: i) three struggling readers; ii) one selected parent from one of the three struggling reader participants; and iii) the class English teacher. The English teacher was used as a gatekeeper to find the potential participants of my pilot study. I talked to all participants about my study before inviting them to participate. Informed consent was also sought, and the participants were provided with the Participant Information Sheet.

After piloting the interview with the parents, teacher and students, I asked their feedback about the questions in order to ensure that the questions were not vague and redundant. I also judged from the participants' responses whether questions had been interpreted as I wished. The pilot study was very helpful because the session enabled me to identify what worked well and what I have could done better. For instance, with the teacher, I determined that I needed to find a more suitable setting

when conducting interviews. The noisy background of construction work hindered the clarity of the interview recording with her. The teacher also suggested that I provide the interview questions in advance so that she could have an idea of the questions she was expected to answer.

I also learned that having three students in a group during the focus group interview was manageable since I was able to control the direction of the conversation. Since children might love to talk about something unrelated to the questions (based on my experience as a teacher and mother), having a small sample (N=3) was just right for the group interview in my study. Although four to six participants are suggested as a good number for a focus group for young students (Kennedy, Kools & Krueger, 2001), the minimum suitable number for a group of participants has not yet been identified (Gibson, 2007). Considering my experience, it would be challenging to “keep the interview on track” (Gibson, 2012, p.148) if I had more than three participants. To record the conversation, I used a video recorder (after informed consent was sought) and found that this was useful to identify who was speaking. Besides that, the pilot study also enabled me to try my hand at observing reading lessons in the ESL classroom. I learned how to utilise video recording equipment to record the teaching methods or strategies and tried to record my classroom observations by using the field notes.

The experience gained in the pilot study, and the feedback received from its participants, led to some amendments in the technique and content of the interview questions.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethics can be described as ‘the application of a system of moral principles to prevent harming or wronging others, to promote the good, to be respectful, and to be fair’ (Sieber 1993, p. 14). This section describes the ethical principles that I observed throughout the research process.

3.8.1 Seeking Permission

According to Cohen et al. (2005) researchers need to obtain official permission before conducting research in particular research settings. For this study, ethical approval was applied for from the

School of Education Ethical Review Committee. In this respect, I submitted the research ethics application forms online. The application comprised of the Participant Information Sheet and a Participant Consent Form. The forms were approved after being reviewed by the University of Sheffield Research Ethics Committee. Approval was also sought from the Economic Planning Unit (henceforth EPU) of the Prime Minister's Department to conduct the study and access the school in Malaysia. The application was done online by submitting all the necessary documents. After receiving a notification email informing that the approval letter and the research pass was ready to be collected, I made an appointment with the designated officer to fetch the letter and the pass. I needed to travel to Kuala Lumpur where the department is located. Subsequent to the approval of the applications, I was also required to obtain permission from the State Education Department. The process required me to go to the State Education Department and fill in a particular hardcopy form before being granted with the approval letter. I did not prepare a permission letter for the school headmaster because the research pass from the EPU and the approval letter from the State Education Department was considered sufficient by the school headmaster where my research was conducted.

3.8.2 Informed consent

Once permission was obtained, I met with all the participants in person to brief them about my research. For example, I talked to the teacher and the student participants at the school. I also talked to the parent participants in the various settings suggested by them, such as at home and at their workplace. The participant information sheet was supplied to all the participants during these initial meetings. The document explained the description of this study incorporating the topic, purpose, duration and methods utilised. Participants were then allowed to ask any questions related to the study. Their informed consent to participate was also sought by signing the form attached with the information sheet. I allowed my participants to ask questions if they needed to clarify any issues related to this study. I also told the participants that their participation was voluntary, and that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any stage if they felt uncomfortable without even notifying me as the researcher (Hammersley & Traianou, 2012). Contact details of the researcher and the supervisor were also provided in the form. In addition, I informed the participants of the information about the purpose of using video-recording and audio-recording is

also included in the forms. After they understood and agreed, informed consent was obtained before recording commenced. Since I was working with young people who were below 18 years of age, and who therefore constituted a high-risk group, I was aware that separate consent needed to be sought from parents in respect to their child's participation. In other words, parents needed to provide consent for themselves and for their child. I asked the parents to talk about the research with their children at home and based on their children's responses, parents would sign the consent form.

3.8.3 Confidentiality and Anonymity

I was aware that I needed to consider the confidentiality of the data and anonymity of the research settings and participants (Hammersley & Traianou, 2012). I kept all the participants' identities and responses confidential. I also utilised pseudonyms for all the participants in my research and their responses were studied and reported anonymously. I kept the physical documents in a secure place and saved all the electronic data obtained from the participants in a specific folder in my laptop, which was protected by a password that was only known to me. At the end of this research, the original raw records of both the interviews and data will be deleted permanently, and the hard copy form destroyed by paper shredder. The actions taken above were in line with the suggestions made by BERA Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2011): "individuals should be treated fairly, sensitively, with dignity, and within an ethic of respect and freedom from prejudice" (BERA, 2011, p.5).

3.8.4 Avoiding harm

In any research, harm needs to be minimised. This includes harm for both the research participants and the researcher. If harm could potentially result from the research methods adopted, the researcher needs to look at whether it can be justified or mitigated (Hammersley & Traianou, 2012). In this study, no potential harms were identified as likely to affect the participants or the researcher. The study utilised suitable research methods that were informed by literature. The study was also conducted in a safe environment and the nature of the research did not risk participants' physical, psychological and cognitive states.

3.8.5 Power relations

The participants in this study were not my own students, and therefore, I did not know them, their parents or the teacher who taught them. I was in the position of being a researcher who undertook data collection for my study. It was suggested that “the power of certain people and groups to resist a researcher’s investigations is also likely to affect the outcome of any research study” (Henn, Weinstein & Foard, 2006, p.74). This did not occur in my case since I obtained consent from multiple parties as required and followed the necessary guidelines and procedures before conducting the research with the participants. My presence among the participants were welcomed and I received good cooperation from all participants in my study. Additionally, even though I came to the research field as a PhD student and a researcher from an institution, I assured the participants that I did not aim to assess their responses. I explained to them that my intention was to explore the experiences of ESL struggling readers for the completion of my study. I also encouraged them to behave and respond naturally as judgment would not be made upon them. I further emphasised that there were no right or wrong answer to their responses and actions.

3.8.6 Ethical Considerations in Research with Children

Ethical concerns are specifically salient when dealing with young children (Flewitt, 2005). It has been suggested that, “... our primary obligation is always to the people we study, not to our project or to a larger discipline. The lives and stories that we hear and study are given to us under a promise, that promise being that we protect those who have shared them with us” (Denzin, 1989, p.83). Flewitt (2005) recommended ethical guidelines that needed to be taken into account while doing research with children. These are negotiation of initial consent, negotiation of ongoing consent, anonymity, confidentiality and visual data and participant consultation and research outcomes.

In relation to consent, Alderson (2004) asserted that consent is a crucial issue when research is conducted with children. Some academics choose to employ the word ‘assent’ over ‘consent’ to illustrate that children are not able to give consent legally (Flewitt, 2005). Nonetheless, it has been

argued that children can provide legal consent if they have enough understanding on what is put forward to them (Alderson & Morrow, 2004). Hughes and Helling (1991) further stated that children between the ages of seven and twelve have the capacity to think rationally and understand the results or outcomes of actions taken. Since my study involved Year 1 primary school students, in other words, seven-year-old children, 'there is no reason researchers cannot obtain informed consent from these children' (Hughes and Helling, 1991, p.229).

Seeking consent from children who are regarded as "vulnerable to persuasion" (Hill, 2005, p.63) needs to be carried out cautiously so that they are not coerced into participating in the study. Children may also not be able to understand their voluntary participation in the research. As such, I adapted the method of seeking consent to their level of understanding by considering using simple words in the explanation to assist them to "give fully informed consent" in an authentic way (BERA, 2011, p.6). It was also explained to the children that they could choose whether or not to take part in the study and there was no problem if they decided to decline the invitation. A participant information sheet which consisted of several images and simple words or phrases was used to explain my research to the children. The idea was taken from a suggestion made by Alderson (2004) who mentioned that picture leaflets would be helpful when consent was sought from children. Children put their thumb up and gave verbal consent to show that they agreed to take part in the study. I also looked at their facial expressions to ensure that they were happy to participate in my study. I repeated several important words and phrases used during the explanation, as recommended by Brodzinsky, Singer and Braff (1984), in order to highlight the purpose of my contact and meetings with them. Such repeated details included why the study was being done, what the study will ask from them, and what will happen to the data obtained. I also allowed children to ask questions related to my study.

Ongoing consent from children should also be obtained (Flewitt, 2005). Children were informed that they could opt out of the research at any stage. Children were also observed throughout the research process so as to identify any signs of discomfort or other indication that they did not want to continue with the study. Such signals might also have resulted from them being tired or hungry. Throughout my study I found that the children did not sit up straight and requested toilet breaks. Nonetheless, they looked happy and said that they wanted to carry on with the interview sessions.

In terms of anonymity, confidentiality and visual data, children were told that their identity would be protected and kept confidential. Consent were also sought from the children for their drawings and responses to be utilised in research reports, publications or presentations. Children were also informed that they would experience no bad affects if their work was shared with the public since their names were made anonymous.

3.9 Trustworthiness

The main criteria to judge the quality of qualitative research continues to be elusive (Barbour, 2014). For instance, on the one hand, Lichtman (2013, p.294) devised “personal criteria” for “a good piece of qualitative research” in her study. On the other hand, “Big-tent” criteria for carrying out “excellent” qualitative study was put forth by Tracy and Hinrichs (2017, p. 3). Patton (2015, p.680) proposed several “alternative sets of criteria for judging the quality and credibility of qualitative inquiry”.

Guba and Lincoln (1982) further claimed that the principles of trustworthiness in a study are determined by the underpinning research paradigm. Since my study adopts constructivism, four elements of trustworthiness were recommended by Guba & Lincoln (1981). These aspects are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These parallel the internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity looked for in research guided by the positivism paradigm that is quantitative in nature (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this section I will describe the strategies applied to establish the trustworthiness of this study based on the four elements suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985) above, which Flick (2007) valued as a “method-appropriate criteria” (Barbour, 2014, p.498).

3.9.1 Credibility

Credibility is related to the question “how we ensure rigor in the research process and how we communicate to others that we have done so” (Gasson, 2004, p.95). In order to ensure credibility in my study I adopted peer debriefing (Guba, 1981) or peer review (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), which involved seeking academic support and guidance from other professionals (Anney, 2014)

and peers. Throughout this process, I had regular meetings with my supervisor, who is an expert in this field of study, in order to discuss the collection and analysis of the data for this study. I also submitted chapters of the research to my supervisor for review and received constructive feedback. Besides getting advice from my supervisor I also had regular conversations with other doctoral students in the School of Education to discuss issues of methodology and the findings of this study. I presented my planning, my pilot study findings and my early main study findings in a number of programmes and seminars organised by different parties. I received insightful comments from the audience that helped me to improve my study. Merriam and Tisdell (2016, p.250) agreed that “an examination or review can be conducted by either a colleague familiar with the research or one new to the topic”.

A number of credibility checks were suggested by Elliott, Fischer & Rennie (1999) and Lincoln & Guba (1985). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) identify one of the principal strategies to enhance credibility in a study conducted under the constructivist paradigm to be triangulation (Gibson & Brown, 2009). In this study triangulation was employed to both confirm (Denzin, 1970) and validate the data (Denzin, 1978). For example, I used two methods, observations and interviews, to validate the findings that I obtained from the teacher participant and student participants. I also employed documents as another method to obtain a “complete picture of the phenomenon under study” and “to get the additional pieces to the overall puzzle” (Ammenwerth, Iller & Mansmann, 2003, p.239). Triangulation was therefore used in this study both “as a tool or a strategy of validation” and “as an alternative to validation” (Flick, 2002, p.227). This is in line with Heigham and Crocker (2009, p.81), who propose that triangulation in qualitative research should be utilised to ensure completeness and comprehensiveness and also “to gain the broadest and deepest possible view of the issue from different perspectives” (Fielding & Fielding, 1986; Redfern & Norman, 1994). The different results from triangulation therefore do not mean faulty measurements, but rather reflect alternative viewpoints of phenomenon under investigation (Moran-Ellis et al., 2006).

3.9.2 Transferability

The next principle of trustworthiness is transferability, which refers to “the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations. That is, how generalizable are the results

of a research study?” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p.253). For instance, my study was carried out in one particular school in Malaysia and the participants were ESL struggling readers, their parents and their teacher. Thus, transferability (or generalisability) in my study is to decide whether the findings could be relevant to different schools across Malaysia or even in different countries. As recommended by Morrow (2005), this study achieved transferability by giving adequate information about necessary elements of the research. These aspects include “the self (the researcher as instrument) and the research context, processes, participants, and researcher–participant relationships” so as to help readers decide whether the findings could be applicable elsewhere (Morrow, 2005, p. 252). Since the sample of this qualitative study is small, and there were no statistical analyses involved, as would be the case in a quantitative study has not involved, it hinders the data to be claimed as generalisable in the conservative sense. Furthermore, the generalisability of a case study results is often limited (Ferrara, 2005). It is therefore necessary for the researcher “in the presentation of the research not to imply that the findings can be generalized to other populations or settings” (Morrow, 2005, p.252).

3.9.3 Dependability

The next aspect of trustworthiness is dependability which was described as “the way in which a study is conducted should be consistent across time, researchers, and analysis techniques” (Gasson, 2004, p.94). The dependability criterion questions the degree to which the research findings can be replicated (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In a qualitative study, however, as Tracy (2013, p.229) has highlighted, “because socially constructed understandings are always in process and necessarily partial, even if the study were repeated (by the same researcher, in the same manner, in the same context, and with the same participants), the context and participants would have necessarily transformed over time—through aging, learning, or moving on”. As such, the focus of this study is to assure that the readers agree that the results presented are constant with data obtained and make sense (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). One of the ways to achieve dependability in a study is by using a record trail which explains in depth how the data was gathered. In this research report, this record trail is included in this methodology chapter, which describes the data collection and data analysis procedures (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

3.9.4 Confirmability

The final criterion of trustworthiness is confirmability, which acknowledges that research is by no means objective (Morrow, 2005). The issue is that “findings should represent, as far as is (humanly) possible, the situation being researched rather than the beliefs, pet theories, or biases of the researcher” (Gasson, 2004, p.93). Findings are substantiated by data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and the researcher’s pre-determined assumptions should not influence the findings (Omar, 2014). Morrow (2005, p.252) further argued that, “It is based on the perspective that the integrity of findings lies in the data and that the researcher must adequately tie together the data, analytic processes, and findings in such a way that the reader is able to confirm the adequacy of the findings”. Guba (1982) proposed a few techniques to achieve confirmability and one that I applied in my study is triangulation as discussed in the Credibility section (3.9.1).

Member checks was also utilised in this study to confirm that the data I collected agreed with the participants’ actual meanings. Member checking, which is also identified as participant validation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), is regarded as “the single most important way of ruling out the possibility of misinterpreting the meaning of what participants say and do and the perspective they have on what is going on, as well as being an important way of identifying your own biases and misunderstanding of what you observed” (Maxwell, 2013, pp. 126–127). In this respect, after completing transcribing, analysing and translating the data. I reported the data to the parents and the teacher. This was only accomplished when I came back to the UK. I carried out the process through phone calls to the parents, as requested by them, and through sending the Word document via telegram to the teacher, as requested by the teacher. None of the participants asked for a revision of the analyses, thus suggesting that the data had been transcribed and analysed in agreement with their views. With the children, however, I could not manage to explain the summary of responses that were gathered from them. Ideally, this should have been carried out during the field work but this was not possible in this study due to time constraints.

3.10 Data Analysis

Flick (2014, p.5) described the process of data analysis as “the classification and interpretation of linguistic (or visual) material to make statements about implicit and explicit dimensions and structures of meaning-making in the material and what is represented in it”. It has also been described as “the process of making sense out of the data. And making sense out of data involves consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read – it is the process of making meaning”, and “the process used to answer your research question(s)” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p.202). Data analysis is performed by the researcher who “starts with a large set of data representing many things and seeks to narrow them progressively into small and important groups of key data” (Gay et al., 2012, p.466).

Analysing data was another challenging and time-consuming element in this study. I bear in mind that the aim of data analysis is also “to summarize how things stand with regard to selected variables, concepts or themes of interest” (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014, p.178). The process required me to read a lot of literature, to think, to reflect and to decide what to analyse, why and how. For me, the intricacy of the process is best described by Coffey and Atkinson (1996, p.10): “Analysis is not about adhering to any one correct approach or set of right techniques; it is imaginative, artful, flexible, and reflexive. It should also be methodical, scholarly, and intellectually rigorous”. To me, data analysis is a system for identifying the most important points in the data. Such important points are known as themes that I was searching for during data analysis process so that my findings can be presented and discussed in an appropriate way. Such a process is inevitably influenced by my biases as a researcher, my individual interests, approach and explanatory focus (Gay, et al., 2012). Creswell (2012a) believed that analysing data is an eclectic process; thus, it is flexible and there is no one finite method.

I started the process by trying to explore several ways of analysing data. I tried my hands at NVivo, Atlas.ti, Word document and manual analysis. I watched videos related to each method and had a discussion with my supervisor and other PhD students in my school before deciding the one I was most comfortable using. As it has been argued that there is no right way of manipulating data analysis (Patton, 2002; Wellington, 2015), I adopted the suggestion by Merriam & Tisdell (2016)

who argued that a mix of manual and computer management can be employed in data analysis process. As Merriam & Tisdell (2016) stated, “At the very least, transcripts and field notes will most likely have been transcribed, and the hard copy will have a computer file backup” (p. 201). I spent a few weeks deciding how to analyse my data. I chose to print out all the transcriptions of the interviews and classroom observations, including field notes as well as particular documents that I collected for this study, highlighting the relevant and interesting data features manually, in addition to using the table feature in Microsoft Word as an option rather than a computerised coding program such as Atlas.ti or NVivo.

3.10.1 Transcribing

After the data was obtained, transcribing served as a crucial research activity that should not be regarded as only a technical matter before the data was analysed (Julia, 2008; Silverman, 2011). The process does not only deal with “writing down what someone or some people said or did” (Gibson & Brown, 2009, p.109). It is instead a critical decision about “what to represent and how to represent it, and choosing to display focus on certain features of a piece of talk, action or interaction rather than others” (Gibson & Brown, 2009, p.109). Hence it cannot be easily differentiated from analysis (Riessman, 1993). Transcribing data is also a complex process and requires a great amount of time (Riessman, 1993). Transcription is not merely transferring what have been listened to into a textual format (Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999), but has been considered as an early step to generate meanings from the collected data. The process facilitates the researcher to have general ideas about the issues that are being investigated (Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen & Snelgrove, 2016) before a closer look is given to the transcribed data.

In my research, I transcribed the interviews and classroom observations on my own and found that this activity helped me to become immersed in the data. The benefit of researchers themselves transcribing their data is articulated well by Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006, p.347) when they say that transcription “provides the researcher with a valuable opportunity to actively engage with his or her research material right from the beginning of data collection”. This process also allowed me to familiarise myself with the data (Yin, 2011). I also chose to transcribe the data myself because

it helped to safeguard the privacy of the participants, which I deemed to be my ethical responsibility.

As noted by Braun and Clarke (2006), it is important to transcribe data as accurately to the original source as possible. Before transcribing the data, I transferred the interviews and classroom observations that I had from the recording devices onto laptop. “Close and repeated listenings to recordings” were carried out, as recommended by Silverman (2011, p. 282) to become familiar with the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I also needed to listen to some parts of the recordings more than others where participants’ utterances were unclear. In order to maintain accuracy, I checked the transcription against the original recording after the transcription was carried out. The activity was also conducted to ensure that misrepresentations did not occur in the final product of transcription (Gibson & Brown, 2009).

During the transcribing process, I referred to Gibson and Brown (2009), who asserted that researchers’ interests may influence the representation of the data that needs to be transcribed. Focus may be given on what specifically the researcher intends to obtain from the data. Gibson and Brown (2009) suggested a few techniques in data transcription, which are indexical transcription, focused and unfocused transcription. In transcribing the interviews, the technique pertinent to my study is unfocused transcription. I decided to employ this technique because the focus was given to the “intended meaning” of the data and not to “the intonation of voices, overlap in talk or non-verbal forms of communication like gestures or gazes” (Gibson & Brown, 2009, p.116) which are emphasised in focused transcription. In unfocused transcription, the ‘basic’ punctuation marks were utilised, such as commas, question marks, exclamation marks and full stops, which is considered to be normal and natural practice (Gibson & Brown, 2009). The aim of the transcription is to identify what was said rather than how things were said.

For example, in the interviews, I aimed to identify the students’, parents’ and teachers’ voices, feelings and thoughts towards subjects that were asked in the interview questions. Hence, what mattered most is the meaning of their experience rather than how the responses or experience were articulated.

While transcribing the observation, I placed emphasis on the substance of the data (e.g. how the students learn and how the teacher delivered the lessons in the ESL classroom) rather than the characteristics of the data (e.g. changes in intonation like raising and falling, pauses, pace of speech, loudness of speech and others) which are significant in focused transcription (Gibson & Brown, 2009). I highlight “what happened” (Gibson & Brown, 2009, p.113) in the classroom by also referring to the field notes. For example, while transcribing students’ observation, I chose particular moments from the field notes and embedded the data into the field notes (Frankel, 2013). Additionally, I also arrange the field notes according to the teacher and individual student data to ease the analysis process. While transcribing the observations I also took note of the non-verbal communications of the teacher and students to assist my analysis and interpretations of the findings.

The choice of this transcription method is in line with Gibson and Brown (2009, p.113) who stated that, “researchers may create their own modes of transcription and representation in response to a particular question”.

3.10.2 Inductive vs Deductive Approach

The two most prominent ways of analysing data are the inductive and deductive approach (Cohen et al., 2005; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Silverman, 2013). In the deductive approach, academics develop themes based on their research questions, pertinent literature and their own experience and use these to interrogate the data that they collected. In contrast, the inductive approach emphasises building up conclusions and theories through producing data from the field rather than specific observations. According to McMillan & Schumacher (2006) qualitative data analysis principally involves an inductive approach, in which the data is sorted out into categories and patterns discovered among the categories. Glaser and Strauss (1967, p. 3) further advocate the use of an inductive approach in a qualitative study and stated “we suggest as the best approach an initial, systematic discovery of the theory from the data of social research. Then one can be relatively sure that the theory will fit and work”.

As my aim in this study is to explore the experience of ESL struggling readers by looking at the ways that parents and teachers worked with the students and how the students perceived their experience through interviews and observations rather than drawing data from literature and current theories, I tended to adopt an inductive approach. I admit, however, that what is present in the literature has both affected and facilitated me in collecting and analysing the data. This is unavoidable and in line with ideas by Strauss and Corbin (1998) who mentioned that one of the limitations of the inductive approach is that researchers begin the study with some theoretical knowledge. In the process of analysing the data to develop themes, I found that some of the codes that I attached to the participants' data had already been stated in previous studies. For example, regarding the teacher participants, the look-and-say reading approach in the literature clearly linked to the prominent teaching method that I found in the study. Nonetheless, a deductive approach was not what I intended to do. I tried not to carry any assumptions or judgments during the fieldwork, nor to be dependent on what was available in literature or existing theory.

3.10.3 Analysing data

Data in this study is analysed based on the sub-research questions because each sub-research question is targeted for each group of participants (teacher, parents and students). In that process, once the data from interviews, observation and field notes were ready, I read, reviewed and scanned the data before making notes and short summaries of each data set. Data obtained in this study were analysed to find emergent themes, which are defined as the “broad units of information consisting of several codes aggregated to form a common idea” (Creswell, 2013, p. 186). Themes are also defined by Auerbach and Silverstein (2003, p. 38) as “an implicit topic that organizes a group of repeating ideas.”

In order to identify themes, I read my entire data line-by-line a few times so as to become familiar with the material. This is supported by Braun and Clarke (2006) and Wellington (2015) who recommended that getting familiarised with data, or data immersion, is necessary to obtain general ideas about the findings of the study.

Next, I began the coding process. Coding can be defined as labelling data that seems to be interesting to the researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This opinion is further reinforced by Bryman (2012) who recommends "...jot down a few general notes about what struck you as especially interesting, important, or significant" (p. 576). The process is also defined as "...attaching key words or tags to segments of text to permit later retrieval" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 56). A code is also explained as "the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon" (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 62). I highlighted relevant data and did the coding manually in the margin of printed transcripts.

The coding process was carried out by using "the words verbatim that participants use" (Onwuegbuzie, 2016, p. 13) and a short phrase or sentence of my own to describe or sum up the transcripts and field notes. Codes that I put into my data are related to the research questions and what I found interesting to me. In this process I take into consideration what was said by Creswell (2013, p. 199), "The researcher seeks a collection of instances from the data, hoping that issue-relevant meanings will emerge". After finish with the coding, I grouped the codes into categories by looking at their relevancy towards one another (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I decided which codes were the most important and dropped codes that I determined were unable to support the overall aim of my research objectives. I looked at the list of codes and identified those which emerged repeatedly in the data. These codes were not necessarily similar in words but conveyed similar concepts or ideas. I arrange the codes into categories and described my preliminary understandings in different Word documents. After that, I looked at the connections between categories and finally put the categories into themes. The themes were revised before being finalised and produced in this thesis so as to ensure that the categories connected to the theme were logical and that the theme could stand independently (Boyatzis, 1998), and did "not need to be developed, separated or combined with other themes" (Sasani, 2010, p. 110).

After finalising the themes, I went back to the literature review to find out how those themes integrated with the relevant literature (Wellington, 2015). I read the themes and categories again and again and compared them with what was there in the literature. The themes and categories were modified a few times after referring to the literature review. The analysis process did not only follow the linear form of codes–categories–themes because the process was also reversible.

Although elements discovered in the literature facilitated this process, this study overall utilised an inductive approach which permitted a more receptive attitude to unanticipated patterns that emerged. The study by Warni (2016) showed that the process of identifying themes can be carried out by referring to the literature review, apart from the research question. The development of a theme can also be developed based on the interests or judgments of a researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Therefore, the themes (which consists of categories and codes) in my study emerged from all the foundations mentioned above, namely the literature review, research questions and my own interests and judgements (Frewan, 2015). My confidence in using this approach was guided by Wolcott (1994) who stated that data from a qualitative study can be transformed in various ways and to various ends.

In essence, the process of analysing data in my study involved the following stages:

- Transcribing interviews and observations, managing the field notes and documents
- Choosing and highlighting relevant data and identifying codes by jotting down words, phrases or sentences to them
- Thinking about the codes and situating the selected codes into categories
- Looking for connection between categories and placing the categories into themes
- Rereading the themes, categories and modifying them by referring to the literature
- Finalising the themes and categories for findings presentation

In terms of the documents and drawings collected during my study, these were not subjected to detailed scrutiny in themselves. Rather they were gathered “more as potential points of reference in the process of analysis” (Margaret, 2017, p.94) or to support the findings and analysis of this study (Yaacob, 2006). They are mainly used as additional information to the emergent themes that I found in the study. In other words, these documents were employed to explain the themes generated from the interview and observation analysis. The document analysis was therefore intertwined in the data analysis process as a whole (Yahya, 2014) and used to triangulate the interview and observation data.

3.10.3.1 Analysis of drawings

As noted above in section 3.6.1, as a prelude to the focus group interviews with the struggling readers, I asked each of them to produce a drawing about their ESL reading experiences. As Pink (2007) notes, visual data are qualitative data just as much as words are, and therefore drawings can work alongside and be triangulated with more “traditional” data, such as field notes and interview transcripts. Just as much as with written data, however (if not more), the researcher is a subjective reader of visual data, and thus the meanings obtained can vary significantly depending on the researcher’s personal context, whether social, educational, disciplinary or physical.

Based on the above understanding, it was therefore considered appropriate to also apply a methodology to analyse the students’ drawings. In this regard, however, I adopted an analytical approach that adapted the scheme developed by McNely (2012), which, while intended for the analysis of images in social media content can be applied to any visual content. Specifically, I integrated my own understanding of the drawing, with the student’s own communication in respect to the image to create an impression of how the drawing reflected on or added to the themes identified in the other types of data (McNely, 2012).

3.10.4 Translation

Translation can be defined as the activity of transcribing the text of a source language into the target language (Gau, Schlieben & Ströbel 2008). I translated the data in the first language of the participants (Malay) into the language of this research report (English). I decided to do the translation after the data had been transcribed, analysed and interpreted “to stay close to the local context and present the accurate meaning of the participants’ views” (Salleh & Woolard, 2019, p. 77).

According to Simon (1996, pp.137-138) “The solutions to many of the translator’s dilemmas are not to be found in dictionaries, but rather in an understanding of the way language is tied to local realities, to literary forms and to changing identities.” Translators must constantly make decisions about the cultural meanings which language carries, and evaluate the degree to which the two

different worlds they inhabit are ‘the same’. In the process of translating the data, I played the role of ‘insider researcher’ (Court & Abbas, 2013), one who shared great understanding with the participants involved in the interview as we socialised within a similar cultural community (Banks, 1998). I translated the Malay transcription into English and I did not depend on a bilingual dictionary because direct translation may result in a loose translation which may not be precise and become out of context. In this project I was the main translator of the transcripts. Oxley, Günhan, Kaniamattam and Damico (2017) argued that translators could be researchers who may have or may not have experience in translating. Researchers are allowed to become the translator of their own study if the language utilised by the researcher who is also the interviewer is similar to the language of the interviewee. Being simultaneously a researcher and translator, however, demands that I myself uphold the ethical responsibilities as suggested by Shklarov (2007, pp.534-535) which are “to protect the participants from any possible harm (in a broad sense)”, and “to produce honest and sound scientific results free of any distortion that might result from language challenges, with respect to maximising benefits of research”.

A few factors could determine the quality of translation. These include the autobiography of the researcher, the knowledge related to the language and culture of the people under investigation that the researcher possesses (Vulliamy, 1990) and the researcher’s competency in the language of the research report (Birbili, 2000). In my life history, I have previous experience translating research instruments, namely questionnaires in my master’s degree project from the original language source or my first language (Malay) into English. That questionnaire received approval from two experts in the field before the instrument was administered to the participants. In addition to that, I also had the opportunity to conduct a small-scale interview in my first language and translated the data into English. Such experience was gained in my degree years when I studied Teaching English as a Foreign Language. It has been argued that words translated are also, “above all, a question of culture before being a question of vocabulary” (Mc Laughlin & Sall, 2001, p.206). I have been immersed with the participants’ culture and language as we come from the same backgrounds. This factor facilitated me to have a good understanding regarding the participants’ contexts. In relation to my English proficiency, I perceived myself as a competent user of English both in oral and written forms based on the international test results that I undertook previously

such as IELTS and Cambridge Placement Test. Thus, I am sufficiently proficient in English, the language used for this research report.

In deciding suitable methods to apply in translating the data, I adopted both literal and free translation, as explained by Birbili (2000). When using literal translation, the researcher translated the data word-by-word which was perceived as fair to what was spoken by the interviewee. For example, in the highly structured interview, the participants' responses of their age, job and work schedule was translated literally. I found that word-by-word translation could not be applied to the whole data, however: it might confuse the readers as it decreases the text's comprehensibility (Birbili, 2000). As such, I also applied another type of translation, namely free translation, that led me to write a 'read well' text. This raises the risk of misinterpreting the data, however (Rubin & Rubin, 1995) and the original meaning of data might be lost (Birbili, 2000). As proposed by Shklarov (2007), "the researcher needs to remain open to the opinions of others in all instances of debatable meanings in cross-language exchange to avoid the accounts of uncertainty or doubt" (p. 535). Taking this opinion into account, and considering the risk of misinterpretation that might occur, I consulted a senior Malaysian teacher who majors in Teaching English as a Second Language, on the data translation of this study. In reporting or presenting the data, some reports included the original language of the responses with the translations (e.g. Dorner, 2012) and others included only the translations (e.g. Hecht, 1998) to ease the target readers of this study.

3.10.5 Conclusion

This chapter provided information about the technical aspects of the study. It began with the constructivist paradigm that underpins the study. The chapter then set out the details of the participating individuals and site, the type of study and how the study was carried out while preserving ethical elements. The chapter ended with the explanation of the data analysis process. The next chapter (Chapter 4) presents the findings of the study.

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

As explained previously in chapter three, I spent three months on the fieldwork for this study and during that time I recruited six students, seven parents and one principal teacher as my research participants. I also utilised three data sets, namely interviews, observations and documents to inform the discussion related to the research questions. This chapter presents the findings of this study, exploring the struggling readers' experiences in respect to the ways their parents work with them at home and the ways their teacher worked with them, as well as those students own perspectives in respect to their learning experiences. I do not intend to make comprehensive generalisations about struggling readers' experience by comparing participants, but rather to comprehend better the experience of struggling readers by looking at their home and school experiences as well as their own viewpoints on their learning experience. I would like to reiterate that the findings presented in this chapter are "relative to my own specific cultural and social references" (Egan, 2016, p. 81) which is driven by my research paradigm (explained in Chapter three) or "one of several right ways in which data can be interpreted" (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p. 32). Hence different researchers may explain this study in a different way.

Creswell (2014) argues that "qualitative approaches allow room to be innovative and to work more within researcher designed frameworks". Such an approach also "allows more creative, literary-style writing, a form that individuals may like to use" (p. 51). I read numerous PhD thesis to identify how the writers presenting their findings and discussion. Some of the writers presented these as two separate chapters while others combined the findings and discussion within a single chapter. I decided to present my findings and discussion each in separate chapters because I think that if I were to attempt to combine them, almost inevitably the discussion will become too disjointed and ad hominem to the particular research question or observation that I am "discussing", making it difficult to get any depth. I aim to have a meaningful discussion and to explore in a more organised and interesting way what issues arising from the rich data. I believe that having a separate discussion chapter therefore allows me to step back from the detail of my findings and to reflect more generally on what I observed as a whole. This will also help me to

reflect on how my own findings integrate with the relevant literature in a more considered and holistic way. I also hope that the way I present my findings and discussion will help to orient the readers of my thesis.

Cohen, Manion and Morison (2011) proposed several ways of presenting the findings, including by groups, by individuals, by themes, by research questions, by research instruments, by one or more case studies and by narrative. Following Creswell's (2014) and Cohen et al.'s (2011) thoughts, I have decided to report my findings by research questions, individuals, themes and by narratives. Presenting the findings based on the research questions helps me to answer directly what this study is aiming to discover. Presenting the findings based on the individuals namely student-participants, parent-participants and teacher-participant helps me to concentrate on a complete and in-depth description of every participant, which I perceive to be essential in order to articulate the findings meaningfully. With the teacher-participant I highlighted three main themes that emerged in the data namely classroom environment, involvement of the teacher with the students and the challenges facing the teacher. With the parent-participants I highlight two main themes that emerged in the data, namely the involvement of each party with the students and the challenges facing each party. With the student-participants, the themes that emerged are perceptions of ESL, the challenges facing the children and their perceptions of ESL classroom learning experience. I also utilise narratives to present the findings because that approach assists me to decide "which sections of data I chose to keep and which bits to lose" (Stirling, 2014, p.87) and to make a summary that would be informative to the readers (Chase, 2005; Creswell, 2012b).

My focus is on describing what struggling readers, parents and teachers are doing, feeling and thinking in the various contexts that I explored and that seemed to arise. I integrate a combination of direct quotations from the participants and extracts from field notes together with summaries and paraphrase of what participants said in this finding chapter. At the end of each sub-research question section I provide a summary of findings in a table to provide an at-a-glance recap of what is written earlier.

In the next chapter (Chapter 5) I discuss the main issues that emerged from this study by sub-research questions (RQ1.1 to RQ1.3).

Once again, I begin this chapter by restating the research question and sub-research questions formulated and addressed in this study:

Research question:

How do the social, cultural and contextual elements surrounding struggling ESL students influence their experiences of English language reading in the Malaysian classroom?

Sub-research questions:

- 1.1- How does the teacher work with the struggling readers?
- 1.2- How do the participating parents work with their children at home?
- 1.3- How do the students themselves engage with their ESL reading?
- 1.4- How do the environmental contexts interact to influence struggling readers' experiences of reading?
- 1.5- What are the implications for education policy and practice in Malaysia?

4.2 Findings in Relation to the Teacher

Sub-research question 1.1: How does the teacher work with the struggling readers in the classroom?

This section explains the findings from the interviews, classroom observations and documents. The aims of this section are to describe: a) the classroom environment; b) the teacher's background; c) the prominent instructional methods the teacher utilised in the reading lessons; d) the use of different types of instructional materials, and; e) the challenges the teacher faced in engaging with the struggling readers' learning.

4.2.1 Classroom Environment

The classroom seemed to be spacious enough to accommodate all the struggling readers. Additionally, there were sufficient tables and chairs for all the students. The bulletin board was also available, and displayed information such as duty rosters, the classroom committee and learning information on selected subjects. The classroom had a scarcity of English reading materials, however. For example, in the English section bulletin board, only one material was put up, namely a poster related naming colours, and this did not seem to be up-to-date in accordance with the topics that the students were learning in the ESL subject. There was also no reading section for recreational reading available in the classroom. Although the teacher stated that the students need to be exposed with reading materials such as story books, this belief did not seem to be implemented by the teacher in the classroom.

4.2.2 Mrs. Leena's Background

The English teacher for the struggling readers, Mrs. Leena, was 37 years old. She appeared to be an energetic and active lady. She was also talkative and friendly. She had been working as a primary school teacher for five years at two different schools. She had a degree in Translation and Interpreting Studies from a local university. She then became a clerk at a shipping company, a cashier at a supermarket and a fast-food restaurant manager. After trying her hand at different types of jobs, she became a secondary school teacher for four years and was positioned as a relief teacher. This experience as a relief teacher is what motivated her to enter the teaching field more seriously. Mrs. Leena afterwards chose to undergo a teacher training course for a year and obtained her teacher certificate from the teacher training institute. She was subsequently allocated a position at a primary school and officially became an English teacher.

Mrs. Leena perceived her appointment as an English teacher for struggling readers as a positive experience. Even though she admitted that it was a challenging task, she never gave up hope of being able to have a positive effect on them. She also believed that the students deserved to receive equal opportunities in education. In her teaching, she motivated her students by talking about how their parents wanted to see them succeed in their study. She also talked about the importance of

reading in English for young children, an ability that all students needed to possess for future undertakings.

4.2.3 Mrs. Leena's Involvement with the Struggling Readers' Learning

This sub-section is divided into two categories, namely prominent instructional methods and the use of different types of instructional materials by Mrs. Leena.

4.2.3.1 Prominent Instructional Methods Applied by the teacher

A few prominent instructional methods were identified from the study included whole-class teaching, drilling, look-and-say, code switching and writing embedded instructions. I explain each instruction below in turn.

4.2.3.1.1 Whole-class Teaching

The study reveals that the teaching and learning of reading in the ESL struggling readers' classroom predominantly adopted whole-class teaching in which the teacher primarily led the instructions. The reason that this technique was applied was because it assisted Mrs. Leena managing the classroom.

Mrs. Leena said, "For the students in this class teaching to the whole class is the most suitable strategy because I think it helps me to control the class"

It was evident in the observations that the typical organisation of the reading lessons centred on a few activities which can be divided into three stages: pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading. In the first stage, Mrs. Leena introduced the topics and reviewed the words of the day by reading the words aloud to the students.

Example 1:

Mrs. Leena: Yes, are you ready class? Okay so today we are going to do some revisions. Listen to me. I will go through the words.

Example 2:

Mrs. Leena: I need you to refer to page 39. Can you see the boy in that page? Page 39, 3 and 9. Don't shout please. Are you ready class? Page 39. Look at the boy. Okay I need you to listen to me.

In these examples, Mrs. Leena instructed the students to listen to her reading without further discussing about the topic or involving the students to discuss the topic.

In the second stage, Mrs. Leena practised the words with the students by asking them to read after her. Mrs. Leena also interspersed that activity by asking the students the meaning of the words, or asking them to read the text without additional in-depth discussion. In performing these activities, Mrs. Leena involved the whole class, although on occasions she nominated an individual student.

In the third stage, Mrs. Leena also conducted a writing activity based on the topic that she had taught. In one reading lesson, she also rearranging jumbled words in a sentence activity led by her in front of the class by using word cards.

Referring to the MOE (2015a), a student-centred approach is highly advocated for fun and meaningful learning. The role of the teacher is not only as a knowledge provider but a learning facilitator. To this end, small group activities are encouraged for students so that students can “share their strengths and also develop their weaker skills as well as their interpersonal skills””in any tasks, questions or problems given by the teacher” (p. 11).

4.2.3.1.2 Drilling

It was evident that drilling was quite extensively employed in the lessons. This was discovered from the interviews and throughout all the classroom observations. Drilling was led by Mrs. Leena

and often carried out with the whole class, and at times with individual students. The teacher would model the words and the students would repeat after the teacher. Mrs. Leena typically accompanied the activity with written text or pictures, asking the students to look at them. Examples of the drilling conducted in the reading lessons are reported below.

Example 1

Teacher : Okay can you repeat after me? Repeat after me. The. Show me your finger, show me your finger. Show me your finger. *Jari awak mana?* [where's your finger?] Okay, point to the word the. I want you to recognise the words.

Students : The

Teacher : The. Finger *mana* finger? [Where is your finger?] This is your finger right? (showing her index finger) Okay find the word the. Say together.

Students : (In unison) the

Teacher : The

Students : (In unison) the

Teacher : The

Students : (In unison) the

Teacher : Okay the

Students : (In unison) the

Teacher : The

Students : (In unison) the

Teacher : The

Students : (In unison) the

Teacher : Okay enough for number one. Number 2? Anyone of you? Number 2 who wants to answer? Please stand up? Can you read number two? The first one is the. The second one? The second one? (point to one student and no answer was given by the student)

Teacher : and

Students : (In unison) and

Teacher : and

Students : (In unison) and

Teacher : and
 Students : (In unison) and
 Teacher : and
 Students : (In unison) and
 Teacher : and
 Students : (In unison) and
 Teacher : Okay how about number 3? Number 3? a
 Students : (In unison) a
 Teacher : Okay a
 Students : (In unison) a
 Teacher : a
 Students : (In unison) a
 Teacher : Number 4? to
 Students : (In unison) to
 Teacher : to
 Students : (In unison) to

Example 2

Teacher : Okay repeat after me. Point to the words by using your finger, *mana jari awak?* [Where is your finger?] [Shouts at the students who are making noise]. Show your finger. I need you to point to the word. *Kita nak baca.* We are going to read the sentences together. [Shouts at the students who are making noise]. Okay now show me your finger. Okay now what you have to do? Okay look at the first picture. Point to the word I. Use your finger. *Guna jari tunjuk dekat I.* Use your finger and point to the word I. Okay. [Shouts at the students who making noise]. Okay show me your finger. Are you ready class? Are you ready? Okay repeat after me. I

Students : (in unison) I
 Teacher : use
 Students : (in unison) use
 Teacher : my

Students : (in unison) my
Teacher : eyes
Students : (in unison) eyes
Teacher : to
Students : (in unison) to
Teacher : see
Students : (in unison) see
Teacher : Okay again. Point towards I mean *jari awak tunjuk dekat* I. The first picture. Okay
I, repeat after me. I,
Students : (in unison) I
Teacher : I
Students : (in unison) use
Teacher : use. I use *jari mana?* [Use your index finger]. I use my eyes to see
Students : (In unison) I use my eyes to see
Teacher : Okay again. I use my eyes to see
Students : (In unison) I use my eyes to see
Teacher : Okay again. I use my eyes to see
Students : (In unison) I use my eyes to see
Teacher : Okay again. [Teacher calls out the students' name who are disengaged] I use my
eyes to see
Students : (In unison) I use my eyes to see
Teacher : Can you read together? Okay, one, two, three. I use my eyes to see
Students : (In unison) I use my eyes to see

In the two excerpts above, it is illustrated that Mrs. Leena utilised drilling to the students as a whole group. The words and sentences were repeated until the teacher felt satisfied with the students' reading. Mrs. Leena also asked the students to use their index finger to track the words being read on the text so that they can recognise the words. In addition to that, the findings revealed that Mrs. Leena utilised drilling to manage the classroom. This was shown when she went around the classroom to encourage every student to read after her.

Example 3

Teacher : Okay there are four characters here. *Ada empat watak dalam gambar ini.* [There are four characters in the picture]. [Shouts at the students who are making noise or who went off-task). Okay we are going to read the dialogue, the dialogue between them. Can you repeat after me?

Students : Yes

Teacher : Okay good. Now Harun asking, what,

Students : (In unison) what

Teacher : is

Students : (In unison) is

Teacher : your

Students : (In unison) your

Teacher : name?

Students : (In unison) name?

Teacher : Okay again, what

Students : (In unison) what

Teacher : is

Students : (In unison) is

Teacher : your

Students : (In unison) your

Teacher : name?

Students : (In unison) name?

Teacher : Okay, how to answer? My

Students : (In unison) My

Teacher : name

Students : (In unison) name

Teacher : is

Students : (In unison) is

Teacher : Harun

Students : (In unison) Harun

Teacher : Okay what is your name?
Students : (In unison) what is your name?
Teacher : Okay how to answer? My name is Harun
Students : (In unison) My name is Harun
Teacher : Okay try to remember how you ask and answer questions related to one's name. You just need to change Harun's name into your name when answering the question of 'What is your name'?

In the excerpt above, drilling was employed by Mr. Leena as a whole group to help the students memorise the target sentence that they needed to master. The repetition began by breaking up the sentence into individual words. Next, the teacher read the whole sentence repeatedly so that it could be memorised by the students.

Example 4

Teacher : Okay now Qila, the next one. Look at the picture. Okay look. Can you read Qila? The format *sama* [similar] to everyone, ready? Okay can you read? Anyone can help her? How to pronounce this one? How to pronounce this word? How to pronounce this word? Read Qila, This
Qila : This
Teacher : This is
Qila : This is
Teacher : This is a?
Qila : This is a mouse
Teacher : rat
Qila : rat

Example 5

Teacher : Okay next? Okay Ali, show everyone what picture do you have? (No answer from Ali). Okay my? Anyone of you? My? My?
Students : My family

Teacher : Okay my family. So there are father, Mother, Brother, Sister, Ok practise *ya* everyone (please practise). Mother, father, brother, sister okay.

This is my? My? My? Family!

Ali : This is my

Teacher : This is my family

Ali : This is my family

Teacher : This is my family

Ali : This is my family

Teacher : Everyone? This is my family

Students : This is my family

In examples 4 and 5 above, drilling was conducted with an individual student. It is noted that Mrs. Leena nominated individual students to read after her and this was followed by whole class drilling. Mrs. Leena employed drilling to help the students to construct sentences by using the different picture cards that each student possessed. Students were expected to maintain the format or structure of the sentence and change the noun from the picture card they received. Similar to example 3, the instance illustrates that drilling is used to help the students memorise the target sentence.

Mrs. Leena indicated drilling as another main method employed in the ESL reading lessons with struggling readers that she taught. She believed that drilling would help to control the students' behaviour. She also thought that such a method would help the struggling readers to pay attention to the lesson. She further stated that, through drilling, the students who were initially not focusing would join in with other students who read after the teacher.

In addition to the above, the teacher also admitted that drilling and repetition resembled the religious method of recitation of the Quran. She said,

I think repetition like what we did in the Quranic classes is most practical and works the best. In the Quranic classes that we attended we repeat time and again until we can read. Similar to what I did in the classroom, the students read after me many times.

The teacher further added that she hoped that the students could recognise and become familiar with the words, remembering them when they encountered them again later. As well as using drilling to enhance the memory of the students and for classroom control, the teacher also gave other reasons, including to model the pronunciation and for students to practise the reading. She believed that the students did not have a lot of exposure to English reading activities at home, and therefore, since they were primarily learning at school, they would reap the benefit from drilling. Overall, they would learn how to pronounce the words correctly and to practise reading as much as possible by copying the teacher.

Referring to the Year 1 English document, several steps were highlighted for early learning, including modelled reading by the teacher and choral reading (MOE, 2015). These were followed by several other steps such as shared reading, guided reading and independent reading. Looking at the methods suggested in the document and how reading was carried out, as well as the response given by Mrs. Leena, it was shown that Mrs. Leena integrated the first two steps into her teaching. She mostly adopted modelled reading by having the students listen to the words or sentences read aloud by her. In choral reading, the students then repeated the reading together in unison. Students did not read aloud in unison by themselves, either in groups or as individuals, as the activity was entirely led by the teacher. There were no occasions where other reading steps were integrated.

4.2.3.1.3 Look and Say Approach over Phonics

Another practice incorporated by the teacher in the ESL reading lesson was look-and-say or the whole word approach. This was done by Mrs. Leena reading aloud the whole words in the text without separating them into phonetic script.

Example 1

Teacher : Okay enough for number one. Number 2? Anyone of you? Number 2 who wants to answer? Please stand up? Can you read number two? The first one is the. The second one? The second one? (Point to one student and no answer was given)

Teacher : and

Students : (In unison) and
Teacher : and
Students : (In unison) and
Teacher : and
Students : (In unison) and
Teacher : and
Students : (In unison) and
Teacher : and
Students : (In unison) and

Example 2

Teacher : Can all of you read this?
Students : Silence
Teacher : pin
Students : Read loudly
Teacher : pin
Students : pin
Teacher : pin
Students : pin

The excerpts in examples 1 and 2 above show that Mrs. Leena employed the look-and-say approach to teach the students to read the words 'and' and 'pin' instead of sounding out the letter as would be practised in a phonics approach.

Example 3

Teacher : It is not map, it ends with the letter T. So, mat. Mat, understand? Now we are going to read this sentence. *Tunjuk kat kawan* [show it to your friends] It. I.T. *dengar ni?* [Are you listening?] I, T? [ai/ti] The pronunciation is? it.
Students : It

Teacher : It
Students : It
Teacher : It
Students : It

Example 4

Teacher : Okay, again everyone, this?
Students : This is a mouse
Teacher : Mouse starts from M. This one is R. So, what is this?
This one is R.A.T. [ar/ey/ti] So, this is a rat.
Students : Rat
Teacher : Rat
Teacher : Rat
Students : Rat

In examples 3 and 4, Mrs. Leena incorporated the spelling activity by reciting the individual letters that are comprised in the words 'it' and 'rat' rather than using the letter sounds. She also focused on the individual letter T in the word 'mat' without sounding it out.

From the interviews, it was discovered that Mrs. Leena hoped that look-and-say would help students build vocabulary which would lead to the development of comprehension. She also preferred to use the whole word approach because she was quite confident that the children did not have any exposure to using phonics before. She also mentioned, *"Looking at their background and the type of pre-school they attended earlier I would say they are not familiar with phonics"*. Additionally, Mrs. Leena admitted that she is not very confident to use the approach because she felt that not enough training had been provided.

Referring to the Standard-Based English Language Curriculum for Primary Schools, one of the core pedagogical principles of teaching and learning was teaching literacy by using phonics strategies (MOE, 2015). This strategy aims to facilitate primary school students to become

independent readers. Phonics strategies were also selected because the approach would be helpful to build a strong foundation of reading skills for Year 1 students (MOE, 2015).

4.2.3.1.4 Code Switching

Another practice evident in the reading instructions that I observed was code switching. It appeared in each lesson that I observed and was also stated by Mrs. Leena in the interviews as one of the methods that she utilised. Mrs. Leena code switched between the English and Malay languages on many occasions throughout the reading lessons. The following excerpts display examples of how code switching was applied in the lessons. The Malay language employed by the teacher is illustrated in italics alongside the English explanation of the language.

Example 1

Teacher : I mean *saya*.. [I] Understand? I *maksudnya apa?* Saya, saya [what does it mean with I? I, I]

Example 2

Teacher : Okay we use our nose to? Smell. What is smell?

Students : *Hidung* [nose]

Teacher : *Smell maksudnya bau. Kita gunakan hidung kita untuk bau.* [Smell means to sniff. We use our nose to smell]. Okay do you understand?

Example 3

Teacher : Okay can you get up? Okay. *Ni apa?* [what is this] (point to the word this on the sheet belongs to the student) ‘This’ right? How to read this? This is a pen.

Students : This is a pen (In unison)

Example 4

Teacher : I, use, tooth brush. What is tooth brush? *Apa dia?* [what is it?]
 Students : *Ketip kuku* [nail clipper]
 Students : Gosok gigi [brushing teeth]
 Teacher : Ha? Gosok gigi? [brushing teeth]
 Students : Ha, *berus gigi* [toothbrush]
 Teacher : Yes, *berus gigi*, [toothbrush] how come *ketip kuku?* [nail clipper] I, brush, my, teeth.

Example 5

Teacher : Okay what is fingernail? *Apa dia* [what is] fingernail?
 Students : *Cepit kuku* [nail clipper]
 Teacher : No, fingernail is *kuku* [nail]
 Students : *gigi* [teeth]
 Teacher : No, fingernail *tu kuku*, [fingernail is fingernail] I, use, a, nail clipper

Example 6

Teacher : Big book, *buku yang besar* [big book] Do you understand? *Boleh faham?* [do you understand?] Yes or no? Okay, for today we want to make some revisions and the topic is about my niece. Okay stop writing. *Berhenti menulis* [stop writing]. (Calls out children's names)

Example 7

Teacher : Do you know what is chew? Chew tu maksudnya *mengunyah* [chew]

Code switching was used by Mrs. Leena to check students' understanding and to provide explanations about the words that she taught in the reading lessons, as shown in examples 1 to 7. She code switched between the English and Malay language when she asked questions to the students to ensure that the students could comprehend the meaning of the words that were taught

in the lessons. It is also noted that instead of using actions the teacher preferred to translate the meaning of particular words such as ‘I’ and ‘smell’ and ‘chew’. Similarly the teacher translated the meaning of fingernail instead of showing her own or students’ fingernails.

Example 8

Teacher : Now what you have to do? I want you to write the question. Okay you have to write the question. *Kena salin soalan ni* [You have to copy the question] (show the students which questions to copy)

Example 9

Teacher : Make it bigger ye, *tulis besar* [Write in a large print]

Example 10

Teacher : Okay hold this one, *pegang*. [Hold]. Hold the picture. *Pegang kad ini*. [Hold the card]. Okay, okay, can you read? Pin.

In the excerpts shown in examples 7 to 10 above, Mrs. Leena code switched to explain the instructions for the lesson. She asked the students to copy the questions and to use an appropriate size of handwriting. She also focused on the instruction for students to hold the picture to make sure it could be seen by other students. I also noticed that Mrs. Leena code switched the instructions about the print size instead of showing examples of what print size was appropriate.

Example 11

Teacher : ‘Are’? Number 18. Find the word. It is on the list. I ask you to circle the word. Do you want to play or to learn? *Nak main ke nak belajar?* [Do you want to play or to learn?] *Tell me nak main ke nak belajar?* [Tell me whether you want to play or to learn?]. *Saya dah marah ni nak jadi tiger dah ni*. [I am angry at you and I am going to turn into a tiger]. Don’t play. *Saya tanya*

awak nak main ke nak belajar? [I am asking you, do you want to play or to learn?] *Kalau nak belajar awak boleh duduk dalam kelas ni dengan saya.* [If you want to learn you can stay with me in the classroom.]

Example 12

Teacher : Okay I count to 5, teacher kira sampai 5, duduk tempat masing-masing *kalau tak balik tempat...*(go back to your seat, if not...)

From the excerpts shown in examples 11 and 12, I deduced that Mrs. Leena code switched when she wanted to manage the students' behaviour in the classroom. In example 1, she made the students think of their behaviour and interest in learning. Example 10 illustrates that Mrs. Leena was reminding the students who were out of their seats to return to their seats by counting to five. It was also discovered that there are no specific classroom ground rules emphasised by Mrs. Leena in the lessons.

Mrs. Leena also stated that the use of code switching, in which the struggling readers' first language is incorporated, is very necessary to facilitate the students' comprehension of the lessons and to control the classroom. She further mentioned that if the lessons were fully conducted in English, the students would face difficulties to understand the content of the lesson. Likewise, she admitted that she would experience a great challenge to deliver the lessons and to provide instructions to the students without using the Malay language. She also believed that managing the classroom required her to use Malay so that the students can understand her messages.

Referring to the Year 1 English syllabus, the use of the students' first language was not mentioned anywhere in the document. The MOE (2015) does, however, highlight the importance of the use of an accurate medium of instruction in teaching and learning: "emphasis is given on the aspects of pronunciation, sentence structure, grammar and the terminology of the language in order to assist pupils organise ideas as well as communicate effectively" (MOE, 2015, p.12). Judging from this it is suggested that the use of the first language is not encouraged as the focus should be given to the good modelling of the target language as a medium of instruction by the teacher.

4.2.3.1.5 Writing embedded instructions

Another prominent strategy that I observed in most of the reading lessons was writing activities. In the first observation that I conducted, students were asked to circle the words on the reading text listed in the HFW lists. For instance, the first word on the list is ‘the’. Students needed to circle the same word ‘the’ which could be found on the reading text.

The next lesson required the students to circle the parts of the body on the reading text provided by the teacher. There were six body parts that are accentuated in the lesson, which are eyes, ears, nose, hands, mouth and teeth. The teacher read the words aloud and the students circled the correct words.

In the following lesson that I observed, children were asked to copy down the question from the whiteboard and write the answer with the teacher’s guidance. The activity was related to the topic ‘My Name’ in the big book reading session the students had earlier. The students were required to copy the question ‘What is your name’ and answer ‘My name is (their own names)’.

Another lesson required the children to copy down the correct sentences provided by the teacher on the board. In this lesson, based on the topic “Be Clean”, an example of a sentence was “I take a bath”. Prior to this activity the teacher put up a few word cards on the board that represent the sentences introduced before and rearranged the jumbled words in order, together with the students.

The teacher gave her opinion about the integration of writing activities in the lesson, which includes an activity to reinforce the students’ comprehension on words they have learnt:

I consider writing activity to be a form of drilling or repetition that can be useful to strengthen students’ comprehension on what the children had learnt from the lesson. After verbal repetition, writing activity may be helpful too.

She further added:

Even though it might seem to just copying down the sentences they read, I think it is still good. They engaged with the words repeatedly.

Referring to the Year 1 English syllabus, it is illustrated that writing activity is suggested to be conducted in the reading lessons (MOE, 2015). Among the activities that are suggested are “read and draw, read and complete the text, read and categorise, read and predict and read and infer” (MOE, 2015, p. 44).

4.2.3.2 Instructional Materials Utilised in the lessons

Mrs. Leena put a high regard on using instructional materials to assist her students. She believed that instructional materials are very important and can work well to help build students’ comprehension, besides increasing students’ learning interest. During the observations, it was discovered that Mrs. Leena employed a number of materials for particular purposes. These materials included the HFW list, reading texts, big book, English Year 1 textbook, picture cards and word cards. The use of each material is explained in turn below.

4.2.3.2.1 Observation 1: High Frequency Word List and Reading Text

In the first classroom observation that I conducted, the reading instructions were based on the HFW list (see Figure 7). All the students had previously been given the list, which were properly printed out and laminated by Mrs. Leena. According to Mrs. Leena, the list was shared by her colleague through a social media group, and she hoped that the list would help the students to increase their vocabulary. The font of the list, which consists of 100 words, was quite small. Referring to the Year 1 Standard-Based Curriculum for Primary School (MOE, 2015a), the list of words produced by the MOE, although quite similar, was not identical to the material produced by the teacher. For example, there were words in the document not included in the teacher’s list. For instance, the words ‘cat’, ‘going’, ‘away’ and ‘help’, which are in the MOE list, were not on the teacher’s list, whereas the words ‘which’, ‘each’, ‘words’, ‘into’, ‘use’, ‘bike’, ‘its’, ‘long’ are not in the list provided by the MOE (2015). According to the MOE (2015a), the teacher can expand the list according to the students’ abilities but the words listed in the documents are the minimum that the teacher needs to teach to the students.

High Frequency Word List					
1.	the	34.	had	67.	than
2.	and	35.	as	68.	many
3.	a	36.	will	69.	see
4.	to	37.	on	70.	like
5.	in	38.	up	71.	these
6.	you	39.	out	72.	me
7.	of	40.	there	73.	words
8.	it	41.	do	74.	into
9.	is	42.	from	75.	use
10.	he	43.	were	76.	has
11.	that	44.	so	77.	way
12.	was	45.	her	78.	like
13.	for	46.	by	79.	make
14.	I	47.	if	80.	did
15.	his	48.	their	81.	could
16.	they	49.	some	82.	more
17.	with	50.	then	83.	two
18.	are	51.	him	84.	day
19.	be	52.	us	85.	will
20.	but	53.	an	86.	came
21.	at	54.	or	87.	get
22.	one	55.	no	88.	down
23.	said	56.	my	89.	now
24.	all	57.	which	90.	like
25.	have	58.	would	91.	this
26.	what	59.	each	92.	too
27.	we	60.	how	93.	fast
28.	can	61.	do	94.	ham
29.	this	62.	go	95.	who
30.	not	63.	about	96.	people
31.	she	64.	could	97.	is
32.	your	65.	time	98.	water
33.	when	66.	look	99.	long
				100.	End

Figure 7: High frequency word list

Mrs. Leena also distributed a short reading text which was utilised alongside with the HFW list in the lesson (see Figure 8). The reading text consisted of three sentences with four to five words that described the picture on it. The characters written on the text, namely Nini and Pak Alang, are local names that portray a Malaysian identity. The picture showed Nini feeding ducks, which are one of the most well-known farm animals in Malaysia. Both the picture and font used in the text were clear. According to Mrs. Leena, the objective of this lesson was to help the students to read the words on the HFW list and to get the students to identify whether the words read on the HFW list are also written on the reading text.

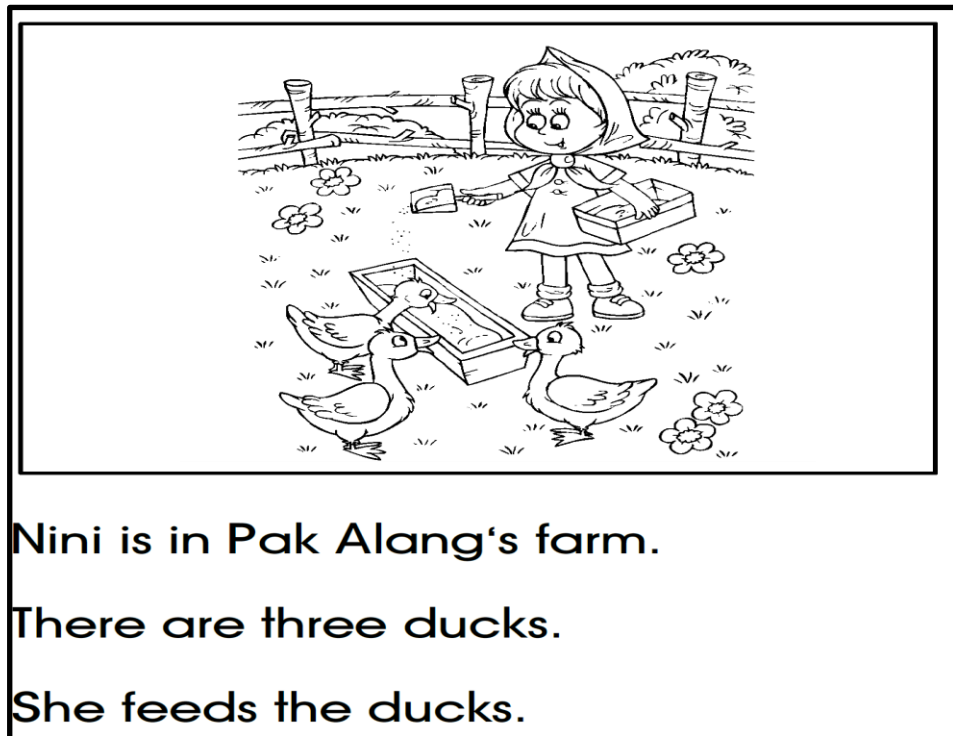


Figure 8: Reading text - feeding ducks

4.2.3.2.2 Observation 2: Reading text

The instructional materials used in the second observation focused on words and sentences on the topic of body parts. The text consisted of pictures of body parts and short sentences that described each of the parts (see Figure 9). The text featured six body parts, namely, eyes, ears, nose, hands, mouth and teeth and used clear pictures and fonts. The picture of each body part was put in the circle shape and the sentence that described the picture was written below the picture. According to Mrs. Leena, the objective of the lesson was for students to be able to recognise the body parts and their functions. She employed the reading text to facilitate the students to read the words and sentences that described the body parts and their purposes.

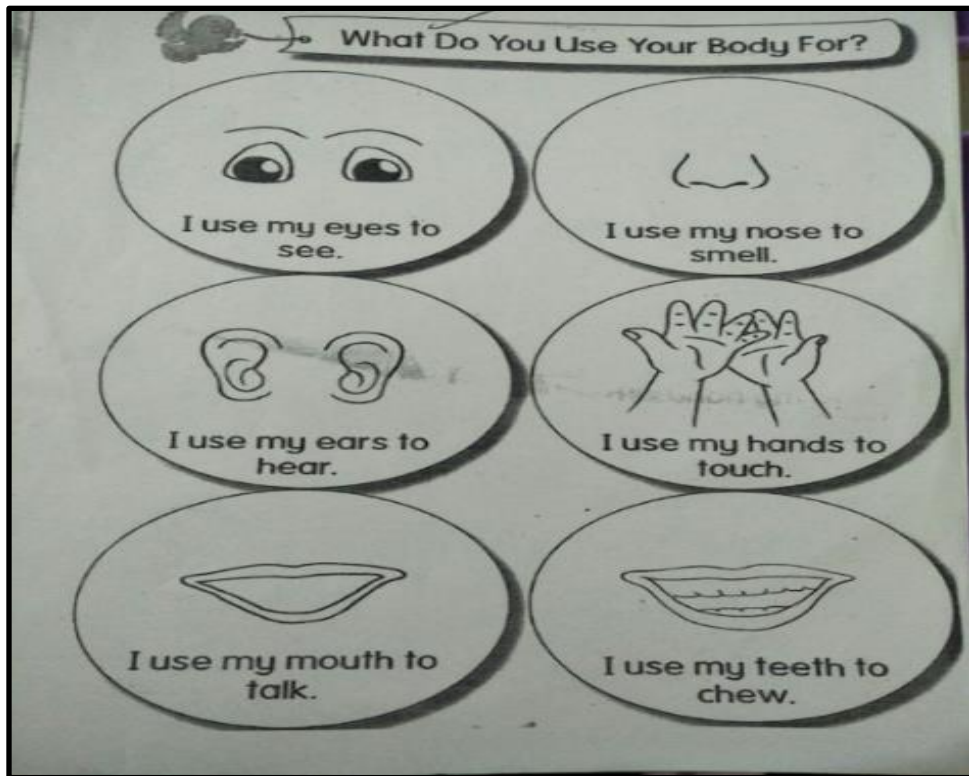


Figure 9: Reading text - body parts

4.2.3.2.3 Observation 3: Big Book

In the third observation, a big book was the main teaching aid utilised in the reading lesson. The objective of the lesson was to revise introducing oneself using simple sentences. The topic chosen was 'My name' (see Figure 10). The big book used several characters that portrayed the Malay, Indian and Chinese people who comprise the major ethnic groups among the Malaysian population, potentially helping the students to engage in the lesson because the learning was contextualised within the Malaysian community that they belonged to. Mrs. Leena thought that the big book was suitable to be used in the classroom because it has large print and pictures.

The use of the big book is also highlighted in the Year 1 Standard-Based Curriculum for Primary School (MOE, 2015). The document mentioned the importance of using the big book to teach students "the conventions about book and prints" such as the book title, and the way sentences are

read, which is from left to right (MOE, 2015, p. 43). The layout of the content used in the big book also helps students to learn about non-linear text. The importance of using non-linear text is also highlighted by the MOE (2015, p. 40) “Pupils will be able to demonstrate understanding of a variety of linear and non-linear texts in the form of print and non-print materials using a range of strategies to construct meaning”.

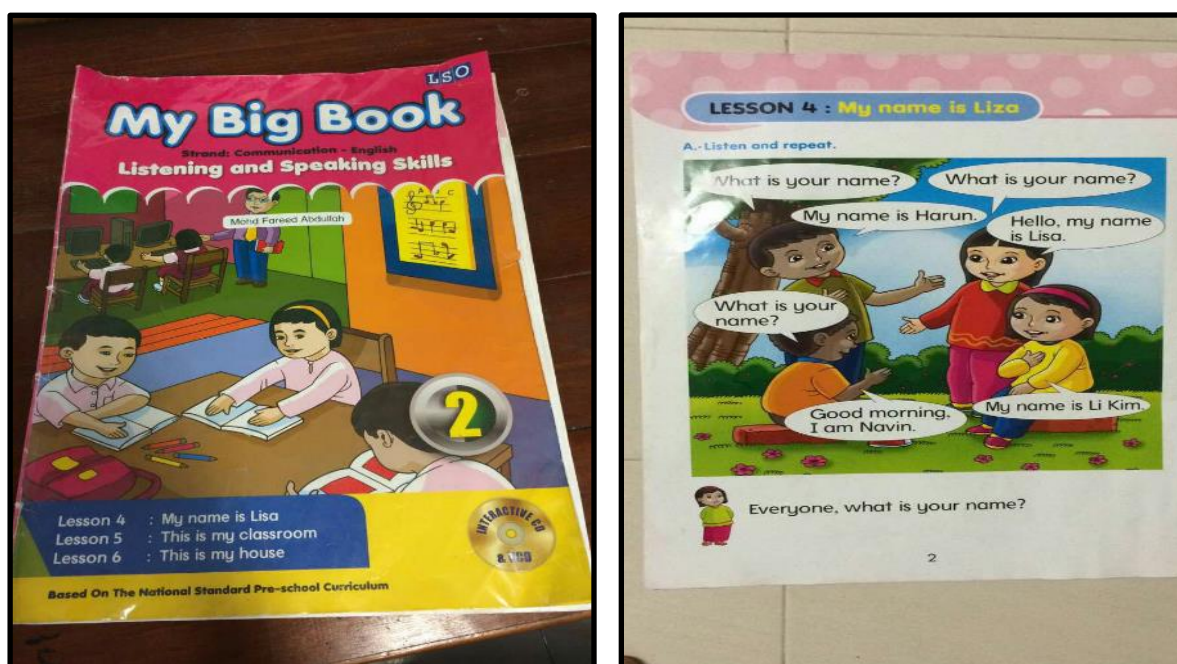


Figure 10: The Big Book

4.2.3.2.4 Observation 4: Year 1 English Text Book and Word Cards

The fourth reading lesson that I observed employed the Year 1 English textbook as the main reference or material. This textbook was produced by the MOE and had been supplied to all students and teachers as the main reference for English in the mainstream classroom. The textbook could also be employed in the struggling readers' class and Mrs. Leena felt that the content of the textbook that she was adopting was also suitable for the children's level. The Year 1 English Curriculum Standard for the Primary School documents mentioned that “materials must suit the differing needs and abilities of pupils” (MOE, 2015, p. 4). Even though the struggling readers were entitled to use the remedial textbook, the teacher's decision to use the textbook was also in line with the curriculum.

According to Mrs. Leena, the lesson observed was adapted from a chapter in the textbook, namely 'Be Clean' (see Figure 11). The main character used in the lesson is Nabil, a Malay boy who was introduced at the beginning of the textbook together with several other main characters that symbolised the melting pot of different cultures that exist in Malaysia. The characters are featured throughout the textbook. The section that was used by the teacher showed Nabil undertaking several actions to cleanse himself. These included bathing, shampooing, brushing teeth and cutting his fingernails. There are eight sentences highlighted by the teacher as displayed in the textbook.

The sentences read:

- i) I have a bath.
- ii) I use soap.
- iii) I wash my hair.
- iv) I use shampoo.
- v) I brush my teeth.
- vi) I use a toothbrush.
- vii) I cut my fingernails.
- viii) I use a nail clipper



Figure 11: Year 1 English textbook - Be Clean

Word cards were also employed by Mrs. Leena. She chose a few sentences taken from the lesson and put up the word cards on the board to be seen by the students. She jumbled them up and rearranged the words together with the students.

4.2.3.2.5 Observation 5: Picture Cards

In the fifth observation that I conducted, Mrs. Leena used picture cards as instructional materials. The cards contained a word that described the picture on it. The cards were printed on white paper and laminated. According to Mrs. Leena, the objective of the lesson was to get the students to read the words, to increase their vocabulary and to make a short sentence based on the words with the assistance of the picture. She further added that the words chosen to be put on the cards were taken from the school textbook. Examples of the cards utilised in this lesson are displayed below in Figure 12.

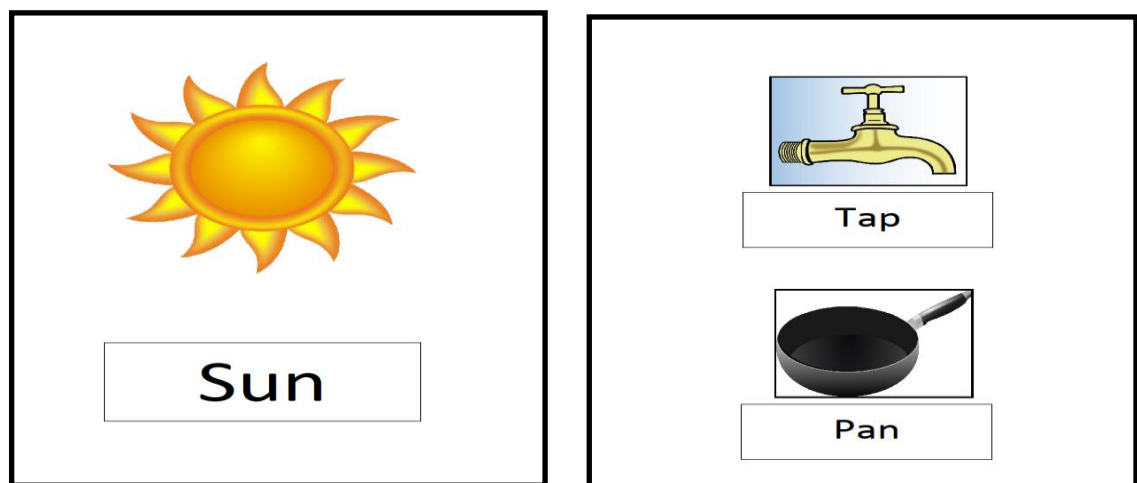


Figure 12: Picture cards

Mrs. Leena mentioned that exposing students to the pictures can be helpful to get the students familiarised with the words that she intended to teach. This step can be followed by introducing

the name of the things displayed on the picture to enrich the students' vocabulary and to guide the students to construct sentences based on the words they learned from the pictures.

4.2.4 Challenges Affecting the Teaching of Reading

Mrs. Leena raised several challenges that she faced while dealing with the struggling readers in this study. The issues included managing students' behaviour, low involvement and cooperation from the parents, quality of the support and cooperation from the District Education Division, lack of time to prepare the materials, lack of resources, lack of knowledge and training in phonics instruction, the assessment system and the absence of designated personnel to take overall charge of the struggling readers' learning.

4.2.4.1 Managing Students' Behaviour in the Struggling Reader's Classroom

The main challenge that Mrs. Leena faced in facilitating the children was managing student behaviour. She believed that managing student behaviour is an integral aspect of a successful teaching and learning session. She stated, *"If they listen to our instructions, things will get easier, our lesson objectives would be met. For me this is the main issue that I had in facilitating the students to read."*

Mrs. Leena also mentioned that students in the struggling readers' classroom have different personalities and attitude issues. This hinders the effectiveness of the reading instructions conducted in the classroom. She perceived the students as either passive or too active and quite playful, loving to make noises and having a short attention span. She also believed that these behaviours might be because the students had low motivation and interest to learn English, a language that is foreign to them. She understood that the students might be able to achieve more but because a lot of her time in the classroom was spent quietening down the noisy students or getting their attention, the core business of teaching and learning was negatively affected.

She further commented on the students' behaviour since this also dampened her enthusiasm as a teacher:

I come to the class and I prepare myself as if I want to go to a battlefield. When I put all my materials on the table, several students misbehave and each with different issues. Things go awry and less time is spent on the teaching and learning.

Mrs. Leena also stated that the children with a negative influenced those who wanted to learn to join their negative behaviour or become a nuisance in the reading lesson and that this created an undesirable environment in the classroom. As Mrs. Leena was unable to manage the classroom, her lesson planning might not meet the objectives. She commented:

It was challenging to manage the students' behaviour. They love to make noise, cannot sit still, disrupt their friends, chatter and play with one another. They really test my patience. My creative teaching method was also disadvantaged by their behaviour.

It was also mentioned that Mrs. Leena was in favour of integrating ICT in her reading lesson. One main constraints, however, meant that she did not use the technology in the classroom is the students' behaviour. She was afraid that some students might ruin the computer lab equipment if she took them to the lab. The teacher stated:

The children are very active and some may play with the computers and disrupt or break them. I do not want to take a risk.

4.2.4.2 Perceived Parental Attitude: Low Involvement and Cooperation

Mrs. Leena also had negative perceptions towards the attitude of the struggling readers' parents in relation to their children's learning. The teacher felt that the children from low socio-economic status were not properly cared by the parents who were normally busy with their work. She expressed her dissatisfaction regarding those parents' cooperation. She believed that the parents needed to be more responsible and look after their children's learning since education starts from home. From her past years' experience, she discovered that homework was not accomplished by the children that she taught. Therefore she decided not to give homework to the present students that she is teaching. She stated:

I seldom give homework to them because if I gave them the homework, many homework were returned with mistakes or even worse unfinished. Doing mistakes are acceptable but I am upset when they neglect the task given.

She further added:

As a teacher I can give them like 50% to 70% of the input but the rest of it should come from the children's parents or family. Parents have their part in students' success.

She also mentioned that the parents were less serious about their children's reading ability and were not helping their children. Mrs. Leena asserted that if the parents were serious they would be able to help their children at home. She said:

At least they can help monitor their children's reading at night for instance. So, what the teacher teaches at school can be reiterated by the parents at home.

Parents were also perceived as lacking of awareness about the present education system resulting in a lack of understanding of their children's learning. Mrs. Leena mentioned about the SAPS, the online portal that stores children's academic reports, including reading performance, which she thinks the parents are not updated with. She said, "*Parents do not really know what is available. Our system is progressing but they don't really catch up on the new system*". She believed that nowadays a lot of things are available on the Internet which can easily be found by the parents.

Mrs. Leena also pointed out that parental understanding of their children's achievement was outdated. Since the parents did not keep up with the present system of education, those parents were more eager to know their children's tests results, specifically on grades and marks rather than the performance in reading. As an English teacher, Mrs. Leena never met the parents of struggling readers as the parent-teacher meetings usually involved only the class teacher. Based on her experience talking with other parents in the class where she is the class teacher, however, Mrs. Leena stated:

Parents are more interested to know their children's marks in tests rather than to know about their children's reading ability. If their children don't know how to read and write how could they achieve good marks in the test?

4.2.4.3 Quality of Support and Cooperation from the District Education Office

Mrs. Leena also stated that she expected the district education office to disseminate the materials done by all teachers in the course that she attended more efficiently. She also mentioned that, in all the courses that she attended, the participants worked together to come out with ideas to assist the students in reading. She did not receive the materials that she thought would be helpful to refer to, however. Mrs. Leena was a little bit disappointed because she had been expecting the materials to reach her.

I don't know how to get the presentations because the organiser promised to share the compilation of ideas with all teachers who attended the courses. I am quite disappointed because I think everyone has spent generous time and put a lot of effort into developing the materials. It would motivate me more if such assistance is available.

She believed that if she had these materials, the process of teaching and learning might become easier in that she would be able to use the newly developed strategies in her teaching practice in the reading classroom.

4.2.4.4 Lack of Resources and Lack of Time

Another challenge reported by Mrs. Leena in facilitating the students was the lack of suitable resources. Mrs. Leena also admitted that she did not have enough time to prepare the materials herself. She believed that the use of suitable materials is necessary to facilitate the students in English language reading. Even though I saw Mrs. Leena utilise particular materials in each of the observations that I conducted, she admitted that those materials were already in her collection. She said "*I develop my own materials and, definitely, it is time-consuming*". She also mentioned that she could not afford to use or prepare materials for each reading instruction. She felt overwhelmed to think about and to prepare the materials for the students as she also taught other classes for different year groups and abilities.

Mrs. Leena has a busy role in the school and was assigned to teach English to both lower and upper primary school classes, namely Years 1, 2 and 4. She had to accomplish academic and non-academic-related duties. For example, in relation to the academic duties, she was required to teach

the students, and to prepare, administer and mark the test papers. She also needed to perform non-academic duties such as organising school events including Sport's day, Teacher's day, Canteen Day, Teacher's retirement day and others.

4.2.4.5 Lack of Training in Phonics Instruction

Another challenge that Mrs. Leena had in facilitating the struggling readers was her knowledge, which she perceived as limited and inadequate. She also admitted that she needed more training before she could widely apply phonics in the classroom more confidently. Phonics is quite new to Mrs. Leena because the shift to phonics was only implemented a few years ago, long after she had her education certificate at the teacher training institute. She further said:

I attended a few courses related to teaching ESL students who struggle with reading and writing. However, the courses did not dedicate much time to revise on this. We usually had the revision together as a whole group, going briefly through a phonics song for instance. The rest of the sessions focused on other things.

4.2.4.6 The Assessment System

Another challenge mentioned by Mrs. Leena was the implementation of the assessment system. Even though she acknowledged the advantages of having the assessments, she thought the tests were too close together, and believed that this disturbed her ability to focus on the students. According to Mrs. Leena, there are many tests throughout the year: in the months of March, May, May, July and October. These tests include literacy screening, school reading tests and other school tests. She stated:

In the same month the students have to sit two types of assessment. For example, in March, the school test is carried out together with reading screening. This situation poses a problem to me as a teacher. This is because I don't have enough time to really focus on students' needs. I need to juggle the syllabus and their real needs.

4.2.4.7 Lack Personnel and Large Class Sizes

Mrs. Leena also mentioned that she needed to cater for struggling readers in a big class in addition to mainstream students. She said:

I teach a few classes and my focus needs to be divided into students who are struggling in reading and those who are not struggling in reading. For instance, in this class, all of them are struggling, but in another class they are not.

She also commented about the issue of lack of time to help children struggling in reading. She said, *“It was challenging for me to dedicate a lot of time, thinking and energy for these struggling readers and non-struggling readers alike”*. She further added other responsible parties need to think of possible solutions to help these struggling readers more efficiently. She believed that there is a need to have a particular organisation or teacher to look at the best way to help these struggling readers to ensure that the students receive their full rights in education. She believed that more attention should be given to the students to help them in reading. She said: *“I can’t give enough focus since I teach them as a whole group and it is just hard to manage them. They need more focus”*

4.2.5 Summary of the findings related to the teacher

The classroom was found to be spacious with enough tables and chairs for each student, but there was no reading corner and few ESL materials available in the classroom.

The teacher’s involvement with the struggling readers incorporated several instructional methods and a number of instructional materials. Whole-class teaching was the main method utilised in the ESL struggling readers’ classroom in order to control the classroom. Besides that, drilling was largely regularly in the reading lessons with the ESL struggling readers for a number of reasons, such as to assist the students recognise and become familiar with the words, to help the students memorise the words, to model the pronunciation to the students, to get the students to practise reading and to attract the students’ attention. Additionally, the look-and-say approach was applied instead of phonics to facilitate students’ vocabulary and comprehension development. The phonics

approach was not applied in the lessons because the teacher did not feel confident in using the approach; further, she felt that the students had never previously been exposed to the method.

Another method utilised by the teacher in the ESL reading lessons was code switching. Code switching was mainly used to assist students' comprehension. Specifically, the teacher code switched while giving instructions, clarifying English words, checking students' understandings and managing the classroom. Additionally, writing activity was also embedded in the reading lessons to make the students engage with the words repeatedly.

Turning to the teacher's explanation for why she teaches in the way that she does, it was explained above that Mrs. Leena was comfortable applying the drilling technique in the reading classroom. In particular, Mrs. Leena would ask her students to read after her, and used her finger to point to the particular words that she was reading with the students. The drilling technique is widely employed because, as a Muslim, she was influenced by the way the Quran is normally taught, i.e. with the emphasis on memorisation of the verses. She hoped that drilling would similarly help the children memorise the English words, language that is not so familiar to the students, as well as to model a good pronunciation. This finding that Mrs. Leena's English teaching was influenced by the practice of Islamic institutions is a significant illustration of the influence of the macrosystem on children's development.

A number of instructional materials were employed in the ESL reading lessons. These included high frequency word lists, word cards, reading texts, the big book, the Year 1 English textbook and picture cards. The main objectives when using these materials were to assist students' comprehension and increase students' learning motivation.

A number of challenges were reported that potentially affected the teaching and learning of reading in the classroom. A prominent challenge was difficulties managing student behaviour during the lesson. Students were also perceived as having low interest towards ESL. This put the teacher off from integrating ICT into the lessons. Parents were also perceived by the teacher as having low involvement in relation to their children's ESL learning due to their low socioeconomic status and the fact that they were required to work long hours in their jobs. The teacher felt that the parents

were not aware of the educational system, one reason that causing the children's poor attainment in English. Based on her previous years' experience, the teacher decided not to provide homework often to the students since she found that parental cooperation was lacking. This is a significant finding because, clearly, not providing children with homework is an unusual practice as completing homework can be seen as a common activity for children at home (Lee, 2010; Pendleton, 2017; Rodriguez, 2005; Xiaoyi, 2017). Furthermore, Mrs. Leena's reasoning—an assumption that the homework would not be completed by the children due to lack of parental support—reveals tensions and misunderstandings within the children's mesosystems. A similar conclusion is evident in Mrs. Leena's belief that the struggling readers' parents were unaware of the online systems that allow parents to check their children's results. In both cases, the teacher appeared to make assumptions about the parents of the struggling readers. Overall, it seemed that the teacher harboured some dissatisfaction about the contribution of the parents, as the other key element in the children's microsystem. This negative perception reflects the loose relationship that the teacher and parents had, with a lack of effective communications between both parties, and associated negative consequences for the children's ESL learning experiences and attainment at school. This is because teachers and parents need to work together for the children's benefit.

Another challenge reported was the poor quality of support and lack of cooperation from the District Education Office in respect to disseminating the teaching resources that were planned and built together during training courses. The teacher also faced a challenge in respect to a lack of suitable resources and time to prepare the materials needed to facilitate the struggling readers. Insufficient training in phonics instruction was another challenge that the teacher faced while working with the struggling readers in the classroom. This is a significant finding because Mrs. Leena was heavily influenced by the way in which she herself was taught during her training to be a teacher. When she had been at teacher training college, she had not been trained in how to use the phonics system to teach reading. Moreover, the training that she had received in phonics, after that reading approach had been introduced to the Year 1 English curriculum was inadequate. This made her feel less confident in applying phonics in her reading lessons. The findings suggest that the influence of the exosystems (here resources, training and educational systems or policies) have had a significant impact on Mrs. Leena's teaching practices which then indirectly affects the struggling reader's learning experiences and their reading performance in the ESL classroom.

The teacher also highlighted the absence of personnel specialised in teaching struggling readers as another challenge that she faced. In addition to time constraints, the absence of that personnel contributed to the lack of programmes that could feasibly be conducted to involve parents in their children' ESL learning. The assessment system was also reported as challenging by the teacher as it was so crowded as to have a negative effect on the teaching of reading to the struggling readers in the classroom. These are again significant findings because all the challenges are related to the systems operated and policies set by the Ministry of Education at that time. Mrs. Leena's dissatisfaction about the lack of teaching assistants, and the way the assessment was organised, affected her ability to operate effectively in the classroom, with associated indirect impacts on the students' development and attainment in ESL reading.

Table 7 reiterates the above summary of the findings in respect to the teacher.

Table 7: Summary of the findings in relation to the teacher

Themes	Categories	Explanation
1) Classroom environment		Lack of ESL reading materials
2) Involvement	Instructional methods	Whole-class teaching Use of drilling Whole word approach over phonics Code-switching Writing embedded instructions
	Instructional materials	High frequency word list and reading text Reading text Big book Year 1 English text book and word cards Picture cards
3) Challenges	Students' challenge	Managing students' behaviour
	Socio-economic challenge	Low involvement from parents
	Institutional challenge	Quality of support and cooperation from the District Education Office Lack of training in phonics instructions Lack of support in materials suitable resources and time to prepare for the materials The absence of personnel who are specialised in teaching struggling readers and class size
	Instructional challenge	The assessment system

4.3 Findings in Relation to the Parents

Sub-research question 1.2: How do the participating parents work with their children at home?

In this section I present the findings from interviews that I had with the parents of struggling readers. The aims of this section are to: a) provide the background of each parent; b) detail the way

the parents got involved in the ESL learning with their child at home; and c) present the challenges the parents faced in engaging with their children as struggling readers.

4.3.1 Mrs. Ela

4.3.1.1 Mrs. Ela's Background

Ali's mother, Mrs. Ela, is 44 years old and is originally from Aceh, Indonesia. Mrs. Ela and her husband work as canteen workers at a college. They have four children. She migrated to Malaysia to live when she was 26 years old and got married and settled down in the country. Her highest educational background was attending secondary school in an Indonesian high school and she learnt English as one of the subjects at that school. Mrs. Ela can only read and write in Malay, and she reads a Malay newspaper regularly. She said:

I read Malay newspapers almost every day. I read them after lunch hour when there are not many customers coming to the café. I can get the newspapers easily from my work place. It is good to read newspapers because I can get updates about our country. I did not read in English because I am not knowledgeable in English. I think English is not that useful to me because my work does not need that.

It was quite easy to arrange meetings with Mrs. Ela because she is often available at the college canteen. When I first met Mrs. Ela at her workplace, she was in the canteen kitchen doing the dishes. Mrs. Ela was happy to see me and welcomed me effusively. She obtained permission from her manager to talk to me in the canteen. My second meeting with Mrs. Ela was also conducted in the college canteen, as requested by her.

4.3.1.2 Mrs. Ela's Involvement with Ali's Learning

Mrs. Ela talked about how she or her husband got involved in Ali's English language reading. She mentioned that the main activity they engaged in was facilitating Ali with his homework. She asked Ali about his homework and sat together with him. When she recounted Ali's daily routine Mrs. Ela mentioned:

Ali reaches home with us at six and we have dinner, watch television and pray together. After that my husband or I will look at his homework if there is any before putting him to bed.

Mrs. Ela also mentioned the importance of homework for Ali's ESL learning. She said

We will help Ali when the homework is available. It is good for him because he can do some readings and revision of what he did at school.

Besides homework, Mrs. Ela also reported that her husband helped by chanting alphabetical letters with Ali before Ali went to bed. According to Mrs. Ela, although the activity is simple, they hope Ali will obtain something from it and it is one way to show support for Ali's ESL learning. She narrated how the activity was done:

Ali's father will ask Ali to chant alphabets and to count numbers in English. My husband will first chant A, B, C and count 1, 2, 3 before asking Ali to say those letters and numbers. If necessary, my husband will correct Ali.

Also according to Mrs. Ela, there were no ESL learning materials at her home except for school books. Stationery were however provided to facilitate Ali's learning and, normally, learning activities were performed at night and at the table in Ali's own room. Mrs. Ela did not have a computer or any gadgets at home except for smart phones. Ali normally employed the smart phones to watch his favourite Malay cartoons.

Mrs. Ela also believed that parents and teachers are responsible for children's ESL learning. She stated that, *"I don't know much English but I know my participation in Ali's ESL learning is necessary"*. She also added, *"However, I believed the teacher knows best because they have the credentials and can teach my son a lot of English"*.

In addition to that, Mrs. Ela believed that Ali would be able to read in English with practice, and wanted her son to be able to read in English. Mrs. Ela, however, did not want to put pressure on her child at the moment. She stated, *"I do not want to strain my son because he is only a Year 1 student. I think he needs to learn reading English little by little."* She also added that it was more important to read Malay than English at the moment. She said, *"He is still small and I think reading in Malay is more important for him now. I don't want to pressure him with academic stuff too"*

much". Despite the limited resources and activities conducted at home, Mrs. Ela did perceive that the ability to read in English is important for Ali. She therefore encouraged Ali to learn to read in English since it would be useful for him when looking for a job in the future. Mrs. Ela also told the researcher that she never took Ali to the public library because she had not been aware of its existence.

4.3.1.3 Challenges Facing Mrs. Ela

One of the challenges faced by Mrs. Ela in helping her child was the limited time they had available to spend together. She realised that her child needed more attention from her, but she and her husband were unable to provide the necessary focus on him. Mrs. Ela also stated that Ali did not frequently engage in ESL activity. She also told the researcher that she had to work for long hours and it was tiring day every day:

Our time together is so restricted. We pity our child but that is something that we cannot help. We start to get ready for work at 5 o'clock in the morning and finish very late. It is a tiring and long day and when we are home we are just looking forward to sinking into our bed.

Mrs. Ela continued talking about her busy working daily schedule. She narrated:

My husband and I woke up as early as 5 in the morning, my husband dropped me off at the canteen and he went back home to prepare Ali to school before joining me in the canteen. We went home at about 5 p.m.

Mrs. Ela was also not sure about materials that could assist her child. She said, "*I am not very sure but I think books which have pictures and words might be helpful. One picture and one word so my child can imagine the meaning of the words*". Mrs. Ela also stated that both she and her husband were limited in their understanding of English and that this hindered them from getting involved more in Ali's English language reading. She also admitted that they did not really know what kind of help could be offered to Ali. She also added that she did not know where they can ask for opinions. Mrs. Ela also told the researcher that the reading task was carried out mainly by her husband who had a little knowledge in English. She said, "*I am not good in English. Usually my husband will take in charge. He knows English a little more than me*".

Mrs. Ela mentioned that she was aware of Ali's position in the low performing students' class from the class teacher who also taught Malay language subject. She told the researcher:

I was informed by the class teacher. Many of his friends are also learning how to read in the classroom. However, I don't know about his English language reading ability. I have never met his English teacher.

She also added that she did not know about how her son was being assessed. Apart from that, Mrs. Ela also stated that as far as she knew, there was no ESL learning programme at school as she never received any invitations related to her child's ESL learning at school. Mrs. Ela also mentioned that she felt that the amount of homework was too small as he largely depended on the homework for home English learning activities. She was also unsure about how to raise this with the English teacher.

Another challenge reported to the researcher was her inability to manage Ali's behaviour. She stated:

Ali is very certain with his demands. If I reject his requests he will cry his eyes out. For example, if he wants to play with the key and I refuse to give him, he will start to cry, he is very sensitive and sulks easily. Thus I don't want to push him too much in his studies, including helping him with learning English.

4.3.2 Mrs. Amina

4.3.2.1 Mrs. Amina's Background

Fairul's mother, Mrs. Amina, is 41 years old. Mrs. Amina and her husband work as factory workers. They are blessed with five children. Mrs. Amina discontinued school after she finished form 5 at a secondary school. She can read and write well in Malay. Mrs. Amina admitted that she did not read English; although she learnt it at school she did not find the language applicable to her daily life and had very little knowledge of English as a result. Mrs. Amina did read Malay newspapers at times, however.

Mrs. Amina does shift work on weekdays and it was quite challenging to meet her for the interviews due to the nature of her work. She requested to have the first meeting at Fairul's school. The second meeting was held at her house. She looked tired when we met as she had just finished a night shift. Nonetheless, she cooperated well throughout the meetings.

4.3.2.2 Mrs. Amina's Involvement with Fairul's Learning

According to Mrs. Amina, she did not do any reading activity at home except for asking about homework and helping with homework to the best of her ability. She told the researcher, *"I will sit with him and help him to read his homework at night, especially when he asked me to help."* She felt that homework is important because she can get engaged with Fairul's learning at school and it is one way to occupy Fairul's time. Mrs. Amina also saw Fairul scribbling letters and numbers on a piece of paper and reading it. In the interview she said:

Sometimes I found my son occupied with alphabet writing or numbers after he comes home from school. He writes the letters down and he reads them with a voice that I can hardly hear and then he comes to me to read it out.

Learning activities are usually carried out at night, at a table near the living room. Mrs. Amina also reported that no ESL learning materials were present in her house except for school books. She was able to provide Fairul with stationery, however, which he used for learning at home or school. According to Mrs. Amina, she does not have any computers or gadgets at home except for smart phones. She told the researcher that her son likes to watch Malay cartoons and play games on the smart phone.

Mrs. Amina believed that parents and teachers have a role in a child's ESL learning. She mentioned, *"Although it is not an easy task for me to participate in my child's ESL learning I still believe that I need to take part in my child's learning"*. She further stated, *"I believe in the teacher because normally teacher knows best and knows what is needed for my son"*.

Mrs. Amina did provide encouragement to Fairul to learn to read in English at school and talked to Fairul about the importance of the language in this era. However, she felt that reading in the Malay language needed to be prioritised: *"He cannot read in English. But reading in Malay for*

me is more important for him now because the language is more useful in his life at this time.” Despite this, Mrs. Amina still perceived that it is vital for Fairul to be able to read in English, mentioning that: *“English is important because the language has been used everywhere and many people use the language for many purposes. It is good if he can read in English”*. Mrs. Amina also believed that Fairul could read with English with practice. She also worried about her child’s reading problems and was deciding whether to send Fairul to private classes. She said, *“I am thinking whether to send Fairul to extra classes or not. It might be good for him and help him in ESL learning.”* Mrs. Amina was unsure where the library was located and did not realise the use or importance of the library. She mentioned, *“I don’t know where the public library is and it never crossed my mind that the library would be a good place for my son to learn to read in English.”*

4.3.2.3 Challenges Facing Mrs. Amina

The main challenge stated by Mrs. Amina was that of time constraints. She also stated that she had to work for long hours and based on shift system. She said:

Time spent with my son is scarce because of the long working hours. I also work on shift. It is just difficult. I need to work, and I don’t think I will either quit my job or change workplace. I feel comfortable with my job now although it was tiring.

Fairul usually does his homework at night after attending Quranic class at his neighbour’s home. Mrs. Amina, therefore, could not really monitor Fairul’s work if she happened to be doing a night shift. Besides admitting that her English knowledge is limited, Mrs. Amina also did not know what materials might be helpful for her to use for the English reading activities and how she can help Fairul more in ESL reading. Additionally, due to her limited knowledge in English, she was not able to utilise her son’s English school books that were written in English, although she added that if the explanation was written in Malay she may be able to use it. Furthermore she also did not know where she could ask about the kinds of help that she could offer to Fairul.

In addition, Mrs. Amina did not know about Fairul’s ESL performance in his class. She was also unaware of how her son was being assessed at school. She also does not really know about the lessons that are being taught by the teacher at school. Although Mrs. Amina once met Fairul’s class teacher, she did not have any opportunity to talk to Fairul’s English teacher. She said, *“I*

haven't talked to the teacher about his progress in English. I do not know how and when the suitable time is." Apart from that, because she depends on homework as the only way to assist her child, she commented about the amount of homework: *"The homework is not always available. Unlike Mathematics, he always does the homework in that subject. Maybe because her teacher found that he is not progressing well in English he is not given any homework"*. She also mentioned that she did not know how to convey her thoughts to the ESL teacher as she has not got the opportunities to meet the teacher. In addition to that, Mrs. Amina told the researcher that she never receive any invitations from the school for programmes that relate to Fairul's ESL learning.

Another problem that Mrs. Amina faced was in dealing with her child's temperament. She felt that Fairul paid little respect to her. She confided to the researcher:

It is quite challenging to guide him through because I think he listens to other's advice or instructions more than mine. Even If I scold him he would not give heed to me. That's what I find challenging about nurturing him and encouraging him to learn English.

4.3.3 Mrs. Nina

4.3.3.1 Mrs. Nina's Background

Mrs. Nina, who is Imran's mother, is 49 years old and has four children. Mrs. Nina is no longer working and chose to become a housewife. Her husband used to have a small business but at the time of the interviews was not able to run it due to poor health. Indeed, at the time, they were mainly surviving on their savings. Mrs. Nina studied at a secondary school and formally stopped school after finishing form 5. She could read and write well in Malay. She also had some exposure to English at a place where she once worked, apart from learning the language at school. Imran's mother talked about her experience when she was once working with a company that required her to use English: *"I needed to learn English as it was used as a criterion to get employed. But now, after I resigned, I do not read English anymore."* She admitted, however, that she reads English when she does reading activities with Imran. Despite her tight schedule juggling motherhood and taking care of her unwell husband, she was willing to make time for me and to participate in this

study. My first meeting with Mrs. Nina was held at school as requested by her. Mrs. Nina brought Imran a packed lunch which he had left at home.

4.3.3.2 Mrs. Nina's Involvement with Imran's Learning

Mrs. Nina reported a number of ways in which she sought to facilitate Imran's ESL reading at home. For example, she facilitated Imran with his reading through the set homework. She asked Imran about the availability of the homework and sat beside him making sure the homework was complete. She also answered questions that Imran posed to her related to the homework. She believed that homework is very useful because it helped her child to revise what he did at school. She also believed that it helped her as a mother to know what activities her child was doing with the teacher at school. Apart from homework, Mrs. Nina also utilised pizza boxes to encourage him to read English. Since pizza is Imran's favourite food, Mrs. Nina took the opportunity to facilitate Imran's learning by using the food packaging. Imran's mother stated, *"I use a pizza box to help my child with reading. He loves pepperoni pizza, we can have a personal pizza with only RM5 from a nearby Pizza Hut restaurant"*. Mrs. Nina mentioned that she usually asked Imran to spell out the word 'pizza' on the box and the food related to the Pizza Hut such as beef, pepperoni, soup, bread and others as a reinforcement to increase his interest in learning. She also mentioned that it is good to make use of everything that can be found from the immediate surroundings to help her child.

Mrs. Nina also employed a new school book titled 'Supermind' which was loaned by the school. The book will only be used next year when Imran is in Year 2, however. Mrs. Nina stated:

I can see that he loves the Supermind book because it has beautiful illustrations. He loves the pizza part the most. Imran brought the Supermind book which was given by his teacher to me while I was sewing. He showed me the pizza in the book and told me that he loves pizza and asked me about the price of the pizza.

Imran showed a deep interest in the picture and kept talking about the same topic. Imran's mother further stated, *"Imran seems not to get bored with the pizza, repeatedly talking about that particular pizza picture with me"*. Imran's mother was asked about the reason for his son's profound interest in the book. She replied that her child loves to eat pizza very much. She also

mentioned that they would also talk about other pictures that he found interesting. Mrs. Nina would help Imran to read the words and talk about the pictures that they found in the book.

Mrs. Nina also considers previous English exam papers to be useful learning resources and keeps them for future use. She said, *“I keep test papers that Imran sat earlier this year. I think it is a good guide to help him during revision and it might come in handy”*. Mrs. Nina described how she made use of previous exam papers as a resource for reading practice. She told the researcher, *“I give Imran the exam paper and let him read by himself. He will try to read short and simple words. If he encounters difficult or long words, he will usually skip the words”*. Mrs. Nina would also try to guide Imran to read the words correctly and explain the meaning of words. Imran also repeatedly asked Mrs. Nina about the pronunciation of certain words that he found in the paper, as Mrs. Nina reported, *“Imran asks me how to pronounce certain words such as ‘we’ and I asked him back”*.

In another account, Mrs. Nina said she did spelling and pronunciation practice with Imran. She also explained the meaning of words that Imran asked about. She said, *“I asked Imran to spell simple words such as ‘hear’ or ‘crocodile’. If he pronounced it wrongly, I would correct him”*. Sometimes she used school books or any books available at home and sometimes she just used what she could remember at that time. She also told the researcher that Imran sometimes asked her to translate English words that he found in the book into Malay. For example, *“What is the Malay word for ‘the’? ‘What is the Malay word for ‘a’ or ‘we’?”* Mrs. Nina would then redirect the questions to Imran and further asked the son to spell out the words.

There are a few ESL learning materials at her home apart from school books, such as storybooks and comics, mostly belonging to her older sons. Mrs. Nina also kept Imran’s exam papers properly and provides stationery for Imran’s learning at home or school. Reading activity was done at night and whenever deemed fit for both mother and son. The activity was carried out at the table near the living room. There were no computers and gadgets at Mrs. Nina’s home except for smart phones. The smart phone was largely used by Imran to play games. Mrs. Nina expressed her worry about the use of smart phones by Imran. She said, *“My husband and I are worried about Imran as he has developed a liking for online games. He learnt it from his cousin not long ago when they met at their grandparents’ house”*. She further told the researcher how she deals with that situation,

“I have to make up stories such as that the phone that he uses to play the games with is malfunctioning”.

Mrs. Nina also believed that, besides teachers, parents need to play their part in helping facilitate their children’s ESL learning. She said:

My involvement in Imran’s ESL learning cannot be denied in spite of my weakness. I believe teachers have their role, and they know better than me what is necessary to be done to my son, yet I need to have my role.

Mrs. Nina believed that reading in English is important because the subject is needed at school. Additionally, because English is an international language it is important to learn it. Mrs. Nina stated that although she knew that Imran was yet to read in English, she believed that he could acquire the ability with time and practice. She therefore encouraged Imran to read in English by talking to him about the importance of English and engaging in what he is doing. She said, *“When I see him holding English books I will try to come to him and read the books together.”* Mrs. Nina could not manage to take Imran to the public library due to her life circumstances. She commented, *“It is just difficult to take Imran to the public library because I don’t have much time for that. What more with the condition of my husband? He is unwell and needs a lot of help”.*

4.3.3.3 Challenges Facing Mrs. Nina

Mrs. Nina reported that one of the challenges preventing her from assisting Imran more at home was time constraints. She elaborated that since her husband was unwell she had more responsibilities and had a hectic life every day. She said:

I would have the reading activities with Imran only when the time permits and, certainly, it is not frequent. I need to look after my husband, do the household chores and run some errands. That’s the reality even though I stay at home and am not working outside. I have a busy life every day.

She further mentioned that her involvement with Imran’s ESL learning is infrequent. In general, she thought that she needed to devote more attention to Imran to help him but felt that it was challenging for her to do so. Mrs. Nina also felt that her English ability was limited. Although she had some exposure to English and put some effort in helping her son, she still believed that her

knowledge is not sufficient. She said, *“I am not very good in English, I want my son to be better in English than me”*.

From the interview, it was found out that Mrs. Nina is not very informed regarding the assessment system taken place at school. She had made an effort to talk with the class teacher when she met the teacher at a school social event. Her son’s reading performance was not discussed in the session, however, since the main reason for the meeting was not related to academic matters. She said:

I talked to my son’s class teacher when I collected the government fund from the school. It was a quick meeting. She said my son is okay except for the loud noise he sometimes makes in the classroom. So I took her words, okay means okay. I never know about his performance in English. I never met the English teacher too.

She stated that she does not know what is the best way to meet Imran’s English teacher. Besides that, Mrs. Nina realised that there were school English books that Imran had not covered, even though the school term was about to come to an end. She was unsure what the reasons were and wished to talk to the teacher about the issue as she felt it was a waste if the books were left unused. She also felt that homework was not given frequently: *“I read with him when he does homework. But it is very seldom that he received homework, unlike Mathematics.”* Apart from that she also stated that she never received any invitations from the school to attend programs related to Imran’s ESL learning. She further added, therefore, that she also does not really know about what Imran was learning at school.

Another challenge that she faced was dealing with her Imran’s temperament. She confided to the interviewer:

Sometimes my son defeats me as a mum. His will I mean, is stronger than mine. When he disagrees with whatever I say for example I ask him to read with me, he cries and pouts and his action forces me to follow his wishes. He gives many reasons to escape from doing things that he dislikes with teary eyes and this behaviour melts me. So it is so challenging, including when it comes to learn English.

4.3.4 Mrs. Sofia

4.3.4.1 Mrs. Sofia's Background

Qila's mother, Mrs. Sofia, is 34 years old. She is a widow, with her husband having passed away two years previously. She looks after five children by herself. She works from home as a tailor and sometimes by selling stuff supplied by her friends. Her highest educational attainment was form five at secondary school and she has not learnt English since then. She stated that she can only read and write Malay well. As she reported, Mrs. Sofia has not got time to read for leisure or information because she has got her hands full with other commitments. My first meeting with Mrs. Sofia was held at the mosque, which also holds religious classes for children. Mrs. Sofia agreed to meet me at the mosque after dropping Qila off at the same place. She brought her two other children who were not yet in school. The second meeting was carried out at Mrs. Sofia's house. When I was invited to come to her house, Qila was seen happily playing with her siblings and other cousins whose house was adjacent to theirs. Since Mrs. Sofia's husband passed away, the family lived in a house that was paid for every month by Mrs. Sofia's brother-in-law. During my visit, it was noticeable that Mrs. Sofia was engaged with her children, who kept coming into the house to confide something that had happened while the children were playing outside together. Mrs. Sofia told me that she did not have television in her home. Instead, her children went to their cousins' house close by if they wanted to watch television together.

4.3.4.2 Mrs. Sofia's Involvement with Qila's Learning

Mrs. Sofia reported that the only way to facilitate Qila's English language reading was through asking and reminding her about her homework. She also had to ask Qila's brother for help with this activity since she was not confident in her own ability, thus delegating the task to Qila's brother whom she deemed to be a reliable person since he had been learning English at school and in extra classes outside school. Qila's brother would usually assist Qila to read words that she found difficult. Mrs. Sofia believed that homework is vital for her child, and an important way to help Qila with her English reading ability.

With the exception of school books, ESL reading material did not exist at her home. Stationery were however provided to Qila as learning resources. Learning activity was usually conducted at night and at the table in the living room when homework was provided by the teacher. Mrs. Sofia did not have a computer at home and only smart phones were available in her house. She had a negative perception of technology and the use of gadgets, however. She said, *“I try to protect my children from being exposed with the technology since they are very young. No games and no hand phones for now. Even television shows are not all good.”*

Mrs. Sofia believed that as a parent she has a role in supporting Sofia’ ESL learning. She stated, *“As a parent it is my duty to help her in her ESL learning. I know I have many limitations but I do what I can”*. Additionally, she also perceived that the teacher is the significant person to help her child. She said, *“I am dependent a lot on the teacher at school because she knows everything. I hoped that the teacher can provide more focus on Qila in the classroom”*.

Mrs. Sofia put a high regard on the importance of reading in English. She stated, *“Reading in English is important. The language is not only required in Malaysia but also in the world; it is also useful for working purposes”*. She believed that Qila will acquire the ability to read with time and practice and she made efforts to encourage her daughter to learn to read in English despite Qila’s current reported performance. She said:

I try to motivate her to read in English because I know I am not good in it. As a mother I need to make her confident with her learning, I know she is slow, but I need to support her consistently and never say she can’t do it.

Mrs. Sofia also seemed concerned about her child. She was thinking of sending Qila to private lessons to improve her learning. Mrs. Sofia was also not aware of the existence of the public library and in any case might not be able to take all her children there together. She said:

I have never been to the library and have never taken my children there. I don’t know about the services they offer. And I think it is just challenging to take all my children together because I don’t know how to drive a car.

4.3.4.3 Challenges Facing Mrs. Sofia

Mrs. Sofia identified the main challenge that prevented her from helping her child with ESL learning as being her status as a widow with five small children. This meant that she needed to manage her time and juggle parenthood and working. She stated:

I am very busy and have to do so many things every day. As a single parent I need to take care of all my children's education and health conditions as well as needing to earn a living. Life is difficult, and I need to face problems in life all by myself.

Qila's mother had a busy life every day. She sent her children to school by motorcycle early in the morning. Then she needed to go to her friend's house to fetch the clothes that needed to be sewn or to get some stuff to be sold, such as beauty and health products. She continued with household chores when she got home before picking up her children from school and sending them back to religious school in the afternoon. She also mentioned that she realised that Qila needed more attention from her as a mother to support her in her learning, but she was not able to provide this due to her hectic life and time constraints. She said, *"I did not spend much time for Qila's education, let alone her ESL learning"*. Mrs. Sofia also did not know the materials that were suitable for her child or who to ask about that, and admitted that she has little knowledge of English and did not have the confidence to help her child.

Mrs. Sofia was not familiar with either the education or assessment system. She stated, *"I honestly do not know a lot about what is happening in the education system at school, including the assessment"*. Mrs. Sofia admitted that she did not have the opportunity to talk to Qila's English teacher at school, but she received negative feedback from her class teacher regarding Qila's performance in school overall. Mrs. Sofia said, *"I talked to Qila's class teacher once, but I never talked to her English teacher so did not know about her progress in ESL learning"*. Mrs. Sofia also noticed that the English homework was not often available and this was a problem since Mrs. Sofia depended on homework as she did not have any ideas on how to facilitate her daughter's learning in other ways. Mrs. Sofia stated that she did not know the best way to meet the English teacher to discuss about her daughter's learning progress. Mrs. Sofia also mentioned that she was never invited to come to school for activities or programmes related to her Qila's ESL learning.

She also understood that her child seemed reluctant to receive her help and seemed to undermine her ability in English. Mrs. Sofia talked about her experience in helping Qila in her study *“I want to appear significant to her. The issue is when I listen to her reading let’s say simple words in her homework, she was the one who taught me. She left me exasperated.”*

4.3.5 Mrs. Su

4.3.5.1 Mrs. Su’s Background

Tairah’s mother, Mrs. Su, is 38 years old and works as a food vendor. Her husband works as a factory worker and they are blessed with three children. Mrs. Su studied until form five at a secondary school in the Eastern part of Malaysia. She could read and write well in Malay, and a little in English. Mrs. Su sometimes read Malay magazines, for example to learn about recipes. She also read Malay newspapers to know what was happening in the country. She further stated that she does not read English materials except for what she reads with Tairah. Mrs. Su requested that my first meeting with her should be at Tairah’s school. For the subsequent meeting, Mrs. Su invited me to meet her at the night market where she had some food to sell at her usual pitch. Her husband and her daughter were seen helping at the site. As a food vendor she came across as sociable while dealing with her customers. She sold several types of food with a combination of Malaysian traditional food, Italian food and desserts. The next interview was held at Tairah’s school as requested by her mother.

4.3.5.2 Mrs. Su’s Involvement with Tairah’s Learning

Mrs. Su described a few examples of how she engaged with Tairah’s English language learning. Mrs. Su admitted that she depended a lot on the homework provided by the teacher, and that she would ask Tairah about her homework on a daily basis. She would sit next to Tairah and ensured that homework is completed. Mrs. Su stated, *“For me homework is necessary. It is one way to monitor her learning and to help her to learn to read in English.”* Another activity conducted by Mrs. Su with her child was reading the words in the picture dictionary. The dictionary was bought when Tairah was in the kindergarten. The objects in the dictionary were described in three

languages, Malay, English and Arabic, and included colourful pictures. Mrs. Su stated that Tairah sometimes just enjoys looking at the pictures in the book and does that unaccompanied. She further mentioned, *“I use a picture dictionary to introduce Tairah to English words: how to say this and that in English. I will also talk about the pictures. She will read with me.”* She stated that she hoped that Tairah could acquire some English words and understand the meaning of the words based on the pictures.

Singing is another activity held at home. Mrs. Su claimed that her daughter was fond of songs, whether in the Malay or English language. She was exposed to the songs by her sister. According to Mrs. Su, even though Tairah can hardly read, her sister sometimes helped her to read some of the lyrics that were displayed on the laptop. Sometimes her sister talked about the lyrics to Tairah too. As the songs were repeatedly played, Tairah could easily memorise the lyrics and she loved to hum the songs at home. One of the songs that she loves was ‘Let-it-go’, a well-known song from the famous Disney film, Frozen.

According to Mrs. Su, a few ESL learning materials were present at home besides the school books. These included a picture dictionary and English songs. Mrs. Su also provided Tairah with stationery to be used at home and school. Mrs. Su stated that learning activity was normally conducted at night and when homework was provided by the teacher at the table in the living room. Apart from smart phones, Mrs. Su has a laptop kept by her elder daughter which is sometimes used to play the songs Tairah enjoys. She thinks that Tairah can learn ESL reading by using songs or cartoons played on the laptop instead of from books, since she seemed more interested in these materials. Sometimes Tairah used the smart phone to watch Malay cartoons.

Mrs. Su believed that the teacher knows the best way to help her child but at the same time she thought that parents need to play a role in facilitating their child’s ESL learning. She stated:

I hope the teacher would assist Tairah at school and offer her more help as the teacher knows what is best for Tairah. But I think it is also the parents’ duty is to guide their children. I am not good at English but I know I need to help her.

Mrs. Su also perceived that her daughter was too young to be able to read in English and was still finding her feet with the new environment of the primary school. Mrs. Su said, *“I think it is vital*

for me to focus on Malay language reading above English for the time being.” Despite her views on the issue, she still gave encouragement for her child to read in English as she believed that English is an important language internationally and that in any case it is essential for her child to understand what is being taught by the teacher at school. She seemed worried about her daughter’s ESL reading attainment and was thinking of sending her for private lessons. She also believed that, with time and practice, Tairah could read in English. Mrs. Su did not take Tairah to the library, again mainly because of time constraints. She preferred to take Tairah to visit their relatives or to go sightseeing, such as to the beaches.

4.3.5.3 Challenges Facing Mrs. Su

Time constraints were the main challenge mentioned by Mrs. Su in her effort to facilitate Tairah in her English language reading. She talked about how her busy routine had taken its toll on her wellbeing, thus affecting the time she could spend with her daughter. She needed to work almost every day at the night market and, during the day, when she did not work, she still needed to prepare the materials for the next day’s night market. She had to buy the raw materials from the shops, to manage the household chores and pick up her children from school. She also worked over the weekend since the night market operated both at weekdays and weekends, depending on the place. Mrs. Su mentioned, *“Honestly I rarely spend my time with her in ESL learning. I was busy with my work”* Mrs. Su realised that she needed to give more attention to Tairah but she just could not afford to provide this due to the demands of her daily life. Additionally, Mrs. Su admitted she was unable to help Tairah a lot because she had little knowledge and confidence of English. She said, *“I am not very confident to teach her. I don’t know a lot about English.”* Additionally, although Mrs. Su felt that Tairah can learn from songs or cartoons she was quite unsure about child-appropriate songs or cartoons to employ with Tairah.

Mrs. Su also reported that she did not really understand the assessment systems in general. She told the researcher that she did not have opportunity to discuss her child’s English reading ability and had only met the class teacher and not the English teacher:

I talked to Tairah’s class teacher briefly in an event. She said Tairah loves to talk and to tell everything that happened at home or in her daily lives. Her teacher also said that

she needs to improve in her education in general. Yet I don't know about her performance in English language reading.

Further, Mrs. Su found that English homework was not often given by the teacher: *"I found that not much homework in English was given to her, very seldom, I think."* She was unable to talk about this matter to the teacher since she has not got any opportunities and did not know the procedure to meet the teacher. Besides that, Mrs. Su stated that she never got any invitation to ESL-learning related programmes for her child.

Dealing with her child's behaviour was another challenge reported by Mrs. Su, especially when she wanted to facilitate her child's learning. She stated:

It is difficult to discipline Tairah and make her focus while doing her work. Usually she will say that she is tired, her hands are aching, she cannot write anymore, and she needs to discontinue the activity that she has been engaged in.

Mrs. Su also commented that it was not easy to gain Tairah's trust as sometimes she perceived her parents as not being able to help her in learning. She said, *"It is sometimes challenging. She just refused to listen to us sometimes. She does not believe what we said, and attempted to teach us instead."*

4.3.6 Mrs. Mina and Ira

4.3.6.1 Mrs. Mina and Ira's Background

Roni's mother, Mrs. Mina, is 40 years old. She works as a food vendor with her husband. They were blessed with five children. Mrs. Mina's highest educational attainment was form five of secondary school. She was able to read and write well in Malay but admitted she had little knowledge of English. Mrs. Mina read Malay newspapers during the weekend and she did not read any English materials. She felt that the language was not applicable to her daily life.

The meetings were held at her house, as suggested by her because she was unable to drive. In the first meeting, Mrs. Mina welcomed me happily and showed me where she set up a stall to sell food for people who wanted to buy breakfast and finger food from her. In the second meeting Mrs. Mina

suggested that I talk to her daughter, Ira, who lived together with the rest of the family in the house, and who was directly involved with Roni's study. Ira is 30 years old and had graduated from one of the local universities in Malaysia. Ira is able to read and write well in Malay, and moderately well in English, even though she did not read any English material except what she found on social media. Ira works as a teacher at a private kindergarten. The next section examines both Mrs. Mina's and Ira's accounts of their involvement and challenges with Roni's ESL learning.

4.3.6.2 Mrs. Mina and Ira's Involvement with Roni's Learning

A few activities were carried out to facilitate Roni's ESL learning. Asking about and helping in homework is one of the activities that is conducted at home. Ira mentioned that she would sit together with Roni to guide her and make sure the homework is complete. She felt that homework is necessary to assist Roni to read and do revision on what he learned at school.

Reading story books is another activity carried out at home. The 'Peter and Jane' book series, a type of storybook was also utilised by Ira as one of the English reading activities. According to Ira, the story books were borrowed from her workplace to help Roni with his reading. Ira's own familiarity with the books encouraged her to use them with Roni at home. Ira stated that the story books have sentences that describe the pictures and some of the words are repeated a few times throughout the story. Ira would read the story to Roni. Besides that, she also read the sentences and Roni would repeat after her. In addition to the book, Ira also employed another type of story book called 'Read Easy Phonics Early Reading Series Beginner's Level'. According to Ira, the book series was chosen because it has pictures that illustrate the words and sentences in the book. The sentences are also short and the words are easy. Similar to the 'Peter and Jane' story books, these phonics books were obtained from Roni's workplace. She stated:

I borrowed the book from my workplace too. I used the books because I was taught how to use them with kindergarten children at my workplace. The book applies the phonics approach. So at time I used the approach to teach him about spelling.

Ira also reported that she would read during the reading session and that Roni sometimes read after Ira, and listened to Ira reading the story.

Another way for Ira to get involved with Roni's English language learning was through reading a picture dictionary. According to Ira, Roni really enjoyed looking at the pictures in any books. She therefore utilised a picture dictionary to help Roni read in English. Ira would read the names of the objects in the dictionary that are coupled with pictures. Sometimes, Ira would just let Roni engage with the book by himself. *"Even without reading them, I hope the activity will boost his interest in learning English"*, Ira said. She further stated, *"I hope that he learnt some new vocabularies from the activity"*.

Ira also employed cartoon shows such as Upin Ipin, which was first broadcast in Malay, but which now has an English version adapted from the Malay episodes which is accessible on YouTube. Roni's sister said, *"I used Upin Ipin because it has an English subtitles and Rino loves watching the cartoon so much since he was very young. I think that is because of the characters are about his age"*. Ira made use of the English subtitles to introduce Roni to some English words. She selected a few simple words and translated them into Malay. At times she retold the story to Roni to ensure that he could understand the story.

A few ESL learning materials, apart from schoolbooks, were present in the house, such as storybooks, a picture dictionary and English cartoons. Mrs. Mina also provide stationery for Roni's learning. The activities were usually carried out at night, at the table in the living room. Mrs. Mina and Roni have smart phones and a laptop at home. The laptop is used by Mrs. Mina to show Roni cartoons for ESL learning activities. Sometimes Roni used the smart phone to play the games.

Mrs. Mina, Roni's mother, believed that parents should also be responsible to facilitate their children's learning. She stated, *"Certainly parent needs to be responsible their children's education. I know my limitations in the ESL but I still need to do something for Roni that is why, I asked his sister to help"*. She also added that the teacher normally knows what is best for her child. She said, *"I believed that the teacher knows a lot about my son and she knows the best way to help my son"*.

Mrs. Mina also perceived that reading in English is important and that the skill is required for different kinds of job. She stated, *"We can explore numerous fields of work if we know English"*.

She also mentioned that English is instrumental for communication purposes. She gave an example that her sister had to speak in English to her neighbour who was of Arab origin since this was the best way for them to understand one another. Realising the importance of the language, Mrs. Mina encouraged her son to learn to read in English by speaking with him about how reading in English is necessary for him to achieve his ambition to be a pilot. Mrs. Mina believed that Roni would read in English with time and practice since he had only just started primary school. Besides that, Mrs. Mina never took Roni to a public library as they did not have the time to do that.

4.3.6.3 Challenges Facing Mrs. Mina and Ira

Both Mrs. Mina and Ira stated that the main challenge they faced in terms of helping Roni was time constraints. Since they worked for long hours every day they had to find a suitable time for Roni, which was usually at night. They still felt, however, that the time spent on Roni was inadequate because they felt tired after working. As for Ira, she stated:

Not much time is spent for Roni's ESL learning sometimes due to work demands. Sometimes I work from home at night to prepare for the next day. I also felt that I need to help Roni in learning other subjects too.

As for Mrs. Nina, another main challenge was her constraints in understanding English, which she felt hindered her from participating more in her child's ESL learning. She told the researcher, *"I had little knowledge in English. I am dependent on my daughter, Ira to help Roni"*. Both Mrs. Mina and Ira also stated that they are not confident with their knowledge. Ira mentioned, *"I am still not confident with everything that I taught Roni. I believe in the teacher because I think the teacher must know best how to help Roni."* Mrs. Nina also added, *"I hope the teacher can give more focus to Roni too"*.

Both Mrs. Mina and Ira did not really understand the assessment system in general. They were not really sure about what and how Roni learned at school. They also never talked to Roni's English teacher. Mrs. Mina had received negative remarks about Roni from the class teacher who also taught Malay language subject. She said *"When I talked to his class teacher, his teacher said that he progresses slowly in his learning. But I don't know how he has been doing in English specifically."* In addition to that, Ira commented on the amount of homework received from the

English teacher and felt that it was insufficient. She also mentioned that she hoped that the teacher can use English more than native language in the classroom but she did not know how to discuss about all these matters with the English teacher at school. Mrs. Mina also reported that she never received any invitation from the school in relation to ESL learning programmes for Roni.

Mrs. Mina raised another concern that she experienced in helping her son with his learning. She felt that Roni underestimated her ability in English. Although she admitted that she had little knowledge in English to offer to Roni, she was still interested to help him. She said:

Roni loves to do his work alone. When I voluntarily approached him with the intention to help, he refused. I believe he is not confident with me and he is worried that I might guide him incorrectly.

4.3.7 Summary of the Findings Related to the Parents

Participating parents worked with their children at home in a number of ways. All the parents saw homework as one main ESL reading-related activities at home and asked their children about the availability of homework. They perceived homework to be one way to help their children do revision and for the parents to know what their children learned at school. A few of the parents also asked their older children to help, and most of the parents sat with the child to accompany them doing the homework, normally at night. Besides that, a few parents utilised chanting alphabets and numbers as ESL learning activities with their children. In these activities the parents either chanted alphabets to their children or listened to their children doing so. One parent employed a spelling activity by using pizza boxes as a resource to encourage her child to learn to read in English. This parent also read and talked about pictures in the Supermind book, used past exam papers for reading and pronunciation activities, provided spelling and pronunciation activities, and explained about English words, with or without books. In addition to that, picture dictionaries were also employed by a few parents, reading the words and talking about the pictures. Moreover, there was also a parent who utilised songs to encourage her child to learn to read in English by using the subtitles and explaining what the songs were about. Story books like phonics books and “Peter and Jane” books were the resources used by another parent to facilitate her child’s learning to read in English. During the storybook reading activities, the parent read the story to the

child and the child would read after her. The parent also used phonics to highlight particular words to the child. Additionally, watching cartoons was another method used by the parent as an activity. While showing the cartoon to the child, the parent used the subtitles to focus on particular words and explain the meaning of the words.

In addition, all participating parents provided a study table and stationery for their child to learn. The parents were also normally involved with their children's ESL learning at night. Some parents claimed that they had no ESL reading materials except schoolbooks, while some others owned a few materials including schoolbooks. Most of the parents did not have a computer or laptop at home, except for two parents, both of whom used the laptops for their children's ESL learning. Besides that, except for one parent who did not expose her child to such gadgets, others reported that their child utilised smart phones either to watch cartoons or play games. These findings are significant because parents appeared unable to provide children with a sufficient amount of English exposure at home. The combination of a lack of English reading materials, a lack of computers and laptops and the underutilisation of such devices for English education at home, may have impaired the children's ESL learning development.

The findings of this study also revealed that all the participating parents believed that parents have a role and need to be responsible for their child's learning; however the parents believed that it was the teacher who knew what was best for their children. All of the parents thought that reading in English was important for their children; however, a few parents felt that reading in Malay was more important for their child at that moment and one parent felt that she did not want to burden her child with academic stuff. Encouragement in the form of actions or words were also provided by all parents to their children to read in English. Moreover, all parents believed that their children could read better in English with time and practice. Besides that, all parents admitted that they never took their child to the library for multiple reasons.

It was also found that all parents experienced time constraints as they had long, tiring working days or worked on shifts. This finding is significant because although children are not directly related to their parents' workplace, that is the children do not spend time directly at their parents' workplace setting, they are influenced by their parents' lack of time to spend with them. This is a

good illustration, therefore, of how the exosystem influences children's learning. Besides that, a few parents also had to manage their child by themselves since their husband was unwell or had passed away. In other words, they had a hectic life schedule every day because they had many responsibilities to shoulder. Other challenges reported by all participating parents included a lack of knowledge in English. Some parents also added about their lack of knowledge and confidence regarding the best ways to help their own child and about suitable and helpful materials. Additionally, they did not know where to get assistance regarding these issues. One parent also mentioned that having Malay translations of the English texts would be helpful for her to assist her child better. These findings are significant because the parents talked about the obstacles that they had in assisting their children in learning English, particularly in terms of their knowledge and confidence. Children's closest relationships are with their parents because they interact with them every day, and it is from parents that children learn their first language and other skills. Children in this study seemed not to be getting the support and exposure that they really needed since the parents had limitations in knowledge and confidence to utilise English with their children at home.

Moreover, none of the participating parents indicated that they had a chance to talk to their child's English teacher at school. They also never received any invitation from the school to get involved with their children's ESL learning. All participating parents were also poorly informed regarding how their child was assessed at school and regarding the way in which English was taught. Homework was perceived as insufficient by all of the parents. In addition the parents talked about the schoolbooks that were found uncovered or unused by the teacher despite many months of the school term having passed, and they mentioned the need for ESL teachers to use English more than the native language in the ESL classroom. They did not know the best way to approach their ESL teacher to talk through these matters, however. These findings are significant because it shows that the parent-teacher relationship was not working well, with potentially negative consequences for the children's learning progress. In general, it is expected that teachers and parents should work hand-in-hand to reinforce similar learning experiences at home and school, cooperate in identifying children's ESL learning needs, work together in sending the same messages about children's conduct, reflecting the importance in Bronfenbrenner's mesosystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The parents in this study, however, appeared to have very little contact and interaction with

the ESL teacher, meaning that they were poorly informed about what was happening in the classroom and what the teacher's teaching practices were. Furthermore, the parents had no idea about how to communicate with their children's ESL teacher. In the absence of a positive relationship between parents and teachers, children's development will be hampered because they lose the benefits of having both parties working together strategically.

Most of the parents also reported that they faced problems arising from their children's temperament, including when encouraging the child to learn English. The children seemed reluctant to be assisted by their parents in learning English and doing homework. The children also seemed to feel that they have more knowledge than their parents, and looked down on their parents 'teaching'. This finding is significant because, even though parents admitted that they had weaknesses in English language knowledge, they were still eager to help their children and found it frustrating when their efforts were not welcomed. This finding suggests that children had negative perceptions towards their parents, specifically in regard to their inability to provide guidance in English learning. As a result, the children felt demotivated and disinterested to learn as they felt that their parents were not capable of providing good assistance.

The findings in relation to participating parents are also summarised in the Table 8 below.

Table 8: Summary of the findings in relation to the participating parents

Children	Parents	Themes	Categories	Explanation
1. Ali	Mrs. Ela	1-Involvement	•Home reading-related activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Homework •Chanting ABC and numbers
			•Home learning environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The child learned at the table •The child learned at night •Parents provided stationery •No ESL learning materials except for schoolbooks •No computers/laptops or other gadgets except for the smart phone. The child used smart phone to watch cartoons
			•Beliefs, attitudes and awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Parents are responsible for the child’s ESL learning, but teacher knows best •The child can read in English with practice and time •Did not want to pressure the child •Reading in English is important •Reading in Malay at this time is more important than English •Encouraged the child to learn to read in English •Never took the child to public library
		2-Challenges	•Parent/family factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Time constraints •Long and tiring working days •Limitations in English knowledge •Not sure what materials are helpful •Do not know how to help

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Do not know where to ask for help
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •School and teacher factors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Never met the English teacher •Never attended any programmes related to ESL learning at school •Not well-informed about the assessment system •Felt that too little homework was provided •Never been invited to ESL learning related programmes
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Child factors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Dealing with the child's temperament
2. Fairul	Mrs. Amina	1-Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Home reading-related activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Homework •Chanting ABC and numbers
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Home learning environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The child learned at the table •The child learned at night •Parents provided stationery •No ESL learning materials except for school books • No computers/laptops or other gadgets except for the smart phone. The child used smart phone to watch cartoons and play games
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Beliefs, attitudes and awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Parents have a role in the child's ESL learning, but teacher knows best •The child can read in English with practice •Reading in English is important •Reading in Malay is more important than English for now •Encouraged the child to learn to read in English •Thinking of sending the child to private classes •Never took the child to public library
		2-Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Parent/family factors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Time constraints

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Shift-Work •Limited knowledge of English, hope the book can provide some Malay explanations •Did not know what materials can helpful •Did not know how can she further help her son •Did not know where to ask for helps •Not very confident to help.
			•School and teacher factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Never met the English teacher •Never attended any programmes related to ESL learning at school •Did not know about the assessment system •Thought that homework is not always available
			•Child factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dealing with the child’s temperament
3. Imran	Mrs. Nina	1-Involvement	•Home reading-related activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Homework •Use pizza box for spelling activities •Reading and talking about pictures in Supermind book •Reading words/sentences and pronunciation activities by using past exam papers •Spelling and pronunciation activities, explaining about English words with or without books
			•Home learning environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The child learned at the table •The child learned at night/whenever deemed fit •Parents provided stationery •Few ESL learning materials are available

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No computers/laptops or other gadgets except for the smart phone. The child used smart phone to watch cartoons and play games
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Beliefs, attitudes and awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Parents need to play roles in the child's ESL learning, but teacher knows best •Reading in English is important •The child can read with time and practice •Encouraged the child to learn to read •Never took the child to public library
		2)Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Parent/family factors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Time constraints •Unwell husband •Hectic life/more responsibility •Not very good in English
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •School /teacher factor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Never met the English teacher •Not well-informed about assessment system •Never been invited to any programs related to ESL learning by school •Felt that homework is scarce •Felt that there are school books were left uncovered/unused by the teacher
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Child factors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dealing with the child's temperament
4. Qila	Mrs. Sofia	1-Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Home reading-related activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Homework
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Home learning environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The child learned at the table •The child learned at night •Parents provided stationery •No ESL learning materials except for school books

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No computers/laptops or other gadgets except for the smart phone. No use of any gadgets by the child
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Beliefs, attitudes and awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Parents have a role to support the child’s ESL learning but teacher knows best •The child can read in English with time and practice •Reading in English is important •Encouraged the child to learn to read •Thinking of sending the child to private classes •Never took the child to public library
		2)Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Parent/family factors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •A single parent status •Hectic life •Time constraints •Little knowledge in English and confidence to help •Did not know of suitable materials that can help •Did not have any ideas how to help •Did not know where to ask for help
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Teacher/ school factors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Never met with the English teacher •Never attended any programs related to ESL learning at school •Did not know about education/assessment system •Thought that homework is not often available
			2)Child factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Child seemed to undermine the parent’s ability
5. Tairah	Mrs. Su	1)Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Home reading-related activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Homework •Talked about pictures/read words in a picture dictionary •Singing activities

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Home learning environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The child learned at a table •The child learned at night •Parent provided stationery •A few ESL learning materials were available • Laptop was used by the parent for Tairah’s learning. Sometimes, the child used smart phone to watch cartoons
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Beliefs, attitudes and awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Parents need to play a role in the child’s ESL learning but teacher knows best •The child can read with time and practice •Reading in English is important •Reading in Malay is more important now for the child •Encouraged the child to learn to read in English •Never took the child to public library
		Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Parent/family factors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Time constraints •Hectic and tiring life •Little knowledge and confidence in English •Did not know child appropriate cartoon/songs
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Teacher/school factors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Never met the English teacher •Never attended any programmes related to ESL learning at school •Did not understand about assessment system •Thought that homework is not often given
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Child’s factors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Dealing with the child’s behaviour •Child seemed to undermine the parent’s ability

6. Roni	Mrs. Mina/ Miss. Ira	1)Involvement	•Home reading-related activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Homework •Read story books - Peter and Jane/ Phonics •Talked about pictures/read words in a picture dictionary •Watch English cartoons
			•Home learning environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The child learned at the table •The child learned at night •Parent provided stationery •A few ESL learning materials were available •Laptop was utilised by parent to show English cartoons and the child used smart phone to play games
			•Beliefs, attitudes and awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Parents need to be responsible with the child's ESL learning but teacher knows best •The child can read in English with time •Reading in English is important •Encouraged the child to learn to read in English •Never took the child to library
		2)Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Parent/family factors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Time constraints •Long working hours •Tired after working •Mrs. Mina (mum) had little knowledge in English •Ira (sister) had lack of confidence. The teacher knows best
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Teacher/school factors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Never met the English teacher •Never attended any programs related to ESL learning at school

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Did not understand about assessment system •Felt that homework is insufficient •Thought that the teacher should employ more English
			•Child's factor	•Child seemed to undermine Mrs. Mina's (mum) ability

4.4 Findings in Relation to the Students

Sub-research question 1.3: How do the students themselves engage with their ESL reading?

In this section I describe: a) the profile of the students; b) the students' perceptions about ESL; c) challenges facing the students, and; d) the students' classroom learning experiences. I present the findings from interviews, classroom observations (including field notes) and documents that I had with those students.

4.4.1 Ali

4.4.1.1 Ali's Profile

Ali was the youngest of his four siblings. He was seven years old and lived in a three bedroom flat with his family of six, which includes his parents and his brothers. He spoke only Malay and loved to watch Malay cartoons such as *BoBoiBoy* (A series of children's animations produced by a Malaysian company, focusing on a boy with superpowers and his four other friends who fight to defend the world from the alien threats), *BoBoiBoy Galaxy* (a rebranding of *BoBoiBoy* which highlights more adventurous narratives with the introduction of a robot called Power Sphera), *Ultraman* (a Japanese cartoon show which centres on fights between *Ultraman* (the imaginary superhero) and various monsters) and *Upin & Ipin* (a Malaysian animation series which features the lifestyle of Upin and Ipin, Malay twin brothers who live in the village with their sister and grandmother). He also enjoyed reading in Malay and cited the *BoBoiBoy* comic as his favourite reading material. In addition, he loved doing colouring. Ali spoke rather quietly but he responded well to my questions. He was quite a talkative person, especially with those he knows well. In the LBI screening he scored K1 to K6 correctly. He also did not obtain passing marks in the school English tests sat in March and May. In the school reading assessment he managed to obtain band 2 out of 6.

4.4.1.2 Ali's Perceptions on ESL

Ali believed that English is important to make him a knowledgeable person so that he can read what the teacher taught in the classroom. He said, *“English is important so that we can read many things learned in the class and we can write the words too”*. Ali also likes to learn English and his teacher and friends were his main reason for this positive feeling. He stated, *“I felt happy to learn English in Mrs. Leena’s class. She is nice”*. He also stated, *“I have many friends. I can talk to them”*. He also stated that he likes to learn English because his mother told him to learn English at school so that he can become a clever person. He said, *“My mum tells me to learn English and be a good boy in the classroom so that I can be a clever boy”*. Ali however mentioned that English is not his favourite school subject.

4.4.1.3 Challenges Facing Ali

Ali chose to draw his reading experience in the classroom because, according to him, English reading did not happen at home except for alphabets and number chanting. He said, *“I don’t read English book at home”*. He also added, *“No one reads with me and dad only teaches me ABC and counting”*. He talked to the researcher about his drawing which reflected one of the lessons that he had in the ESL reading lessons. He said the picture portrays Mrs. Leena teaching the students how to read while the students sitting and listening to the teacher in the classroom.

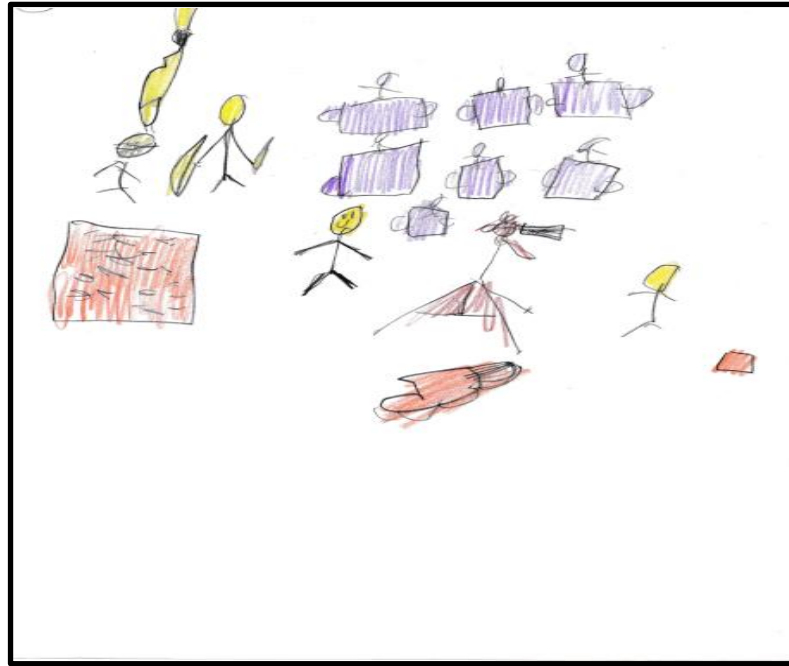


Figure 13: Ali's drawing

Ali claimed that he cannot read in English and perceived the activity as difficult. He stated, *"I don't know how to read in English"*. He also said, *"I just don't know English but I can do counting and adding numbers in Malay"*. Ali also mentioned that he can only read in English when he becomes a grown up. He said, *"I think I can read when I grow older like my brother"* referring to his elder brother who is studying at an upper secondary school.

Ali also stated that when reading English there are many difficult words that need to be read and understood. He said, *"Reading is difficult. It is hard to read and understand the words"*. Data collected from observation showing that the difficulties expressed by Ali emanated through his behaviour the classroom. From my observation I noticed that Ali had a tendency to not engage in the learning sessions and looked around in the classroom or looked blankly. I also found that Ali was reprimanded by the teacher for not paying enough attention in the classroom. He was likely to join in with his friend who initiated the chatter. He could not resist this and happily talked and sometimes played along with his friends. In one of the sessions, the teacher had to change his seat upon realising that he was completely disengaged with the lesson. During the conversation I told

Ali I realised he was disengaged and off task and I asked him if there was a reason why. He stated, *"I don't know, English is hard"*. Besides that, when Ali attempted to read a sentence he was unable to read it and had to read the sentence with guidance. He was only able to read the word 'I' in the sentence and tripped in the rest of the sentence. He also mistakenly read 'a' for 'are'. In one of the writing activity, he was asked to complete the sentence by using his name, but he wrote the teacher's name instead as he could not read and understand the entire sentence. The teacher then guided him to write the correct answer.

Apart from that, in each conversation, Ali mentioned that the lesson was quite challenging and reading in English is difficult. He also stated that he could not really understand the English words that he learned in the classroom. He told the researcher that he forgot what he learnt and could only remember the Malay words such as 'mata' [eyes] and 'hidung' [nose].

4.4.1.4 Ali's Perceptions on the Classroom Learning Experience

Ali told the researcher that he likes lessons when they involve him carrying out an activity such as writing. He also told the researcher, *"I like the lessons when I can do something like writing"*. From my observation, I noticed that Ali seemed to display some involvement in the writing activity. He also looked interested in the activity that required him to accomplish the task sheet. For example, he was quite focused and tried to complete the task by circling the correct answer as instructed by the teacher although his attempts were not all correct.

Ali also commented that he likes the lessons when the teacher gives him rewards in the classroom. He said, *"I feel happy today because I got something from Mrs. Leena"*. From my observation, I found that Ali volunteered to read when an ice cream stick was promised to those who read to the class willingly although he was not able to read the sentences correctly. He also likes the lessons because the teacher shows pictures in the classroom. He said, *"I like the pictures. They are beautiful"*. In one of the observations, I discovered that Ali seemed to be interested in the picture cards and talked about them with his friend. He said in Malay, *"Cantiknya gambar yang saya dapat"* [*What a nice picture that I have got here*"].

Apart from that, he does not like the lessons if they require him to read after the teacher many times. He told the researcher, *“I am tired to repeat after the teacher”*. In my observation, he seemed to be daydreaming or flipped over the textbook when the teacher was repeating the words. He read after the teacher at times but more often he kept his mouth shut until his name was called by the teacher. It appeared that he was not able to focus for a long time in that activity as he seemed to be lost in his own world. He also stated that he found the lessons related to the HFW List difficult. He told the researcher that there are a lot of words in the list. From my observation, I also discovered that Ali seemed to be disengaged soon after the learning took place. He was also unable to complete the task related to the list. Ali also added that he thought that he wanted to have some play activities in the ESL reading lessons to make it more fun.

4.4.2 Fairul

4.4.2.1 Fairul’s Profile

Fairul was the fourth of five siblings. He was seven years old and lived in a small rundown flat in a suburban area. The flat consisted of three bedrooms which he shared with his extended family, which included his parents, his brothers and his sister, his brother in-law and his niece. He can easily express his feelings. For example, in one of the interviews, he told me that he did not want to talk to me because he was tired and bored. I thanked him for being honest, did not force him to continue with the session and left him on his own. Fairul spoke only Malay and enjoyed watching television, particularly Malay cartoons such as *Upin & Ipin*. Apart from watching television, he loved to play games on his sister’s mobile phone. In the English reading screening Fairul was able to fulfil the K1 to K8 but struggled in the other four instruments. In the school English tests, sat in March and May, Fairul did not achieve a passing mark in either of the English papers. The school reading assessment report showed that Fairul only managed to obtain band 2 out of 6.

4.4.2.2 Fairul Perceptions on ESL

Fairul believed that English is necessary to make him become more knowledgeable. He stated, *“English is important to make me a cleverer person”*. He also mentioned, *“If I can read in English*

I can be very clever and the teacher will like me more". Besides that, Fairul also stated that he likes to learn English however English is not his favourite school subject. Fairul reported that the reason for liking English was because of his teacher and friends. He told to the researcher, *"I like learning English because all my friends and the teacher are nice"*.

4.4.2.3 Challenges Facing Fairul

Fairul decided to draw his experience in the classroom because, according to him, English language reading was not done at home (see Figure 14). He stated that *"I don't read anything in English at home"*. He also mentioned, *"My parents don't teach English"*. He further stated that support with his learning from other parties might help him develop his English reading ability, *"If I go to the private tutoring, I will be able to read in English"*. He described his drawing to the researcher by highlighting the picture of a pencil and an eraser that he used in writing activity and the image of him reading a book after the teacher in the classroom.

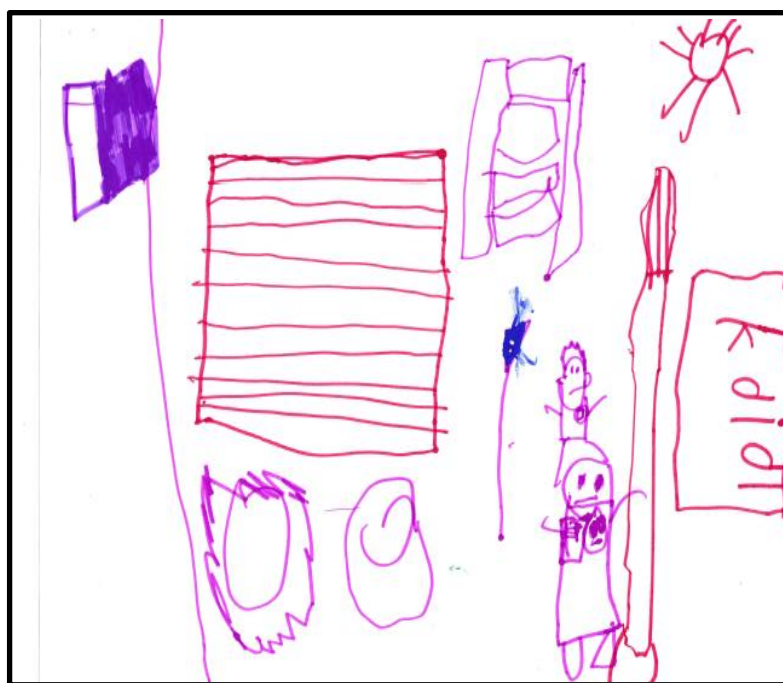


Figure 14: Fairul's drawing

He admitted that he was unable to read and understand many English words. He stated, *“I do not know how to read in English, I can only read in Malay.”* Fairul further stated that ESL reading can only be done if the people are clever enough. He mentioned, *“I can read if I am clever”*. He also added, *“If I clever I will get a high mark in English exams”*.

Fairul also mentioned that English is difficult. He said, *“English is difficult. Many difficult words to read”*. He also stated that he cannot understand English words. His difficulty in reading English is shown through the way he engaged in the classroom. From my observation, Fairul was unable to read the sentence correctly without help. For instance, in one sentence that he was reading aloud, he was only able to read the word ‘I’ and could not read the rest. He also could not read the picture card with the word ‘pin’. He also was unable to answer the teacher’s question when he was asked what his name is. He wrote the teacher’s name instead of his name as he could not read and understand the sentence. Apart from that, it was noticeable that although he was a little bit focused at the beginning of a number of lessons that I observed, he displayed a series of signs of inattentiveness and distracted behaviour in each lesson. He could not focus for a long time and was reprimanded by the teacher to get him to focus. He also got down from his table to play. The teacher had to take him out of the table where he was sitting when he had failed to heed the teacher’s warning. He also threw a small piece of paper towards his friend. Fairul sometimes disturbed his friend who sat next to him and was told off by the teacher. After one observation I told Fairul I noticed he was playing and chattering with his friends and I asked him if there was a reason why. He stated that, *“the lesson is hard”* or *“I played because I don’t understand difficult English words”*.

When he was asked for his feedback on the activities that he experienced in the English reading lessons, he again stressed that he was a poor reader. He also mentioned in each conversation that the lesson was not easy for him. He was able to say a few of the words learnt in the lesson by using Malay words, such as the words ‘mulut’ [mouth] and ‘gigi’ [teeth]. In another response, he also mentioned, *“I can’t really remember the words taught”*.

4.4.2.4 Fairul's Perception on the Classroom Learning Experience

According to Fairul, he enjoyed lessons that needed him to do something like writing. He said, *"I like to do activity such as writing"*. From the observation, it was evident that Fairul seemed to show some interest in the lesson during the activity which needed him to complete the task sheet. For example, he asked the teacher to show the examples on how the task should be done. He said, *"Boleh saya tengok jawapan cikgu?"* [*"Can I see your answer?"*]. He also looked interested in the activity of writing a sentence on the board. He wrote what the teacher instructed him to do and went silent. He was corrected by the teacher for making mistakes in the task. He also liked the big book which was used by the teacher in one of the lessons. *"I love the book, the story in it"*. From my observation I discovered that Fairul seemed to be excited when the big book was introduced to him. He said to his friend in Malay, *"Besarnya buku tu, cantikkan?"* [*Such a big book, isn't it nice?*]. Fairul also likes rewards from the teacher. He said, *"I love to get present like in today's lesson"*. My observation also suggested that Fairul seemed to be enthusiastic about reading when he was motivated by rewards from the teacher. He was among the few who raised his hand to volunteer to read when an ice cream stick was promised to those who volunteered, although he was unable to carry out the task and was entirely dependent on help from the teacher.

Throughout the observations I discovered that Fairul was committed to reading after the teacher for a few times. As the drilling activity went on, however, he seemed restless and was therefore reprimanded by the teacher as the teacher tried to get everyone involved in the lesson. He also once showed signs of boredom by laying his head down on his table during the activity. It was discovered that he felt tired when he needs to repeat many times. He commented that he dislikes the drilling activity. He said, *"It is tiring. I don't want to copy teacher many times"*.

He also commented about the challenging task in the HFW List activity. He told the researcher, *"too many words and it is difficult"*. From the observation it is found that Fairul was unable to complete the task correctly and seemed lost when the teacher went through all the words with the students.

4.4.3 Imran

4.4.3.1 Imran's Profile

Imran is the youngest of three siblings. He was seven years old. He lived with his parents in a flat with two bedrooms in a suburban area. His other brothers were in a boarding school. He had a loud voice, loved to talk and was approachable. He brought a packed-lunch to school every day. Imran spoke only Malay in his daily life. His hobby was playing games. He said:

I love playing mini games like Zombie and Mini Rush. I play the game through my mother's smart phone. I can download the games by myself. I play the game after school at home, usually after I have my lunch.

In the reading screening, Imran mastered the K1-K8 instruments in the LBI screening but did not manage to master the K9 to K12 instruments. He was unable to achieve pass marks in the school English tests sat in March and May. According to the school reading assessment report he only managed to obtain band 2 out of 6.

4.4.3.2 Imran's Perceptions on ESL

Imran perceived that English was vital to make him a knowledgeable person. He said, "*English is important because it can make us become clever*". He further stated, "*I want to be able to read in English to become a clever person*". He also mentioned that knowing English will help him to obtain a good result in examinations. He said, "*English is important, if I know the language I can get a good mark in the exam and I can get a present*". He also admitted that his friends were the main reason for him learning to read in English, "*I like to learn English because I have many friends in this class. I feel happy learning with many nice friends*". Imran also added, however, that English is not his favourite subject.

4.4.3.3 Challenges Facing Imran

Imran illustrated his reading experience in the drawing below (see Figure 15). His drawing centres on how English language reading happened in the classroom because he stated that reading

predominantly occurred in the classroom. He also said, “*I read with mum at home, but not often. Mum is normally busy*”. He said, his drawing illustrates the words that Mrs. Leena taught in the classroom and the reading activity he has with his friends.

He further explained about the different experience he had while learning at home and school. When he was asked how her mother helped him, he stated a few ways such as using a particular book, by using questions and by having one-to-one sessions. He said, “*At home, a bit different compared to at school. I read Supermind book*” and “*my mum answers all my questions*”. He also mentioned, “*I learn reading alone with my mother’s help.*” From my observation I discovered that Imran likes to talk to the teacher from his seat to draw the teacher’s attention. For example, he asked, “*Teacher Laila. Nak kena tulis nama ka?*” [*Do I need to write my name down?*] He also asked, “*teacher tulis apa?*” [*Teacher, what should I write?*]. He also said, “*Teacher, sudah siap*” [*Teacher, I am done*]” for a completed task. I found out that the teacher did not always respond to him as she was attending to other students. He also commented about how he learns at school, which echoed how he described his drawing at the beginning. He said, “*In the classroom, I learn with many friends and teacher writes on the board and we read after her*”.

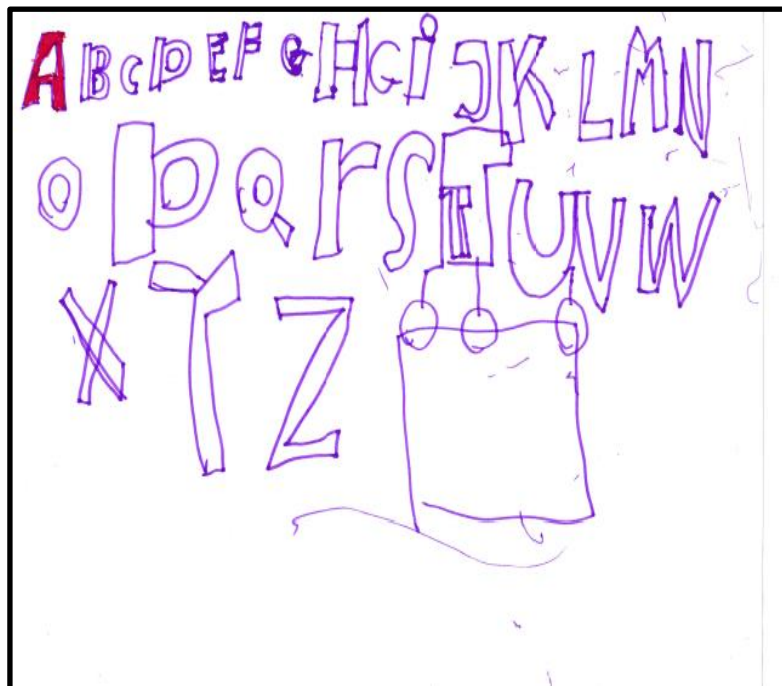


Figure 15: Imran’s drawing

Imran claimed that he knew how to read a little English but can read books written in Malay. He stated, *“I can read in English but little”*. He further added, *“I can read the Maths and Science book in Malay”* He believed that he cannot read in English as he is still unable to obtain an A in exams. He stated, *“When you get an A in exams you can read”*. He also claimed, *“I need to get an A to be a good reader, now I only get a B mark”*.

Imran also mentioned that ESL reading is difficult. He further elaborated, *“Many words are difficult to read and understand”*. From observation I found out that Imran showed some interest in learning. For example, he was seen to be responsive when the teacher asked him to get ready with the lesson. In another example, when the teacher asked what it is in the picture, he shouted one-word answers such as “Eyes! Eyes!” or “Teeth! Teeth!” However, when he was trying to read, Imran stumbled upon particular words in the sentences and hesitated when he encountered the words he could not read. For example, he was unable to read the words ‘use’ and ‘my’ correctly. In one activity Imran told the teacher, *“I don’t know how to do the task”*. He stated that he had difficulty doing the exercise because he cannot read and understand all the words. Imran could recall a few words that he learned in the classroom in both English and Malay languages such as ‘ears’, ‘eyes’, ‘teeth’. Imran admitted that he found reading lessons a little difficult and cannot fully understand what the teacher taught him. He said, *“I can only understand a few words but not too much”*.

4.4.3.4 Imran’s Perceptions on the Classroom Learning Experience

Imran mentioned that what he likes about the class is when the pictures are used by the teacher. He stated, *“I like to see the picture”*. In one of the observations, Imran seemed to get excited when he received the picture cards from the teacher. He said to his friend, *“Look at this picture. I like it, how about you?”* Imran also looked excited when rewards such as an ice cream stick were promised in the lessons. When he was asked, he said *“I like the present from teacher”*. He volunteered to read, and read the phrases or sentences with guidance from the teacher. Imran stated that he liked activities that need him to do things. He stated, *“I like it when teacher gives me work like writing”*. From my observations, Imran appeared to get involved with lessons that required

him to accomplish writing tasks even though not all the answers were correct. For instance, after completing the first question in the task sheet, Imran asked the teacher to check the answer. He said, *“Betul tak jawapan saya ni cikgu?” [Is my answer correct]?”*

He also talked about what he disliked in the lessons, *“I don’t like a few friends because they made noises.”* During the observations I discovered that Imran seemed disturbed and reported about his friend’s noises to the teacher for few times. Another thing that he mentioned disliking was the drilling activity. He also admitted that he was tired to follow the teacher over and over. He stated, *“I don’t sometimes repeat everything the teacher said”* he added, *“It is sometimes tiring”*. Through the observations, I found that Imran only read after the teacher a few times before stopping.

Imran also mentioned that he dislikes the HFW list activity. He commented, *“There are too many words”*. From my observation, he started to appear disengaged when the teacher started to read all words listed in the reading text. Imran could not perform the task given correctly. Imran also told the researcher that he would like the learning more if the teacher included games that he played at home. Imran was really attracted to the games and even asked me about my favourite games that I often play. Apart from playing games he showed an interest in the book entitled ‘Supermind’. He said, *“I want to read the Supermind book. I did not bring it to school today. The book has pizza in it”*.

4.4.4 Qila

4.4.4.1 Qila’s Profile

Qila is the fourth child of five siblings. She was seven years old. She had a quiet and rather shy personality. Qila lived in a small three-bedroom house in a suburban area. A few of her aunties’ and uncles’ families lived near to her house. She only used Malay in her daily communications. Qila’s hobby was playing with her siblings and she did not like watching television because she said she did not have enough time for that activity. Qila’s academic transcript showed that she was not able to achieve the mastery level in the LBI reading screening. She was able to answer the K1

to K8 instruments correctly but was unable to answer K10 to K12. Qila was also not able to achieve pass marks in the school English tests held in March and May, only managing to obtain band 2 out of 6.

4.4.4.2 Qila's Perceptions on ESL Reading

Qila's perceived that English is essential for a few reasons. She stated, "*Yes, English is vital because I want to get a good mark in examination*". She also regarded English as important to achieve her ambition as a teacher. She further mentioned that English is important because the language is used everywhere in the world. Although English has not become Qila's favourite school subject, she still likes learning English. The reason why she likes learning English is because of her parent. She said, "*My mum advised me to learn English and be a good student*". She also mentioned, "*My dad has passed away so my-mum tells me I need to have a good job*". She also felt sorry for all the responsibility that her mother had to shoulder and believed that this was why she did not help her with her learning.

4.4.4.3 Challenges Facing Qila

Qila's sketch on her reading experience is reproduced below (see Figure 16). She decided to draw an image about the reading that she did in the classroom. She told the researcher that she drew this picture because English reading was not done at home except for homework. She also said, "*My mum did not read with me, I learn only at school*". Qila also talked to the researcher about her drawing which portrays the classroom physical settings with picture cards that the teacher presented.

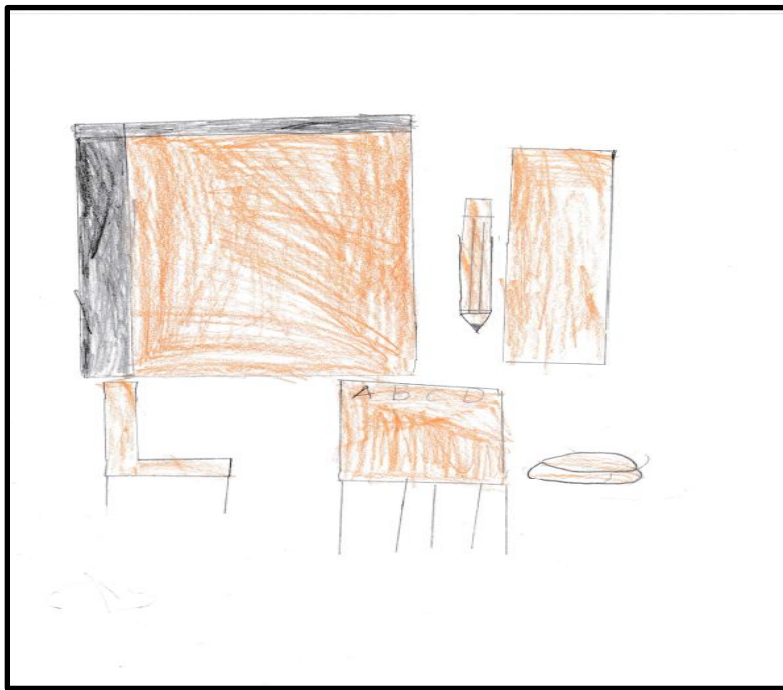


Figure 16: Qila's drawing

Qila perceived ESL reading as being for clever people. Qila talked about her perceptions of her own ability in reading in English. She said, *"I can't read in English, it is for clever people."* She also reiterated that she can be a good reader only if she is clever. When asked further, she responded, *"Being clever is when you get good marks in exams"*.

She also felt that ESL reading is difficult, as she mentioned, *"Reading in English is difficult"*. She made comments all throughout. She said, *"I don't understand, it is difficult to read and say the words"*. Qila's difficulties in reading are shown in the classroom. She sometimes looked like she was daydreaming and playing with her stationery. She hardly spoke but sometimes she repeated after the teacher in a quiet voice. When she made an attempt to read she can only read the word 'I' correctly with a soft voice and stumbles over the rest of the words in the sentence. When I asked her about what I saw in the classroom she said, *"English is hard"*. In another observation she was unable to read the sentence assigned to her and needed the teacher's help. She also could not manage to complete the written task correctly. Nonetheless, Qila shows some interest to learn. For example, she followed the teacher's instructions to show her index finger to read after the teacher. Qila stated that she found the lessons in the classroom a bit challenging. She said, *"It is difficult, and I can't remember many words that the teacher teaches"*. She also mentioned that she can only

remember a few words but read them in Malay, such as ‘hidung’ [nose], ‘mata’ [eyes], ‘tikus’ [rat] and ‘topi’[hat].

4.4.4.4 Qila’s Perceptions on the Classroom Learning Experience

Qila expressed her positive feelings towards Mrs. Leena’s classroom reading instruction which is related to the writing activity. She mentioned, *“I like learning in Mrs. Leena’s class because I can read and write”*. From classroom observation it was discovered that Qila seemed to be engaged in the activities that involved writing activity and tried to complete the task given by the teacher. She also stated, *“I don’t like the lessons if there is nothing to do”*. She also volunteered to read by putting up her hand when an ice cream stick was promised as a reward. She commented, *“I like the gift from the teacher”* referring to the reward that the teacher gave.

She also commented about what she dislikes in the classroom. She stated, *“I dislike a few friends who make noises”*. She also stated that repeating after the teacher many times is a little tiring. In the observations, I discovered that Qila did not follow the choral repetition activity entirely and stopped after a few times of repeating. Qila also mentioned that she did not like reading aloud because she was shy of making mistakes and people would notice her weaknesses. In addition to that, she also disliked the HFW list activity. According to her, the list was lengthy and hard. She said, *“So many difficult words”*. I discovered in my observation that Qila looked blank and stared at the list while doing nothing. She was then unable to complete the HFW task.

4.4.5 Tairah

4.4.5.1 Tairah’s Profile

Tairah is the youngest of three siblings. She was seven years old. She was a cheerful person, talkative and expressive. She loved to share what she did at home, the events that happened out of school and when she was small. She enjoyed learning and coming to school every day because she wanted to become smart and achieve her ambition to be a teacher. Tairah lived in a three-bedroom flat in a suburban area with her parents and siblings. She utilised Malay as her medium of

communication in daily life. Tairah's hobby was playing with her bicycle and watching television. She talked about her hobbies, *"I enjoy cycling in the afternoon. I also love watching Malay cartoons and sometimes English cartoons such as Spiderman, Minion and Frozen."* Tairah also enjoyed singing, talking about this interest with the researcher. She stated, *"Sometimes I sing songs with my sister. The songs are Korean and English songs"*. In the LBI screening, she failed four instruments, namely K9 to K12, and this result has positioned her as a struggling reader. Tairah was also unable to obtain a pass mark in her school English tests in March and May. She achieved band 2 in the school reading assessment conducted by the teacher.

4.4.5.2 Tairah's Perceptions on ESL

According to Tairah, English is important for a few reasons including for use in the future and in exams. She talked to the researcher about her thoughts, *"English is necessary because if you want to become somebody in the future such as a teacher, doctor, fireman or police"*. She further stated, *"If we can't read in English things become more difficult when we become grown-ups"*. Tairah also mentioned, *"During the exam we are required to read independently, and if we can't read we can't answer well"*. She also liked to learn English because her mother told her to study. She said, *"My mother asked me to go to school every day and learn every day"*. Tairah also stated that she likes to learn because of her teacher. She said, *"I like reading lessons with Mrs. Leena. She is nice and sometimes she advised us to work hard so that we can become clever people"*. Tairah told the researcher, however, that English is not her favourite subject.

4.4.5.3 Challenges Facing Tairah

Tairah decided to draw her experience with reading in the classroom because she said that reading was rarely done at home (see Figure 17). She also said, *"My parents and my sisters are busy. They have work to do."* Tairah described what she drew to the researcher outlining the picture found in the classroom such as a pen and pencil.

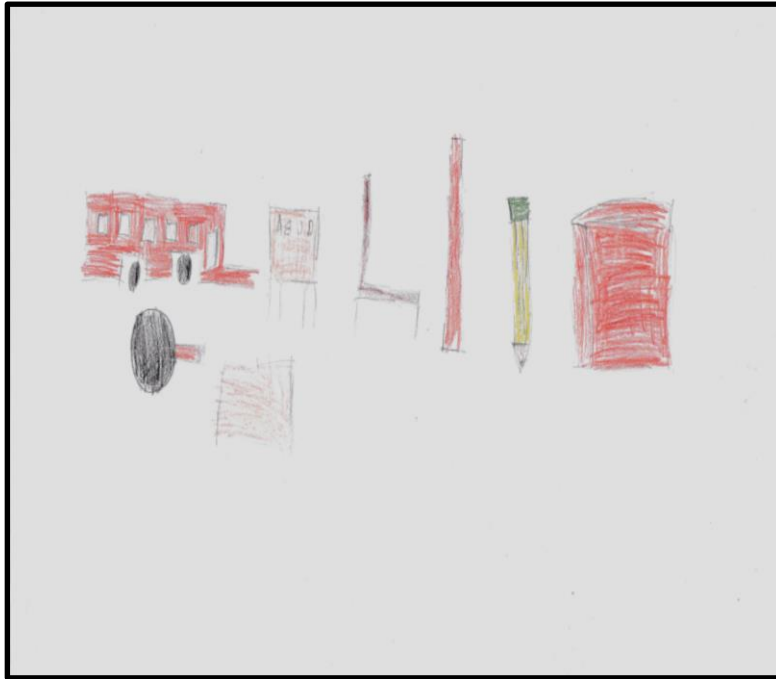


Figure 17: Tairah's drawing

Tairah also stated that she cannot read in English and can only read when she is clever. She said, *“I can read in English if I am clever. We cannot read if we are not clever”*. According to Tairah being clever is when the student is progressing to the next level. She said, *“When we are in Years two, four or six”*. She also said she needed to get the first place in the examination before she can read in English. She said, *“I don’t get number one yet in exams, that is why I am not a good reader”*.

Tairah found reading in English difficult. She said, *“Reading in English is really difficult”* She also stated, *“It is hard to read and understand the words”*. Data from the observations reiterated the difficulties that Tairah experienced. Although I found that Tairah showed some interest at the beginning of each lesson, for example she put up her reading text as requested by the teacher when the lesson was about to begin, when the lesson was ongoing, Tairah displayed disengaged behaviours. She chattered on a regular basis with her neighbour. After being reprimanded by Mrs. Leena she stopped chattering and went back to work but would start talking again after a while. There were times when she seemed to initiate the talking and playing and continued with this behaviour for some time. She was also observed to talk about things other than what was being taught in the class, especially when the teacher was attending to other students. In her attempts to read the sentences, she tripped over many words, for instance she could read the word “I” and

needed the teacher's help to continue the rest of the sentence. In another activity, Tairah did not seem to understand what was taught by the teacher. She wrote her teacher's name instead of hers in one activity carried out in the classroom. In the interviews, I told Tairah that I realised she was chattering or playing and I asked her if there was a reason why. She stated, "*English is difficult*".

Tairah reported that she did not get all the things that the teacher said. She also explained, "*I can only remember a little from the lessons*". Tairah could only recall Malay words for a few of the words that she had been taught in the reading lesson such as 'mata' [eyes], 'hidung' [nose] and 'pen' [pen].

4.4.5.4 Tairah's Perceptions on the Classroom Learning Experience

Tairah likes the lessons in which the teacher utilises pictures. In one of the responses she stated, "*The lesson is fun because I love to see pictures.*" From my observation, I discovered that Tairah looked to be interested and talked about the picture in the text book to her friends. She said in Malay "*Tengok gambar orang mandi ni, benda ni macam yang dekat rumah saya lah*", [*"Look at this boy having a shower, It looks similar to my shower at home."*]

She also mentioned that she likes to do something like writing activity. In my observation, I found that Tairah seemed interested in the class activities that required her to do writing activity. She was happy when she got the task completed and shouted to the teacher. For example she said, saying, "*Nak bulatkan apa cikgu?*" [*What should I circle teacher?*]. In addition to that, Tairah commented that she likes the use of first language by the teacher. She said, "*I like it because she also speaks Malay in the class*". From one of my observations I noticed that Tairah asked Mrs. Leena the meaning of particular words in the beginning of the lesson. She said in Malay, "*Apa dia cikgu maksudnya dalam BM?*" [*What does it mean in Malay, teacher?*] Tairah also mentioned that she loved to receive presents from the teacher. In the observation I found that she volunteered to read when rewards were promised, although she was unable to read the sentence correctly.

She also commented about things that she did not like to have in the reading class. She said, "*I don't really read because my mouth is tired. I like to do different things*". From my observation,

Tairah looked sleepy and bored, yawning and stretching her body during drilling. She read after the teacher only for a few times. She also told the researcher that she does not like the HFW list activity. It was discovered that Tairah seemed to be disengaged in the activity and was unable to complete the task and chattered with her friends when the teacher conducted the activity. Tairah also wished to include singing activities in the reading lessons, she stated, *“I wish I can sing the songs in the lessons”*.

4.4.6 Roni

4.4.6.1 Roni’s Profile

Roni is the fourth of five siblings. He was seven years old. He was cheerful and loved to smile. He lived in a flat with three bedrooms with his parents and three siblings. He utilised Malay in his daily life. Roni enjoyed playing with his friends and watching television during his spare time. He watched both Malay and English cartoons. He talked about his hobby to the researcher, *“I love watching Boboiboy and it is in Malay. Sometimes I also watch Upin Ipin in Malay and English.”* The LBI screening results showed that Roni was able to master the K1 to K8 instruments but not the other four instruments. Roni failed the school English test that he sat in March and May. His reading level according to the school reading assessment was band 2.

4.4.6.2 Roni’s Perceptions on ESL

Roni agreed that English is vital for two reasons: to become knowledgeable and to achieve his ambition. He said, *“English is important because I want to become a doctor when I grow up.”* He also mentioned, *“It is important to read in English, or else we don’t know a lot of things.”* Roni also stated that he likes English lessons, although English is not his favourite school subject. In addition to that, the teacher and parent are the reasons for Roni to learn English. She said, *“I love to learn English because Mrs. Leena teaches me nicely”* he also mentioned, *“My mum asked me to learn English”*.

4.4.6.3 Challenges Facing Roni

The picture in Figure 18 below was drawn by Roni to illustrate his reading experiences. He decided to draw experiences in the classroom because he mentioned that he learns to read in English every day at school, unlike at home. He stated that he reads with his sister but not often. He said, “*My sister teaches me but just sometimes*”. He talked about his drawing that consists of himself learning while Mrs. Leena was teaching words and showing pictures to him. Roni also reported a difference between what he experienced at home and what he experienced at school. He mentioned, “*My sister normally spells the words when I learned with her, unlike in the classroom*”. How he explains the process of learning in the classroom echoes his drawing description. He said, “*In the classroom with Mrs. Leena, I see pictures and read words*”.

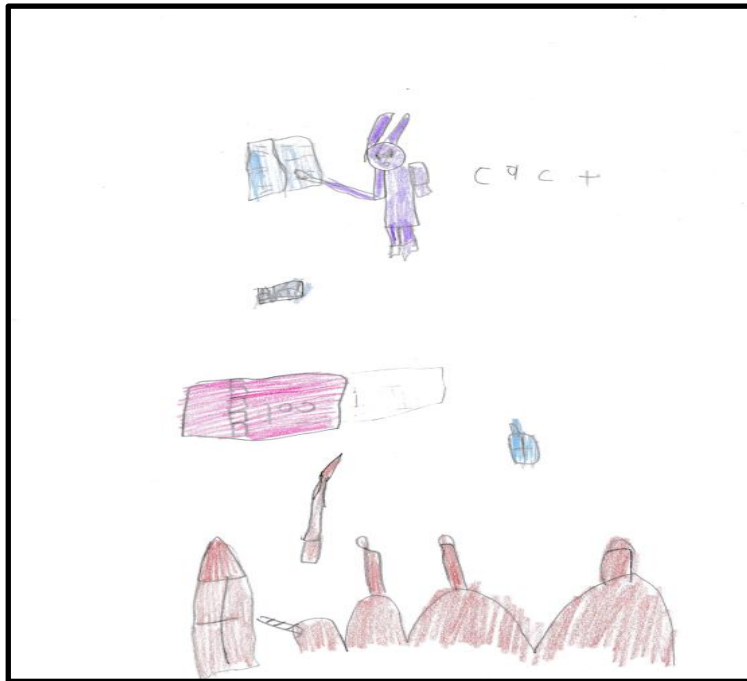


Figure 18: Roni's drawing

Roni admitted that he cannot read in English but he was able to read in Malay. He compared his exam result in Malay and English too. He stated, “*I cannot read in English. I did not obtain good marks in English*”. He also mentioned, “*I will be a good reader when I get good marks like in Malay*”. He also stated, “*I can't read English but I read Mathematics, Malay and Physical*

Education books.” He reiterated his interest. *“I want to read in Malay only. I love reading Malay books.”*

Roni also mentioned that reading in English is difficult. He further explained about his inability to read in English. He said, *“I can’t read and spell many words”*. He also stated, *“I can’t understand the words too”*. His difficulty in ESL reading is also illustrated in the classroom observation. For instance, when the teacher asked him to read a sentence he was unable to read certain words such as ‘use’ and ‘have’, ‘brush’, and ‘hair’. He also could not do all the written task, correctly for instance in the exercise related to the topic of ‘what is your name’ as he could not read and understand many words.

Roni also told the researcher that the lessons are not very easy. He said, *“It is a little difficult”*. He also admitted that it is difficult to spell and read words that he encounters. He was able to recall a few words that he learned in the reading lessons, however, such as ‘bath’ and ‘cat’ in English.

4.4.6.4 Roni’s Perceptions on the Classroom Learning Experience

Roni stated that he liked the lesson when the teacher made use of pictures. In addition, he likes writing activity too. He stated, *“I like pictures because they are-beautiful”* and he also added, *“I like to do something like writing”*. From one of my observations I discovered that Roni talked about the pictures to his friend. He said, *“Teacher gives me a nice picture”*. He also seemed to get engaged with the task that required him to do something such as the writing task. In one of the lessons, he asked the teacher where his name should be written on the paper. He circled the answers as instructed by the teacher although not all of the answers are correct.

Roni also told the researcher that he is happy with the rewards that the teacher gave him. He said, *“I am happy because I received a present from my teacher”*. From my observation I found that Roni volunteered to read a sentence aloud to the class when rewards were promised by the teacher. Although he was unable to read the sentence independently correctly, he was still eager to volunteer to be picked by the teacher to read the sentence.

Roni talked about what he disliked during the lesson too. He stated that he did not like friends who made noises during the lesson. He also named a few friends that he thinks caused a disturbance in the English class. In my observation, He talked to the teacher about his friend's misbehaviour who made noises. He said, *"Teacher, look at him!"* Roni also expresses negative views about the drilling activity. He mentioned, *"Sometimes I feel tired and I stopped following"*. He also added, *"Sometimes not everyone reads after the teacher"*. From my observations I discovered that Roni read after the teacher only a few times, then he started to play with his own books or stationery. In another observation he started to chat with his friends and was not following the teacher.

He also showed disinterest in the HFW list activity. He said in the post-observation interview, *"I don't like today's activity"*. In my observation, when the teacher started to go over the high frequency word list, Roni seemed to be lost. He was also unable to complete the task. Roni also talked about what he would like to include in his reading classroom, specifically an English cartoon. He said, *"I would love to watch cartoons in the classroom"*. He added, *"Cartoons like Upin Ipin like my sister shows me, or any cartoons"*.

4.4.7 Summary of the Findings Related to the Students

In terms of students' perceptions of ESL, the findings illustrated that all the students believed that English is necessary for a variety of reasons. Some of the students understood that English was important to make them become knowledgeable. Besides that, a student added that knowing English would also facilitate him to read and write things learned in the classroom. A few students also added that English was needed for them to achieve their ambitions. Another student believed that English was vital because it is needed everywhere in the world at present; further, it was necessary to get a good mark in the exams. There was also a student who mentioned that English was necessary to achieve one's ambitions, to answer examination questions and to be used when someone grows up.

Besides that, parents, teachers and friends were the main reasons why all the students liked learning English. This is broken down as follows. There is a student who stated that parents, teachers and friends were the reasons why he learnt English. Another student mentioned that teachers and

friends made him learn English. There is a student who talked about friends as the main influence for him to learn English. Parents and friends were also a reason for learning English for another student, whereas for another student, parents were the sole reason, whilst both parent and teachers made another student become interested in learning English. A few students mentioned that their parents advised them to learn English, a few others mentioned that their teachers were nice, and some students stated that their friends were nice. Although all the students liked to learn English they did not position English as their favourite subject.

The students also faced a few challenges in relation to ESL learning. One of the challenges that all of the participating students reported was that they did not have much ESL reading activities at home with their parents. This is also evidenced by the fact that all of them drew the picture of them learning in the classroom instead at home. One student thought that going to private tutoring could be helpful.

Besides that, all the participating students also believed that they could not read in English, except for a student who thought that he could read a little English; the latter student also thought that he would be able to read more in English once he obtained an A in the English exams. All the students also felt that they could not read in English, with a few of them highlighting what they could do instead, namely counting and reading in the Malay language. Some students mentioned being clever as a criterion for them to be able to read in English which is measured by getting good marks or first place in the exam and when they progress to a higher level at school. These findings are significant because it shows how children are influenced by the definitions of success and failure advanced within educational systems and societal norms. The messages that the children received could be consistently learned and reinforced from the parents, family, teachers and schools. For example, they might have got an idea about the definition of good readers through the assessment systems that they had gone through since they were at the kindergarten or pre-schools, or from the individuals around them who talked to them and put an emphasis on the need to acquire certain marks to be acknowledged as successful in the school and community. These definitions of successful reading became embedded within the children's minds and perspectives, with potentially negative consequences for how they perceive themselves and their opportunities to succeed.

Apart from that, there is also a student who stated that he would only be able to read English when he grew up. Another challenge that all the students had was that they believed that English was all about hard words which they cannot read and understand. One student added that he was unable to spell the hard words. Difficult words challenged the students, as evidenced in the reading lessons either due to disengagement, difficulty reading the English words aloud and incomplete or incorrect answers in writing tasks, as well as their inability to recall the lessons they learned in the classroom. Another challenge was specifically mentioned by two students who shared the differences of experience they had at home and school.

The students also talked about their perceptions of the classroom learning experiences. All the students stated that they liked activities that required them to do something such as writing. Further, they all mentioned rewards from the teacher as another positive thing they experienced in the reading lessons. Some students expressed liking the pictures that the teacher employed in the classroom. The big book used by the teacher was also liked by a student. Similarly, the use of Malay was also favoured by a student. On the other hand, all the students disliked the drilling activity where they had to repeat after the teacher and the HFW list activity. A few students also disliked their noisy friends, with one among these few disliking reading aloud. Additionally, there is a student who hoped that the teacher could integrate play activities in the classroom, and another student wished to have games and his favourite book included in the ESL reading lessons. There is a student who also hoped to have English cartoons whilst another student wished to have singing activities in their ESL classroom.

The findings in relation to participating students are summarised in Table 9 below.

Table 9: Summary of the findings in relation to participating students

Children	Themes	Categories	Explanations
1)Ali	1)Perceptions on English	•Value of English	•English is important to become knowledgeable and to read and write things learned in the classroom
		•Reasons for learning	•Love to learn English reading but English is not favourite school subject •Parent, teacher and friends
	2)Challenges	•Support	•Lack of support from parents
		•Self-perceptions	•Cannot read in English •Can only do counting and adding numbers in Malay •Can only read English when he becomes a grown-up
		•Reading is difficult words	•Many difficult words to read and understand causing the disengagement/inability to read in the classroom
	3)Perceptions on classroom learning experiences	•Positive views	•Likes to do something such as writing activities •Likes rewards •Likes picture
		•Negative views	•Dislikes repeating the teacher •Dislikes HFW list activity
		•Ways of learning could be more fun	•To include playing activities

2)Fairul	1)Perceptions on English	•Value of English	•English is important to become clever and will be liked by the teacher
		•Reasons for learning	•Love to learn reading in English but English is not favourite school subject •Teacher and friends
	2)Challenges	•Support	•Lack of support from parents • Attending private tutoring could be helpful
		•Self-perceptions	•Cannot read in English •Can only read Malay •Can read in English if clever/ get a high mark in exams
		•Reading is difficult words	Many difficult words to read and understand and causing to the disengagement/inability to read in the classroom
	3)Perceptions on classroom learning experiences	•Positive views	•Likes to do activities such as writing •Likes rewards •Likes big book
•Negative views		•Dislikes repeating the teacher •Dislikes HFW list	
3)Imran	1)Perceptions on English	•Value of English	•English is important to become knowledgeable, to get good results in exams and can get present

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Reasons for learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Love to learn to read in English but English is not favourite school subject •Friends
	2)Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Lack of support from parents
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Self-perceptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Can only read little English •Can be a good reader when he gets an A in exam
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Reading is difficult words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Cannot read and understand many words
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Home verses classroom experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Read the Supermind book, one-to-one with mother and asks many questions
	3)Perceptions on classroom learning experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Positive views 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Likes pictures •Likes to do activities such as writing •Likes rewards
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Negative views 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Dislikes friends who made noises •Dislikes repeating after the teacher •Dislikes HFW list activity
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Ways learning could be more fun 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •To include games and Supermind book
4)Qila	•Perceptions on English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Value of English 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •English is important to get good mark in exams, it is needed everywhere and to achieve ambition
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Reasons for learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Parent

	•Challenges	•Support	•Lack of support
		•Self-perceptions	•Can't read in English •Can only read if clever/when she gets a good mark in exams
		•English is difficult words	•Can't read, say and understand words
	•Perceptions on classroom learning experiences	•Positive views	•Likes writing activity •Likes rewards
		•Negative views	•Dislikes noisy friends •Dislikes repeating •Dislikes reading aloud •Dislikes HFW list activity
5)Tairah	•Perceptions on English	•Value of English	•English is important to achieve ambition to be used as a grown up and to answer exams
		•Reasons for learning	•Parent and teacher
	•Challenges	•Support	•Lack of support
		•Self-perceptions	•Can't read in English •Can only read if clever/when she progresses to the next level or when she gets first place in exams

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •English is difficult words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Hard to read and understand the words
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Perceptions on classroom learning experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Positive views 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Likes pictures •Likes to do something such as writing activity •Likes the use of Malay • Likes rewards
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Negative views 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Repeating the teacher •HFW list activity
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Ways learning could be more fun 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •To include singing activity
6)Roni	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Perceptions on English 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Value of English 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •English is important to become knowledgeable and to achieve ambition
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Reasons for learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Love to learn English but not favourite school subject •Parent and friends
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Challenges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Lack of support from parent
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Self-perceptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Cannot read in English •Able to read only in Malay •Can be a good reader if he gets a good mark in exams
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Reading is difficult words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Cannot spell, read and understand many words
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Home versus classroom experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Read through spelling at home 	

	3) Perceptions on classroom learning experiences	• Positive views	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likes pictures • Likes rewards • Likes writing activity
		• Negative views	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dislikes noisy friends • Dislikes repeating the teacher • Dislikes HFW list activity
		• Ways learning could be more fun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To include English cartoons

Having summarised the findings of this study, the subsequent chapter centres on a discussion of the findings presented earlier.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the major findings of the study. I attempt to reflect coherently on my findings from Chapter Four and present the discussion by relating the findings with the analysis of the relevant literature reviewed in Chapter Two in order to establish links or disparities between the findings and the extant literature. I also incorporate my own thoughts so as to reflect critically on the issues raised by my findings.

In contemplating the whole argument, I was also asking what the implications of these findings might be for the system surrounding struggling readers in the Malaysian primary classroom. Therefore I incorporate a number of implications that arise from my study in respect to the needs of the struggling readers in Malaysian primary classrooms. To begin with, I restate the overarching purpose of this study which is to explore struggling readers' experiences with the ESL reading at home and in the classroom. This objective was accomplished by investigating the ways in which the teacher and parents worked with the struggling readers. I will now discuss the findings of this study according to the main research question and sub-research questions developed.

Main research question:

How do the social, cultural and contextual elements surrounding struggling ESL students influence their experiences of English language reading in the Malaysian classroom?

Sub-research questions:

- 1.1- How does the teacher work with the struggling readers?
- 1.2- How do the participating parents work with their children at home?
- 1.3- How do the students themselves engage with their ESL reading?
- 1.4 How do the environmental contexts interact to influence struggling readers' experiences of reading?
- 1.5 What are the implications for education policy and practice in Malaysia?

5.2 The Ways the Teacher Works with the Struggling Readers (Sub-RQ 1.1)

In this section, three themes will be discussed, namely classroom environment, involvement and challenges.

5.2.1 Classroom Environment

The scarcity of ESL reading resources found in the classroom could impede the ESL students' reading development (Shin & Crandall, 2019). This is because the students needed to be immersed in the print literacy environment and engaged with the activities related to the print to become successful readers (Shin & Crandall, 2019).

5.2.2 Involvement of the Teacher

The findings reveal that whole-class teaching approach was employed as the main method when working with the ESL struggling readers. The method was mainly utilised to ease classroom management. In this respect, the teaching and learning centred on a few routines revolving around teacher-centred activities. The strategies described above are not interactive and could hinder the effectiveness of the teaching and learning. Instead, a combination of more suitable activities (Harmer, 2012; Kırkgöz, 2018; Scrivener, 2010; Shin, 2006) as part of interactive teaching could probably be of more benefit to ESL struggling readers in the classroom (Gersten & Geva, 2003; Harmer, 2012; Shin, 2006). Furthermore, learning opportunities could increase if the activities employed involved a mixture of approaches consisting of whole class, group work, individual and pair work (Scott & Yterberg, 1990; Shin, 2006).

In addition, the tendency in the observed classes for question and answer sessions, which normally involve students answering questions about the meaning of particular words or reading words that they are assigned to without in-depth discussion (Gersten & Geva, 2003; Lesaux, 2010; Kieffer, Fallor & Kelley, 2010), could have restricted the integration of the students' responses into teaching and learning. Again, this limits the interactivity of the teaching (Gersten & Geva, 2003; Hickman, Pollard-Durodola & Vaughn, 2004). Moreover, the teacher did not engage the students'

previous knowledge before the lessons began and she only read the words that the students were going to learn. Such an approach would not be helpful to assist students' comprehension because the students might not be able to link what they knew with the instructional content of the lessons (Bartlett, 2017).

Many researchers highlight that struggling readers are best taught in groups or individually (Bokhari et al., 2015; Denton et al., 2004; Baker et al., 2014; Richards-Tutor et al., 2016; Vaughn, 2006). Moreover, small group activities are advocated by the MOE (2015a) as a way of helping students to learn more effectively. Findings in this study showed that struggling readers are taught as a whole class because there is no specialised teacher available to teach the students. The onus, therefore, was on the class English teacher to design the lessons based on the learning objectives and the needs of the students. Such a situation might hinder the effectiveness of the teaching and learning in respect to struggling readers.

This study also noticed that drilling was utilised as one of the main instructional methods in teaching ESL struggling readers. This finding is in accordance with other studies conducted in the ESL Malaysian primary classroom (Lee, 2015; Md-Ali et al., 2016; Yaacob, 2006) and internationally (Arikan, 2011). In this study, drilling was applied to a whole group (Arikan, 2011; Yaacob, 2006; Harmer, 2007) or sometimes to individual students (Lee, 2015). The teacher utilised drilling to help the students recognise and become familiar with the words which echoed Harmer (2012) and Md-Ali et al. (2016). Besides that, in this study, drilling was applied in the ESL classroom to demonstrate pronunciation (Yaacob, 2006; Lamsal, 2011; Project Trust, 2016) as well as to get the students to practise reading and to attract the students' attention.

Furthermore, in the drilling activities that I observed, the teacher would lead the session and let the students listen to her reading before the students read after her. This is in agreement with the recommendations of the MOE (2015a), which identified modelled reading as one of the steps in early reading. In addition, the use of teaching materials that supplemented the drilling method was also perceived as helpful to assist struggling readers' learning (Celce-Murcia, 2001; Higa, 2002; Li, 2006). The literature has highlighted that getting the students to follow the words with their finger when reading is good practice (Harmer, 2012) and this was evident as a practice in the

observations in this study. On the other hand, although drilling is acknowledged as a helpful method for low attaining students such as in this study (Harmer, 2007), other approaches to drilling such as pair level drilling or semi-chorus level drilling rather than just whole class and individual drilling could also be implemented to make the instructional method less dull (Lamsal, 2011, p.14), to avoid the students feeling bored and tired (Harmer, 2007) and to ensure the effectiveness of the method for the ESL students' learning (Basuki, 2018; Heward, 2003; Liu, 2006; Richards & Rodgers, 2002; Swanto & Din, 2014). This would help the students to enjoy drilling as part of the learning process (Higa, 2002; Yuwanda, 2017).

Besides that, the extensive amount of drilling discovered in this study could make the learning less effective because drilling entails a rather unnatural use of language (Harmer, 2007; Lee, 2015). This was particularly concerning since drilling was so dominant that meaningful exposure and opportunities for struggling readers to practise the language scarcely existed (Shine & Crandall, 2019, p.195) as the teacher was the one who initiated and controlled the interactions (Richards & Rodgers, 2002). The teaching of reading could benefit students more if other reading steps suggested by MOE (2015a) were to be applied to encourage student participants, such as shared reading. In addition to that, the emphasis on drilling suggests that the teacher focused too much on correct pronunciation and oral practice, with little attempt to help students engage with the main ideas of the sentences or the texts, which could be more helpful in developing students' comprehension.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of human development (1979) suggests that children's development occurs in the context of the systems that surround the child, whether close and directly, or more distant and indirectly. In other words, children's development and experiences transpire in actual settings that can be from their direct contexts such as parents and teachers or indirect contexts such as the various institutions and environments that comprise the children's mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem (Palts & Kalmus, 2015). Additionally, the teacher also forms dynamic relations with other contexts in the children's systems within which they develop. The findings of this study reveal, for example, that Mrs. Leena has been influenced by the recitation method used to teach the Quran. This encapsulates what happens in the children's macrosystem in which socio cultural and religious practices influence the children's experience

indirectly through their influence on how the teacher goes about teaching in the classroom. While the system is distal from the children, or not in the children's immediate settings, the influence of the system is still significant to the children's learning experience and reading development. This is further elaborated by Bronfenbrenner who stated that the behaviour of participants in the classroom "is profoundly affected by other social systems in which they have roles and responsibilities" (Bronfenbrenner, 2005, p. 28). Consistent with Bronfenbrenner's conceptualisation of his ecological model of human development, which emphasises the "role of the social context in facilitating or impeding specific processes of human development" (Bronfenbrenner, 2005, p. 28), a practice like drilling, taken from the socio-cultural religious context, might be applied excessively and ultimately hinder children's reading development.

Another prominent instructional method employed was the look-and-say or whole word approach, aiming to facilitate the development of the students' vocabulary and comprehension. Research suggests that the method can be helpful for ESL young students to increase their reading development, as discovered by Budiana (2011), Nurnianti (2012) and Nofiandari (2016). In contrast to the participating teachers in the research conducted by Nofiandari (2016), who perceived look-and-say as a reading approach familiar to parents, the teacher in this study mainly applied look-and-say because she was not comfortable with phonics and believed that the struggling readers were not familiar with a phonics approach. She made the judgment based on the students' family background and the type of pre-schools that the students had attended in the previous year. Apart from that, materials such as pictures which accompanied the method can be good practice to further assist students' comprehension of the words being taught (Nofiandari, 2016; Baker et al., 2014). By putting the words into context, the method utilised by the teacher could facilitate the struggling readers to read and understand the words (Au, 1993; Nofiandari, 2016). The findings therefore suggest that the use of the look-and-say approach is appropriate and helpful for ESL struggling readers.

Another important finding, however, was that look-and-say was the only method utilised and preferred by the teacher. In other words, the teacher did not apply a phonics approach at all while working with the students, although it has been widely suggested by researchers for its various benefits (Dubeck et al., 2012; Farokhbakht, 2015; Gersten & Geva, 2003; Jamaludin et al., 2016;

Nag & Snowling, 2012; Shin & Crandall, 2019), and is also heavily emphasised by the MOE (2013a, b); (2015a). One of the reasons why the teacher did not use phonics instruction was that she lacked confidence because she felt that she had not received enough training on phonics instruction. This concern about confidence with phonics echoes the findings of the studies by Dubeck et al. (2012), Mokotedi (2012) and Shafee (2019). The neglect of the phonics method in the ESL struggling readers' classroom is significant, however, since it risks "serious consequences" for the students' progress in reading (Dubeck et al., 2012, p. 50) since the teaching and learning overall lacked an explicit and systematic approach, meaning that the learning process could not be optimised (Dubeck et al., 2012; Gersten & Geva, 2003; Richards-Tutor et al., 2016). Since the phonics approach is taught in an explicit and systematic way, focusing on the concept of phonemic awareness, coding and the letter-sound relationship taking place in small steps, from easiest to difficult (Dubeck et al., 2012; Rosenshine, 1987), struggling readers could benefit a lot more if phonics were fully integrated in the teaching and learning (Gersten & Geva, 2003; Vaughn et al., 2006). Besides that, neglecting the phonics approach and focusing only on a look-and-say approach could not effectively support young ESL struggling readers' development, since the research indicates that the use of both approaches in tandem is the most helpful for assisting struggling readers (Apandi & Nor, 2019; Hakimi et al., 2014; Prasad et al., 2016).

Another instructional method widely applied by the teacher was code switching. The findings show that code switching was used for a number of reasons, but mainly to facilitate students' comprehension. Particularly, code switching was used to give instructions to the students (Azman, 2006; Mokotedi, 2012), interpret particular English words (Yaacob, 2006; Azman, 2006; Mokotedi, 2012), check students' understandings (Yaacob, 2006) and manage the classroom (Azman, 2006). Although code switching can be perceived negatively (Low, 2016; Martin, 2005), and is not mentioned in the Malaysian curriculum document as a recommended practice (MOE, 2015a), the benefits of code switching for ESL students (Badrul & Kamaruzaman, 2009; Kamisah & Misyana, 2011; Kuchah, 2019; Then & Ting, 2011), and particularly for low-attaining ESL students such as in this study are undeniable, as discussed fully in section 2.3.3.1.1 (Lin, 2005; Shin, 2006). I also discovered in this study, however, that there were times when code switching was not necessarily needed. For instance, instead of code-switching, the teacher could utilise gestures, actions or show real examples of things available in the classroom to make the students'

understand what she was trying to convey (Baker et al., 2014; Gersten & Geva, 2003). The findings suggested that, although code switching is recommended by many researchers for its benefits, the teacher in this study could have used code switching more selectively and effectively, as suggested by Azman (1999), Yaacob (2006), Harmer (2007) and Shin (2006).

An important finding that emerged especially from the interviews with students was the suggestion that they would be engaged more effectively in learning if writing activity was integrated with the reading activity. Many of the students indicated that they would find the classes more interesting if they were asked to do writing activities, whereas, in practice the teacher relied on just a few quite limited writing activities such as copying the sentences and circling the correct words as part of the reading lessons for reinforcement so that students can engage repeatedly with the vocabulary learnt. The integration of writing activity into the reading lessons in ESL primary classroom is supported by researchers and something I noted in section 2.3.1.4 of the literature review (e.g. Clay, 2001; Hakimi et al., 2014) but it was not something I particularly emphasised as significant at that point, whereas the findings seemed to suggest that this could be an important way of engaging the students in this study. MOE (2015a) has further suggested that a cohesive and coherent organisation between all of the language skills would benefit the students and there are a number of ways in which writing activity can be utilised more effectively besides from copying down sentences and circling the correct words as practised by the teacher. Additionally, no other activities to increase the students' encounter of the words were identified in the lessons conducted by the teacher apart from the writing activity that the teacher conducted in all lessons. Those activities can include "crosswords, charades, sketching, and drawing to represent word meanings" (Baker et al., 2014, p.21).

This study also discovered that a heavy emphasis was placed on the utilisation of instructional materials, both to build students' comprehension and to increase students' interest in learning English. A number of instructional materials employed by the teacher were identified. As the benefit of using materials is undeniable, such a practice could facilitate ESL struggling readers in this study to learn more effectively (Snow et al., 1998; Biswas, 2018; McGrath, 2013; Nurliana, 2019; Patel & Jain, 2008; Winke, 2005). A weakness, however, was the lack of use of technical media in the teaching and learning sessions (Brinton, 2001; Harmer, 2012; Zewary, 2011). While

the teacher was concerned about classroom control, the absence of technical media placed the ESL struggling readers in an unfavourable position since the evidence suggests that the combination of technical and non-technical media in the classroom is particularly effective (Brinton, 2001; Ramirez-Garcia, 2012; Shin & Crandall, 2014). Indeed, MOE (2015a) suggests directly that electronic media should be used to help ESL teaching become more appealing for students. Given that a key finding of this study is that the struggling readers are particularly at risk of becoming disengaged in the class, this argues for more, not less, use of technical media.

In addition, from the study, it was discovered that pictures were often integrated in the teaching and learning, either available in the reading text or in the form of picture cards (Harmer, 2012). Since the benefits of using pictures in the ESL classroom are recognised to be significant (Canning-Wilson, 2001; Harmer, 2007; 2012; Syandri, 2015; Zewary, 2011), this finding suggested that effective learning could take place among ESL struggling readers. Another resource employed by the teacher was the HFW list. The use of the HFW list has also been recommended by some scholars for its benefits (Cameron, 2001; Nation, 2000; Johns & Wilke, 2018; Shin & Crandall, 2019). The teacher's use of this resource was not ideal, however. While she included an additional reading text as a task sheet to complement the use of the HFW list and also modelled the words and asked students to read after her, both of which are activities supported in the literature (Imaniah, 2017; Johns and Wilke, 2018), it was also discovered that the teacher included too many words into the HFW list, in a font too small to be seen by young students. In addition, no particular focal words were selected when the teacher used the list with the students, as was recommended by Johns & Wilke (2018) and Shin & Crandall (2019). Additionally, other activities suggested by Johns and Wilke (2018) can also be included while using HFW list to make the most of the instructional material, like hand clapping and foot-tapping as the words are read. It was also found that the HFW list utilised by the teacher was not exactly similar to the list prepared by the MOE (2015a). For example, four words in the list prepared by the MOE (2015a) were missing from the teacher's list and eight new were added to the student's list that did not appear in the MOE list (2015a). Such a practice could be inefficient because students need to be exposed to lists that match with what is in the text materials being used throughout the academic school year. Although teachers are allowed to add more words to the list (MOE 2015a), the teacher needs to first cover

all the words given by the MOE because materials provided, such as text-books, are principally developed based on the word list provided by the MOE (2015a).

Overall, the materials used were suitable to the students' contextual and cultural backgrounds (Richard-Amato, 1998; Shin, 2006; Watt & Foscolos, 1998), and this can facilitate students' comprehension of the text as they can draw on their background knowledge (Shin & Crandall, 2019). The illustrations and colours also make the materials appealing to the students (Ghosn, 2019; Richard-Amato, 1998; Shin, 2006). This is also in line with the MOE (2015a) as teachers are required to link the students' daily life experiences and the community which the students belong to with the content of the lessons. The use of the big book and textbook is recommended by scholars (Halliwell, 2006; Harmer, 2001; Richards, 2001) and by the MOE (2015a). The teacher utilised the text-book alongside other materials, as suggested by Nurliana (2019) and Spratt et al., (2011). Academics have suggested the use of reading texts such as graded readers and these should be considered as additional material because since they might benefit ESL struggling readers' learning in the long run.

5.2.3 Challenges Facing the Teacher

While working with the ESL struggling readers in her classroom, it was possible to identify a number of challenges that the teacher faced. These can be divided into three categories, as suggested by Kizildag (2009), namely institutional, instructional and socio-economic challenges. In relation to institutional challenge, Kizildag (2009) has highlighted lack of support and lack of understanding of the nature of language teaching as being the main problems facing the teacher in his study. Similarly, in this study, the teacher reported that she received a lack of cooperation and support from the District Education Office. The teacher also believed that she herself had a lack of training in phonics instructions. Insufficient training seems to be a prominent challenge in the literature as it was also found to be lacking in ESL teachers in other studies not only locally (Bokhari et al., 2015; Lee, 2015), but also internationally (Arikan, 2011; Biswas, 2018; Pathan et al., 2016; Salahuddin et al., 2013).

Apart from that, the problems related to time constraints that the teacher experienced in this study are also faced by the teachers in the study by Bokhari et al. (2015); while previous studies also reported about problems pertaining to a lack of facilities and materials (Abrar, 2016; Anyiendah, 2017; Arikan, 2011; Biswas, 2018; Lee, 2015; Pandian, 2006; Salahuddin et al., 2013). The teacher also felt that the absence of personnel specialised in teaching struggling readers, together with large class sizes, made it more difficult to teach these students effectively. This echoes other studies conducted in Malaysia by Bokhari et al. (2015) and Hadzir et al. (2016). The class size factor is indeed widely reported in previous research (Abrar, 2016; Apandi & Nor, 2019; Arikan, 2011; Erkan, 2012; Garton, 2014; Kizildag, 2009; Lee, 2015).

Another category of challenge put forth by Kizildag (2009) is instructional challenges. In this study it was revealed that the teacher perceived the assessment system as a challenge that affected the teaching and learning process of the ESL struggling readers. While Kizildag (2009) talked about the content of the assessment being unsuitable, and the pressure placed on the teacher to teach to the test, the findings of this study highlighted the implementation of multiple tests performed too closely together. The findings about successive tests as a challenge to the ESL struggling readers' teachers has also been reported by Lee (2015) in Malaysian primary schools.

In relation to Bronfenbrenner's model of human development (1979), these findings pertaining to the institutional and instructional challenges can be explained by emphasising the exosystem. the levels in the ecological theory within which the children develop.

According to Bronfenbrenner, the exosystem is "one or more settings that do not involve the developing person as an active participant, but in which events occur that affect or are affected by, what happens in the setting containing the developing person" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 25). For example, the lack of cooperation and support from the District Education Office in disseminating the materials from the course she attended, suggest that there are barriers in the children's exosystem. In addition, a lack of teaching assistants, which Mrs Leena thought she needed, and the unsystematic implementation of assessments further suggest that the exosystem is not working well in this case.

Furthermore, in this study, the teacher also reported a lack of involvement by the parents in students' ESL learning that is put into the category of socio-economic challenge (Kizildag, 2009). Similar to the teachers in a local study by Azman (1999), in this study the teacher decided not to give homework to the students because the teacher perceived that it may not be successfully completed. Based on the teacher's years of experience dealing with struggling readers, she found that homework given to the students was not accomplished appropriately. The findings related to unfinished homework were also faced by teachers in past studies (e.g. Kizildag, 2009). The teacher also believed that the parents who came from low socio-economic backgrounds were too busy with their work and could not manage to get involved in their children's ESL learning, which echoes the findings from the study by Al-Fadley et al. (2018). The parents in the study were also perceived by the teacher as less serious with their children's ESL education, resulting in a lack of help being given to the children. The study concurs with Kizildag (2009) who found that little support was perceived to be given by the parents in his study. Adding to the literature in relation to the involvement of the parents is the teacher's perception that the parents in this study had a lack of awareness towards the practices of the present education system.

The teacher's views on the parents reveal that the children's mesosystem, which is described by Bronfenbrenner (1979) as interactions among children's microsystems, were not working well. Bronfenbrenner (1986) also recommends that teachers and parents do not work in isolation but should form dynamic relations with one another and the other contexts in the ecosystem. This process has an unavoidable impact on the children's development (Bronfenbrenner 1986) specifically in my study, the children's reading attainment. The communication breakdown between both parties has contributed to the teacher developing negative ideas about the parents. In the Bronfenbrenner ecological model of human development (1979), individual development happens within a system of relationships that involves of multiple individuals and parties. Parents and teachers are directly related to the children, having the closest relationship with the children in their microsystem (Palts & Kalmus, 2015). When these two systems, namely teachers and parents, are not synchronised, students' development can be affected. For example, an assumption that parents neglect their children's ES learning meant that the teacher did not set homework. As a result, children had little practice in English outside the classroom, influencing their experiences and learning development.

Core among the challenges not highlighted by Kizildag (2009) but available in other literature is that the teacher perceived students' behaviour as a challenge that has disadvantaged her teaching methods and resulted in her turning away from using ICT in teaching and learning (for example). Those students are perceived as either passive or too active because the students are perceived to have had not much interest and motivation in English language learning. The findings of this study are in agreement with both local (Pandian, 2006; Salahuddin et al., 2013) and international studies (Abrar, 2016; Anyiendah, 2017; Garton, 2014; Mokotedi, 2012).

The findings about the challenges facing the teacher are highly consistent with the relevant literature on the teaching of struggling ESL readers in the Malaysian primary school context (Apani & Nor, 2019; Bokhari et al., 2015; Lee, 2015; Pandian, 2006) and ESL students internationally (e.g. Kazaldag, 2009). However there is a slight difference compared to the categories of challenges facing the teacher as proposed by Kizildag (2009). While Kizildag focused on three categories of challenge, one new category of challenge emerged from this study, namely the challenge of student behaviour. Additionally, the findings of this study also contribute to the literature as there is a slight difference in the detail regarding the teacher's challenges in terms of lack of awareness of parents with the current education system, which falls under the socioeconomic challenge category, lack of cooperation and support from the District Education Office which falls under the institutional challenge category and the nature of the examination system which is categorised under instructional challenge.

5.3 The Ways the Parents Work with Their Children (Sub-RQ 1.2)

Two themes will be discussed in this section, namely involvement and challenges.

5.3.1 Involvement of the Parents

Scholars have identified several ways that parents could be involved in their children's ESL learning. The findings of this study replicate some of the categories mentioned in the previous research. As for the home reading activities that the parents had with their children, all participating

parents deemed homework as a paramount activity which can facilitate their children's ESL learning. The orientation towards the importance of homework reflects the findings in previous studies internationally (Li, 2004; Lee, 2010; Pendleton, 2017; Rodriguez, 1999; Rodriguez, 2005; Reyes et al., 2007; Xiaoyi, 2017), and indeed the benefits of parents getting engaged in the ESL students' homework is well-documented (Majid et al., 2005; Rodriguez, 1999). The parents in this study were involved with their children's homework in a few ways. For example, they would ask about the existence of homework (Rodriguez, 1999), sit with their children while doing homework (Pendleton, 2017; Xiaoyi, 2017), try to ensure that the homework provided by the teacher was completed (Rodrigues, 2005), dedicate time to ensure the homework was being carried out (Li, 2004; Rodriguez, 2005), which is normally at night, and ask other siblings or other family members to help the child with the homework by reading the difficult English words to the child (Li, 2004; Majid et al., 2005). Other ways of helping with the homework as suggested by some parents in the study by Pendleton (2017) included utilising computers and school books as references to help the children, and attempting to identify homework mistakes prior to submission to the teacher (Lee, 2010). These additional methods are probably not found in this study because the parents did not have a lot of English language knowledge and thus lacked confidence to help their children (Majid et al., 2005). While homework is deemed important by all parents in this study, it is also worth noting that all of the parents complained of the scarce amount of homework their children received. This is similar to the study by Li (2004). As a result, those parents were unable to perform reading activities most of the time because they were very much dependent on the homework provided by the teacher as one of the ESL learning activities.

Other home reading activities reported by two parents in this study were chanting alphabets or numbers in English. The finding is quite similar to the study by Lynch (2008), in which parents read alphabets to their children. Chanting alphabets in this study incorporated parents reading alphabets to the children (Lynch, 2008) or parents listening to the children chanting alphabets. The practice however did not include pointing to the letters at commercial boards or signage outside the house (Lynch, 2008). This is possibly due to the fact that the practice found in the study by Lynch (2008) was influenced by the Head Start programmes that the children were enrolled in. Additionally, both parents in my study admitted that they did not know the best way to help their children; therefore, they 'just' performed such an activity to the best of their knowledge. According

to the literature, chanting alphabets is an emergent literacy practice (Evans, Shaw & Bell, 2000) which could be regarded as essential for children's reading attainment because the activity could help children to be aware of the connection between the letters names and the letter sounds (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998).

Besides that, one parent in this study reported that songs were used as one of the reading activities carried out at home. This finding was also reported previously in other studies (Lee, 2010; Lynch, 2008; Pendleton, 2017; Rodriguez, 2005). In this study, singing activity was carried out by the elder sibling (elder sister) playing the song on a laptop before singing together with the child (her younger sister). The elder sister sometimes read and talked about the lyrics that were displayed in the video to the child. This finding is quite similar to Lynch (2008), where one mother read the Sesame Street lyrics on the TV, and Pendleton (2017), where parents talked about the lyrics of the song with their children. According to Rodriguez (2000), using songs could be an enriching experience, and one that is both an attractive and entertaining way for children to interact with the language.

Another parent in this study employed spelling activities and pronunciation practice. The findings of this study are quite similar to the study by Pendleton (2017), as the parents in Pendleton's study corrected their children's pronunciation during the conversation. The parent in my study, however, specifically asked her child to spell and pronounce particular words, either by using the book or by what she could remember in her mind at that time. The parent would correct the child when necessary. This parent also redirected the questions asked by her child and carried out spelling activities based on the words previously asked by her child. Such a practice could benefit children through language modelling and feedback provided by the parents (Pendleton, 2017). Additionally, two parents of this study employed reading activities with their children as one activity to facilitate their children in ESL learning. This included reading storybooks, which is similar to the findings in previous studies by Forey et al. (2015), Lee (2010), Lynch (2008) and Pendleton (2017). In this study, the parent read the story to the child which echoes the findings in past studies. Furthermore, she sometimes asked the child to repeat after her, which is not reported in other previous studies. The parent also utilised the phonics method when she wanted to emphasise the spelling of particular words. Again, this was similar to the few parents in the study

by Lee (2010). Engaging young children with book reading at home with their parents has been shown to bring positive effects on the ESL non-readers' reading progress, as reported in the study by Harji et al. (2016) and ESL low attaining readers' development in the study by Raslie, Deli, John, Mikeng and Pandian (2020).

The findings of this study also revealed a parent utilising a pizza box as a resource to facilitate children in ESL reading. The parent thought that resources from the immediate environment could be useful to assist her child. Quite similar findings were discovered in the study by Lynch (2008) in which the participating parents employed cereal boxes to assist their children in ESL reading. Parents in the study by Lynch (2008) reported that their children normally initiated the activity by asking the parent to read the cereal box as they were enchanted by the cartoon characters on the box. In this study, in contrast, although the impetus came from the child, who loved to eat pizza, the idea to use the pizza box as a learning resource originated from the parent, who asked her child to read what was written on the pizza box and asked him to spell the food words related to pizza.

In addition, the use of the schoolbook named 'Supermind' was also reported by one participating parent. Through engagement with the book, the parent read and talked about many interesting pictures identified by the son such as pizza. Besides that, two participating parents utilised a picture dictionary in a similar way to that seen in the study by Pendleton (2017) – the parent read a picture dictionary with their children, although Pendleton (2017) did not detail how this was being done. Parents in my study would talk about the pictures in the dictionary, read aloud to the children the words that are coupled with the pictures in the dictionary, or let the children explore the dictionary by themselves by looking at the pictures or read the written words.

Moreover, a parent in this study used English cartoons to facilitate their children's learning, similar to the study by Lee (2010) and Majid et al. (2005). While the study by Majid et al. (2000) did not focus on how activity was done, Lee (2010) would block the Chinese captions supplemented in the English cartoons that their children were watching. In this study, however, the parent utilised the English subtitles displayed in the cartoon to introduce the child to some English vocabulary. Sometimes the story was retold by the parent to the child to assist his understanding of the story. Furthermore, another practice not found in past studies was the exploitation of the past exam papers

by one participating parent to assist her child in ESL reading. This was performed by the parent who guided the child to read the difficult words that the child came across. Besides that, they also had pronunciation practice and the parent explained the meaning of particular words found in the examination paper.

To fit the findings into the framework designed by Reyes et al. (2007), I found that the four domains proposed by the authors as home literacy practices can be used as guidelines to understand the parents' positioning towards reading activities that they had with their children. Firstly, it was discovered that school-related activity was perceived as the most prominent activity done by the parents to assist their children in ESL reading. Under this domain, activities included doing homework by all parents, using past exam papers and the use of the school-book named 'Supermind' by one parent to facilitate their children in ESL reading. Furthermore, two parents also used chanting ABC to assist their children in ESL reading which falls under the category literacy for the sake of literacy. In addition to that, one participating parent in this study utilised songs and another used cartoons, which belonged to the entertainment domain. Another activity that could belong to the entertainment domain was the use of a picture dictionary by two participating parents. Another parent also used storybooks to facilitate the child which falls under the category storybook time. Another activity used by one parent which did not belong to any of the categories suggested by Reyes et al. (2007) was the use of a pizza box. In this study, a pizza box was used by the parent to teach children to spell and read the words related to pizza such as pizza, beef and pepperoni. The use of this framework suggests that the parents in this study mostly used activities from the school-related activity domain. This discovery also suggests that the parents of young children in this study are wedded to school-associated reading activities, which echoes a previous study in the Malaysian context by Boivin et al. (2014).

In terms of the home learning environment, it was discovered that the parents in this study designated a space for their children to study, namely a study table. In contrast to the study by Emmanuel (2000), in which more than half of the parents did not provide space for learning, the findings here echo a previous study by Majid et al. (2005). Apart from that, the parents in this study set a specific time for their children to learn at home, normally at night, which is similar to the findings in Majid et al. (2005). There was also mixed findings on the parental use of technology

in this study. In contrast to other studies in the Malaysian context, such as those of Boivin et al. (2014), Emmanuel (2000) and Majid et al. (2005), which discovered that participating parents did not acknowledge the use of technology as an educational tool, interestingly, a few of the parents in this study utilised a laptop as a tool to play English songs and cartoons to help their children's ESL learning. The findings reflect past studies carried out internationally (Forey et al., 2015; Lee, 2010; Li, 2004; Pendleton, 2017; Rodriguez, 2005). Most of the parents however seemed to relate technology to entertainment rather than as a learning tool. Such an explanation could be due to the fact that the concept of ESL learning in the Malaysian context has been culturally associated with school reading activities. Besides that, the parents of this study might not have exposure and knowledge regarding how technology can be a useful tool for their children's education.

In terms of beliefs, attitudes and awareness, all the parents agreed that English was essential and needed to be learnt by their children for several reasons, which echoes previous studies (e.g. Majid, 2005; Wati, 2016). The parents also wanted the students to be more successful than themselves (Majid et al., 2000; Pendleton, 2017; Wati, 2016). A few of the parents in this study, however, believed that reading in Malay was more necessary for their children for the time being. Additionally, one of those parents added that she did not want to put a lot of stress on her child's academic performance by overburdening her. Apart from that, all the parents in this study also believed that their children could read or read better in English with time and practice. Such high expectations were also expressed by participating parents in past studies (Majid, et al., 2005; Wati, 2016). Furthermore, all the parents in this study also agreed that, besides the teachers at school, parents themselves have an important role to facilitate their children in ESL learning (Forey et al., 2015; Lee, 2010; Majid et al., 2005; Pendleton, 2017; Wati, 2016). On the other hand, they continued to believe that the teachers knew what was best for their children. Such a notion could probably be due to their perceived constraints regarding English knowledge or culturally embedded beliefs that are held by some parents in the Malaysian community as revealed in the study by Emmanuel (2000) or in other countries (Ruzane, 2013). Besides that, the parents reported that they provided encouragement for their children to learn English. The findings of this study are therefore similar to Majid et al. (2005) and Emmanuel (2000) in that in those studies also most parents encouraged their children to learn English and work hard in their study.

The findings of this study also concur with Emmanuel (2000) who discovered that the parents never took their children to a library. This contrasts with the findings from studies by Rodriguez (2005) where participating parents also faced some similar challenges but still took their children to the library. The absence of children's visits to the library could bring a negative consequence to the children. As studies by Lee (2010) and Ruzane (2013) illustrate, ESL students with good attainment in English had a supportive literacy environment including having had library visits.

Furthermore, all of the parents in this study tried their best to provide learning materials to their children, particularly stationery. However, only a few English language materials were available in every home and only a few homes had schoolbooks or similar. This was comparable to the findings of the study by Emmanuel (2000). This lack of learning resources could disadvantage the children as the home environment is seen as not being supportive enough for the children since a rich literacy input could not be provided (Lee, 2010; Ruzane, 2013).

Overall, the findings of this study are in accordance with the findings in Lynch (2008), who suggested that low income parents should not be perceived as completely lacking in their capacity. Additionally, the findings of this study also reflected the study by Forey et al. (2015) in which the participating parents still put in some effort despite the constraints they were struggling with. All the parents in this study also agreed that their participation was essential (Majid et al., 2005), and they seemed to be interested to engage in their children's education (Boivin et al., 2014; Lynch, 2008). They were also aware about the importance of ESL learning for their children and were positive about their children's ESL status (Majid et al., 2005). At the same time, however, the parents realised that their involvement was insufficient (Al-Mahrooqi et al., 2016). This could be due to the challenges that they faced while working with their children which, one way or another, influenced the way they took part in their children's learning.

5.3.2 Challenges Facing the Parents

All the participating parents in this study talked about the challenges that affected the way they worked with their children, with these coming from themselves, the school and teachers and their children. In terms of challenges from the parents themselves, one of the most stated challenges

mentioned by the parents was they did not have enough time to spend with their children due to work and life commitments. They did not have much time to get involved in the ESL learning activities. For example, many of the parents had tiring days because they had to work for long hours every day, which was also found both in previous local studies (Emmanuel, 2000; Majid et al., 2005) and international studies (Forey et al., 2015; Kavanagh & Hickey, 2013; Lee, 2010).

Besides that, two parents in this study also had to manage their child by themselves, in one case since the husband of one participant was unwell and in the other case because he had passed away. Both of these parents admitted that they had a hectic daily life schedule since they had to shoulder many responsibilities. As a result, they could not afford to spend much time with their children to help with the ESL learning.

Other challenges reported by all of the participating parents were little knowledge of the target second language being learned by their children (in this study, ESL) which resonated with past local studies (Emmanuel, 2000; Majid, et al., 2005) and internationally (Forey et al., 2015; Kavanagh & Hickey, 2013; Li, 2004; Rodriguez, 2005). Three parents talked about their insufficient understanding of the best way to facilitate their children and the suitable materials to use with their children. They also did not know where to ask for help (Emmanuel, 2000). Surprisingly, none of the participating parents talked about financial problems to provide their children with English materials, in contrast to some parents in the study by Emmanuel (2000) and Lee (2010).

Another category of challenges was related to the teacher and school. This study discovered that all the participating parents felt that they did not have the opportunity to meet and discuss their children's learning with their ESL teacher. Further, they were not invited to participate in the meetings with the English teachers or to participate in activities related to their children's ESL learning at school. It was also apparent that the parents were little knowledge of the education system, for example in terms of what and how the children learned English and how their children were being assessed (Rodriguez, 2005). Apart from that, the amount of homework set was deemed as insufficient (Li, 2004). This greatly affected those parents who wanted to engage in their children's learning since they were mostly dependent on homework as the learning resource.

Besides that, one parent complained that the schoolbooks were left unused by the teacher and another parent stated that the teachers needed to use English as the medium of instruction in the ESL classroom. To aggravate this further, the parents were also unaware of how to meet and talk to the subject teacher about those concerns and problems.

Challenges in the category of children, however, mainly regarded the way the children perceived the parents' capacity. Children seemed to be doubtful about their parents' ability to help them in English (Kavanagh & Hickey, 2013). Additionally, all participating parents confided that their children's temperament was also challenging (Forey et al., 2015; Kavanagh & Hickey, 2013; Li, 2004; Rodriguez, 2005).

The challenges reported in this study can be viewed from the model of parental involvement as explained by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997), which was subsequently revised in Walker et al. (2005). The authors highlighted that factors such as parents' beliefs about their role as parents, perceived life context and invitations from children, school and teacher can influence parental participation in their children's learning. With regard to beliefs, in this study, all parents believed that English was important and that their role in the children's ESL learning was important. Although they admitted that their teachers knew what was best for their children, they still put some effort into helping their children in several ways because they believed that their role was also necessary. For example, the parents carried out particular ESL learning activities with their children, motivated the children, had a high expectation of their children, designated a learning area and provided some learning materials.

The extent and frequency of involvement were also influenced by other factors highlighted in the model, however, such as parents' perceived life context (Walker et al., 2005) which seemed to be a significant aspect affecting those parents' involvement. Due to the parents' perceived English proficiency, available time and energy, the findings suggest that parents were unable to engage actively or consistently in their children's learning.

To connect this argument with Bronfenbrenner's model of human development (1979), the parents' time constraints arising from the demands of their jobs, and how these affect the quantity

and quality of the time they spend with their children is a good illustration of the indirect, but still significant, influence that the exosystem can have on children's development. To be specific, children had less contact time with parents than those parents thought they should have due to the demands at the parents' workplaces. This clearly raises the possibility of negative impacts on learning development.

A few parents depended largely on homework or chanting ABC as the main activities because of constraints in knowledge, time and energy. For a few other parents, although they conducted a slightly wider range of activities than the former, still faced similar constraints of time and energy. Further, they still lacked sufficient confidence about the knowledge they had and about the best way to assist their child.

A similar issue in respect to perceived life context (Walker et al., 2005) can explain why the parents did not take their children to a library. As reported, time restraints, transportation problems and lack of awareness of the existence of a library were among the explanations provided by participating parents that hindered them from visiting libraries or using the facilities available at the library. Parents' life contexts and beliefs can further explain why most parents only have a few learning materials at home. In this study, the parents did not really know what the best learning resources were that would help their children. This shows that the microsystem or "the social systems closest to children's daily lives" (Coleman, 2013, p. 50) is not working well. Children's microsystems, encompass the individuals that children interact with in person (Jaeger, 2012; Thor 2016). It was found in this study, however, that parents had limitations in supporting the children with ESL learning due to a lack of library visits, scarcity of reading materials at home and a lack of knowledge and confidence. Such challenges facing the children lead to the instability of their microsystems that could negatively impact children's learning development. Apart from that, the students' exosystem is not functioning well too. The exosystem encompasses a setting that do not involve the children as active participants, but the events that happen still affect the children who are in the setting. It is discovered in this study, that parents lacked time to spend with their children due to the nature of the parents' job. Such a difficulty could influence the children's learning growth in a negative way. Besides that, the dysfunctionality of the children's mesosystem or the relationship between two microsystems namely children's home and school is also noticeable in

this study. This is evident as the teacher does not supply the homework which is regarded as the main reading materials for the parents to assist their children's ESL reading. Such a circumstance might deter the development of students' ESL learning.

Walker et al. (2005) also stated that invitations from school or teachers would influence the involvement of the parents. In this study, the parents perceived that they struggled to understand the school system, particularly the way their children were assessed. They were also unsure about their children's ESL performance at school and were confused by aspects of the teacher's instructional practices such as the unused schoolbooks and the instructive language applied in the ESL lessons. Besides that, the parents did not receive invitations to meetings or activities related to their children's ESL learning. Moreover, the parents did not know how to talk to the relevant ESL teacher. The findings suggest that there was a lack of communication between parents and teachers. It can be predicted that parental involvement would be more evident if invitations from the school or teachers were made more available for the parents. In relation to Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of human development, the lack of communication between parents and teacher in this study reflects how the mesosystem is not functioning effectively. The mesosystem here consists of two microsystems surrounding the children namely the parents and the teacher (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). As Coleman observed, "Children's development and education are supported best when there are frequent and strong linkages among their microsystems" or the children's mesosystem (Coleman, 2013, p. 50). When the two ties are not strong, as it seems here in the lack of communication between parents and teacher, children's learning development could be hindered.

In addition, invitations from children were also a factor that determined the involvement of the parents in this study. A few parents' reported that they felt that their children undermined their ability to assist them in English. Many of them also felt that their children always gave excuses during study time. Such factors seemed to limit parental involvement in their children's ESL learning. This discovery speaks to Walker et al.'s (2005) proposition that parental involvement is also influenced by children's requests and the opportunities that the parents have to interact with their children.

Turning now to what the parents say about the experience of trying to help their children with homework, and the reluctance of the child to receive this help, Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of human development highlights the dynamics relationship between the developing individual and the integrated, multilevel ecology of human development (Lerner, 2005, p. ix). One such dynamic relationship is, of course, that between children (as developing individuals) and their microsystems, namely parents. This person-context relatedness component (Tudge, Gray & Hogan, 1997) suggests that children also influence the developing contexts surrounding them, or "the child also influences those who influence him" (Bronfenbrenner, 2005, p. 28). The findings show that children were reluctant to be assisted by their parents. This is a good example, therefore, of the "person" element in the newer versions of Bronfenbrenner's model of human development specifically. Here, the children themselves influence how their parents' act, which then feeds back to impact on the children's ultimate learning. Using Bronfenbrenner's language, the children's "force characteristics" (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006) has influenced the way they behave to their parents. The children might not have a lot of motivations and persistence to learn at home because they also had a lack of "resource characteristics" namely resources in terms of having access to materials in English at home, including supporting adults. The children felt that their parents had limitations in understanding English thus reducing their desire to be helped by their parents. In turn, the parents were not able to offer more assistance to their children. Thus, this finding reveals how the characteristics of the children influence their parents' interaction with them, in line with Bronfenbrenner's ideas.

In short, the findings of this study have revealed multiple ways in which the parents worked with their children at home by detailing the home reading activities they undertook with their children, and their beliefs and perceptions about the children's learning and the home environment. Since virtually no studies have researched struggling readers' experiences at home in Malaysia by looking at the way their parents work with them, the findings mainly relate to the literature from international studies. Moreover this study revealed details of how parents and children engaged in ESL learning activities which are yet to be found in extant research focused on the Malaysian context. The challenges facing the parents were also discussed, again mainly with respect to past studies conducted outside Malaysia, since, again, little in the way of related literature can be found in the local setting.

5.4 Struggling Readers' Engagement with Their ESL Reading (Sub-RQ 1.3)

Three themes will be discussed in this section, namely perceptions of ESL, and challenges and perceptions regarding the classroom learning experience.

5.4.1 Perceptions of ESL

The findings from this study revealed that all the participating struggling readers perceived English to be important. This echoes the students' perspectives in other past studies, both locally (Mat & Yunus, 2014) and internationally (Araos, 2015; Betty, 2016; Inostroza, 2018; Jin et al., 2014; Nikolov, 1999; Ruzane, 2013). In my opinion, however, most of the reasons are oriented towards 'school' or 'academic' purposes such as to become knowledgeable (Jin et al., 2014; Ruzane, 2013), to be able to learn things taught in the classroom, to be liked by the teacher, to answer examination questions, to attain good marks in examinations and to get rewards for good marks. Besides that, the students in this study also stated that English was necessary to achieve their ambitions (Mat & Yunus, 2014; Ruzane, 2013). Although a few students mentioned the importance of English on account of its widespread use throughout the world (Jin et al., 2014; Ruzane, 2013), and thus the need to use English when one grows up, they did not specify how people could use the language in practice. This contrasts with the studies by Inostroza (2018) and Araos (2015), where students stated actual uses of English including listening to music, travelling, communicating with people from different ethnic groups and sharing knowledge with family members (Nikolov, 1999; Ruzane, 2013). Further, none of the students in this study stated personal satisfaction as the reasons why English was perceived as necessary by them (Betty, 2016; Ruzane, 2013). In my view the findings suggest that although the students in this study valued English or were aware of the importance of English, they might be exposed to the English language mainly from the teacher in the classroom. As such, their views regarding the importance of English were focused on what they felt was practical to be accomplished within the classroom and school settings. Besides that, it is also interesting to note that the findings of this study contrasts with the study by Cheng et al. (2016) regarding the low attaining students in the Malaysian primary classroom who reported that they could not see any relevance of English to their life.

In addition, all the students expressed that they liked learning English which agrees with the findings of many other studies conducted previously (Betty, 2016; Hashim, 2016; Hsieh, 2011; Mat & Yunus, 2014; Inostroza, 2018; Nikolov, 1999). None of the students, however, regarded English as their favourite or preferred subject, in contrast to the studies by Betty (2016) and Nikolov (1999). The findings suggest that the students might have difficulty in learning the subject although they admitted that learning English was fun. Another interpretation is that the students' interests in learning English might be affected by external influences rather than internal factors. This is further substantiated by another finding discovered in this study: that the students reported that their enjoyment in respect to learning the language was influenced by people close to them such as their parents, teacher and friends. In particular, the students in this study explained that their parents told them or advised them to go to school, to learn English and to be a good student. Another reason for learning English stated by the students was because of the teacher of the subject. These findings echo the studies by Betty (2016), Hashim (2016), Mat and Yunus (2014), Nikolov (1999) and Ruzane (2013). Students in this study also felt that their teacher was a nice person who did not scold the students and gave good advice to them which is quite similar to the findings of the study by Mat and Yunus (2014) which showed that the students felt that the teacher did not embarrass them in the class. However, a contrasting finding was found in the study by Cheng et al. (2016) who found that low attaining students did not like learning English and also disliked their English teacher. Apart from that, the students also reported having friends who were nice, who they could talk to and learn together as their reason for fondness in learning English. The findings suggest that the role of other people around them is very important for these struggling readers.

5.4.2 Challenges Facing the Students

The students in this study also talked about their challenges in relation to learning ESL. Firstly, all the students stated that they had infrequent ESL reading activities with their parents at home. A similar finding is also reported by Mat and Yunus (2014). The students in this study further stated that their encounters with English only normally occurred at school, as was also conveyed through their drawings. Similar findings were obtained from low-attaining students in the study by Cheng

et al. (2016) and some students in the study by Ruzane (2013), who reported that they did not have a supportive ESL learning environment at home. One student also mentioned that additional support from private tutoring might be helpful for his learning. This lack of activities at home may have a negative impact on children who need a supportive learning environment to thrive in their ESL learning.

Secondly, the students also perceived ESL as difficult, a similar finding to the low-attaining students in the study by Cheng et al. (2016) and participating students in the studies by Hsieh (2011), Ruzane (2013) and Tepfenhart (2011). They perceived themselves as unable to read in English, except for one student who said he could read a little English. A previous study by Garrett (2012) also evidenced that struggling readers perceived themselves as non-readers. The students in this study further mentioned that they thought they could only achieve the ability to read in English when they are clever, for example when they obtained good marks or gained first place in examinations. Additionally, they felt that they could read when they progressed to the next higher level at school. One student also stated that he would only be able to read English when he grew up, a similar point made by the students in a study by Ruzane (2013).

The explanation given by the students showed that they based their achievement and ability in ESL reading on what has been set by the school. Such an explanation also portrays that the students felt that ESL reading was not something attainable for them at the moment when they are in that particular class or year level. Additionally, the responses given by the students illustrated that they were aware of their position as struggling readers as set by the school, which could have an impact on their aspirations in learning English. This argument could also be strengthened by the fact that all the students were learning together in a low-attaining class.

To relate this finding to Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of human development (1977; 1979), the children's macrosystem is the outermost level in Bronfenbrenner's conception of the ecological system surrounding the child (1977; 1979). The macrosystem encompasses a belief system, cultural values and norms of a society (Hayes et al., 2017; Krishnan, 2010). In this study, children were 'taught' in one way or another the meaning of good readers and non-readers from what has been long believed by many people and has long been practised by particular institutions until they

subconsciously become the norms and values of the society. The repetitive messages that the children receive across the range of individuals that they interact with, such as parents and teachers, and the institutions they are part of, such as their school and assessment systems, shape the children's self-perceptions and beliefs about their own current performance and future opportunities.

The third challenge perceived by the students was they believed that English was associated with difficult words that they could not read and comprehend. Problems in understanding the English words or what is being read, were also reported by some students in previous studies (Garrett, 2012; Hsieh, 2001; Li, 2004; Wiggs, 2012). Difficulty in spelling words was also stated by one participant in this study, similar to what was faced by some students in the studies by Lee (2004) and Wiggs (2012). These difficulties were manifested during the lessons in the students' disconnection from the teaching and learning sessions, including playing alone or with their friends, disturbing friends, chattering and looking blankly as if they were day-dreaming. Conversely, the hard word challenge that the students reported was evident in their struggle during the reading aloud activity. Similar to Wiggs (2012), the students in this study also associated their lack of comprehension with forgetfulness as a few of them said they had forgotten what they read or learnt in the classroom. The difficulty faced by the students might also come from the differences between home and school learning. This seemed to be borne out by the findings in respect to the teacher and the parents.

5.4.3 Perceptions Regarding the Classroom Learning Experience

Another aspect discussed by the students in this study was their perceptions of the ESL classroom learning experience. In terms of positive experiences, all the students admitted that they liked activities that involved them in doing something active such as writing. Findings from past studies by Ruzane (2013), Hsieh (2001) and Nikolov (1999) also revealed that the children preferred more active tasks. This included writing among other activities, as stated by the students in this study, but could also include other activities such as games and songs. In addition, all the students also liked receiving rewards from the teacher. Similar findings were found in previous studies by Nikolov (1999) and Ruzane (2013). Moreover, the use of materials by the teacher such as the big

book and pictures was also liked by one and four students, respectively. These findings were similar to the studies by Hashim (2016) and Betty (2016), who discovered that the materials utilised by the teacher played an important role in attracting students' interest to learning English. Aspects of teaching method was also mentioned by a student, namely the use of the first language (Malay) through code-switching in the lessons, which they found helpful to make them understand the message that the teacher was trying to deliver (Ruzane, 2013)

In terms of negative experiences, all the students expressed their dislike of simply repeating the teacher. The findings echo the perceptions held by the students in the study by Jin et al. (2016), but contrasts with some of the students' perceptions in the study by Ruzane (2013). Reasons such as being tired, bored and wanting to do other activities were given by the students for not their dislike of doing the drilling activity repeatedly. The findings suggest that the students preferred activities that required them to participate in the learning activity, rather than just being passive receivers or listeners. These findings appear plausible as children have short attention spans (Harmer, 2012), therefore activities need to be varied to avoid non-participating behaviour (Ruzane, 2013).

Children also talked about their dislike of using one particular material, the HFW list. They found it difficult and challenging, with too many words listed. Additionally, a few of the students mentioned the learning environment, namely noisy friends that had disturbed them. Similar findings were reported by the students in the study by Mat and Yunus (2014) who felt uncomfortable with noisy friends. The findings suggested that the students needed a more supportive environment to learn in the classroom. One student did not like the activity that required her to read aloud in the classroom as she felt shy making mistakes (Ruzane, 2013; Tepfenhart, 2011) and was worried that this would be noticed by her friends and lead to her being teased by them (Mat & Yunus, 2014; Ruzane, 2013).

Some students articulated the kind of lesson they wished they could have in the classroom. This included playing activities, and incorporating games and their favourite books, English cartoons and songs into the lessons. The findings concurred with the studies by Araos (2015) and Inostroza

(2018), in which the participating students talked about their ideal classroom activities which included playing (Araos, 2015) and games (Inostroza, 2018).

To summarise, the overall findings imply that the students' interests are influenced by external factors such as materials and methods of teaching as well as parents, teachers and friends rather than from internal or self-driven interest and motivation. Additionally, the findings suggest that students' voices, interests and home experience are not really acknowledged by the teacher which denies the benefits recommended by Barkhuizen (1998), Breen (1989), Fanselow (1992), Garrett (2012), Kumaravadivelu (1991), Mamun (2015), Noursi (2013), Nunan (1988), Rudduck (1996) and Wiggs (2012). Most findings are supported by international studies since there has been very little research conducted into ESL struggling readers' perceptions in the Malaysian context.

5.5 Discontinuities Between Home and School

A number of discrepancies were evident between the perceptions of the ESL teacher and those of the participating parents. One notable discontinuity was that both parties had different views on homework (Li, 2004). In this study, all the parents perceived homework as the main learning activity that they conducted with their children at home. The parents also professed to be committed to the homework and expected more homework to be provided because they perceived homework as necessary both to help their children do revision with ESL reading and for the parents to communicate with the curriculum; and, crucially, as their household's main opportunity to access ESL reading resources. On the other hand, the teacher believed that homework was not essentially helpful since she assumed, based on prior experience, that parents would be unable or unwilling to cooperate to ensure the homework was done. Accordingly, the teacher rarely set homework for the students. This seemed to have a negative effect on the students' experience because the parents depended on homework as the main activity to do with their children. In addition, the involvement of other family members in supporting students with homework demonstrated that parents who were deemed incapable by the teacher could outsource the learning to other family members.

The second set of discontinuities regarded the instructional method (Li, 2004). The findings of this study revealed that in the ESL classroom the students learnt ESL reading largely by using the whole word approach. The phonics approach was not utilised by the teacher because she believed that the children were not exposed to the approach. Besides, she herself was not very confident to apply the approach within the teaching and learning sessions. In contrast, it was discovered that chanting alphabets (highlighting individual letters of alphabets) and learning to read English by using phonics instruction were among the activities conducted by the parents at home. This disjunction might have a negative effect on students' learning experiences because the child's home experience was not included by the teacher as part of the applied method. In addition, the teacher also focused on the whole class approach, whereas it was reported that the children received one-to-one support from their parents at home. Such a mismatch might pose an uncomfortable experience for the children in learning ESL. Apart from that, a few parents utilised technology as learning resources for their children's ESL learning. Similarly, all children encountered technology in their daily life by themselves, through playing games and watching cartoons. This contrasted with the classroom experience where technology was deemed inappropriate by the teacher for classroom management reasons. The exclusion of technology in the classroom might have a negative effect on the children's learning regarding ESL and their participation in the classroom. Moreover, while learning in the classroom, the questions were largely posed by the teacher as the teaching and learning focused on teacher-centred activity. In contrast, while learning at home, the children had opportunities to pose questions to their parents to get clarification on anything particular that interested them. Additionally, children have choices in relation to their learning activity, including engaging their interest towards particular cartoons, songs, food or pictures, with these often being indulged by their parents. Such a mismatch between learning at home and school is also explained in previous studies by Heath (1983) or Li (2004).

The third discontinuity concerned the lack of communication between parents and teacher (Li, 2004; Ruzane, 2013). Although the parents and teacher each seemed to be genuinely concerned with the children's ESL learning, neither party discussed the children's learning progress, difficulties and such like with the other. Efforts that the parent put, supports that the parents tried to give and the problems faced by the parents were never discussed with the teacher. The parents were also left wondering about the books that were not utilised by the teacher, the way English

was taught in the classroom, including whether English was used as a medium of instruction, the ways in which the children were being assessed at school and the ways to keep themselves updated with the children's progress. The teacher also had little knowledge about her students' home life experiences and simply assumed that the parents would be uninterested in supporting their children's ESL learning. In the Malaysian school context, parent-teacher meetings usually involve the children's class teacher who taught Malay language as a compulsory subject to the students. This class teacher is thus the principal teacher in terms of maintaining the overall performance record of the children. Thus, the parents did not have the opportunity to talk to their English teacher. That is possibly a significant reason for any misunderstandings that occurred between both parties.

5.6 Differences in Perspectives Expressed between Teacher and Students

The findings revealed that the students had positive perceptions towards English. They also expressed that they liked learning English and that they liked their teacher. In addition, the students thought that English was necessary for a variety of reasons. However, the teacher held negative viewpoints about the students in terms of their interest and participation in the classroom. The teacher perceived the students as having a low interest in learning English by observing the way they learned in the classroom. This appeared to be confirmed by the students, as they expressed difficulties and boredom through disengaged behaviour or through non-participating behaviour.

Such a disengagement the students displayed however, mirror the poor teaching technique, among others, that simply did not engage the students. For example, the teacher believed that drilling was the best instructional method to be used with the students, but the students were robustly uninterested in the excessive use of this method. Students also talked about liking other forms of activities. The students also wished to have activities in the forms of songs, games or cartoons or using their favourite books in the reading lessons. Additionally, the students' drawings also illustrated their reading experience in the classroom which centred on the routine observed in the classroom. This included reading with the teacher by using pictures, children sitting at their respective places, and the teacher standing and talking in front of the class to deliver the lessons to the students. Such a practice could also reflect the normal way of how teaching and learning is

conducted in their classroom. The teacher has always usually been perceived as the main person to teach the students, which could also lead to the passive role of the students in the classroom. As mentioned previously, the students expected to have a ‘better’ experience that included their interests, and what they did at home with their parents and family.

Having discussed the findings of the study, the next sub-section will explore the theoretical implications of the study.

5.7 Theoretical Discussion of the Findings

This section explains how the three theories discussed in (2.2) are utilised in this study to explain the socio-cultural contexts that influence children’s learning development and attainment in ESL. Particularly, this section relates the findings of the study to the cognitive and sociocultural theories of reading and to the ecological model of human development of Bronfenbrenner (1979).

From the findings, the teacher in this study entirely adopted the top-down reading model (Goodman, 1976; Prasad et al., 2016) that is in line with cognitive or psycholinguistics perspectives of reading. The focus in the lessons aimed to make sense of what was written rather than sounding out the written language (Smith, 1994). The findings also suggested that the bottom-up reading model (Gough, 1972) was completely neglected by the teacher. That is to say, the teaching of reading did not focus on the process of “building phonemic awareness, which helps discriminate sounds in English, and then moving on to learning the relationship between the sounds and letters in order to decode words” (Shin & Crandall, 2019, p.189). As the value of such a model is substantial, the lessons could not be effectively delivered to the students. In addition, combining both models as explained earlier (which is termed the interactive model) could be the best way to assist the struggling readers in this study (August & Shanahan, 2006; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000; Hakimi et al., 2014). By acknowledging and integrating the bottom-up reading model into the teacher’s present practice, students could benefit more from their learning.

Besides that, the use of instructional materials and reading texts that reflected the students' cultural background was in line with schema theory (McDonough, 1995; Harmer, 2007). For instance, the pictures employed by the teacher in each lesson could help the students activate their background knowledge or past experiences (Pardede, 2008). In addition, the teacher began the lesson by introducing the words of the day with their meanings, which could also activate the students' schema (Prasad et al., 2016). That was the only method included as an activity before reading, however, and no further discussion about the reading text was conducted through the course of the lessons (Aebersold & Field, 1997; Urquhart & Weir, 1998).

In my opinion, the strategies utilised by the teacher during the lessons might be insufficient to activate and build the students' schema. Due to insufficient schema and "coherent explanation of objects and events mentioned in a discourse" (Anderson, 1994, p.473), students might face difficulties in understanding the lessons being taught by the teacher (Mokotedi, 2012; Scott, 2001). In other words, comprehension, one main component and goal of reading might not be successfully developed. Although the teacher highlighted the comprehension elements that she sought to achieve from her teaching method, the lessons predominantly focused on the words in the sentence. The students could have benefitted more from the lessons if attention were drawn to whole sentences or text. Apart from that, being able to pronounce the words correctly did not necessarily secure understanding among the students. From my observation there were students who could read some words when asked by their teachers, but they could not complete the written task correctly. This suggests that the students had inadequate comprehension to figure out the meaning of sentences or texts that they had read as the focus was given mainly to their oral language practice.

The findings also imply that the students' sociocultural background was not fully integrated into the teaching and learning. Although the use of reading texts and instructional materials were pertinent to the students' cultural setting, and could assist activate the students' schema, the teacher did not incorporate some of the students' preferred activities and home activities into the teaching and learning. In schema theory, it is essential to be aware of what the students' previous experiences entail or what the students take along to a new experience (Pardede, 2008). Similarly, Vygotsky (1978), in his social constructivist theory, has argued that scientific concepts need to be

built based on everyday concepts. In other words, the academic knowledge that the children are expected to acquire at school needs to be built based on the students' personal experiences that they gained outside school.

Furthermore, according to Vygotsky (1978) in his social constructivist theory, learning is a social process that accentuates the roles of other people such as teachers, family members and friends in mediating the learning process (Moll, 1990; Ebrahimi, 2015). The findings of this study suggest that the students have limited opportunities to learn as they are positioned in a low attaining class in which most of the students share similar issues in terms of reading attainment, motivation and behaviour. This means that the students might not be able to learn from one another, to communicate with each other and build up their knowledge. The students in the study had scarce opportunities for teacher-student or student-student interactions as the main focus was on drilling of language items, specifically in teaching vocabulary. In addition to that, the students were not exposed to many learning opportunities at home.

Apart from infrequent learning activities that transpired, and the limited capacity of English that the parents possessed, the students did not have extensive literacy resources to assist their learning process. In social constructivism, it is argued that knowledge construction happens between people and social environments (Vygotsky, 1978). That is to say, students' knowledge is reliant on communications or collaborations with other people and their environments prior to the internalisation process occurring (Amineh & Asl, 2015; Roth, 2000). Moreover, "the opportunities that learners have, impacts on how literacy is achieved" (Pillay, 2018, p.35). As a result, the students might not be able to develop their reading ability further because they had inadequate support from more knowledgeable people surrounding them, namely the teacher, parents and friends, as well as from other tools such as the learning resources available at home.

Furthermore, the findings also revealed that the teacher applied the whole class approach and there were few opportunities for the students to interact with the teacher, or each other. According to social constructivist theory, children function as active learners (Lee, 2016; Schunk, 2008). They learn through communication with others which could be more likely to happen if they are

positioned in small groups and receive scaffolding on their identified current knowledge, or ZPD in the classroom (Wiggs, 2012).

Additionally, the students in this study expressed their interest towards English. This seemed to be influenced by their teacher, parents, friends and particular instructional methods in the classroom. This discovery is in line with constructivist theory which asserts that the people and environment around students affect students' motivations towards learning (Harmer, 2007; Li et al., 2019). Furthermore, students in this study also recognised themselves as poor readers and thought that they could not possibly be able to read until they achieved a certain quality, attained a certain mark in exams or moved on to the next level in school. Such a negative connotation advocates that the reading experience is socially connected, shaped by the teacher's opinions or the school system, and that this affects the way they perceived themselves. This finding is also in accordance with social constructivist theory which highlights that motivations are influenced by what surrounds the students. In short, the findings of this study are aligned to social constructivist theory: the students' actions, perceptions and achievements are products of the social process that they experience (Pritchard & Woolard, 2010).

Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of human development (1979) puts an emphasis on the importance of the contextual elements within which children develop. Specifically, children's development occurs within the context of a range of interdependent interactions between the social and contextual elements that surround children. Various individuals, parties and institutions play a role in influencing children's growth. Bronfenbrenner articulates this by conceptualising different levels of the surrounding ecosystem, namely microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In addition to that, Bronfenbrenner also believed that children are active players in their own development.

In Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of human development, the microsystem is the innermost circle in which children live (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Children spend most of their time with multiple individuals directly connected to them in the immediate environment. These include parents, family, teachers and friends who the children frequently meet. The interactions that happen between children and these individuals will influence how those children develop. For

instance, the parents in this study faced many challenges, ranging from time constraints, insufficient knowledge and low confidence to assist their children's ESL learning at home. In addition to that, children had scarce access to ESL learning materials at home and little opportunity to use electronic gadgets such as tablet computers as an educational tool to learn English. Due to such circumstances, children lacked exposure to English and had insufficient support at home. Altogether, these challenges in the microsystem affect the children's ESL reading development.

Besides the home, school is another immediate setting or microsystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) since children also spend a lot of time at school. In this setting, children socialise with other children and are educated through interaction with adults (Coleman, 2013). This study revealed that many of the teacher's teaching practices were not effective at promoting reading acquisition (e.g. Dubeck et al., 2012). This condition could put the children's ESL learning development at risk.

The way children react to individuals in their microsystem will also affect the way the children are treated in return. This is in line with Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006), who state that "force characteristics" which encompass children's motivation and perseverance, and "resource characteristics", which include the privilege of getting support with English at home through materials and help from individuals, can all influence students' experience in their microsystems. For instance, in this study, children were reluctant to get assistance from their parents because they had a lack of "force characteristics" that might stem from the lack of "resource characteristics", resulting ultimately in the non-cooperative behaviour reported by the parents.

The mesosystem in Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of human development (1979) has been described as "[A]n individual's relationships in every setting are impacted by relationships in other settings in that individual's life. There is . . . a chain of activity that individuals drag with them across microsystems" (Slesnick et al., 2007, p. 1238). In this study, two microsystems were identified as the influential factors in children's learning development, namely teacher and parents. The partnership between these two parties in two settings, school and home, have a significant impact on children's learning growth. Bronfenbrenner also refers to such an interrelation (1979) as "inter-setting communications" (p. 210) "through which dialogues are maintained and

knowledge is exchanged” (Luff, 2020, p. 19). In this study, it is discovered that the parent-teacher relationship was not established well. The lack of communication between both parties left the teacher making judgments about the parents that were probably erroneous. In particular, the teacher believed that parents were not interested in their children’s learning and lacked understanding of the current education system. On the other hands, parents wondered about the teacher’s teaching practices in the ESL classroom and did not know how to meet the ESL teacher. Thus, the children’s mesosystem was not functioning well to support learning development.

Furthermore, the exosystem is another level of Bronfenbrenner’s model of human development (1979) that influences the students’ ESL learning growth, although indirectly. Children do not participate directly in the social systems that comprise the exosystem. For example in this study, the teacher faced a number of challenges with the policies that have been set by the different organisations in the government such as the Ministry of Education and District Education Office. In particular, the teacher had little knowledge about the phonics method of instruction, had not received teaching aids that were developed in the course she attended previously and had no teaching assistants to help her in the classroom. Moreover, the teacher also talked about the inefficient assessment system, with examinations held too close to each other, affecting both students and the teacher. All these challenges reported by the teacher transpire in the children’s exosystem, as it involves certain agencies who the teacher deals with. Such challenges hampered the teacher’s capacity to develop more effective teaching practices in the ESL struggling readers’ classroom.

Another example from the exosystem level that has indirect influence on children’s developmental outcomes is the parents’ workplace. For instance, most parents in this study had to handle busy working hours in daily life, which made it difficult for them to spend quality time with their children. The parents’ working hours flow from their workplaces’ policies, and although these do not have any direct relationship to the children, it still has a negative impact on those children’s ESL learning development.

Finally, the macrosystem is also part of the Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model of human development (1979), and involves the societal and cultural beliefs of particular subjects (Hayes et

al, 2017; Krishnan, 2010). Although the macrosystem is the most distal level of this ecological theory, it is undeniable that macrosystem still has a big influence on children's learning development (Thor 2016). For example, in this study, students' perceptions and definitions about successful readers are shaped by their surroundings. They relate being a good reader to getting high marks and good grades that are necessarily achieved through examinations. Such a belief could inculcate negative self-perceptions within the children, affecting their ESL learning development. Additionally, the impact of religious practices of teaching the Quran has guided a default learning method of reading in the ESL classroom. Specifically, the teacher employed drilling techniques extensively that the students were not really interested in. Such a circumstance might hinder the children's ESL reading development.

5.8 Implications

The discussion in this chapter suggests some implications of this study for the system surrounding struggling readers in the Malaysian context. One needs to be cautious, however, about the applicability of these implications for other parts of the country which might experience different issues (Dubeck et al., 2012). This is because findings from a case study such as this are not meant to be generalisable; after all, they are tied to the experiences of individuals who are in a particular setting.

In this section, I offer the relevant implications of these findings, which are divided into three categories: implications for the home-school relationship, implications for educational policy, and; implications for educators in understanding struggling readers.

5.8.1 Implications for the Home-School Relationship

The findings of this study suggest that the home-school relationship needs to be strengthened and reinforced. Although such a partnership has been in place in Malaysian schools for many years, in my opinion a 'true' understanding of the concept and a 'true' implementation is still in its infancy, and normally restricted to the PTA, parent-teacher meetings or raising funds for schools, which is usually undertaken annually (Harji, 2016).

In this study, while all of the parents showed an interest in their children's ESL literacy learning, they also reported circumstances that impeded their ability to participate more in their children's learning. I would therefore like to draw upon the suggestions put forward by Arias and Morillo-Campbell (2008) regarding how parents can be supported to get involved with their children's ESL literacy learning. Based on Epstein's (2001) six typologies of parental involvement, Arias and Morillo-Campbell (2008, p. 13) propose several ways in which parents of children whose first language is not English can be facilitated. These recommendations are adapted to suit the needs of struggling readers in the Malaysian context. The suggestions include:

- 1- Helping parents with parenting skills and with ways to establish a home environment that supports the learning of ESL reading;
- 2- Establishing two-way communication to inform parents about school programmes and students' progress in ESL reading;
- 3- Getting parents involved as volunteers or audiences in teaching episodes in the classroom;
- 4- Generating realistic ideas on how parents can get involved with their children's ESL reading activities at home, including suitable books needed for children;
- 5- Getting parents to be more involved in school decision making through the PTA; and
- 6- Cooperating with relevant parties, such as non-government organisations, to support school ESL reading programmes, including support for parents.

Arias and Morillo-Campbell (2008) also suggest the integration of parents' cultural backgrounds into the above recommendations. This can be done by empowering parents, as also stated by Torres and Castañeda-Peña (2016). Teachers should perceive parents as facilitators in the process of learning the language, and value the possible parental assistance with students' home learning. Teachers can also invent pedagogical spaces and take parents on board so that parents may develop their self-confidence and turn out to be more valuable in the process of ESL learning.

Secondly, the school party can support families through education programmes for parents, an aspect further highlighted by Arias and Morillo-Campbell (2008). In the Malaysian context, Majid et al. (2005) believed that there is evident need for a family literacy programme, both in order to impart parents with relevant knowledge, and so that parents' own practices, skills and aptitudes at

home can also be integrated and strengthened. For example, in this study, schools can capitalise on parental roles concerning homework (Torres and Castañeda-Peña, 2016). Moreover, parents can be enlightened that the use of technology should be perceived as an educational tool rather than simply an entertainment tool. A few scholars such as Goldenberg and Gallimore (1991), Harji (2016) and Koskinen et al. (2000) have explained that involving parents in the children's ESL can be done by sending literacy resources such as storybooks to be read together, as this has proved to be significant to the students' reading attainment. Other practices outlined in previous studies such as reading billboards or cereal boxes can also be suggested as part of the learning activities at home. By expanding the parents' understanding of the various ways in which they can engage with their children's ESL learning, they would feel that ESL learning is not about simply doing homework and reading books. As such, they can make the most out of their limited time with the children.

Thirdly, communication between both parties that highlights the linguistically and culturally appropriate practice is also essential. Although teacher and parents share the same language, the communication process between both parties can further be improved. From my experience as a parent and as a schoolteacher, the parent-teacher meeting which is carried out in the Malaysian schools normally has a session whereby a class teacher hands students' academic results to the parents. Very rarely are parents advised how they can help with their children's learning at home. This is because teachers are not trained to include discussions on parental participation in their children's learning. The meeting could be performed more effectively if it became a platform for parents and teachers to listen to each other's expectations and exchange ideas, as well as a platform to explain practical ways on how family members can support students at home. In fact, this agenda should become a priority in efforts to promote parental involvement in children's ESL literacy learning. Through a strong collaboration, teachers can learn more about the children, which will assist their interactions with children and teaching and learning in the classroom (Kirkwood, 2016). When the quality of this cooperation improves, it offers many advantages to all parties including teachers, parents and students (Hampden-Thompson & Galindo, 2017). Further, by facilitating a dialogue between parents and teachers, both parties can "find ways of understanding each other's problems and supporting each other effectively" (Ruzane, 2013, p.132).

Furthermore, in the Malaysian context, during parent-teacher meetings, other subject teachers such as the ESL teacher are not present because they are usually in other classrooms, functioning as a class teacher to meet other parents. Besides such formal meetings, non-formal meetings can therefore be arranged to generate opportunities for parents to communicate with their children's ESL teachers (Malik, Rafiq, Chaudhry & Fatima, 2019). Other than face-to-face meetings, interactions can also be done through notes given to the children or by using phone calls or social media applications (Malik et al., 2019).

Since parents reported that time constraints were one of the challenges they faced, teachers can discuss with parents the best and most practical ways that they can become involved with their children's learning. Among the suggestions that can be made for parents is to involve other family members to assist the children in learning. Teachers can also discuss with parents about how to make the most of their time with children to highlight how learning can possibly happen more regularly or consistently at home.

5.8.2 Implications for Educational Policy

From the findings, it is evident that more support should be provided to teachers, and this could take many forms. For example, professional development courses on areas that need improvement, such as phonemic awareness and phonics instructions, sight word knowledge, developing comprehension thorough suitable strategies, getting into students' background knowledge, making the most of the instructional materials, and classroom management are all essential for teachers of young struggling ESL readers aiming to enhance reading attainment. Schools in Malaysia can also adopt "training days" program as normally conducted by schools in the UK a few times a year. Apart from that, provision of online resources (webinars, suggested lesson plans, learning resources) can be made available formally by the MOE to cater for the teacher's needs. It is also important for the MOE to make amendments to the content of teacher training modules to provide more efficient and better quality teaching.

Moreover, guidance on how the particular methods applied in this study such as drilling and code switching can be integrated into the ESL classroom and used more effectively during teaching and

learning also needs to be considered by the MOE (Azman, 2006). In addition, the whole-word method that is mainly employed by the teacher should be integrated into curriculum planning as parts of a teaching technique as almost all parents of this study adopted such a technique at home. Similarly, teachers are more familiar with such an approach. In addition, a mentoring system among teachers or colleagues at school can also be established to help teachers deliver the instructions effectively. By equipping teachers with such support, it is hoped that they will be able to successfully deliver the instructions aligned with the methods that are “understood to promote reading acquisitions” to children (Dubeck et al., 2012).

The findings revealed that the absence of personnel who are specialised in teaching struggling readers, and large class sizes, have been challenges affecting the teaching and learning of struggling readers in the ESL classroom. As a school-teacher myself, I noticed that it is normal for a Malaysian classroom to have about thirty students or more with one teacher in each class. Although it is not easy to reduce the class size, the MOE can look into how support can be given to the teachers. For example, by providing teaching assistants to large classes. Alternatively, by assigning other teachers to teach together in the same classroom consisting of students who need more attention, such as the struggling readers in this study. This can probably be done at least once or twice a week. By having more teachers in the team, assisted by the school administrators they can possibly organise suitable programmes at the school that include parents.

Besides that, encouragement should be given to teachers to carry out more research in the classroom to study how effective the methodology they apply in the classroom is. By doing so, improvements can be made based on the need analysis of the students. Professional development courses for teachers can include training on research methodology to assist teachers conducting research on a classroom level. Additionally, in order to have better home-school connections as elaborated in the previous sub-section (5.8.1), teachers should also be exposed and trained with the best possible strategies to engage with the parents and the best possible ways to have fruitful discussions with the parents, which can also be integrated into their professional development course or included in the curriculum of student-teachers in teacher training colleges (Zhong, 2011).

Apart from that, it was also found that participating parents never visited the public library. As suggested by Zhong (2011), public libraries, which serve as a community institution, can collaborate with schools to give information to parents on the services they provide by disseminating leaflets or giving talks to parents. Workshops and seminars can also be carried out for parents to educate them about the home-work balance too. Such efforts could help parents to increase their understanding and awareness towards the benefits of visiting libraries.

5.8.3 Implications for Educators in Understanding Struggling Readers

The findings of this study suggest that it is essential for teachers of struggling readers to know the theories of language learning embedded in the teaching methodologies, alongside taking into consideration individual child differences, dealing with the particular needs of young students and employing suitable techniques that promote the reading development of those students (Kırkgöz, 2018; Mule, 2014). Long-term consequences might interrupt students' learning paths if students do not receive effective instructions. Stanovich (1986) terms this occurrence as “the Matthew Effect”, demonstrating that “children who experience reading problems tend to fall further behind their peers over time” (Eveleigh, 2010, p.1).

Besides that, the struggling readers have particular dispositions towards their ESL learning experiences. For instance, in this study the children express their interests in selective reading instructions and they behave in particular ways in the reading lessons. Listening to and learning from children is therefore paramount (Frankel & Brooks, 2018). Stewart (2015) suggested that an instructional approach could focus on listening to the students rather than constructing assumptions regarding them. Neglecting students' voices will not benefit the students' education (Learned, 2016). He also believed that mistakenly perceiving students' stress as avoiding work and having low motivation will only serve to further intensify the struggling readers' deficient positioning. Taylor (2012) argued that teachers need to make an effort to inspire and involve students in their own learning. Such an effort can only be done by first understanding the students' interests and recognising students' voices in the learning process. The students' voices can be informally sought, in a manner focused on the way the children feel, about the lessons that they learned, or the activities they had in the classroom.

Apart from that, struggling readers may also experience certain types of ESL activity with their parents at home which are evident in my study. Among others are doing homework, reading a picture dictionary and watching cartoons. The students have specific familial circumstances and most of them engage with the television and video games. They also had particular materials that may never have been thought about by the teacher. Such a diversity requires the teacher and school to understand the struggling readers' backgrounds and personalities so that the needs of these students will be identified.

Getting to know the struggling readers more closely will decrease the likelihood of the teacher simply classing the children as problematic due to their or their family's perceived failures. In this respect, Frankel and Brooks (2018) recommended that educators "build from the resources and interests that readers already possess" (p.112). The readers' present language and learning and first-hand assets need to be identified by the educators. They also need to find the reasons why and the ways in which these assets can be used in the classroom (Brooks, 2017; Kelly, 2016; Majors, 2014; Rowsell & Kendrick, 2013). Kuchah (2019) further stated that "classroom practices, such as those promoting interaction and fun, need to be rooted in the sociocultural realities of learners and, at best, elicited from them" (p.83). Educators play a big role in providing support for policies and practices to facilitate the struggling readers and their family members by recognising the way students are supported at home and the way the students perceive their experience in ESL reading.

Additionally, the teacher can set attainable goals for the students to achieve in their ESL reading. This can help students to feel that they are successful and may acknowledge themselves as good readers (Wiggs, 2012). Furthermore, such a practice could foster the students' positive self-perceptions if they achieve success repeatedly (Wiggs, 2012).

Having discussed the implications of the study, the following chapter elaborates on the conclusions of the study.

CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This thesis explores the experiences of ESL struggling readers from the standpoints of a teacher, parents and students. In order to “produce a manageable and achievable research task” (Silverman, 2013, p.96), I focused on six students, their parents and the class English teacher. I utilised interviews, focus groups, observations and document collection to garner information from the participants. I present here a full report of the participating students’ learning experiences by investigating the teacher’s practices, parents’ practices and students’ viewpoints towards their ESL learning experience. In this chapter, I present the summary of the study by reviewing each chapter, followed by considering the limitations of the study, recommendations for future studies, while highlighting the contribution of the study. I also include the reflections that I have made in the course of my PhD journey. To explain the issues of social, cultural and contextual elements surrounding struggling readers of English as a second language in the Malaysian classroom, I utilised the cognitive or psycholinguistic perspectives of reading and the sociocultural perspectives of reading to highlight ways in which the teacher and parents work with struggling readers at school and home as well as the struggling readers’ own thoughts regarding their experiences of learning in the ESL classroom. I also utilised Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model of human development to understand the way the environmental contexts interact to influence struggling readers’ experiences of reading.

What I present in this study is based on my understanding and interpretation of the findings and my familiarity and know-how with the topics, research practices and applicable literature. Hence, the ‘story’ that I share in this study is not the only possible explanation of the findings because I have been influenced by my own perspectives and judgments as well as my social and cultural positioning. I also construct the interpretations together with my research participants, thus making the whole process of putting forth the arguments in line with the constructivism, my research paradigm. Although the findings from this qualitative research could not be widely generalised, they offer an overview of ESL struggling readers’ experiences by looking at how the parents and the teacher worked with those readers, the challenges that both parties experienced and the

perceptions that the students had about ESL, about ESL reading lessons and the challenges they faced in learning, in one suburban school in Malaysia.

6.2 Summary of the Study

To recap, this thesis is divided into six chapters and each chapter will be summarised in turn in this section. The study begins with the Introduction section or Chapter One, outlining the background and justification of the study, research objectives and research questions, the significance of the study, terminology, overview of the thesis and context of the study. The Literature Review in Chapter Two is divided into five main headings. It started with examining in detail the major learning theories and their relevance to ESL learning. It also included Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of human development and their connections to the children's ESL learning development. The section next presented a review of literature related to the school-based ESL teaching. This section incorporated the aims of reading followed by recommended methods to teach young struggling readers, approaches to reading, English language teaching methodologies, instructional materials and challenges facing the teacher. Then, the thesis continues with a similar review of literature looking at parental contributions highlighting the components of parental involvement, the influence of cultural, individual and contextual elements on the parental roles in children's learning, and the challenges facing the parents. After that, students' characteristics and engagement of the ESL lessons were also reviewed, encompassing perceptions of ESL, challenges facing students and perceptions regarding the classroom learning experience. In Chapter Three I detail the research paradigm that I adopt in this study as well as from the research design and research methodology. I include participants' recruitment process and ethical considerations before explaining about the trustworthiness criteria of this study. I also explain the data analysis procedure by describing the process of transcription, the stages of data analysis and the process of translation. Chapter Four sets out the findings in respect to each research question. The discussion of the findings is presented in Chapter Five, and Chapter Six concludes the study by putting forth the limitations, recommendations and contribution of the study and ends with reflections.

6.3 Limitations of the Study

All studies face limitations and this study is no exception. Firstly, the study is based on a small case study within a single suburban primary school. As such, the findings from this study cannot be reflected as being accurately representative of primary school level ESL struggling readers all over Malaysia. Nonetheless, the findings can enrich the existing literature on issues related to struggling readers for whom English is their second language, a group which is immensely under-researched in Malaysia. Though I acknowledge the benefits of having a large-scale study, there remains a need for in-depth work such as this. The diverse interpretation of the perceptions and involvement of parents and students' with regard to the struggling ESL readers' experience may not been disclosed without the potential depth in a case study of the type described in this thesis (Wyse, Sugrue, Fentiman & Moon, 2014). Once these interpretations have been identified, however, they can point the way to areas that could later be examined through more large-scale research so as to establish to what extent the issues identified in this school are, or are not, replicated elsewhere in Malaysia

Time constraints were another limitation of this study. Due to a few issues during data collection, I limited the time frame to ten weeks. Prior to the study, I had been looking for potential schools on the Internet and contacted several schools deemed fit for the purposes of my research. After several phone calls made to the selected schools, one headmaster from a particular school was happy to permit me to conduct my research at his school. However, after my first visit to the school, the teacher who was working with the struggling readers refused to participate because she had been overwhelmed with other duties and therefore could not commit to the research. She also said that the school had a tight schedule that would make it difficult for the researcher to carry out classroom observations. From this experience, I learnt that even though the headmaster is in control of the school, the study would not be fruitful if the prospective participant teacher did not consent to the study. I therefore had to spend more time to find another school and gain consent from the headmaster and English teacher of the school before conducting the study. I needed to make an appropriate plan to ensure that I could collect my data within the set time frame. Although the study can only be carried out in a certain time frame, as requested by the headmaster, good cooperation from the participants combined with research planning allowed me to gather enough

data to inform my analysis. If I had spent more time within the school, however, I could have done more classroom observations and thus generated more data.

The third limitation of this study is that it did not involve home visits or observations of children's home reading experiences. The findings were obtained mainly from the parents' interviews. By asking participating parents to recount examples and provide frequencies, however, parents were aware of the need to reflect thoroughly on their responses (Lynch, 2008).

The final limitation of this study is the constructivist paradigm that I adopted as the lens by which this research allows different interpretations of the findings. There could have been "other ways of hearing, understanding, and interpreting" responses from the participants (Ferrara, 2005, p.230). Different people have different opinions and might not agree with the way I approached the study and analysed the findings. Since the focus of this study was to explore and identify the individual thoughts, practices and experiences, all of which are subjective (Cohen et al., 2007; Yahya, 2014), similar studies carried out by other researchers with similar participants could yield different understandings and findings. Having explained the study limitations, the next section will suggest a few recommendations for future research.

6.4 Recommendations for Future Research

The findings of this study suggest a few opportunities for future research. Firstly, the data from the study was only collected from struggling readers (and readers who were not necessarily improving). Future work should repeat this study including a broader range of students: those who were not struggling and those who had been struggling but who had improved so that they were not struggling anymore. Such a broader set of data would allow researchers to understand more clearly what practice needs to be encouraged (i.e. in contrast to my present research which 'just' compared the findings in respect to actual practices with the evidence of the effectiveness of those practices gained from other research). More studies need to be carried out to explore how ESL children can succeed in learning English and what are effective teaching practices to facilitate the children's learning too. Additionally, "while this study gives a window into how parental involvement in education is enacted in daily life and how it might be helpful to children, it is not

able to link these practices to each child's classroom performance" (Zwass, 2014, p.31). Future studies can therefore investigate aspects of parental involvement that affect the reading success of struggling readers in the Malaysian ESL classroom.

Besides that, the findings suggest that there is a lack of connection between home and school. It would therefore be beneficial for future studies to explore such issues in more detail. Such research could include the feasibility of the practice of a wider home-school connection in ESL Malaysia primary classrooms or the influence of home-school connections towards ESL children's attainment which can hardly be found in the literature.

6.5 Contribution of the Study

The substantial contribution of this study to advancing knowledge is its attempt to address the social, cultural and contextual factors that influence struggling ESL primary school struggling readers' learning development by proposing solutions for practice. This study is the first (to the best of my knowledge) that involved three main stakeholders of the education system in Malaysia encapsulating the microsystems of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of human development, namely the social systems that are nearest to the children's daily lives. This is explained through the examination of the relationship of the children with their parents and the teacher (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Particularly, the focus is placed on the under-researched ESL Malaysian primary school students and their parents. My study has also examined the ways the teacher and parents worked with the struggling readers and the students' engagement towards their ESL learning experience, highlighting their involvement, challenges and perceptions. Besides that, from the findings of this study, I also revealed the children's mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem issues. All of these factors create a dysfunctional microsystem. The Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of human development (1979) highlights on the interconnectivity of the layers of systems. The flawed in all levels of systems drill down to affect the children's learning development. Such a discovery creates a rich holistic understanding of the total learning environment of these struggling readers and, through this, leads me to identify implications for the home-school relationship, educational policy and educators in understanding the struggling readers.

The findings from this study can enrich the educators, school administrators and policy makers' understanding pertaining to the issues affecting struggling readers in the ESL Malaysian classroom with the hope that there will be an improvement of practice in the system surrounding struggling readers in the upcoming years. Besides that, in order to make the study more visible, I aim to disseminate the findings of this study through journal articles or conference publications.

6.6 Reflections

Throughout my PhD journey, I associated my dream to get this thesis accomplished with that of Stake (1995) who perceived the purpose of research "as not necessarily to map and conquer the world but to sophisticate the beholding of it" (p.43). What I understand by this quotation is that a PhD thesis must be 'good enough' to make a contribution to academia and not necessarily need to be able to solve the world's problems. Although my study involves a small number of participants, it does make a contribution to the field being studied and I believe that no contribution is too small. Silverman (2013) asserts that "the point of qualitative research is to say a lot about a little" (p. 328). By having a small sample size I hope I have successfully answered the research questions and discussed them in a rigorous way.

By accomplishing this study, I also attempted to detach myself from looking at the struggling readers' children and their parents as a people with very little interests in education. My experiences as a school teacher influenced my initial position on how I looked at the parents' ability to work with their children. It was difficult to get over from the notion of doubting, "Do those parents care about their children?" However, undertaking the study has shifted my paradigm into a broader way of looking at the parents' practices and efforts to get involved with their children's learning in English. I normally perceived low-attaining children as not learning or having parents who do not have any interest in English, a language which is foreign to them. I started to understand things differently by talking to the parents and getting closer to them. I discovered that the parents were interested in their children's learning with some limitations. I was so touched with one of the parent participants who genuinely showed her interest in her child's learning by asking through WhatsApp messages (a social media application) my opinion about

suitable books for her child. She also asked me to accompany her to the book shop to choose suitable materials for her child. Similarly, by listening to the students' voices, I understood that these students loved to learn English and preferred to learn it in particular ways despite their struggles.

Apart from that, reporting in detail on what I did and what happened throughout the research journey showed me how detailed the process of researching was. I also learned to treat my participants as invaluable human beings as they played a huge role in the content of this thesis. They also took part in this study voluntarily and did not receive any monetary benefits. My positionality and interest in carrying out this study flourished and I became more empathetic towards these struggling readers' families too. I undertook a course to get certified in phonics instruction as I aim to develop family literacy programmes with those underprivileged in my home country once I finish my PhD.

During the data collection phase method it became evident that the participating parents were learning about their child's English reading progress, including their difficulties in reading, through me as a researcher, rather than directly through the school or teacher. I had not anticipated this situation prior to the data collection but as it became apparent and as I reflected on the interview with the teacher that I conducted previously, I came to understand that whilst the school had established a policy that parents would be informed about their children's English learning progress through an online portal, in practice, some parents were not familiar with this system and were not using it.

In respect to how I then responded, when I was engaging with participating parents and they expressed a lack of awareness about their children's English reading attainment, I attempted to move the conversation on, tried to sound natural and did not interfere with the parents' responses. I did this because I was worried that I might influence the parents' views on the issue, and I did not want to prejudice the relationship between the parents and the teacher. Reflecting upon this subsequently, however, I have come to feel that it would have been better for me to discuss this issue with the teacher; in other words, to inform the teacher that the parents did not know about their children's English reading performance at school, suggesting that the teacher and/or the

school generally might want to consider how that information reached parents, and whether that process could be improved. In this case, I feel that my initial response was probably not in the best interests of the children, and this should have been my primary concern. In other words, on the basis that parents need to have a comprehensive understanding of their child's progress if they are to be able to support that child to improve, I should have notified the school that this communication was not working. This would have had the additional advantage of tactfully alerting the teacher and the school that parents did appear to be interested in their children's learning; which the findings in general suggested the school was not fully cognisant of.

Finally, conducting my research qualitatively has increased my understanding towards research methods. As I did my master's degree by using a quantitative approach, conducting qualitative research was a little challenging to me. I was thinking with a quantitative mindset. By that I mean that I seemed to want to pin down, very tightly, a pre-existing theoretical framework, and some kind of 'accepted' point by point analysis process. That pushed me into difficulties because it was essentially impossible with the kind of qualitative rich data, derived from a unique and complex context that I dealt with. By reading a lot of references, talking to my supervisor and other PhD students and watching related videos on qualitative studying, I developed a significant amount of knowledge on how qualitative study can be performed, analysed and interpreted.

On the whole, every individual experiences different things in life with regards to their education, carrier or social spheres (Frewan, 2015). Such an experience influences one's thoughts, emotions, and beliefs of one's life. For me, the PhD experience has influenced me positively and moulded me into a more critical and determined person.

REFERENCES

- Abrar, M. (2016, October 1-2). *Teaching English problems: An analysis of EFL primary school teachers in Kuala Tungkal*. Paper presented at the 16th Indonesian Scholars International Convention, University of Birmingham, United Kingdom. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Mukhlash_Abrar2/publication/314280291_TEACHING_ENGLISH_PROBLEMS_AN_ANALYSIS_OF_EFL_PRIMARY_SCHOOL_TEACHERS_IN_KUALA_TUNGKAL/links/58bef13392851cd83aa123cf/TEACHING-ENGLISH-PROBLEMS-AN-ANALYSIS-OF-EFL-PRIMARY-SCHOOL-TEACHERS-IN-KUALA-TUNGKAL.pdf
- Adams, M. J. (1990). *Beginning to read: Thinking and learning about print*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Adheisat, M.A.A. (2014). *Obstacles in parental involvement facing Jordanian public Kindergartens*. Unpublished PhD thesis, Universiti Sains Malaysia.
- Adler, P.A., & Adler, P. (1994). Observational techniques. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.). *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 377-392). London: Sage.
- Aebersold, J. A. & Field, M. L. (1997). *From reader to reading teacher: Issues and strategies for second language classrooms*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ahmad, S. Z., & Mutalib, A.A. (2015). Preliminary study: An investigation on learning assistance requirement among low achievers in primary schools. *International Journal of Computer Applications*, 114(2), 48-54.
- Ahmad, Z. B. A., Lockards, C. A., Bee, O. J., Leinbach, T. R. (2020). *Malaysia*. Retrieved April 14, 2020, from britannica.com/place/Malaysia.

- Alawiyah, N.L. (2014). Tadris maharah al-qira'ah fi dlau al-madkhal al-bina'i alijtima'i [Teaching reading skills in the light of social constructivism] at *Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab dan Kebahasaaraban*, 1(2), 283-292. doi: 10.15408/a.v1i2.1145, pp. 282-292.
- Alderson, P. (2004). Ethics. In S. Fraser, V. Lewis, S. Ding, M. Kellett & C. Robinson (Eds.). *Doing research with children and young people* (pp. 97-112). London: SAGE.
- Alderson, P., & Morrow, V. (2004) *Ethics, social research and consulting with children and young people*. Ilford: Barnardo's
- Allington, R. L., Johnston, P. H. (2000). What do we know about effective fourth-grade teachers and their classrooms? In C.M. Roller (Ed.), *Learning to teach reading: Setting the research agenda* (pp. 150-165). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Alvarez, M. C., Armstrong, S. L., Elish-Piper, L., Matthews, M. W., & Risko, V. J. (2009). Deconstructing the construct of 'struggling reader': Standing still or transforming expectations and instruction? *American Reading Forum Annual Yearbook*, 29. Retrieved from http://americanreadingforum.org/yearbook/yearbooks/09_yearbook/Alvarez%20and%20Armstrong.pdf
- Amadioha, S.W. (2009). The importance of instructional materials in our schools, an overview. *New Era Research Journal of Human, Educational and Sustainable Development*, 2, 61-63.
- Ammenwerth, E., Iller, C. and Mansmann, U. (2003). Can evaluation studies benefit from triangulation? A case study. *International Journal of Medical Informatics*, 70(2), 237-248.
- Amineh, R.J. and Asl, H.D. (2015). Review of constructivism and social constructivism. *Journal of Social Sciences, Literature and Languages*, 1(1), 9-16.
- Anderson, N. J. (1999). *Exploring second language reading: issues and strategies*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

- Anderson, R. (1994). Role of the reader's schema in comprehension, learning, and memory. In R.B. Ruddell, M.R. Ruddell, & H. Singer (Eds.), *Theoretical models and processes of reading* (p. 469–482). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Anderson, R., and P. D. Pearson. (1988). A schema theoretic view of basic processes in reading comprehension. In Carrell, P.L., Devine, J., & Eskey, D.E. (Eds.), *Interactive approaches to second language reading* (pp. 37–55). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Anfara, V. A., Jr. (2008). Theoretical frameworks. In L. Given (Ed.), *The SAGE Encyclopedia of qualitative research methods* (pp. 870-874). Thousands Oak, CA: Sage.
- Anney, V.N. (2014). Ensuring the quality of the findings of qualitative research: Looking at trustworthiness criteria. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies*, 5(2), 272-281.
- Anselmo, G. & Williams, M. (2012, March 29-31). *Does code switching work for young children? A case study of English language learners*. Paper presented at The National Conference On Undergraduate Research, Weber State University, Ogden Utah. Retrieved from <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/9fff/133a93fed9935ae5b5eca98de36782059586.pdf>
- Antwi, S.K., & Hamza, K. (2015). Qualitative and quantitative research paradigms in business research: A philosophical reflection. *European Journal of Business and Management*, 7(3), 217-226.
- Anyiendah, M.S. (2017). Challenges faced by teachers when teaching English in public primary in Kenya. *Frontiers in Education*, 2(13), 1-3. doi: 10.3389/feduc.2017.00013
- Apandi, N.A.A. & Nor, F.M. (2019). Teachers' perspectives towards equipping pupils with phonological awareness to improve English proficiency. *LSP International Journal*, 6(1), 55–67.

- Araos, M.J.I. (2015). *Examining challenges and complexities in the Chilean young learners classroom: A case of teaching English as a foreign language* (PhD thesis, The University of Sheffield, England). Retrieved from <http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/11397/>
- Archer, A. L., & Hughes, C. A. (2011). *Explicit instruction: effective and efficient teaching*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Arias, M.B. & Morillo-Campbell, M. (2008). *Promoting ELL parental involvement: Challenges in contested times*. Tempe: Education Policy Research Unit. Arizona State University.
- Arikan, A. (2011, April 27-29). *A small-scale study of primary school English Language teacher's classroom activities and problems*. Paper presented at the International Conference on New Trends in Education and their Implications, Antalya, Turkey. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED519176.pdf>
- Arnold, W., & Rixon, S. (2008). Materials for teaching English to young learners. In B. Tomlinson (ed.). *English Language Teaching Materials: A critical review* (pp. 38-58). London: Bloomsbury.
- Au, K.H. (1993). *Literacy instruction in multicultural settings*. New York: Harcourt Brace.
- Au, K.H. (1998). Social constructivism and the school literacy learning of students of diverse background. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 30(2), 297-319.
- Au, K.H. (2006). *Multicultural issues and literacy achievement*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Auerbach, C. F., and Silverstein, L. B. (2003). *Qualitative data: An introduction to coding and analysis*. New York: New York University Press.
- August, D., & Shanahan, T. (Eds.). (2006). *Developing literacy in second language learners: Report of the national literacy panel on language, minority children, and youth*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

- Aukerman, M. & Schuldt, L.C. (2015). Children's perceptions of their reading ability and epistemic roles in monologically and dialogically organized bilingual classrooms. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 47(1) 115–145.
- Azman, H. (1999). *Multilingualliteracies in rural Malaysia: National goals and local practices*. Unpublished PhD Thesis: The University of Western Australia.
- Azman, H. (2006). English language in rural Malaysia: Situating global literacies in local practices. *The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies*, 11, 99-119.
- Azman, H. (2016). Implementation and challenges of English language education reform in Malaysian primary schools. *The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies*, 22(3), 65 – 78.
- Azuara, P. & Reyes, I. (2011) Negotiating worlds: a young Mayan child developing literacy at home and at school in Mexico. *Compare*, 41(2), 181-194.
- Al-Fadley, A. Al-Holy, A. & Al-Adwani, A. (2018). Teacher perception of parents' involvement in their children's literacy and their reading instructions in Kuwait EFL primary school classrooms. *International Journal of Education and Practice*, 6 (3), 120-133.
- Al-Mahrooqi, R., Denman, C., & Al-Maamari, F. (2016). Omani parents' involvement in their children's English Education. *SAGE Open*, 6 (1), 1-12.
- Badrul H. A. & Kamaruzaman J. (2009). Teachers' code-switching in classroom instructions for low English proficient learners. *English Language Teaching*, 2(2), 49–55.
- Bailey, A.L., & Osipova, A.V. (2016). *Children's multilingual development and education: Fostering linguistic resources in home and school contexts*. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.
- Baker, S., Lesaux, N., Jayanthi, M., Dimino, J., Proctor, C. P., Morris, J., Gersten, R., Haymond, K., Kieffer, M. J., Linan-Thompson, S., & Newman-Gonchar, R. (2014). *Teaching academic content*

and literacy to English learners in elementary and middle school (NCEE 2014-4012). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE), Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/publications_reviews.aspx.

Ballam, N. (2013). *Defying the odds: Gifted and talented young people from low socioeconomic backgrounds* (Doctoral dissertation, The University of Waikato, New Zealand). Retrieved from <http://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/>

Banks, J. (1998). The lives and values of researchers: Implications for educating citizens in a multicultural society. *Educational Researcher*, 27(7), 4-17.

Barbour, R.S. (2014). Quality of data analysis. In U. Flewrick (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative data analysis* (pp. 496-509). London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Barcelos, A.M.F. (2003). Researching beliefs about SLA: A critical review. In P. Kalaja & A.M.F. Barcelos (Eds.), *Beliefs about SLA: New research approaches* (pp. 7–33). Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Bari, A.A. (2005). *Islam dalam perlembagaan Malaysia*. [Islam in the Malaysian constitution]. Petaling Jaya: Intel Multimedia and Publication.

Barkhuizen, G. P. (1998). Discovering learners' perceptions of ESL classroom teaching/ learning activities in a South African context. *TESOL Quarterly*, 32(1), 85– 108.

Bartlett, J. L. (2017). *Effective reading comprehension strategies for English language learners' achievement in Tennessee* (Doctoral dissertation, Carson-Newman University, United States). Retrieved from https://www.cn.edu/libraries/tiny_mce/tiny_mce/plugins/filemanager/files/Dissertations/Dissertations2017/Jessica_Bartlett.pdf

- Bass-Dolivan, D.W. (2011). *Students' engagement with second language learning: A sociocultural approach* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Wollongong, Australia). Retrieved from <https://ro.uow.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.co.uk/&httpsredir=1&article=4358&context=theses>
- Basuki, Y. (2018). The use of drilling method in teaching phonetic transcription and word stress of pronunciation class. *Journal of English Language Teaching Learning and Literature*, 1(1), 54- 69.
- Baumann, J.F., Hoffman, J.V., Moon, J. & Duffy-Hester, A.M. (1998). Where are teachers' voices in the phonics/whole language debate? Results from a survey of U.S. Elementary classroom teachers. *The Reading Teacher*, 51(8), 636-650.
- BERA. (2011). *Ethical guidelines for educational research*. Retrieved December 12, 2016 from: <http://bera.dialsolutions.net/system/files/3/BERA-Ethical-Guidelines-2011.pdf>
- Berg, B., and Lune, H. (2012). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*. London: Pearson.
- Betty, K. J. (2016). *Factors influencing performance of English as a subject in Kenya certificate of primary education in Nakuru Town, East Sub-Sounty, Kenya* (Master's dissertation, University of Nairobi, Kenya). Retrieved from <http://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/handle/11295/99638>
- Birbili, M. (2000). Translating from one language to another. *Social Research Update*, 31,1-7.
- Biswas, S. (2018). *Challenges of teaching English in rural areas: A study of BRAC Primary Schools in Jessore* (Master's dissertation, BRAC Institute of Languages, Dhaka, Bangladesh). Retrieved from http://dspace.bracu.ac.bd/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10361/10816/15277005_BIL.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y
- Blackledge, A. (2001). Literacy, schooling and ideology in a multilingual state. *The Curriculum Journal*, 12(3), 291-312.

- Block, D. (1994). A day in the life of a class: Teacher/learner perceptions of task purpose in conflict. *System*, 22, 473-486.
- Blunden-Greef, L. (2014). Teaching reading and writing to EFAL. In N. Phatudi (Ed.), *Introducing English as first additional language in the early years* (pp. 140-171). Cape Town: Pearson Holdings.
- Bogdan, R.C. and Biklen, S.K. (2007). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods* (5th ed.). Boston: Pearson.
- Boivin, N., AlBakri, N., Yunus, Z.B.M., Mohammed, H. & Muniandy, N. (2014). Assessing emergent, social, and multiliteracy practices in urban Malaysian homes. *Malaysian Journal of ELT Research*, 10(2), 34-54.
- Bokhari, R., Rashid, S.M., & Chan, S.W. (2015). Teachers' perception on the implementation of the literacy, numeracy and screening (LINUS LBI 2.0) programme among lower primary ESL pupils. *Malaysian Journal of ELT Research*, 11(1), 108-121.
- Bolduc, J. (2008). The effects of music instruction on emergent literacy capabilities among preschool children: a literature review. *Early childhood Research & Practice* 10(1). Retrieved from <http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/EJ848819.pdf>.
- Boothe, K., & Walter, L. B. (1999). *What is a bottom-up reading model?* Retrieved from www.sil.org/lingualinks/Literacy/ReferenceMaterials
- Bowen, G. A., 2009. Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9(2), 27-40.
- Boyatzis, R. E. (1998). *Transforming qualitative information: Thematic analysis and code developments*. Thousand Oaks, CA, US: Sage Publications.

- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1977). Toward an experimental ecology of human development. *American Psychologist*, 32 (1), p.513–531.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1986). Ecology of the family as a context for human development: Research perspectives. *Developmental Psychology*, 22(1), p.723–742.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1993). The ecology of cognitive development: Research models and fugitive findings. In R.H. Wozniak & R.W. Fischer. (Eds.), *Development in context: Acting and thinking in specific environments* (pp. 3-44). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1995). Lewinian space and ecological substance. In U. Bronfenbrenner. (Eds.). *Making human beings human, Bioecological perspectives on human development* (pp. 41-49). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (2001). Bioecological theory of human development. In J. S. Neil & B. B. Paul. (Eds.), *International encyclopedia of the social and behavioral sciences* (pp. 6963-6970). Oxford: Pergamon.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (2005). *Making human beings human*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Bronfenbrenner U., & Evans, G. W. (2000). Developmental science in the 21st century: Emerging questions, theoretical models, research designs, and empirical findings. *Social Development*, 9(1), 15–25.
- Bronfenbrenner U., & Morris, P. A. (1998). The ecology of developmental processes. In R. M. Lerner. (Eds.), *Handbook of Child Psychology* (5th ed., Vol. 1, pp. 993–1028). New York: Wiley.

- Bronfenbrenner, U., & Morris, P. A. (2006). The bioecological model of human development. In W. Damon & R. M. Lerner. (Eds.), *Handbook of child psychology: Vol. 1 Theoretical models of human development* (6th ed., pp. 793–828). New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.
- Brooks, M.D. (2017). How and when did you learn your languages? Bilingual students' linguistic experiences and literacy instruction. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 60(4), 383–393.
- Bryman, A. (2012). *Social research methods* (4th ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3 (2), 77-101.
- Breen, M. P., and Candlin, C. N. (1980). The essentials of a communicative curriculum in language teaching. *Applied Linguistics*, 1, 89-112.
- Breen, M. (1989). The evaluation cycle for language learning tasks. In R. K. Johnson (Ed.), *The second language curriculum* (pp. 187–206). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Brinton, D.M. (2001). The use of media in language teaching. In M. Celce-Murcia, D.M. Brinton & Snow, M.A. (Eds.), *Teaching English as a second or foreign language* (3rd ed., pp.459-475). Boston: Heinle and Heinle.
- Brodzinsky, D. M., Singer, L. M., & Braff, A. M. (1984). Children's understanding of adoption. *Child Development*, 55(3), 869–878.
- Brooke, M. (2013). Which research paradigm for TESOL? Theory and practice in language studies. *Academy Publisher*, 3(3), 430-436.
- Brown, H. (2000). *Principles of language learning and teaching*. New York: Longman.

Brown, H.D. (2007). *Teaching by principles, an interactive approach to language pedagogy* (3rd ed.). NJ: Pearson.

Bryman, A. (2012). *Social research methods* (4th ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Budiana, A.A. (2011). *The use of look and say as a technique in teaching reading to elementary school students* (Master's thesis, Semarang State University, Indonesia). Retrieved from <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/0944/854a90f3ef1d8fd5e178202e5a4152be882a.pdf>

Bullock, S. (2014). *A look at home literacy experiences and parental support: A case study* (Master's dissertation, St. John Fisher College, United States). Retrieved from https://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1350&context=education_ETD_masters

Bunnis, S., & Kelly, D.R. (2010). Research paradigms in medical education research. *Medical Education*, 44(4), 358–366.

Caddy, S. (2015). *Exploring strategies for teaching reading to English first additional language learners in grade 2* (Master's thesis, The University of Pretoria, South Africa). Retrieved from <https://repository.up.ac.za/handle/2263/50848>

Cameron, L. (2001). *Teaching languages to young learners*. UK: Cambridge University.

Canning-Wilson, C. (2001). Visual & language learning: Is there a connection? *The Weekly Column*, 48, 8.

Carlo, M. S., August, D., McLaughlin, B., Snow, C. E., Dressler, C., Lippman, D., White, C. E. (2004). Closing the gap: Addressing the vocabulary needs for English language learners in bilingual and mainstream classrooms. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 39(2), 188-215. doi:10.1598/RRQ.39.2.3

Celce-Murcia, M. (2001). *Teaching English as a second or foreign language* (3rd ed.). Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.

- Chai, C. S., Koh, E., Lim, C. P., & Tsai, C. C. (2014). Deepening ICT integration through multilevel design of technological pedagogical content knowledge. *Journal of Computers in Education*, 1(1), p.1-17.
- Chall, J. (1967). *The great debate*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Chan, N. (2018). No more Linus programme in schools next year: D-G. *Daily Express* 1st December 2018. Retrieved from <http://www.dailyexpress.com.my/news.cfm?NewsID=129096>
- Chase, S. E. (2005). Narrative inquiry: Multiple lenses, approaches, voices. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed. pp. 651-679). London: Sage.
- Cheng, L., Yunus, M. M., & Mohamad, M. (2016). Issues contributing to low performance of English in a national school in Song, Sarawak. Paper presented at the *International Seminar on Generating Knowledge through Research, UUM-UMSIDA*, UUM, Kedah, Malaysia. Retrieved from <http://ojs.umsida.ac.id/index.php/icecrs/article/view/519>
- Clay, M.M. (2001). *Change over time in children's literacy development*. Auckland: Heinemann.
- Clark, A. (2005). Listening to and involving young children: A review of research and practice. *Early Childhood Development and Care*, 175(6), 489-505.
- Coffey, A. (2014). Analysing documents. In Flewrick, U. (Eds), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative data analysis* (pp. 367-380). London: SAGE.
- Coffey, A. & Atkinson, P. (1996). *Making sense of qualitative data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison K. (2005). *Research Methods in Education* (5th ed.). London: Routledge Falmer.

- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research methods in education* (7th ed.). London: Routledge Falmer.
- Cole, M. (1996). *Cultural psychology. A once and future discipline*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Coleman, M. (2013). *Empowering family-teacher partnerships: Building connections within diverse communities*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Cook, G. (1989). *Discourse*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cook, V. (2008). *Second language learning and language teaching* (4th ed). London: Edward Arnold.
- Cooper, M.A. (2017). *Understanding English language learners' social experiences in a United States suburban high school* (Doctoral Dissertation, The Dwight Schar College of Education Ashland University). Retrieved from https://etd.ohiolink.edu/!etd.send_file?accession=ashland1499443115557272&disposition=inline
- Copland, F. & Ni, M. (2019). Languages in the young learner classroom. In S. Garton & F. Copland (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of teaching English to young learners* (pp. 138-153). Oxon: Routledge.
- Court, D. & Abbas, R. (2013). Whose interview is it, anyway? Methodological and ethical challenges of insider–outsider research, multiple languages, and dual-researcher cooperation. *Qualitative Inquiry* 19(6), 480– 488.
- Creswell, J.W. (2012a). *Educational research: planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson/Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Creswell, J. W. (2012b). *Qualitative inquiry & research design : Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

- Creswell J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research: meaning and perspective in the research process*. London: SAGE.
- Dallas, H. (2013). *Improving written language and exploring attitudes towards learning English in primary age ESL learners in Brunei Darussalam* (Master's thesis, The Univeristy of Waikato). Retrieved from <https://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/handle/10289/8445>
- Denicolo, P.M., Long, T. & Bradley-Cole, K. (2016). *Constructivist approaches and research method*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Denscombe, M. (2007). *The good research guide: for small-scale social research projects*. Berkshire: Open University Press.
- Denton, C.A., Anthony, J.L., Parker, R., & Hasbrouck, J.E. (2004). Effects of two tutoring programs on the English reading development of Spanish-English bilingual students. *The Elementary School Journal*, 104(4), 289-305.
- Denzin, N. (1970). *The research act in sociology*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Denzin, N. K. (1978). *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods* (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Denzin, N.K. (1989). *Interpretive biography*. London: Sage.

- Department of Statistics Malaysia. (2016). *Current population estimates, Malaysia, 2014-2016*. Retrieved December 20, 2016 from https://www.dosm.gov.my/v1/index.php?r=column/cthemByCat&cat=155&bul_id=OlxdEVoY1JCS0hUZzJyRUcvZEYxZz09&menu_id=L0pheU43NWJwRWVSZklWdzQTlhUUT09
- de Castro, L.S.V. (2013). Teaching English as a foreign language in accordance with social-constructivist pedagogy. *Tejuelo*, 17, 97-114. Retrieved from <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/72046987.pdf>
- Diller, K. C. (1978). *The language teaching controversy*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
- Din, M.A.O. (2011). Asal usul orang Melayu: Menulis semula sejarahnya [The origin of Malay: Rewriting its history]. *Jurnal Melayu*, 7, 49-50.
- Dorner, L. M. (2012). The life course and sensemaking: Immigrant families' journeys toward understanding educational policies and choosing bilingual programs. *American Educational Research Journal*, 49(3), 461–86.
- Driessnack, M. (2006). Draw-and-tell conversations with children about fear. *Qualitative Health Research*, 16(10), 1414-1435.
- Dubeck, M.M., Jukes, M.C.H. & Okello, G. (2012). Early primary literacy instruction in Kenya. *Comparative Education Review*, 56(1), 48-68.
- Duerden, M.D. & Witt, P. A. (2010). An Ecological systems theory perspective. *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration* (28), 2. 108-110.
- Duncan, P.A. (2013). *Drawing as a method for accessing young children's perspectives in research* (PhD thesis, The University of Sterling). Retrieved from Retrieved from <https://dspace.stir.ac.uk/handle/1893/17258#.Xvy-rChKg2w>

- Ebrahimi, N.A. (2015). Validation and application of the constructivist learning environment survey in English language teacher education classrooms in Iran. *Learning Environ Res*, 18, pp 69–93.
- Eder, D. & Fingerson, L. (2002) Interviewing children and adolescents. In J.K. Gubrium & J.A. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of interview research context and method* (pp. 181-201). London: Sage.
- Edwards, R. & Holland, J. (2013). *What is qualitative interviewing?* London: Bloomsbury.
- Egan, E. (2016). *An Exploration into Perspectives on Literacy and Literacy Education for Students between the Age of 16 and 18 who are Taking Vocational Qualifications in a Further Education College*. (Doctoral dissertation, Institute of Education, University of London). Retrieved from http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/1477240/1/Egan_EdD%20Thesis%20-%20Eamonn%20Egan.pdf
- Einarsdottir, J., Dockett, S., & Perry, B. (2009). Making meaning: children's perspectives expressed through drawings. *Early Child Development and Care*, 179(2), 217-232.
- Eldredge, J. L. (2005). *Teach decoding: How and why* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Prentice Hall.
- Elliott, R., Fischer, C. T., & Rennie, D. L. (1999). Evolving guidelines for publication of qualitative research studies in psychology and related fields. *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 38, 215–229.
- Elmore, J. (2017). *Information sharing in ESOL classes: People, objects and places* (Doctoral Dissertation, The University of Sheffield, England). Retrieved from <http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/20026/>
- Emmanuel, J.S. (2000). *Poor reading ability in English among Tamil school students: A study of parental support, stimulation and expectation*. Unpublished Master's thesis: Universiti Sains Malaysia.

Encyclopaedia Britannica. (2020). *Malaysia*. Retrieved April 14, 2020, from britannica.com/place/Malaysia.

Epstein, J. L. (2001). *School, family and community partnerships: Preparing educators and improving schools*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Epstein, J., Sanders, M., Simon, B. S., Salinas, K. C., Jansorn, N. R., & Van Voorhis, F. L. (2002). *School, family, and community partnerships: Your handbook for action* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Erickson, F., & Schultz, J. (1992). Students' experience of the curriculum. In P. W. Jackson (Ed.), *Handbook of research on curriculum* (pp. 465-485). New York: Macmillan.

Erkan, S.S.S. (2012). Problems of English language instruction in primary in Turkey and their suggestions. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 46, 1117 – 1121.

Evans, M.A., Shaw, D., & Bell, M. (2000). Home literacy activities and their influence on early literacy skills. *Canadian Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 54(2), 65-75.

Eveleigh, E.L. (2010). *Examining instructional efficiency among flashcard drill and practice methods with a sample of first grade students* (PhD Dissertation, The Graduate School of The Ohio State University). Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/268399024_Examining_Instructional_Efficiency_among_Flashcard_Drill_and_Practice_Methods_with_a_Sample_of_First_Grade

Fan X. T., Chen M. (2001). Parental involvement and students' academic achievement: a meta-analysis. *Educational Psychology Review*, 13, 1–22.

Fanselow, J. F. (1992). *Contrasting conversations: Activities for exploring our beliefs and teaching practices*. New York: Longman.

- Fantuzzo, J., McWayne, C., Perry, M.A., & Childs, S. (2004). Multiple dimensions of family involvement and their relations to behavioral and learning competencies for urban, low-income children. *School Psychology Review*, 33, 467-480.
- Fareed, M., Humayun, S. & Akhtar, H. (2016). English language teachers' code switching in class: ESL learners' perceptions. *Journal of Education & Social Sciences*, 4(1), 1-11. doi: 10.20547/jess0411604101
- Farnsworth, V., Kleanthous, I., & Wenger-Trayner, E. (2016). Communities of practice as a social theory of learning: A conversation with Etienne Wenger. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 64 (2), 139-160.
- Farrell, T.S.C & Guz, M. (2019). If I wanted to survive I had to use it': The power of teacher beliefs on classroom practices. *The Electronic Journal for English as a Second Language*, 22(4), pp. 1-17.
- Farokhbakht, L. (2015). *The effect of using synthetic multisensory phonics in teaching English literacy on literacy learning and reading motivation: A case of Iranian young learners of English* (Master's thesis, University of Isfahan, Iran). Retrieved from https://jolly2.s3.amazonaws.com/Research/Leila_Farokbakht_Thesis.pdf
- Fashola, O. S., Drum, P. A., Mayer, R. E., & Kang, S. (1996). A cognitive theory of orthographic transitioning: Predictable errors in how Spanish-speaking children spell English words. *American Educational Research Journal*, 33, 825-843.
- Fasse, B., & Kolodner, J.L. (2000). Evaluating classroom practices using qualitative research methods: Defining and refining the process. In B. Fishman & S. O'Connor-Divelbiss (Eds.), *Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference of the Learning Sciences* (pp. 193-198). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Ferrara, S.L.N. (2005). Reading fluency and self-efficacy: A case study. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 52(3), 215-231.

- Fielding, N., & Fielding, J. (1986). *Linking data*. London, England: SAGE.
- Fook, C.Y. & Sidhu, G.K. (2012). *School-based assessment among ESL teachers in Malaysian secondary school*. Malaysian Education Deans Council Journal, 9, 75-87.
- Foote, M., Q and Bartell, T. G., (2011). Pathways to equity in mathematics education: How life experiences impact researcher positionality. *Educational Studies in Mathematics*, 78(1), 45-68.
- Forey, G. & Besser, S. & Sampson, N. (2015). Parental involvement in foreign language learning: The case of Hong Kong. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 0(0) 1-31.
- Fraenkel, J.R., & Wallen, N.E. (2008). *How to design and evaluate research in education* (7th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Frankel, K.K., Jaeger, E., Brooks, M. D., & Randel, M. (2015). Struggling readers?: Using theory to complicate understandings of what it means to be literate in school. *Literacy Research: Theory, Method, and Practice*, 64, 307-322.
- Fraser, S. & Robinson, C. (2004). Paradigms and philosophy. In S. Fraser, V. Lewis, S. Ding, M. Kellett and C. Robinson (Eds.). *Doing research with children and young people* (pp. 59-78). London: Sage.
- Frewan, A. (2015). *An exploration of EFL teachers' perceptions of the teaching of communication strategies* (PhD thesis, The University of Sheffield, England). Retrieved from http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/10049/1/AHMED_FREWAN_PHD.pdf
- Flewitt, R. (2005). Conducting research with young children: Some ethical considerations. *Early Child Development and Care*, 175(6), 553–565.
- Flick, U. (2002). *An introduction to qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Flick, U. (2007). *Managing the quality of qualitative research*. London: Sage.
- Flick, U. (2014). Mapping the field. In U. Flick (Ed.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative data analysis* (pp. 3-18). London: Sage.
- Frankel, K.K. (2013). Understanding "re-mediation" from a student perspective: *Adolescents' reading in high school literacy intervention classes* (PhD thesis, University of California, Berkeley). Retrieved from <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7x23m5ch>
- Frankel, K.K., & Brooks, M.D. (2018). Why the “struggling reader” label is harmful (and what educators can do about it). *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 62(1), 111–114.
- Gaffney, J. S., & Anderson, R. C. (2000). Trends in reading research: Changing intellectual currents over three decades. In M. L. Kamil, P. B. Mosenthal, P. D. Pearson, & R. Barr (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research: Vol III* (pp. 53–76). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Garbarino, J. & Scott, F. (1992). *What young children can tell us. Eliciting, interpreting and evaluating critical information from children*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Garrett, J. (2012). *The reading experience : How struggling and non-struggling readers differ* (Master's dissertation, St. John Fisher College, New York, United States). Retrieved from https://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1227&context=education_ETD_masters
- Garton, S. (2014). Unresolved issues and new challenges in teaching English to young learners: the case of South Korea. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 15(2), 201-219.
- Garton, S.& Copland, F. (2019). Introduction. In S. Garton & F. Copland (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of teaching English to young learners* (pp. 1-10). Oxon: Routledge.

- Gasson, S. (2004). Rigor in grounded theory research: An interpretive perspective on generating theory from qualitative field studies. In M. E. Whitman & A. B. Woszczyński (Eds.), *The handbook of information systems research* (pp. 79–102). Hershey, PA: Idea Group.
- Gay, L.R., Mill, G.E., & Airasian, P.W. (2012). *Educational research: Competencies for analysis and application* (10th ed.). Boston. Pearson Education Inc.
- Gau, S., Schlieben, K., and Ströbel, I. (2008). *Translation paradoxes and misunderstandings*. Zürich: Shedhalle.
- Gersten, R. & Geva, E. (2003). Teaching reading to early language learners. *Educational Leadership*, 60(7), 44-49.
- Ghosn, I. (2019). *Materials for early language learning*. In S. Garton & F. Copland (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of teaching English to young learners* (pp. 374-388). Oxon: Routledge.
- Gibbons, P. (2015). *Scaffolding language, scaffolding learning*. *Teaching English language learners in the mainstream classroom* (2ed.). Portsmouth: Heinemann.
- Gibson, F. (2007). Conducting focus groups with children and young people: strategies for success. *Journal of Research in Nursing*, 12(5), 473-483.
- Gibson, J. E. (2012). Interviews and focus group with children: Methods that match children's developing competencies. *Journal of Family Literacy and Review*. 4, 148-159.
- Gibson, W.J. & Brown, A. (2009). *Working with qualitative data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. New York: Aldine.
- Gold, R.L. (1958) Roles in sociological field observations. *Social Forces*, 36, 217–23.

- Goldenberg, C., & Gallimore, R. (1991). Local knowledge, research knowledge and educational change: A case study of early Spanish reading improvement. *Educational Researcher*, 20(8), 2-14.
- Goodman, K. (1976) Reading: A psycholinguistic guessing game. In: H. Singer, and R. Ruddell (Eds.), *Theoretical models and processes of reading*. Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association.
- Gough, P. (1972). One second of reading. In J. Kavanagh, and I. Mattingly (Eds.), *Language by Eye and Ear*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Government of Malaysia. (1976). *Third Malaysia plan 1976-1980*. Kuala Lumpur: Government Press.
- Grabe, W. & Stoller, F. L. (2001). Reading for academic purposes: Guidelines for the ESL/EFL teacher. In M. Celce-Murcia (Ed.), *Teaching English as a Second of Foreign Language* (3rd ed., pp. 187-203). Boston: Heinle & Heinle.
- Grabe, W., & Stoller, F. L. (2002). *Teaching and researching reading*. London: Pearson Education.
- Gray, D.E. (2014). *Doing research in the real world*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Green, J. & Bloome, D. (1996) Ethnography and ethnographers of and in education: A situated perspective. In J. Flood, S. Heath, S. & D. Lapp (Eds.), *A handbook for literacy educators: Research on teaching the communicative and visual arts* (pp. 1-12). New York. Macmillan.
- Greene, S. and Moane, G. (2000). Growing up Irish: Changing children in a changing society. *Irish Journal of Psychology*, 21(3-4), 122-137.
- Grieg, A. & Taylor, J. (1999). *Doing research with children*. London: Sage.

- Grolnick W. S. (1994). Parental involvement in children's schooling. A multidimensional conceptualization and motivational model. *Child Development*, 65(1), 237-252.
- Guba, E. G. (1981). Criteria for assessing the trustworthiness of naturalistic inquiries. *Educational Communication and Technology Journal*, 29(2), 75- 91.
- Guardia, J.R. & Evans, N.J. (2008). Factors influencing the ethnic identity development of Latino fraternity members at a Hispanic Serving Institution. *Journal of College Student Development*, 49(3),163-181.
- Guba, E.G. (1990). The alternative paradigm dialog. In E.G. Guba (Eds.), *The paradigm dialog* (pp. 17-30). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. (1981). *Effective evaluation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Guba, E. G. & Lincoln, Y. S. (1982). Epistemological and methodological bases of naturalistic inquiry. *Educational Communication and Technology*, 30(4), 233-252.
- Guba, E. G. & Lincoln, Y.S. (1989). *Fourth generation evaluation*. Newbury Park, California: Sage Publication.
- Gunderson, L. (2006). Foreword. In Li, G. (Eds.), *Battles of literacy and schooling between mainstream teachers and Asian immigrant parents* (pp. xi-xiv). Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Gumperz, J. J. (1982). *Discourse strategies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gunderson, L. (2009). *ESL (ELL) Literacy instruction a guidebook to theory and practice* second edition. New York: Routledge.

- Gunn, S. & Wyatt-Smith, C. (2011). Learning difficulties, literacy and numeracy: Conversations across the fields. In C. Wyatt-Smith, J. Elkins & S. Gunn (Eds.), *Multiple perspectives on difficulties in learning literacy and numeracy* (pp 17-48). Dordrecht: Springer.
- Gustafsson, J. (2017). *Single case studies vs. multiple case studies: A comparative study*. Retrieved from <http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1064378/FULLTEXT01.pdf>
- Hackling, M. W. (2014). Challenges of conducting ethical video-based classroom research. In M.K. Dixon, E. von Dietze (Eds.), *Proceedings of the Australasian Ethics Network Conference* (pp. 1-5). Perth: Australasian Ethics Network.
- Hadzir, N.B., Alias, A. M.B., Kamaruzaman, A. L.B., & Yusof, H. S. B. M. (2016). Teachers' perception on literacy, numeracy and screening (LINUS2.0) assessment features based on year 1 students' performance. *Research Journal of English Language and Literature*, 4(1), 40-47.
- Hakimi, Z., Abdorahimzadeh, S., J. & Kargar, A., A. (2014). Interactive reading in primary education: A case study in Iranian EFL context. *Global Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*, 4(2), 123-133.
- Hall, G. (2018). *Exploring English language teaching: Language in action* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.
- Halliwell, S. (2006). *Teaching English in a primary classroom*. Harlow: Pearson Education.
- Hamed, A.S. (2016). *The teaching of reading English in a foreign language in Libyan universities: methods and models* (PhD thesis, College of Social Sciences, University of Glasgow). Retrieved from <http://theses.gla.ac.uk/7829/>
- Hammersley, M. (1992). *What's wrong with ethnography?* London: Routledge.

- Hammersley, M. & Traianou, A. (2012). *Ethics in qualitative research. Ethics and educational research, British Educational Research Association*. Retrieved from <http://www.learnersfirst.net/private/wp-content/uploads/Ethics-and-Educational-Research.pdf>
- Hammond, M., & Wellington, J. (2013). *Research methods: The key concepts*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Hampden-Thompson, G., & Galindo, C. (2017). School-family relationships, school satisfaction and then academic achievement of young people. *Educational Review*, 69(2), 248-265.
- Harji, M.B., Balakrishnan, K. & Letchumanan, K. (2016). SPIRE Project: parental involvement in young children's ESL reading development. *English Language Teaching* 9(12), 1-12. Doi:10.5539/elt.v9n12p1
- Harmer, J. (2001). *The practice of English language teaching*. Harlow: Pearson Education.
- Harmer, J. (2007). *How to teach English*. England: Pearson Education.
- Harmer, J. (2012). *Essential teacher knowledge: Core concepts in English language teaching*. Pearson Longman.
- Harries, A. & Sipay, R. (1985). *How to increase reading ability* (5th ed.). White Plains: Longman.
- Hartney, R.N., (2011). *Investigating reading difficulties in English second language of grade 3 learners in one primary school in the Khomas education region of Namibia* (Master's thesis, University of Namibia, Windhoe). Retrieved August 16, 2016 from <http://www.wisis.unam.na/theses/hartney2011.pdf>
- Hashim, S.S.A. (2016). *Students', parents' and EFL teachers' perceptions about the project of learning English from grade 1 in Bahraini primary government schools* (Doctoral dissertation, The University of Exeter, England). Retrieved from <https://core.ac.uk/display/161939344>

- Hassan, A. (1998). *Penggunaan Pelbagai Kaedah Mendapatkan Data Kualitatif Pengetahuan Guru* [The use of multiple methods to obtain qualitative data of teachers' knowledge]. *Journal of Educational Research*, 19, 165-186.
- Hatch, J. A. (2002). *Doing qualitative research in education settings*. New York: State University of New York.
- Hayes, N., O'Toole, L. Halpenny, A.M. (2017). *Introducing Bronfenbrenner, a Guide for practitioners and students in early years education*. New York: Routledge.
- Haynes R.B. (2006). Forming research questions. *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology*, 59(9), 881-886.
- Heath, S. B. (1983). *Ways with Words*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Heath S. B. (1986). What no bedtime story means: Narrative skills at home and school. In B. B. Schiffelin and E. Ochs (Eds.). *Language socialization across cultures* (pp. 97-126). . New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Hecht, T. (1998). *At home in the street: Street children of Northeast Brazil*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Heigham, J., Crocker, R. (2009). *Qualitative research in applied linguistics: A practical introduction*. England, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Heng, C.S., Abdullah, A.N., & Tan, H. (2016). *HMEF5133 directed reading*. Malaysia: Open University Malaya.
- Henn, M., Weinstein, M., & Foard, N. (2006). *A critical introduction to social research* (2nd ed.). London: Sage Publication.

- Hennink, M., Hutter, I., & Bailey, A. (2011). *Qualitative research methods*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Heptinstall, E. (2000). Research note. Gaining access to look after children for research purposes: lessons learned. *British Journal of Social Work*, 30(6), 867–872. Retrieved from <http://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/30.6.867>
- Herrera, S.G., Perez, D.R., & Escamilla, K. (2015). *Teaching reading to English language learners: Differentiated literacies* (2nd ed.). United Kingdom: Pearson Education.
- Hesse-Biber, S. N. & Leavy, P. (2006). *The practice of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, London, and New Delhi: SAGE Publications.
- Hestetræet, T. I. (2019). Vocabulary teaching for young learners. In S. Garton & F. Copland (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of teaching English to young learners* (pp. 220- 233). Oxon: Routledge.
- Heward, W.L. (2003). Ten faulty notions about teaching and learning that hinder the effectiveness of special education. *The Journal of Special Education*, 36(4), 186-205.
- Hickman, P., Pollard-Durrodola, S. & Vaughn, S. (2004). Storybook reading: Improving vocabulary and comprehension for English-language learners. *The Reading Teacher*, 57(8), 721-730.
- Hiebert, J. S., & Grouws, D. A. (2007). The effects of classroom mathematics teaching on students' learning. In F. K. Lester, Jr. (Ed.), *Second hand-book on mathematics learning and teaching* (pp.371-404). Charlotte, NC: Information Age.
- Higa, H. (2002). Lesson ideas for children: Drilling masked as fun and games. In M. Swanson, & Hill, K (Ed.), *Waves of the Future*. JALT 2002 Conference Proceedings (pp167-172). Shizuoka, Japan. Retrieved from <http://jalt-publications.org/archive/proceedings/2002/167.pdf>.
- Hill, M. (2005). Ethical considerations in researching children's experiences. In S. Greene & D. Hogan (Eds.). *Researching children's experiences* (pp 61-86). Sage: London.

- Hitchcock, G. & Hughes, D. (1995). *Research and the teacher* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.
- Hoover-Dempsey, K.V., and H.M. Sandler. (1997). Why do parents become involved in their children's education? *Review of Educational Research*, 67(1), 3–42.
- Hornby, G. & Lafaele, R. (2011). Barriers to parental involvement in education: an explanatory model. *Educational Review*, 63(1), 37-52.
- Hosseinpour, V., Yazdani, S. & Yarahmadi, M. (2015). The Relationship between parents' involvement, attitude, educational background and level of income and their children's English achievement test scores. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 6(6), 1370-1378.
- Howard, E.R., Páez, M.M., August, D.L., Barr, C.D., Kenyon, D. & Malabonga, V. (2014). The importance of SES, home and school language and literacy practices, and oral vocabulary in bilingual children's English reading development. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 37(2), 20–141,
- Hsieh, M.F. (2011). Learning English as a foreign language in Taiwan: students' experiences and beyond. *Language Awareness*, 20(3), 255-270.
- Huang, Y.C. (2015). Why don't they do it? A study on the implementation of extensive reading in Taiwan. *Cogent Education*, 2(1), 1-13.
- Hudson, T. (2007). *Teaching second language reading*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hughes, P. (2010). Paradigms, methods and knowledge in G. MacNaughton, S. Rolfe & I. Siraj-Blatchford (Eds.), *Doing early childhood research* (2nd ed., pp. 31-55). Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Hughes, T., & Helling, M.K. (1991). A case for obtaining informed consent from young children. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 6, 225-232.

- Husin, W.N.W., & Ibrahim, H. (2016). Religious freedom, the Malaysian constitution and Islam: A critical analysis. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences* 217, 1216-1224. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2016.02.152
- Imaniah, I. & Nargis. (2017). *Teaching English for young learners*. Cikokol-Kota Tangerang: FKIT UMT Press.
- Imenda, S. (2014). Is there a conceptual difference between theoretical and conceptual frameworks? *Journal of Social Sciences*, 38(2), 185-195.
- Inostroza, A, M-J. (2018). Chielan young learners' perspectives on their EFL lesson in primary schools. *Actualidades Investigativas en Educación*, 18(1), 1-20.
- Isik-Ercan, Z. (2010). Looking at school from the house window: Learning from Turkish-American parents' experiences with early elementary education in the United States. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 38(2), 133-142.
- Iwaniec, J. (2014). Motivation of pupils from southern Poland to learn English. *System*, 45, 67–78.
- Jacob, S.S. (2016). Impact of reading on second language acquisition. *International Journal of English Language, Literature, and Humanities*, 4(3), 316-321.
- Jaeger, E.L. (2012). *Understanding and supporting vulnerable readers: An Ecological systems perspective*. (Doctoral dissertation, University of California, Berkeley). Retrieved October 18, 2016 from http://digitalassets.lib.berkeley.edu/etd/ucb/text/Jaeger_berkeley_0028E_12253.pdf
- Jamaludin, K.A., Alias, N., Khir, R.J.M., DeWitt, D., & Kenayathula, H.B. (2016). The effectiveness of synthetic phonics in the development of early reading skills among struggling young ESL readers. *Journal of Research Policy and Practice*, 27(3), 445-470. doi: 10.1080/09243453.2015.1069749

- Jeynes, W.H. (2007). The relation between parental involvement and urban secondary school student academic achievement: A meta-analysis. *Urban Education*, 42(1), 82-110.
- Jin, L. & Cortazzi, M. (2019). Early English language learning in East Asia. In S. Garton & F. Copland (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of teaching English to young learners* (pp. 477-492). Oxon: Routledge.
- Jin, L., Jiang, C. S., Zhang, J., Yuan, Y., Liang, X. H., and Xie, Q. (2014). *Motivations and expectations of English language learning among primary school children and parents in China*. London: British Council.
- Jin, L., Zhou, J., Hu, X. Y., Yang, X. L., Sun, K. Zhao, Md., and Yang, F. (2016). *Researching the attitudes and perceived experiences of kindergarten learners of English and their parents in China*. London: British Council.
- Johns, J.L. & Wilke, K.H. (2018). High-frequency words: Some ways to teach and help students practice and learn them. *Texas Journal of Literacy Education*, 6(1), 1-13.
- Jose, G. R., Raja, B. W. D. (2011). Teachers' role in fostering reading skill: Effective and successful reading. *Journal of English Language Teaching*, 1(4), 1–10.
- Josefsson, R. (2010). *Code-switching in the English classroom six teachers' theory and practice* (Master's thesis, Karlstads universitet, Sweden). <http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:411891/FULLTEXT01.pdf>
- Julia, B. (2008). First steps in qualitative data analysis: Transcribing. *Family Practice*, 25(2), 127-131.
- Kainz, K. & Vernon-Feagans, L. (2007). The Ecology of Early Reading Development for Children in Poverty. *The Elementary School Journal*, 107(5), 407-427. Doi: 10.1086/518621

- Kavanagh, L. & Hickey, T.M. (2013). 'You're looking at this different language and it freezes you out straight away': identifying challenges to parental involvement among immersion parents. *Language and Education*, 27(5), 432-450.
- Kawulich, B., & Chilisa, B. (2012). Selecting a research approach: paradigm, methodology and methods. In C. Wagner, B. Kawulich, M. Garner (Eds.), *Doing social research: A global context* (pp. 51-61). London: McGraw Hill.
- Khaerunnisa, L. (2016). An EFL teacher's code switching in a young learners' class. *Indonesian Journal of EFL and Linguistics*, 1(1), 13-31.
- Kim, B. (2001). Social constructivism. In M. Orey (Ed.), *Emerging perspectives on learning, teaching, and technology*. Switzerland: the Jacobs Foundation.
- Koçyiğit, S. (2014). Preschool age children's views about primary school educational sciences. *Theory and Practice*, 14(5), 870-1874.
- Kissau, S., Adams, M. J., and Algozzine, B. (2015). Middle school foreign language instruction: A missed opportunity. *Foreign Language Annals*, 48(2), 284–303.
- Krishnan, V. (2010). *Early Child Development: A Conceptual Model*. Presented at the Early Childhood Council Annual Conference 2010, "Valuing Care", Christchurch Convention Centre, Christchurch, New Zealand.
- Kucer, S. B. 1987. The cognitive base of reading and writing. In J. Suire (Ed.), *The dynamics of language learning* (pp. 27–51). Urbana, IL: National Conference on Research in English.
- Kundu, J. (2017). Use of teaching aids in language teaching. *International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews*, 4(3), 247-250.

- Kırkgöz, Y. (2018). Teaching english to young learners: An observation and evaluation of effective teaching strategies. In A.S. Akdemir (Ed.), *Proceedings of the First International Conference on Language, Education and Culture* (pp. 50-54). Girne, Cyprus.
- Kayser, K.M. (2019). *Children's multilingualism and teaching French as a foreign language in a primary classroom in England* (PhD thesis, Goldsmiths, University of London). Retrieved from <http://research.gold.ac.uk/27682/>
- Kelly, L.L. (2016). "You don't have to claim her": Reconstructing black femininity through critical hip-hop literacy. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 59(5), 529–538.
- Kennedy, C., Kools, S., Krueger, R. (2001) Methodological considerations in children's focus groups. *Nursing Research*, 50(3), 184–187.
- Kirkwood, D. (2016). *Understanding the power of parent involvement*. Retrieved July 2, 2017, from <http://iteslj.org/Articles/Stott-Schema.html>
- Kivunja, C. & Kuyini, A.B. (2017). Understanding and applying research paradigms in educational contexts. *International Journal of Higher Education*. 6(5), 26-41.
- Kizildag, A. (2009). Teaching English in Turkey: Dialogues with teachers about the challenges in public primary schools. *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education*, 1(3), 188-201.
- Knapp, N. F. (2002). Tom and Joshua: Perceptions, conceptions and progress in meaning based reading instruction. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 34, 59-98.
- Kocyigit, S. (2014). Preschool age-children's views about primary school. *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice*, 14(5), 1870-1874.

- Koskinen, P., Blum, I., Bisson, S., Phillips, S., Creamer, T., & Baker, T. (2000). Book access, shared reading, and audio models: The effect of supporting the literacy learning of linguistically diverse students in school and at home. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 92(1), 23-36.
- Kuchah, K. (2019). Teaching English to young learners in difficult circumstances. In S. Garton & F. Copland (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of teaching English to young learners* (pp. 73-92). Oxon: Routledge.
- Kumar, R. (2011). *Research methodology. A step-by-step guide for beginners* (3rd ed.). New Delhi: Sage Publication.
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (1991). Language-learning tasks: Teacher intention and learner interpretation. *ELT Journal*, 45(2), 98–107.
- Kırkgöz, Y. (2019). Fostering young learners’ listening and speaking skills. In S. Garton & F. Copland (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of teaching English to young learners* (pp. 171-187). Oxon: Routledge.
- Lamsal, P.C. (2011). *Effectiveness of oral drill in teaching grammar* (Master's Thesis. Faculty of Education Tribhuvan University, Nepal). Retrieved from <http://107.170.122.150:8080/xmlui/bitstream/handle/123456789/167/7191%20Education%20English%20Thesis.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>
- Lapadat, J. C., & Lindsay, A. C. (1999). Transcription in research and practice: From standardization of technique to interpretive positionings. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 5(1), 64-86.
- Larsen-Freeman D. (2000). *Techniques and principles in language teaching* (2nd ed.). Oxford; Oxford University Press.
- Latunde, Y.C. (2017). *Research in parental involvement methods and strategies for education and psychology*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Lawton, R. (2017). *Parents and teachers' perceptions of a parental involvement component in afterschool tutoring* (Doctoral dissertation, Walden University, Minnesota, United States) Retrieved from <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations/4527/>
- Learned, J.E. (2016). Becoming “eligible to matter”: How teachers’ interpretations of struggling readers’ stress can disrupt deficit positioning. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 59(6), 665–674.
- Lee, L. Z. (2015). *After three years, a review of the effectiveness of LINUS in English in a Malaysian primary school*. (Master’s thesis, The University of Nottingham, Malaysia). Retrieved January 16, 2016, from <https://www.scribd.com/document/272826150/After-3-years-A-Review-of-the-Effectiveness-of-LINUS-in-English-in-a-Malaysian-Primary-School#download>
- Lee, Y. (2010). Parents’ perceived roles and home practices in supporting Taiwanese children’s English language and literacy learning. *English Teaching & Learning*, 34(1), 1-53.
- Lerner, R.M. (2005). Foreword, Urie Bronfenbrenner: Career contributions of the consummate developmental scientist. In U. Bronfenbrenner (Eds.). *Making human beings human, Bioecological perspectives on human development* (pp. ix-xxix). Thousands Oak, CA: Sage.
- Lesaux, N. K., Kieffer, M. J., Faller, S. E., & Kelley, J. G. (2010). The effectiveness and ease of implementation of an academic vocabulary intervention for linguistically diverse students in urban middle schools. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 45(2), 196-228. doi:10.1598/RRQ.45.2.3
- Li, G. (2004). Perspectives on struggling English language learners: case studies of two Chinese-Canadian children. *Journal of Literacy Research*. 36(1), 31-72.
- Li, X. (1999). How can language minority parents help their children become bilingual in familial context? A case study of a language minority mother and her daughter. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 22(2), 113-125.

- Li, Y., Han, Y. & Gao, X. (2019). Young learners' motivations in learning English. In S. Garton & F. Copland (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of teaching English to young learners* (pp. 60-72). Oxon: Routledge.
- Lichtman, M. V. (2013). *Qualitative research in education: A user's guide*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lin, A. M. Y. (1996). Bilingualism or linguistic segregation? Symbolic domination, resistance, and code-switching in Hong Kong schools. *Linguistics and Education*, 8(1), 49–84.
- Lin, A. M. Y. (2013). Classroom code-switching: Three decades of research. *Applied Linguistics Review*, 4(1), 195-218. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1515/applirev-2013-0009>.
- Lincoln, Y.S. and Guba, E.G. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.
- Lincoln, Y.S. & Guba, E.G. (2013). *The constructivist credo*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.
- Liu, F. (2010). A short analysis of the nature of reading. *English Language Teaching*, 3(3), 152-157.
- Liu, W.C. (2006). *Memorization and improvisation: A comparison of two strategies in the oral acquisition of English as a second language* (Doctoral Dissertation, Australian Catholic University). Retrieved from <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/efde/b83a80966ca819e5c854537566dbc15e8bc2.pdf>
- Low, S.M. (2016). *The effectiveness of classroom code-switching in Malaysian science classrooms* (Doctoral dissertation, The University of Sheffield, England). Retrieved <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/77022934.pdf>
- Lynch, J. (2008). Engagement with print: Low-income families and Head Start children. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy* 8(2), 151–175.

- Ma, A. (2011). Do teachers reap what they sow? – A study of young ESL learners’ perception of what is learned in an English lesson. *Asian EFL Journal* 13(3), 184-20.
- Maarof, N. (1998). *Assessing second language reading*. Bangi: UKM.
- Maarof, N., & Chen, M.M.B. (2017). Code switching among Malaysian primary school teachers in teaching English as a second language. *Man in India* 97(13), 31-39.
- Macmillan, B. (1997). *Why Schoolchildren can’t read*. London: The Institute of Economic Affairs.
- Maddox, K. & Feng, J. (2013, October 18). *Whole language instruction vs. Phonics instruction: Effect on reading fluency and spelling accuracy of first grade students*. Paper presented at Georgia Educational Research Association Annual Conference, Savannah, Georgia. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED545621.pdf>
- Majors, Y.J. (2014). Joy and the “smart kids”: Competing ways of being and believing. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 57(8), 633–641.
- Majid, A.B.A, Muhammad, A.B. & Puteh, F.B. (2005). *English language literacy in rural community setting: An analysis of the environment to encourage and sustain the development of English language learning outside the classroom*. Research Management Centre: Universiti Teknologi Malaysia.
- Malik, M., Rafiq, N., Chaudhry, A.Q., & Fatima, G. (2019). Perceptions of elementary school students about their parents’ involvement at home and school. *Journal of Elementary Education*, 29(2),150-161.
- Manset-Williamson, C, & Nelson, J.M. (2005). Balanced strategic reading instruction for upper-elementary school students with reading disabilities, a comparative study of two approaches. *Learning Disability*, 28(2), 59–74.

- Maxwell, J. A. (2013). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- May, H.E. (2000). *The engagement of children with learning difficulties within primary classroom interactions* (Doctoral dissertation, The University of Leeds, England). Retrieved from http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/351/1/uk_bl_ethos_270758.pdf
- Mc Laughlin, F., & Sall, T. S. (2001). The give and take of fieldwork: Noun classes and other concerns in Fatick, Senegal. In P. Newman & M. Ratliff (Eds.), *Linguistic fieldwork* (pp. 189-210). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Md-Ali, R., Karim, H.B.B.A., & Yusof, F.M. (2016). Experienced primary school teachers' thoughts on effective teachers of literacy and numeracy. *Malaysian Journal of Learning and Instruction*, 13, 43-62.
- Moran-Ellis, J., Alexander, V.D., Cronin, A., Dickinson, M., Fielding, J., Sleney, J. & Thomas, H. (2006). Triangulation and integration: Processes, claims and implications *Qualitative Research*, 6(1), 45-59.
- Mukundan, J. & Aziz, A. (2009). Loading and distribution of the 2000 high frequency words in Malaysian English language textbooks for form 1 to form 5. *Pertanika Journal of Social Science and Humanities*, 17(2), 141-152.
- Murtiningsih, S.R. (2014). *Indonesian student teachers' beliefs and practices in teaching L2 reading* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Oklahoma, United States). Retrieved October 15, 2016 from https://shareok.org/bitstream/handle/11244/10425/Sri%20Rejeki%20Murtiningsih_Indonesian%20Student%20Teachers'%20Beliefs%20and%20Practices%20in%20Teaching%20L2%20Reading.pdf?sequence=2

- Malakolunthu, S. & Sim, K. H. (2010). Teacher perspectives of school-based assessment in a secondary school in Kuala Lumpur. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences* 9,1170–1176. doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.12.302.
- Malaysian Examination Syndicate. (2011). *Panduan dan peraturan pentaksiran berasaskan sekolah* [Guidelines and regulations of school based assessment]. Putrajaya: Ministry of Education Malaysia.
- Malaysian Examination Syndicate (2014). *Circular of Improvement of PBS. KP.LP.003.07.14. (81)*.Putrajaya: Ministry of Education.
- Mamun, M.A.A. (2015). *Exploring the perceptions of the teachers and students on English language learning at junior secondary level in Rangamati* (Master's thesis, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh. Retrieved from <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/0f1c/15b080385712b548fad7958c5735fc11d484.pdf>
- Manzo, A. & Manzo, U. (1990). *Content area reading: A heuristic approach*. Ohio: Merrill Publishing Company.
- Manzo, A. and Manzo, U. (1995). *Teaching children to be literate: A reflective approach*. Florida: Ted Buchholz.
- Margaret, H.L. (2017). *Young children, schooling and literacy: An ethnographic study of literacy practices in a London primary school* (Doctoral Dissertation, King's College London). Retrieved from https://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/files/73258119/2017_Henning_Lucy_Margaret_0735536_thesis.pdf
- Martin, P. (2005). Safe language practices in two rural schools in Malaysia: tension between policy and practice. In A. M. Y. Lin & P. W. Martin (Eds.), *Decolonisation, globalisation: Language-in-education policy and practice* (pp. 74-97). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd.

- Mat, S.S.C., & Yunus, M.M. (2014). Attitudes and motivation towards learning English among FELDA school students. *Australian Journal of Basic and Applied Sciences*, 8(5), 1-8.
- Mauthner, M. (1997). Methodological aspects of collecting data from children: Lessons from three research projects. *Children & Society*, 11(1), 16-28.
- McDonough, S.H. (1995). *Strategy and skill in learning a foreign language*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- McFadyen, J., & Rankin, J. (2016). The role of gatekeepers in research: Learning from reflexivity and reflection. *Journal of Nursing and Health Care*, 4(1), 82–88.
- McGrath, I. (2013). *Teaching materials and the roles of EFL/ESL teachers: Practice and theory*. London: Bloomsbury.
- McMillan, J. H., & Schumacher, S. (2006). *Research in education: Evidence based inquiry*. Boston: Brown and Company.
- McNely, B. (2012). *Shaping organizational image-power through images: case histories of Instagram*. IEEE International Professional Communication Conference, 1-8. Piscataway, NJ: IEEE.
- Mehigan, G. (2016). *Effects of fluency oriented instruction on reading achievement and motivation among struggling readers in first class in Irish primary schools* (Ph.D. thesis, National University of Ireland, Cork). Retrieved from <http://www.tara.tcd.ie/bitstream/handle/2262/85318/Gene%20Mehigan.pdf?seque=>
- Mermelstein, A.D. (2015). Improving EFL learners' writing through enhanced extensive reading. *Reading in A Foreign Language*, 27(2): 182-198.

- Merriam, S.B., & Tisdell, E.J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Miles, M.B., Huberman, A.M., & Saldana, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: a methods sourcebook*. SAGE: London.
- Ministry of Education Malaysia. (2007). *National educational blueprint*. Kuala Lumpur: Malaysia.
- Ministry of Education Malaysia. (2012). *Dasar pendidikan kebangsaan* [National educational policy]. Putrajaya: Education Policy Research and Planning Division.
- Ministry of Education Malaysia. (2013a). *Modul guru literasi Bahasa Inggeris tahun 1* [Year 1 English literacy module for teachers]. Putrajaya: Curriculum Development Centre.
- Ministry of Education Malaysia. (2013b). *Malaysia education blueprint 2013-2025 preschool to post secondary education*. Putrajaya: The Malaysian Ministry of Education. Retrieved October 16, 2016 from http://www.padu.edu.my/files/meb_final/3._Malaysia_Education_Blueprint_20122025.pdf
- Ministry of Education Malaysia. (2015a). *Kurikulum standard sekolah rendah. Dokumen standard kurikulum sekolah rendah dan pentaksiran bahasa Inggeris* [English language standard document and assessment for primary school]. Retrieved September 16, 2016 from https://www.academia.edu/31023776/DSKP_Bahasa_Inggeris_SK_KSSR_Tahun_1
- Ministry of Education Malaysia. (2015b). *Buku pengoperasian program LINUS 2.0* [Operating book for LINUS 2.0 programme]. Kuala Lumpur: Curriculum Development Division.

- Ministry of Education Malaysia. (2015c). *Bilangan sekolah mengikut kumpulan jenis dan negeri* [Number of schools by types and states]. Retrieved August 31, 2016 from <http://www.moe.gov.my/my/statistik-sekolah>
- Ministry of Education Malaysia. (2017). *LINUS 2.0 literasi bahasa Inggeris. Instrumen saringan literasi membaca*. [LINUS 2.0 English literacy. Reading screening instrument]. Putrajaya: Author.
- Ministry of Education Malaysia. (n.d.). *Panduan perkembangan pembelajaran murid Bahasa Inggeris sekolah kebangsaan tahun 1* [Year 1 students' English learning development's guidance] Putrajaya: Author.
- Misbah, N. H., Mohamad, M., Yunus, M.M., & Ya'acob, A. (2017). Identifying the factors contributing to students' difficulties in the English language learning. *Creative Education*, 8, 1999-2008.
- Mokhtar, N.Z.N.B. (2016). *The use of request strategies by second language learners in a global community a multicultural setting of a higher education institution* (PhD Thesis, The University of Sheffield, England) Retrieved from <http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/12426/>
- Mokotedi, R.T. (2012). *An investigation into pedagogical knowledge and teaching practices of reading among primary school teachers in Botswana* (Doctoral dissertation, The University of Exeter, England). Retrieved from <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/7961/0fd5dbfa3899bdcf20935b08c85ce5cd76ce.pdf>
- Moll, L. C. (1990). Introduction. In L. C. Moll (Ed.), *Vygotsky and education: Instructional implications and applications of sociohistorical psychology* (pp. 1-27). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Morrison, F. J., Bachman, H. J., & Connor, C. M. (2005). *Improving literacy in America: Guidelines from research*. New Haven: CT7 Yale University Press.

- Morrow, S. L. (2005). Quality and trustworthiness in qualitative research in counseling psychology. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52* (2), 250–260.
- Morse, W. C., Lowery, D. R., & Steury, T. (2014). Exploring saturation of themes and spatial locations in qualitative public participation geographic information systems research. *Society & Natural Resources, 27*(5), 557-571.
- Mukatel, J. (1998). *Approaches to English language teaching*. New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House.
- Mukherji, P. & Albon, D. (2015). *Research methods in early childhood. An introductory guide* (2nd ed.). London: Sage Publications.
- Mule, K. (2014). *Types and cause of reading difficulties affecting the reading of English language: A case of grade 4 learners in selected schools in Ogong Circuit of Namibia* (Master's thesis, University of Namibia). Retrieved October 16, 2016 from <https://repository.unam.edu.na/bitstream/handle/11070/851/Mule2014.pdf?sequence=1>
- Muñoz, C. (2014). Exploring young learners' foreign language learning awareness. *Language Awareness, 23*(1-2), 24-40.
- Murray, S., Johnson, L. (1996). *Read to learn: A course in reading for academic purposes*. London: Hodder & Stoughton.
- Musa, N.M., Lie, K. Y., & Azman, H. (2012). Exploring English language learning and teaching In Malaysia. *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies, 12*(1), 35–51.
- Mutlu, T. (2016). *Understanding students' and teachers' approaches to tablet use in Turkish secondary schools: A model based approach* (PhD thesis, The University of Sheffield, England). Retrieved from <http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/15836/>

- Nag, S., & Snowling, M. J. (2012). School underachievement and specific learning difficulties. In J. M. Rey (Ed.), *IACAPAP e-Textbook of Child and Adolescent Mental Health* (pp. 1-44). Geneva: International Association for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Allied Professions.
- Nation, I.S.P. (2000). *Learning vocabulary in another language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nation, I. S. P. (2013). *Learning vocabulary in another language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2017). *Promoting the educational success of children and youth learning English: Promising futures*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press.
- National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (2000). *Report of the national reading panel: Teaching children to read; An evidence- based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction*. Washington, DC: NICHD, National Institutes of Health.
- National Reading Panel. (2000). *Teaching children to read*. Bethesda, MD: National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.
- Navarro-villarroel, C. (2011). *Young students' attitudes toward languages* (PhD thesis, Iowa State University, Capstones). Retrieved from <https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/etd/11978>
- Nikolov, M. (1999). Why do you learn English? 'Because the teacher is short.' A study of Hungarian children's foreign language learning motivation. *Language Teaching Research*, 3(1), 33-56.
- Nofiandari, N. (2016). *The effectiveness of using "Look and say method" in teaching reading to increase students' reading achievement for the fourth grade the students of MI Baiturrahman* (Master's

thesis, Faculty of Tarbiah and Teacher Training State Islamic Insitutue, Tulungagung, Indonesia). Retrieved <http://repo.iain-tulungagung.ac.id/4640/>

Nordin, E.R.M., Rajab, A., Nor, F.M. & Ismail, N. (2019). The use of reading strategies by struggling English language learners. *International Journal of Recent Technology and Engineering* 8(3), 685-688.

Noursi, O.A. (2013). Attitude towards learning English: The case of the UAE technological high school. *Educational Research*, 4(1), 1-30.

Nunan, D. (1988). *The learner-centred curriculum: A study in second language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nunan, D. (1991). *Language teaching methodology a textbook for teacher*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Nunan, D. (2015). *Teaching English to speakers of other languages. An introduction*. New York: Routledge.

Nurhamidah, Fauziati, E., & Supriyadi, S. (2018). Code-switching in EFL classroom: Is it good or bad? *Journal of English Education*, 3(2), 78-88. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.31327/jee.v3i2.861>

Nurliana. (2019). Developing a model of supplementary English materials based on local content. *Journal of English Language Studies*, 4(1), 86-100

Nurnianti, S. (2012). Teaching reading using look and say technique at the fifth grade *pupils of SDN Warung Bambu IV Karawang*. Retrieved May 13, 2019 from <https://docplayer.net/91825a988-Teaching-reading-using-look-and-say-technique-at-the-fifth-grade-pupils-of-sdn-warung-bambu-iv-karawang-siska-nurnianti.html>

- Ogina, T.A. (2012). The use of drawings to facilitate interviews with orphaned children in Mpumalanga province, South Africa. *SA Journal of Education*, 32(4), 428-440.
- Okpala, C.O.R. (2017). Reflecting in the woods: Can it help to enhance the formulation of (our) research question? *BioResources* 12(3), 4490-4494.
- Oldfather, P. (1995). Problems in motivation? Listen to the students! *Reading Today*, 14, 1-22.
- Oldfather, P., West, J., White, J., & Wilmarth, J. (1999). *Learning through children's eyes: Social constructivism and the desire to learn*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Omar, Y.Z. (2014). *Perceptions of selected Libyan English teachers of English as a foreign language regarding teaching of English in Libya* (Doctoral Dissertation, The University of Missouri, Columbia). Retrieved from <https://mospace.umsystem.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10355/45769/Research.pdf;sequence=1>
- Ong, S.L. (2010). Assessment profile of Malaysia: high-stakes external examinations dominate. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 17(1), 91-103. doi: 10.1080/09695940903319752
- Onwuegbuzie, A.J. (2016). A call for conducting multivariate mixed analyses. *Journal of Educational Issues*, 2(2), 1-30.
- Opie, C. (2004): What is educational research? In C. Opie (Ed.), *Doing educational research: A guide to first time researchers* (pp. 1-14). London: Sage.
- Oxley, J., Günhan, E., Kaniamattam, M. & Damico, J. (2017): Multilingual issues in qualitative research. *Clinical Linguistics & Phonetics*, 31(7-9), 612-630.
- PADU. (2015). *Persidangan LINUS peringkat kebangsaan* [LINUS national conference]. Putrajaya: Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia.

- Palts, K., & Kalmus, V. (2015). Digital channels in teacher-parent communication: The case of Estonia. *International Journal of Education and Development using Information and Communication Technology*, 11(3), p. 65-81.
- Pandian, A. (2006). What works in the classroom? Promoting literacy practices in English. *3L Journal of Language Teaching, Linguistics and Literature*, 11,15-39.
- Pardede, P. (2008, June 27). A review on reading theories and its implication to the *teaching of reading*. Paper presented at the English Department Bimonthly Conference of FKIP-UKI, Jakarta, Indonesia. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/321228081_A_Review_on_Reading_Theories_and_its_Implication_to_the_Teaching_of_Reading
- Parlindungan, F. (2017). Exploring literacy practices in a second language. *TEFLIN Journal*, 28(1), 115-132.
- Patel, M.F. & Jain, P. M. (2008). *English language teaching methods*. Jaipur: Sunrise Publishers and Distributors.
- Patesan, M., Balagiu, A., & Alibec, C. (2018). Visual aids in language education. In N. Balcescu (Ed.), *Management and Military Sciences*. Proceedings of the 21st International Conference Knowledge-Based Organisation (pp. 356-361). Sibiu, Romania.
- Pathan, M.M., Khaiyali, A.T.A., Marayi, Z.E. (2016). Teaching English as a foreign language in Libyan schools: Issues and challenges. *International Journal of English and Education*, 5(2), 19- 39.
- Patton, M.Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (2nd ed.). Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousands Oak, CA: Sage.

Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Shelton, L. G. (2019). *The Bronfenbrenner primer, a guide to Devel ecology*. New York: Routledge.

Pey, K.C., Min, L.H., & Wah, L.L. (2014). Relationship between oral reading fluency and reading comprehension among ESL students. *Journal of Language Studies*, 14(3), 19-32.

PEMANDU. (2009). *Literacy and numeracy education NKRA lab*. Putrajaya: Prime Minister's Department. Retrieved October 13, 2016 from <http://sksgrokam.edu.my/portal/downloads/leteracy%20and%20numeracy%20a.pdf>

PEMANDU. (2011). *Government transformation programme (GTP) annual report 2010*. Putrajaya: Prime Minister's Department.

PEMANDU. (2014). *Government transformation programme (GTP) annual report 2013*. Putrajaya: Prime Minister's Department.

Pendleton, S.E. (2017). *Home literacy practices: A focus on Dominican families* (Master's thesis, Western Michigan University, United States). Retrieved from https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/masters_theses/914

Pillay, J. (2018). Hope for the future and literacy achievement in a sample of impoverished South African primary school children. *Africa Education Review*, 15(2), 32-48.

Pink, S. (2007). *Doing Visual Ethnography* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.

Pinter, A. (2006). *Teaching young language learners*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Pinter, A. (2011). *Children learning second languages: Research and practice in applied linguistics*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Pinter, A. (2015). Researching young learners. In B. Paltridge and A. Phakiti (Eds.), *Research methods in applied linguistics* (pp. 339-455). London: Bloomsbury.
- Plath, S. & Kukul, K.V. (2000). *The Unabridged journals of Sylvia Plath 1950-1962*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Poplin, M. (1995). Looking through other lenses and listening to other voices: Stretching the boundaries of learning disabilities. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 28(7), 392–398.
- Prasad, R.D., Maarof, N. & Yamat, H. (2016). Implementing phonics in Malaysia. *International Journal of English Language Teaching and Linguistics*, 1(1), 1-18.
- Pritchard, A. and Woolard, J. (2010). *Psychology for the classroom: Constructivism and social learning*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Project Trust. (2016). *TESOL Teaching Manual*. Argyll: Author.
- Psychology Notes HQ, (2013). What is Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory? Retrieved January 18, 2021 from <https://www.psychologynoteshq.com/bronfenbrenner-ecological-theory/>
- Purcell-Gates, V., Jacobson, E., & Degener, S. (2006). *Print literacy development: Uniting cognitive and social practice theories*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Rahimi, M. & Hassani, M. (2011). Attitude towards EFL textbooks as a predictor of attitude towards learning English as a foreign language. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 31(2012), 66 – 72.
- Ramirez-Garcia, M. (2012). Usage of multimedia visual aids in the English language classroom: *A case study at Margarita Salas Secondary School (Majadahonda)*. (Master's thesis, Universitas

Complvtensis Matritensis, Madrid, Spain). Retrieved from https://www.ucm.es/data/cont/docs/119-2015-03-17_11.MariaRamirezGarcia2013.pdf

- Rapley, T. (2014) Sampling strategies in qualitative research. In U. Flick (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis* (pp. 49-63). London: SAGE.
- Rasinski, T.V., Homan, S.P. & Biggs, M. (2009). Teaching reading fluency to struggling readers: Method, materials and evidence. *Reading and writing quarterly: Overcoming learning difficulties*, 25(2-3), 192-204.
- Raslie, H.B., Deli, R.M., John, D.S., Mikeng, D., & Pandian, A. (2020). The effects of parental reading socialisation on the reading skill performance of rural primary school student in Sarawak. *International Journal of Asian Social Science*, 10(3), 159-170.
- Redfern, S.J., & Norman, I. J. (1994) Validity through triangulation. *Nurse Researcher*, 2(2), 41-56.
- Reglin, G., Cameron, H. & Losike-Sedimo, N. (2012). Effects of a parent support reading intervention on seventh-grade at-risk students' reading comprehension scores. *Reading Improvement*, 49(1), 17-27.
- Reyes, I., Alexandra, D., & Azuara, P. (2007) Literacy practices in Mexican immigrant homes, *Cultura y Educación*, 19(4), 463-474.
- Richard-Amato, P. (1988). *Making it happen*. New York: Longman.
- Richards-Tutor, C., Baker, D.L., Gersten, R., Baker, D.L., & Smith, J.M. (2016). The effectiveness of reading interventions for English learners: *A research synthesis*, *Exceptional Children*, 82(2), 144-169.
- Richards, J. C. and Rodgers, T. S. (2002). *Approaches and methods in language teaching* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Richards, J. C. (2001). The role of textbooks in a language program. Retrieved from <https://www.professorjackrichards.com/wp-content/uploads/role-of-textbooks.pdf>.
- Richards, J. C. (2006). *Communicative language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Riessman, C. K. (1993). *Narrative analysis*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Rightmyer, E.C., McIntyre, E., & Petrosko, J.E. (2006). Instruction, development, and achievement of struggling primary grade readers, *Literacy Research and Instruction*, 45(3), 209-241. doi: 10.1080/19388070609558449
- Rivers, W. (1968). *Teaching foreign-language skills*. Chicago: The University of Chicago.
- Robson, C. (2011). *Real world research: a resource for users of social research methods in applied settings* (3rd ed.). Wiley Chichester: John Wiley & Sons UK.
- Rodriguez, M.V. (1999). Home literacy experiences of three young Dominican children in New York City. *Educators for Urban Minorities*, 1(1), 19-31.
- Rodriguez, M.V. (2005). Dominican children with special needs in New York City: Language and literacy practices. In A. C. Zentella (Ed.), *Building on strength: Language and literacy in Latino families and communities* (pp. 119-132). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Roopnarine, J. L., & Johnson, J. E. (2000). *Approaches to early childhood education*. Upper Saddle River, N.J: Merrill.
- Rosenshine, B. (1987). Explicit teaching and teacher training. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 38(3), 34-36.

- Roth, W. M. (1999). Authentic school science: Intellectual traditions. In R. McCormick and C. F. Paechter (Eds.). *Learning and knowledge* (pp. 6-20). London, UK: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Rowell, J., & Kendrick, M. (2013). Boys' hidden literacies: The critical need for the visual. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 56(7), 587–599.
- Rubin, H. & Rubin, I. (1995). *Qualitative interviewing. The art of hearing data*. Thousand Oak, CA: Sage.
- Rudduck, J. (June, 1996). Testimony of the expert witnesses. *Times Educational Supplement*.
- Ruzane, G.C. (2013). *The perceptions of teachers, parents and young children on factors that affect EAL learning at an infant school in the south of England* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Leicester, England). Retrieved from <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/30a4/6c503814f67798c2acfc45602adec04d08de.pdf>
- Sadiku, L. M. (2015). The importance of four skills reading, speaking, writing, listening in a lesson hour. *European Journal of Language and Literature Studies*, 1(1), 29-31.
- Salahuddin, A.N.M., Khan, M.M.R., & Rahman, M.A. (2013). Challenges of implementing English curriculum at rurals primary schools of Bangladesh. *The International Journal of Social Sciences*, 7(1), 34-51.
- Salleh, R., & Woolard, J. (2019). Inclusive education: Equality and equity (Teachers' views about inclusive education in Malaysia's primary schools). *Jurnal Pendidikan Bitara*, 12, 72-83.
- Saldana, J. (2013). *The coding manual for qualitative research. The coding manual for qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Sani, N., & Idris, A.R. (2013). Identifying the challenges in dealing with indigenous students. *Malaysian Online Journal of Educational Management (MOJEM)* 1(3), 48-63.

- Sarantakos, S. (2005). *Social research*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Sasani, S. (2018). *The place of culture in English language teaching: An exploration of non-native ESOL teachers' attitudes towards intercultural competence*. (PhD thesis, The University of Sheffield, England). Retrieved from <http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/20958/>
- Savage, R. (2008). Word reading instructions method: The evidence concerning phonics. *Encyclopedia of Language and Literacy Development*. London, ON: Canadian Language and Literacy Research Network.
- Savin-Baden, M. and Major, C. (2013). *Qualitative research. The essential guide to theory and practice*. Routledge, London.
- Schensul, J. J., & LeCompte, M. D. (2013). *Essential ethnographic methods: A mixed methods approach*. Ethnographer's toolkit, book 3 (2nd ed.). Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.
- Schmitt, N. (2000). *Vocabulary in language teaching*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Schmitt, N. (2008). Review article: Instructed second language vocabulary learning. *Language Teaching Research*, 12, 329–363.
- Schunk, D. H. (2008). *Learning theories: An educational perspective* (5th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Schunk, D.H. (2012). *Learning theories. An educational perspectives* (6th ed.). Boston, MA Pearson Education Inc.
- Schwandt, T. A. (1993). Theory for the moral sciences; Crisis of identity and purpose. In D. J. Flinders & G. E. Mills (Eds.), *Theory and concepts in qualitative research* (pp. 5–23). New York: Teachers College Press.

- Schwandt, T.A. (2007). *The SAGE dictionary of qualitative inquiry* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Scott, W.A. & Ytreberg, L.H. (1990). *Teaching English to children*. New York: Longman.
- Scrivener, J. (2010). *Learning teaching. The essential guide to ELT* (3rd ed.). Oxford: MacMillan.
- Sénéchal, M., & LeFevre, J. (2002). Parental involvement in the development of children's reading skill: A five-year longitudinal study. *Child Development*, 73(2), 445-460.
- Shafee, N. A. S. B. M. (2019). *The teaching of early reading in English using the phonics approach in Malaysian primary schools: Teacher beliefs, knowledge and practices* (PhD thesis, Liverpool John Moores University). Retrieved from <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/THE-TEACHING-OF-EARLY-READING-IN-ENGLISH-USING-THE-Shafee/e20719f54e37934b4085656300377cd3170e8f4e>
- Sheldon, S.B., Epstein, J.L. (2005). Involvement counts: Family and community partnerships and mathematics achievement. *The Journal of Educational Research* 98(4), 196-207.
- Shi, Z. (2013). Home literacy environment and English language learners' literacy development: What can we learn from the literature? *Canadian Children Child Study*, 38(10), 29-38.
- Shih, J.C. (2013). How many classroom observations are sufficient? *Middle Grades Research Journal*, 8(2), 41-49.
- Shin, J. K. (2006). Ten helpful ideas for teaching English to young learners. *English Teaching Forum*, 44(2), 2-13.
- Shin, J. K. & Crandall, J. A. (2014). *Teaching young learners English: From theory to practice*. Boston, MA: National Geographic Learning/Cengage Learning.

- Shin, J. K. & Crandall, J. (2019). Teaching reading and writing to young learners. In S. Garton, & F. Copland (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of teaching English to young learners* (pp. 188-202). Oxon: Routledge.
- Shklarov, S. (2007). Double vision uncertainty the bilingual researcher and the ethics of cross language research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 17(4), 529-538.
- Shrosbree, M. (2008) Digital video in the language classroom. *The JLT CALL Journal*, 4(1), 75-84.
- Sieber, J., 1993. The ethics and politics of sensitive research. In C. Renzetti and R.M. Lee (Eds.), *Researching sensitive topics*. London: Sage.
- Silverman, D. (2013). *Doing qualitative research: A practical handbook* (4th ed.). London: SAGE Publications.
- Silverman, D. (2011). *Interpreting qualitative data. A guide to the principles of qualitative research* (4th ed.). London: SAGE.
- Simasiku, L., Kasanda, C., & Smit, T. (2015). Can code switching enhance learners ' academic achievement? *English Language Teaching*, 8(2), 70-77.
- Simons, G.F. & Fennig, C. D. (Eds.). (2017). *Ethnologue: Languages of the world* (20th ed.). Dallas, Texas: SIL International.
- Simon, S. (1996) *Gender in translation: Cultural identity and the politics of transmission*. London: Routledge.
- Sivan, E. (1986). Motivation in social constructivist theory. *Educational Psychologist*, 21(3), 209-233.
- Smith, F. (1994). *Understanding reading: A psycholinguistic analysis of reading and learning to read*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

- Snelson, C. & Perkins, R.A. (2009). From silent film to YouTube: Tracing the historical roots of Motion picture technologies in education. *Journal of Visual Literacy*, 28(1), 1-27.
- Snow, C., Barnes, W., Chandler, J., Goodman, I., & Hemphill, L. (1991). *Unfulfilled expectations: Home and school influences on literacy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Snow, C. E., Burns, M. S., & Griffin, P. (1998). *Preventing reading difficulties in young children*. Washington: National Academies Press.
- Soler, J. (2016). The politics of the teaching of reading. *PROSPECTS*, 46(3-4), 423–433.
- Spratt, M., Pulverness, A., & Williams, M. (2011). *The teaching knowledge test course*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Stanovich, K. E. (1986). Matthew effects in reading: Some consequences of individual differences in the acquisition of literacy. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 21(4), 360-407.
- Stanczak, G. C. (2007). *Visual Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Stewart, M.A. (2015). “My journey of hope and peace”: Learning from adolescent refugees’ lived experiences. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 59(2), 149–159.
- Stirling, E. (2014). Why waste your time on Facebook?: A temporal analysis of first-year *undergraduate students and transition in UK Higher Education* (Doctoral dissertation, The University of Sheffield, England). Retrieved from <http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/6377/>
- Stivaros, H. (2007). *An ecological perspective of children's school experiences and educational*

outcome (Doctoral dissertation, University of Huddersfield). Retrieved from <http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/id/eprint/959/>

Stott, N. (2001). Helping ESL students become better readers: Schema theory applications and limitations. *The Internet TESL Journal*, 7(11). Retrieved from <http://iteslj.org/Articles/Stott-Schema.html>

Strauss, A., and Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. London: Sage Publications, Inc.

Street, B. (1995). *Social literacies: critical approaches to literacy in development, ethnography and education*. London: Longman.

Stuvland, R.C. (2019). Capturing other perspectives: Lesson artifacts, pupil voice and participatory potential in ITE lesson study. In P. Wood, D. Larssen, N. Helgevold and W. Cajkler (Ed.), *Lesson study in initial teacher education: Principles and practices* (pp. 89-103). England: Emerald Publishing Limited.

Suarez, T. (1999). *Early Mapping of Southeast Asia: The Epic story of seafarers, adventures, and cartographers who first mapped the regions between China and India*. Hong Kong: Periplus Editions.

Swanto, S. & Din, W.A. (2014). Employing drilling technique in teaching English writing skills to a group of rural Malaysian students. *Developing Country Studies*, 4(14), 73-83.

Syandri, G. (2015). A case study on the used of visual media in English. Instructional process at State Islamic Secondary School 1 Malang. *IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 5(4), 46-56.

Tekin, A.K. (2011). Parent involvement revisited: Background, theories, and models. *International Journal of Applied Educational Studies*, 11(1), 1-13.

- Tepfenhart, K.L. (2011). *Student perceptions of oral participation in the foreign language classroom*. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED518852.pdf>
- Then, D.C.O & Ting, S.H. (2011) Code-switching in English and science classrooms: more than translation. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 8(4), 299-323.
- Thor, T.P. S. (2016). *An ecological approach to understanding highly able students' experiences of their academic talent development in a Singapore school*. Doctoral thesis , UCL (University College London). Retrieved from <https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/1534486/>
- Thornbury, S. (2002). *How to teach vocabulary*. Harlow: Longman.
- Thuraisingam, T.G., Gopal, S., Sasidharan, N., Naimie, Z. & Asmawi, A. (2017). Implementing pre-reading strategies to improve struggling ESL learners' interest and comprehension in English reading lessons. *International Journal of Education, Culture and Society*, 2(3), 94-100. doi: 10.11648/j.ijecs.20170203.13
- Tierney, R. J., & Pearson. P.D. (1981). Learning to learn from text: A Framework for improving classroom practice. *Reading Education Report*, 30, 1-38. Retrieved from https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/7cb6/db32faa5cf6c0117ee2f1d63c0e1634fd798.pdf?_ga=2.37672992.1638491875.1587705538-657711072.1534629942
- Tomalin, B. (1991). Teaching young children with video. In S. Stempleski & P. Arcano, (Eds.), *Video in Second Language teaching: using, selecting and producing video for the classroom*. Teachers of English to speakers of other languages, INC.
- Torres, S.A.H & Castañeda-Peña, H.A. (2016). Exploring the roles of parents and students in EFL literacy learning: A Colombian case. *English Language Teaching*, 9(10), 156-165.
- Tracy, S. J. (2013). *Qualitative research methods*. West Sussex, UK: Wiley- Blackwell.

- Tracy, S. J. & Henrichs, M.M. (2017). Big tent criteria for qualitative quality. In J. Matthes, C.S. Davis, R.F. Potter. *The International Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods* (pp 1-10). Retrieved from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/9781118901731.iecrm0016>
- Trepanier, K. (2009). The effectiveness of the Orton Gillingham instructional programme *when used in conjunction with a basal reading programme* (Doctoral dissertation, Florida Gulf Coast University, USA). Retrieved from https://fgcu.digital.flvc.org/islandora/object/fgcu%3A27407/datastream/OBJ/view/THE_EFFECTIVENESS_OF_AN_ORTON-GILLINGHAM-STILLMAN-INFLUENCED_APPROACH_TO_READING_INTERVENTION_FOR_LOW_ACHIEVING_FIRST-GRADE_STUDENTS.pdf
- Tudge, J. R. H., Gray, J., & Hogan, D. M. (1997). Ecological perspectives in human development: A comparison of Gibson and Bronfenbrenner. In J. Tudge, M. Shanahan, & J. Valsiner (Eds.), *Comparisons in human development: Understanding time and context* (pp. 72 – 105). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Tudge, J. R. H., Mokrova, I., Hatfield, B. E. and Karnik, R. B. (2009), Uses and Misuses of Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Theory of Human Development. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, 1, 198–210. Doi:10.1111/j.1756-2589.2009.00026.x.
- Ugol, S.P. (2015). *Developing literacy in young adolescents.teacher's beliefs and structures that shape learning* (Doctoral dissertation, Manhattanville College, New York). Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/openview/a080e49841dfa4e46e3208a1b566fcad/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y>
- United Nations. (2019). *Population division: World population prospects 2019*. Retrieved from population.un.org/wpp/

- Urquhart, S. & Weir, C. (1998). *Reading in a second language: Process, product and practice*. London: Longman.
- Uys, D., & Dulm, V.O. (2011). The function of classroom code-switching in the Siyanda district of the Northern Cape. *Southern African Linguistics and applied language studies*, 29(1), 67-76.
- Vaismoradi, M., Jones, J., Turunen, H., & Snelgrove, S. (2016). Theme development in qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis. *Journal of Nursing Education and Practice*, 6(5), 100–110.
- Vaughn, S., Mathes, P., Linan-Thompson, S., Cirino, P., Carlson, C., Pollard-Durodola, S., Francis, D. (2006). Effectiveness of an English intervention for first-grade English language learners at risk for reading problems. *The Elementary School Journal*, 107(2), 153-180.
- Vellymalay, S.K.N. (2012). Children's attitudes and behaviours towards at-home learning: A case study at children's home Taiping. *Asia Pacific Journal of Educators and Education*, 27, 139–158.
- Vickers, J. (2016). *Exploring engagement: A grounded theory study of young people's interactions with healthcare professionals* (PhD Thesis, The University of Salford, Salford, UK). Retrieved from <http://usir.salford.ac.uk/38623/1/Jason%20Vickers%20thesis%20%28FINAL%29.pdf>.
- Vulliamy, G. (1990) Research outcomes: PostScript. In G. Vulliamy, K. Lewin and D. Stephens, *Doing educational research in developing countries*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Vygotsky, L. (1987). The development of scientific concepts in Childhood. In R. W. Rieber & A. S. Carton (Eds.), *The collected works of L. S. Vygotsky, Volume 1 Problems of General Psychology Including the volume Thinking and Speech* (pp. 167-242). New York: Plenum Press.

- Walker, J. M. T., Wilkins, A. S., Dallaire, J. R., Sandler, H. M., & Hoover-Dempsey, K. V. (2005). Parental involvement: Model revision through scale development. *The Elementary School Journal*, 106(2), 85–104.
- Watt, D., and Foscolos, D. (1998). Evaluating ESL software for the inclusive classroom. *International Electronic Journal for Leadership in Learning*, 2(6).
- Warni, S. (2016). *Implementation of online portfolios in an Indonesian EFL writing class* (PhD thesis, The University of Sheffield, England). Retrieved from <http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/13741/>
- Wati, S. (2015). Parental involvement and English language teaching to young learners: Parents' experience in Aceh. In D.D. Rochsantiningsih (Ed.), *Trends and Issue in Teacher Training and Education in the 21st Century*. Proceedings of the International Conference on Teacher Training and Education (ICTTE) FKIP UNS 2015 (pp. 527-533). Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia.
- Wei, L., & Lin, A. M. (2019). Translanguaging classroom discourse: Pushing limits breaking boundaries. *Classroom Discourse*, 10(3-4), 209-215.
- Weigel, D.J., Martin, S.S., Bennett, K.K. (2006). Mother's literacy beliefs: Connections with the home literacy environment and pre-school children's literacy development. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 6(2), 191-211.
- Wellington, J. (2015). *Educational Research: Contemporary issues and practical approaches*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Wellington, J. & Szczerbinski, M. (2007). *Research methods for the social sciences*. London: Continuum International Pub. Group.

- Whitehurst, G.J., & Lonigan, C.J. (2001). Emergent literacy: Development from prereaders to readers. In S. B. Neuman & D. K. Dickensen (Eds.), *Handbook of early literacy research* (pp. 11-29). New York: Guilford Press.
- Widodo, H. P., & Savova, L. (Eds.). (2010). *The Lincom guide to ELT materials design and development: Theory and practice*. Munich: Lincom Europa.
- Wiggs, C.E. (2012). *Understanding reading through the eyes of third- grade struggling readers* (PhD dissertation, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, United States). Retrieved from <http://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1599&context=dissertations>
- Wilson, K., & Lianrui, Y. (2007). A social constructivist approach to teaching reading turning the rhetoric into reality. *CELEA Journal*, 30(1), 51-56.
- Winke, P., M. (2005). Promoting motivation in the foreign language classroom. *Clear News*, 9(2),1-6.
- Wolcott. H. (1994) . *Transforming qualitative data: Description. analysis and interpretation*. Thousand Oaks. CA: Sage.
- Wragg, E.C. (1999). *An introduction on classroom observation*. Routledge: London.
- Wray, D. J., & Medwell, J. (2006). Pupils' perspectives on literacy teaching. *Education* 3(13), 34, 201-210.
- Wyse, D., Sugrue, C., Fentiman, A. & Moon, S. (2014). English language teaching and whole school professional development in Tanzania. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 38, 59-68.
- Xiaoyi, M. (2017). *Parental involvement in children's foreign language learning: Improving 6-12 year-old pupils' English through parent-school interaction, a case study in China* (Master's thesis,

University of Eastern Finland). Retrieved from http://epublications.uef.fi/pub/urn_nbn_fi_uef-20170406/urn_nbn_fi_uef-20170406.pdf

Yaacob, A. (2006). *Malaysian Literacy Practices in English: 'big books', CD-ROMs and the year 1 English hour* (PhD thesis, Centre for English Language Teacher Education, University of Warwick). Retrieved from <http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/4076/>

Yaakop, M.R. & A. Aziz, S. (2014). Kontrak sosial perlembagaan persekutuan 1957 peringkat jati diri bangsa Malaysia merdeka [*Social contract 1957 federal constitution Malaysian merdeka national identity level*]. Kuala Lumpur: Institut Terjemahan & Buku Malaysia.

Yaghoubi-Notash, M. (2015). From extensive reading to expository paragraph writing: focusing on advanced EFL learners' grammatical accuracy. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research*, 2(4), 130-142.

Yahya, R. (2014). *Play and learning: Experiences and perspectives of immigrant mothers and bicultural children in Canada* (Doctoral dissertation, The University of Sheffield, England). Retrieved from <http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/8252/>

Yamat, H., Fisher, R., & Rich, S. (2014). Revisiting English language learning among Malaysian children. *Asian Social Science*, 10(3), 174–180.

Yang, L. and Wilson, K. (2006). Second language classroom reading: A social constructivist approach. *The Reading Matrix*, 6(3), 364-372.

Yin, R. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4th ed.), Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Yin, R. K. (2011). *Qualitative research from start to finish*. New York: The Guilford Press.

- Yuen, F. C. (2004). "It was fun. . . I liked drawing my thoughts": Using drawings as a part of the focus group process with children. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 36(4), pp. 461-482.
- Yukich, C. (2013). *Teaching and learning challenges facing primary school teachers of students from non-English speaking backgrounds*. (Master's thesis, Unitec Institute of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand). Retrieved from <https://unitec.researchbank.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10652/2464/Courtney%20Yukich.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>
- Yunus, M.M., & Chun, J.S. (2016, October 25-27). Teachers' perspectives on the reading behaviour of primary ESL learners in SJKC Chung Hua Semera Sarawak. Paper presented at the *International Seminar on Generating Knowledge through Research, UUM-UMSIDA*, UUM, Kedah, Malaysia. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.21070/picecrs.v1i1.518>
- Yuwanda, D.Y. (2017). *The use of choral drill technique to improve students speaking skills* (Master's thesis, Teacher Training and Education Faculty State Institute for Islamic Studies, Salatiga, Indonesia). Retrieved from <http://e-repository.perpus.iainsalatiga.ac.id/2102/1/GraduatingPaper.pdf>
- Zakaluk, B. L. (1996). *A theoretical overview of the reading process: Factors which influence performance and implications for instruction*. Retrieved from <http://www.umanitoba.ca/faculties/education/edlab>
- Zakir, N. (2017). *The impact of educational change processes in Brunei preschools: An interpretive study* (PhD thesis, The University of Sheffield, England). Retrieved from <http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/21197/>
- Zewary, S.M. (2011). *Visuals in foreign language teaching* (Master's thesis, Kansas State University, United States). Retrieved from <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/5172505.pdf>

- Zhong, L. (2011). *Chinese immigrant parents involvement in the education of their elementary school children in Windsor, Ontario: Perceptions and Practices* (PhD thesis, University of Windsor, Canada). Retrieved from <https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1426&context=etd>
- Ziegler, J., Goswami, U. (2005). Reading acquisition, developmental dyslexia and skilled reading across languages; A psycholinguistic grain size theory. *Psychological Bulletin*, 131(1), 3-29.
- Zong, X., Zhang, L., & Yao, M. (2017). Parental involvement and Chinese elementary students' achievement goals: the moderating role of parenting style. *Educational Studies*, 44(3), 1-16.
- Zulkipli, I. & Ali, H.M. (2018). *Strategic leadership: Realising student aspiration outcomes*. Singapore: Partridge Publishing.
- Zwass, R.H. (2014). *Parent literacy activities and interactions with school-aged children* (Masters' thesis, University of California, Los Angeles). Retrieved from <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/65q0t3n4>.
- Zwass, R.H. (2018). *The home literacy environment: A qualitative investigation of school-aged children* (Doctoral dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles). Retrieved from <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/5jx9k8md>

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Ethical approval letter

School Of Education, University Of Sheffield



Downloaded: 20/05/2017
Approved: 19/05/2017

Siti Soraya Lin Abdullah Kamal
Registration number: 150252913
School of Education
Programme: PhD in Education

Dear Siti Soraya Lin

PROJECT TITLE: Exploring 'Struggling' Readers in the English as a Second Language (ESL) Classroom
APPLICATION: Reference Number 012567

On behalf of the University ethics reviewers who reviewed your project, I am pleased to inform you that on 19/05/2017 the above-named project was **approved** on ethics grounds, on the basis that you will adhere to the following documentation that you submitted for ethics review:

- University research ethics application form 012567 (dated 07/03/2017).
- Participant information sheet 1026867 version 2 (07/03/2017).
- Participant information sheet 1026866 version 2 (07/03/2017).
- Participant information sheet 1026865 version 2 (07/03/2017).
- Participant consent form 1026870 version 2 (14/03/2017).
- Participant consent form 1026869 version 1 (27/01/2017).
- Participant consent form 1026868 version 1 (27/01/2017).

The following optional amendments were suggested:

See Rosowsky suggestions above.



If during the course of the project you need to [deviate significantly from the above-approved documentation](#) please inform me since written approval will be required.

Yours sincerely

David Hyatt
Ethics Administrator
School of Education

Appendix 2: Approval letter for conducting research in Malaysia

Economic Planning Unit, Malaysia

	<p>KEMENTERIAN PENDIDIKAN MALAYSIA MINISTRY OF EDUCATION MALAYSIA BAHAGIAN PERANCANGAN DAN PENYELIDIKAN DASAR PENDIDIKAN EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND RESEARCH DIVISION ARAS 1-4, BLOK E8 KOMPLEKS KERAJAAN PARCEL E PUSAT PENTADBIRAN KERAJAAN PERSEKUTUAN 62604 PUTRAJAYA</p>		<p>KEMENTERIAN PENDIDIKAN MALAYSIA</p>
		Telefon : 03-8884 6500 Faks : 03-8884 6439 Laman Web : www.moe.gov.my	

Ruj. Kami : KPM.600-3/2/3 Jld. 40(4f)
Tarikh : 05 April 2017

Ketua Pengarah
Seksyen Ekonomi Makro
Unit Perancangan Ekonomi
Jabatan Perdana Menteri
Blok B5 Aras 4
Kompleks Jabatan Perdana Menteri
Pusat Pentadbiran Kerajaan Persekutuan
62502 PUTRAJAYA
(u.p.: En. Azral Izwan bin Mazlan)

Tuan,

Permohonan Untuk Menjalankan Penyelidikan di Malaysia
Nama: Siti Soraya Lin Abdullah Kamal

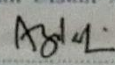
Dengan hormatnya saya merujuk kepada perkara di atas.

2. Adalah saya diarahkan memaklumkan bahawa permohonan tuan untuk menjalankan kajian bertajuk:

"Exploring 'Struggling' Readers in the English as a Second Language (ESL) Classroom"
diluluskan dengan syarat.

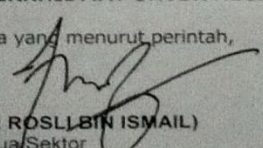
3. Bersama-sama ini disertakan ulasan Bahagian ini ke atas cadangan penyelidikan yang dikemukakan.


Sekian dimaklumkan, terima kasih.

Salinan Disukai Asal Dan Sah

b/p. Ketua Pengarah
Unit Perancangan Ekonomi
Jabatan Perdana Menteri

" BERKHIDMAT UNTUK NEGARA "

Saya yang menurut perintah,


(DR ROSLI BIN ISMAIL)
Ketua Sektor
Sektor Penyelidikan Dan Penilaian
Bahagian Perancangan dan Penyelidikan Dasar Pendidikan
b.p. Ketua Setiausaha
Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia



CERTIFIED TO ISO 9001:2008
CERT. NO. AE 3166

**REVIEW OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL
ULASAN TENTANG CADANGAN KAJIAN**

Researcher's Name : Siti Soraya Lin Abdullah Kamal Research/ Kajian: Ph.D / Kedoktoran Masters / Sarjana
 Am

Name of institution/ Nama Institusi : University of Sheffield

Research Title/ Tajuk Kajian : Exploring 'struggling' readers in the English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom

a) **Views concerning the research proposal:**
Setelah membaca cadangan kajian seperti yang dinyatakan di atas, pandangan terhadap cadangan kajian adalah seperti berikut:

- i) **Area of study/ Bidang yang akan dikaji:**
 Suitable / Sesuai Not Suitable / Tidak Sesuai
- ii) **Sample and research location / Sampel dan lokasi kajian:**
 Suitable / Sesuai Not Suitable / Tidak Sesuai
- iii) **Benefits of the research or its importance to the Ministry Of Education, Malaysia / Hasil penyelidikan - faedah penyelidikan kepada Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia**
 Beneficial / Faedah Not Beneficial / Tidak Berfaedah
 Not Applicable / Tidak Berkaitan

Findings of this study will be important to the MOE because it informs policy makers on:

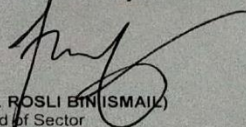
"Exploring 'struggling' readers in the English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom"

b) **Suggestions made by EPRD, Ministry of Education, Malaysia / Cadangan BPPDP, Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia:**

- Approved / Diluluskan Approved with Conditions / Diluluskan dengan bersyarat
 Not Approved / Tidak diluluskan

Remarks:

Penyelidik mesti mendapatkan kebenaran bertulis daripada ibu bapa / penjaga murid yang dilibatkan dalam kajian.


(DR. ROSLI BIN ISMAIL)
Head of Sector
Research and Evaluation Sector
Educational Research and Planning Division
Ministry of Education, Malaysia

Tarikh: 3 April 2017



UNIT PERANCANG EKONOMI
Jabatan Perdana Menteri
Blok B5 & B6
Pusat Pentadbiran Kerajaan Persekutuan
62502 PUTRAJAYA
MALAYSIA

Tel : 603-8000 8000
Laman web : www.epu.gov.my

Ruj. Tuan:
Your Ref.:

Ruj. Kami: UPE 40/200/19/3426
Our Ref.: (7)

Tarikh: 19 May 2017
Date:

Ms. Siti Soraya Lin binti Abdullah Kamal
43, Lorong 5/1, Taman Pauh Jaya
13700, Perai
Pulau Pinang
Email : sslabdullahkamal1@sheffield.ac.uk

APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN MALAYSIA

With reference to your application, I am pleased to inform that your application to conduct research in Malaysia has been approved by the **Research Promotion and Co-ordination Committee, Economic Planning Unit, Prime Minister's Department**. The details of the approval are as follows:

Researcher's name : **SITI SORAYA LIN BINTI ABDULLAH KAMAL**
Passport No./ I.C No : **860815-38-5854**
Nationality : **MALAYSIAN**
Title of Research : **"EXPLORING 'STRUGGLING' READERS IN THE ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL) CLASSROOM"**
Period of Research Approved : **1 year and 7 months (19.5.2017-31.12.2018)**

2. Please take note that the study should avoid sensitive issues pertaining to local values and norms as well as political elements. At all time, please adhere to the conditions stated by the code of conduct for researchers as attached.

3. The issuance of the research pass is also subject to your agreement on the following:

- a) to ensure submission of a brief summary of your research findings on completion of your research;
- b) to submit three (3) copies of your final dissertation/publication; and
- c) to return the research pass to the Research Promotion and Co-ordination Committee, Economic Planning Unit, Prime Minister's Department.

4. Thank you for your interest in conducting research in Malaysia and wish you all the best in your future research endeavor.

Yours sincerely,



(AZRAL IZWAN BIN MAZLAN)

for Director General
Economic Planning Unit
Prime Minister's Department
Email: azral.mazlan@epu.gov.my
Tel : 03 88725277
Fax : 03 88883798

ATTENTION

This letter is only to inform you the status of your application and **cannot be used as a research pass.**

c.c

Ketua Setiausaha
Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia
Bahagian Perancangan dan Penyelidikan Dasar Pendidikan
Aras 1-4, Blok E8
Kompleks Kerajaan Parcel E
Pusat Pentadbiran Kerajaan Persekutuan
62604 Putrajaya
(u.p. Dr. Rosli bin Ismail)
Sektor Penyelidikan dan Penilaian



Appendix 3: Research pass for conducting research in Malaysia

Economic Planning Unit, Malaysia




Appendix 4: Approval letter for conducting research in the selected school

State Education of Department

	JABATAN PENDIDIKAN PULAU PINANG JALAN BUKIT GAMBIR 11700 PULAU PINANG Tel : 04-657 5500, Faks : 04-658 2500 http://jpnp.edu.my	 KEMENTERIAN PENDIDIKAN MALAYSIA
---	--	--

“1 MALAYSIA : RAKYAT DIDAHULUKAN PENCAPAIAN DIUTAMAKAN.”

Ruj Tuan :
Ruj Kami : JPNPP(PER) 1000-4/2 Jld.11 Bil(20)
Tarikh : 6 Jun 2017

 Siti Soraya Lin Abdullah Kamal
43, Lorong 5/1, Taman Pauh Jaya
13700 Perai, Pulau Pinang.

Tuan/Puan,

KELULUSAN UNTUK MENJALANKAN KAJIAN DI SEKOLAH, INSTITUT PERGURUAN, JABATAN PENDIDIKAN NEGERI DAN BAHAGIAN – BAHAGIAN DI BAWAH KEMENTERIAN PENDIDIKAN MALAYSIA

Dengan hormatnya saya diarah merujuk perkara tersebut di atas.

2. Surat kelulusan menjalankan kajian daripada Bahagian Perancangan Dan Penyelidikan Dasar Pendidikan, Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia KPM.600-3/2/3 Jld.40(97) bertarikh **05 April 2017** adalah dirujuk.

3. Dengan ini dimaklumkan bahawa pihak Jabatan Pendidikan Pulau Pinang, tiada halangan untuk Tuan/Puan menjalankan penyelidikan di sekolah-sekolah negeri Pulau Pinang yang bertajuk:

“Exploring ‘Struggling’ Readers in the English as a Second Language (ESL) Classroom”

diluluskan.


4. Walau bagaimanapun Tuan/Puan adalah tertakluk kepada syarat-syarat seperti berikut:

- 4.1 Mendapat kebenaran dari Pengetua/Guru Besar sekolah berkenaan.
- 4.2 Tidak mengganggu perjalanan, peraturan dan disiplin sekolah.
- 4.3 Segala maklumat yang dikumpul adalah untuk tujuan akademik sahaja.
- 4.4 Menghantar satu salinan laporan kajian ke Jabatan ini setelah selesai kajian.
- 4.5 Sila kemukakan surat ini apabila berurusan dengan pihak sekolah.
- 4.6 Surat ini berkuatkuasa sehingga **31 Disember 2018**.

Sekian, terima kasih.

“BERKHIDMAT UNTUK NEGARA”

Saya yang menurut perintah,


(**ZURIDA BINTI MUSTAPHA**)
Penolong Pendaftar Institusi Pendidikan
Jabatan Pendidikan Pulau Pinang
b.p Ketua Pendaftar Institusi Pendidikan
Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia

Appendix 5: Interview guide with the teacher

Interview (before the first classroom observation)

Ice-breaking questions related to the teacher's background information

- What is your name?
- What name do you go by?
- How old are you?
- What is your educational background?
- What is your working experience?
- What subjects are you responsible for?

Questions related to the way teacher works with the struggling readers

- What is your teaching aspirations?
- How long have you been teaching the struggling readers?
- Do you think it is vital for young children to read in English?
- How do reading lessons usually take place in the classroom?
- What are teaching materials that you use while working with those struggling readers?
- What references do you refer to teach those struggling readers reading?
- What are reading components that you teach those struggling readers in the classroom?
- What do you think is the best method to teach reading to those struggling readers?
- How the struggling readers are being assessed?
- How have those students performed in those assessments?
- What is your perceptions towards the struggling readers in this study?
- What are the difficulties those struggling readers have in reading?
- What are challenges that you faced while working with those struggling readers?
- Do you think it is good to involve parents in those struggling readers learning?
- What are your hopes towards those struggling readers?
- Is there anything else you want to talk about your feelings and experience?

Post-observations interview

- What was the objectives of the lesson?
- How do you think that reading lesson went?
- Questions about particular methods utilised in the observations.
- Is there anything else you want to talk about your feelings and experience?

Appendix 6: Interview guide with the parents

Ice-breaking questions related to the teacher's background information

- What is your name?
- What name do you go by?
- How old are you?
- How many children do you have?
- How old is each child you have?
- What birth order is (participating child's name)?
- What is your educational background?
- Do you read/write/speak in English?
- Where do you live?
- What do you do?
- Do you mind if I ask how much you earn/ your household income?

Questions related to the way parents work with their child

- What is your working schedule?
- What is (participating child's name) routine?
- What does (participating child's name) like to do?
- How do you spend your time with (participating child's name) at home?
- Do you have ESL materials to assist him learning to read in English?
- Other resources to help (participating child's name)'s learning?
- Do you take (participating child's name) to library?
- Do you have any problems to find ESL materials to support your child reading?
- Do you have computers/laptops or any gadgets at home?
- How do you or (participating child's name) use them?
- What activities you do to support (participating child's name) reading in English?
- Where/ When do you carry out the activity?
- Do you think it is important for (participating child's name) to be able to read in English?
- How do you support (participating child's name) in learning to read in English?
- Who do you think is responsible to facilitate (participating child's name) ESL learning?

- What are your opinions about your child's reading ability in English?
- What are your opinions about your child being identified as struggling readers at school?
- Do you know how (participating child's name) is doing at school and how they are being assessed?
- Have you ever attended school programs related to (participating child's name) ESL learning?
- What are your expectations towards your child's reading ability?
- What are the challenges you face when working with your child?
- Is there anything else you want to talk about your feelings and experience?

Appendix 7: Interview guide with the students

Ice-breaking questions related to the students' background information

- What is your name?/ Can each of you introduced your name?
- How do you like to be called?
- What do you like to do at home?
- How did you come to school?
- How has your morning been?

Focus group questions related to the students' perceptions on their learning experiences

- What did you learn in the reading lesson today? (showing the students the reading material they used in the classroom as a prompt)
- Was the lesson easy or difficult for you?
 - What was easy or difficult?
- What did you like best?
- What did you not like best?
- I see you (student's actions) while the teacher (teacher's actions). Why?
- Anything else you want to talk about your classroom experience today?
- Can you draw me picture of you reading English at home or in the classroom?
 - Why do you draw this?(Subsequent questions are based on the students' responses)
 - Do you want to tell me about your drawing?(Subsequent questions are based on the students' responses)
- Do you think English is important?
 - Why?
- Can you read in English?
- Is it easy or difficult to read in English?
- What can make you become a good/better ESL reader?
- Do you like learning English?
 - Why?
- Is there anything else you want to talk about your feelings and experience?

Appendix 8: Participation information sheet for the teacher

Participant Information Sheet

1- Research project title

Exploring ‘struggling’ readers in the English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom

2- Invitation

You are being invited to participate in this research project “Exploring ‘struggling’ readers in the English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom”. Before you decide to do so, it is important you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Feel free to ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

3- What is the project purpose?

This study intends to explore students who are believed to be ‘struggling’ with reading in the Year 1 ESL classroom based on their LINUS 2.0 results. The study also discusses the underlying factors that contribute to the positioning of the students as ‘struggling’ readers in their educational experiences.

4- Why I have been chosen?

You have been chosen because as an English teacher of ‘struggling’ readers, your opinions, experience and responses are valuable for this study. This study aims to identify factors that contribute to the positioning of students as ‘struggling’ readers in the ESL Malaysian classroom by exploring the students, students’ home life and school environment.

5- Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part in the research. If you decide to take part you can keep a copy of this information sheet and you should indicate your agreement to the consent form attached. You can still withdraw at any time without it affecting you in any way. You do not have to give a reason.

6- What will happen to me if I take part?

The researcher will come into one of your reading class, sit on the sidelines to observe how the reading lesson is being conducted. After that, an interview will be conducted to get clarifications about things happen in the lesson observed which will take you about 30 minutes. At another day, one more interview will be carried out which will take you approximately 60 minutes. The interview session will take place at school, in a room suggested by the headmaster. Both observation and interview will take place in April.

7- What do I have to do?

If this information is clear and you agree to take part in this study, you can sign the consent form attached and return it to the researcher.

8- What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

Participating in this research is not expected to cause you any disadvantages or risks.

9- What are the possible benefits of taking part?

While there are no immediate benefits for those taking part in the research, it is hoped that this study gives you opportunity to express your opinions about the students who have been perceived as ‘struggling’ readers in the ESL classroom. The findings from this study is hoped can enrich educational practitioners’ understandings about the issues affecting ‘struggling’ readers and the role of environmental factors in the perception of students as ‘struggling’ with reading.

10- What happens if the research study stops earlier than expected?

Should the research stop for any unforeseen circumstances, we will inform you the reasons. The information you have shared in this study will also be destroyed.

11- What if something goes wrong?

If you are not happy with any aspects of this study for example, the interview that you will have, you can lodge complaints by contacting the research supervisor:

Dr Mark Payne
The University of Sheffield
School of Education
388 Glossop Road
S10 2JA Sheffield
Email: mark.payne@sheffield.ac.uk
Tel: (+44) (0)114 222 8170
<http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/education/staff/academic/paynem>

If you think your complaints have not been appropriately managed, you can contact the University's Registrar and Secretary, David Hyatt at D.Hyatt@sheffield.ac.uk

12- Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

The information that we collect from you can only be accessed by the researcher and supervisor. The findings will be mainly used for analysis, presented in the thesis and other academic purposes related to the research such as presentation and publications. Your name and the school name however will be labelled pseudonym to ensure your anonymity. You will not be identified in any publications unless you have given your consent.

13- Will I be recorded, and how will the recorded media be used?

Audio recording will be used during the interview. Video recording will be used during the classroom observation. The information analyzed from the recording will only be used for thesis writing and other purposes that are associated to the research. The information will be stored safely and protected with a password that is only known to the researcher. If you need a break during the interview or classroom observation, you can do so by letting me know. I will pause the recording device. Also, if you want to withdraw in the middle of the session you are free to do so and I will delete the previous recording.

14- What type of information will be sought from me and why is the collection of this information relevant for achieving the research project's objectives?

In the interview, you will be asked about your teaching practices and teaching experience. Furthermore, your opinions about the students being perceived as ‘struggling’ readers based on the recent LINUS 2.0 result and will be sought. You will also be asking about your expectations toward the students’ reading performance in the ESL classroom. Your views and explanation are just what this study is interested in investigating.

15- What will happen to the results of the research project?

The information that you share will be analyzed by the researcher and the information will be included as part of the researcher’s thesis. The results may also be shared in presentations and publications. However, your personal information will not be disclosed and will be labelled pseudonym to ensure your anonymity.

16- Who is organizing and funding the research?

This PhD research is being sponsored by Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia and Universiti Sains Malaysia.

17- Who has ethically reviewed the project?

This project has been ethically approved by the School of Education Ethics Review Procedure. The University’s Research Ethics Committee has monitored the application and delivery of the University’s Ethics Review Procedure across the University.

18- Contacts for further information

Researcher’s Name: Siti Soraya Lin Abdullah Kamal

Email: sslinabdullahkamal1@sheffield.ac.uk

Tel: (+60) 019 2444 366

Address: School of Education, The University of Sheffield, 388 Glossop Road, Sheffield S10 2JA

Supervisor Name: Dr Mark Payne

Email: mark.payne@sheffield.ac.uk

Tel: (+44) (0)114 222 8170

Address: School of Education, The University of Sheffield, 388 Glossop Road, Sheffield S10 2JA

<http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/education/staff/academic/paynem>

Please find attached a consent form that you need to sign to show that you have understood this study and agreed to participate in it. Please return the form to the researcher. I would like to thank you in advance for your time, cooperation and commitment to make this study a success. Do contact me for any problems and questions. Thank you.

Appendix 9: Participation information sheet for the parent

Participant Information Sheet (parents)

1- Research project title

Exploring ‘struggling’ readers in the English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom

2- Invitation

You are being invited to participate in this research project “Exploring ‘struggling’ readers in the English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom”. Before you decide to do so, it is important you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Feel free to ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

3- What is the project purpose?

This study intends to explore students who are believed to be struggling with reading in the Year 1 ESL classroom based on their LINUS 2.0 results. The study also discusses the underlying factors that contribute to the positioning of the students as ‘struggling’ readers in their educational experiences.

4- Why I have been chosen?

You have been chosen because as a parent of ‘struggling’ readers, your opinions, experience and responses are valuable for this study. This study aims to identify factors that contribute to the positioning of students as ‘struggling’ readers in the ESL Malaysian classroom by exploring the students, students’ home life and school environment.

5- Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part in the research. If you decide to take part you can keep a copy of this information sheet and you should indicate your agreement

to the consent form attached. You can still withdraw at any time without it affecting you in any way. You do not have to give a reason.

6- What will happen to me if I take part?

You need to attend a one to one interview which will take you approximately 30 minutes. The session will take place in the school canteen in the afternoon. The interview will be conducted in May 2017.

7- What do I have to do?

If this information is clear and you agree to take part in this study, you can sign the consent form attached and return it to the English teacher of your child. You can just pass it on to your child.

8- What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

Participating in this research is not expected to cause you any disadvantages or risks.

9- What are the possible benefits of taking part?

While there are no immediate benefits for those taking part in the research, it is hoped that this study give you opportunity to voice your attitude of your child being perceived as ‘struggling’ readers in the ESL classroom. You can also share your expectations for your child’s reading performance and your hopes to the school with regards to your child’s performance. The findings from this study can enrich the educational practitioners’ understandings about the issues affecting ‘struggling’ readers in the ESL classroom and the role of environmental factors in the perception of students as ‘struggling’ with reading.

10- What happens if the research study stops earlier than expected?

Should the research stop for any unforeseen circumstances, we will inform you the reasons. The information you have shared in this study then will also be destroyed.

11- What if something goes wrong?

If you are not happy with any aspects of this study for example, the interview that you will have, you can lodge complaints by contacting the research supervisor:

Dr Mark Payne
The University of Sheffield
School of Education
388 Glossop Road
S10 2JA Sheffield
Email: mark.payne@sheffield.ac.uk
Tel: (+44) (0)114 222 8170
<http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/education/staff/academic/paynem>

If you think your complaints have not been appropriately managed, you can contact the University's Registrar and Secretary, David Hyatt at D.Hyatt@sheffield.ac.uk

12- Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

The information that we collect from you can only be accessed by the researcher and supervisor. The findings will be mainly used for analysis, presented in the thesis and other academic purposes related to the research such as presentation and publications. Your name however will be labelled pseudonym to ensure your anonymity. You will not be identified in any publications unless you have given your consent.

13- Will I be recorded, and how will the recorded media be used?

Audio recording will be used during the interview. The information analysed from the recording will only be used for thesis writing and other purposes that are associated to the research. The information will be stored safely and protected with a password that is only known to the researcher.

If you need a break during the interview you can do so by letting me know. I will pause the recording device. Also, if you want to withdraw in the middle of the session you are free to do so and I will delete the previous recording.

14- What type of information will be sought from me and why is the collection of this information relevant for achieving the research project's objectives?

In the interview, you will be asked about your socioeconomic background. Furthermore, your opinions about your child being perceived as ‘struggling’ readers based on the recent LINUS 2.0 result will be sought. You will also be asking about your time spent with the children and reading activity carried out with the children. Your views and explanation are just what this study is interested in investigating.

15- What will happen to the results of the research project?

The information that you share will be analysed by the researcher and the information will be included as part of the researcher’s thesis. The results may also be used for presentations and publications. However, your personal information will not be disclosed and will be labelled pseudonym to ensure your anonymity.

16- Who is organizing and funding the research?

This PhD research is being sponsored by Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia and Universiti Sains Malaysia.

17- Who has ethically reviewed the project?

This project has been ethically approved by the School of Education Ethics Review Procedure. The University’s Research Ethics Committee has monitored the application and delivery of the University’s Ethics Review Procedure across the University.

18- Contacts for further information

Researcher’s Name: Siti Soraya Lin Abdullah Kamal

Email: sslinabdullahkamal1@sheffield.ac.uk

Tel: (+60) 019 2444 366

Address: School of Education, The University of Sheffield, 388 Glossop Road, Sheffield S10 2JA

Supervisor Name: Dr Mark Payne

Email: mark.payne@sheffield.ac.uk

Tel: (+44) (0)114 222 8170

Address: School of Education, The University of Sheffield, 388 Glossop Road, Sheffield S10 2JA

<http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/education/staff/academic/paynem>

Please find attached a consent form that you need to sign to show that you have understood this study and agreed to participate in it. Please return the form to your child's English teacher via your child. I would like to thank you in advance for your time, cooperation and commitment to make this study a success. Do contact me for any problems and questions. Thank you.

Appendix 10: Participation information sheet and consent form for the children

Participant Information Sheet (children)



University student



PhD/study



Project/thesis



Reading lessons



Drawing



Talk about the drawing,
your experience and feelings



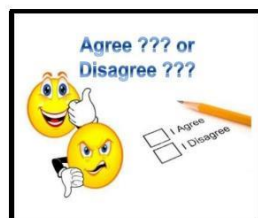
With friends



Video record



Any questions?



Agree/disagree?

Appendix 11: Consent form for the teacher

CONSENT FORM FOR THE ENGLISH TEACHER

Title of Project: Exploring 'struggling' readers in the English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom		
Name of Researcher: Siti Soraya Lin Abdullah Kamal		
Participant Identification Number for this project:		
		Please initial box
1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet/letter for the above project and have had the opportunity to ask questions.		<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason by contacting the researcher at sslinabdullahkamal1@sheffiled.ac.uk or by calling 019-2444366. Alternatively, you can contact the supervisor at mark.payne@sheffield.ac.uk		<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I understand that all reasonable steps will be taken to protect my identity.		<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I understand the information might be used in the presentation and publication.		<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I give permission for the researcher to audio-record our conversations and video-record the observations to ensure accurate transcription.		<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I agree to take part in the above research project.		<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	Date	Signature
<u>Siti Soraya Lin Abdullah Kamal</u>	_____	_____
Researcher	Date	Signature
Copies: <i>Once this has been signed by all parties the participant should receive a copy of the signed and dated participant consent form, the letter/pre-written script/information sheet and any other written information provided to the participants. A copy for the signed and dated consent form should be placed in the project's main record (e.g. a site file), which must be kept in a secure location.</i>		

Appendix 12: Consent form for the parent

CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: Exploring 'struggling' readers in the English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom		
Name of Researcher: Siti Soraya Lin Abdullah Kamal		
Participant Identification Number for this project:		
		Please initial box
1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet/letter for the above project and have had the opportunity to ask questions.		<input style="width: 50px; height: 25px;" type="text"/>
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason by contacting the researcher at sslinabdullahkamal1@sheffiled.ac.uk or by calling 019-2444366. Alternatively, you can contact the supervisor at mark.payne@sheffield.ac.uk		<input style="width: 50px; height: 25px;" type="text"/>
3. I understand that all reasonable steps will be taken to protect my identity.		<input style="width: 50px; height: 25px;" type="text"/>
4. I understand the information might be used in the presentation and publication.		<input style="width: 50px; height: 25px;" type="text"/>
5. I give permission for the researcher to audio-record our conversations to ensure accurate transcription.		<input style="width: 50px; height: 25px;" type="text"/>
6. I agree to take part in the above research project.		<input style="width: 50px; height: 25px;" type="text"/>
_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	Date	Signature
<u>Siti Soraya Lin Abdullah Kamal</u>	_____	_____
Researcher	Date	Signature
Copies: <i>Once this has been signed by all parties the participant should receive a copy of the signed and dated participant consent form, the letter/pre-written script/information sheet and any other written information provided to the participants. A copy for the signed and dated consent form should be placed in the project's main record (e.g. a site file), which must be kept in a secure location.</i>		

Appendix 13: Parent’s consent for children form

Date:.....

PARENT’S CONSENT FOR CHILDREN

Exploring ‘struggling’ readers in the English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom

Your child is being invited to participate in this study. I will be working with your child and other children in your child classroom for a few months. Your child’s participation is not compulsory. If they do want to take part, I will be observing them in the classroom. I will be asking them about things they learn and things they do in the ESL reading lesson and to draw about their reading experience. I will also supply the students with papers and coloured pencils to do the drawing. The activity may take your child 30 minutes.

Besides drawing activity, I will be conducting group interview with your child and other children. Your child will be asking to share their drawing and talk about it in the group. The interview will also cover the questions such as students’ feeling towards reading in English and the interview lasts no more than 45 minutes. During the observation and interview, the session will be video recorded and I will be asking your child permission prior using the device.

Your child’s name and identity will be kept confidential at all times and your child can withdraw from the project at any time. I will also be asking your child if they want to take part in the study and I will not work with them if they do not want me to. The findings of this study will be used in the thesis writing, presentations and publications. This study will be privileging your child’s voices as they will share their thoughts and feelings on learning experience in the ESL reading lesson. They will also have the benefit of another adult working with them. However, we can’t guarantee that your child will personally experience benefits from participating in this study.

Yours Sincerely,

Siti Soraya Lin Abdullah Kamal

.....

I have read and understood the above information and I give permission for my child

..... to be part of the study conducted by

Siti Soraya Lin Abdullah Kamal

Signature.....

Date.....

Upon signing, the parent or legal guardian will receive a copy of this form, and the original will be held in the subject’s research record.