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**Malaysian Literacy Practices in English: 'Big Books',
CD-ROMs and the Year 1 English Hour**

By

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requirement for the degree of

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List of Abbreviations

1. BM (Bahasa Malaysia)	Malay Language
2. CD-ROM	Compact Disc-Read Only Memory
3. DISCIS Books	A collection of books which have been converted to CD-ROM
4. ELT	English Language Teaching
5. ESL	English as a second language
6. EteMS	English Teaching of Mathematics and Science
7. ICT	Information Communication Technology
8. IT	Information technology
9. KBSR (Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Rendah)	Integrated Curriculum for Primary School
10. LCD	Liquid Crystal Display
11. MGB (Majlis Guru Besar)	The Headmasters' Association
12. MOE	Ministry of Education
13. PMR (Penilaian Menengah Rendah)	Assessment for Lower Secondary
14. SPM (Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia)	Malaysian Certificate of Education
15. STPM (Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia)	Malaysian higher Certificate of Education
16. UPSR (Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah)	Assessment for Primary Education

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ABSTRACT

In the context of an increasing awareness of improving the standards of English in Malaysia, this study explores Year 1 literacy practices in English and offers important insights into the three major innovations introduced in 2002: the English Hour, Big Books and CD-ROMs. The findings are examined in the context of the Ministry's desire to promote active engagement and high quality interaction.

Two studies were conducted using a naturalistic approach. In 2003, 50 questionnaires were distributed to primary school teachers: 5 classes and 9 teachers in 2 primary and 3 pre-schools were observed teaching English, Bahasa Malaysia and Arabic/Jawi. These teachers were also interviewed. In 2004, 2 trainers and 10 teachers were interviewed, 48 lessons of English, Mathematics and Science in English by the 10 teachers were observed, but the study focuses on the literacy practices in 26 lessons by 4 English teachers in four schools. Interviews and role plays with 28 children from these four classes in 7 groups of 4 inform the accounts and discussion of reading and writing events and practices.

The 2004 study suggests that the Ministry of Education's directives to English classes to integrate the use of the English Hour, Big Books and CD-ROMs have only been partially implemented in the classroom. The Ministry's hopes to provide more active engagement and to increase students' interests and motivation through the Big Books and the CD-ROMs were achieved, but the expectations of high quality interaction were not realised. Methods need to be developed to accommodate teachers' beliefs about the value of drilling, repetition and choral reading with the Ministry's desire to extend these interaction patterns and practices.

The present study contributes to existing research on the implementation of the English Hour, Big Books and CD-ROMs in Year 1 English classrooms, specifically from the perspective of Year 1 English classes in non-English speaking contexts. It also provides greater understanding of issues to be addressed in future teacher education developments.

Chapter 1:

Introduction and Background to the Study

1.0 Introduction

Literacy practices in Malaysia have always been very traditional with heavy reliance on the traditional texts and the teachers to deliver the knowledge. The students become passive recipients in their learning. With an effort to improve the teaching and learning situations, the Ministry of Education introduced innovative practices including the English Hour, Big Books and CD-ROMs in 2002. The English Hour adopted from the UK is hoped to provide active engagement and to produce high quality of interaction:

Active engagement and high quality interaction means that the teacher and pupils are always talking to each other or discussing with each other about the ideas in the story or about spelling, grammar, pronunciation, etc.

(Kurikulum Semakan Bahasa Inggeris: Kursus Orientasi Jurulatih dan Guru, 2002: 35)

The Big Books were introduced to inculcate good reading habits among the students, while the CD-ROMs were hoped to provide greater opportunities to use English in an IT rich environment. This study examines Malaysian Literacy practices in English focusing on the impact of recent developments namely the English Hour, the Big Books and the CD-ROM on interaction and practices in the context of the Ministry's hopes and aspirations to improve the teaching and learning of English. This move towards the centrality of spoken interaction in learning reflects a major paradigm shift in Literacy Studies.

1.1 The Paradigm Shift in Literacy Studies

There has been a paradigm shift in literacy studies in general and early childhood literacy in particular away from the traditional view of reading as decoding. "The concept of early childhood literacy as a socially- situated practice is a relatively recent development" (Hall, Larson and Marsh, 2003: xviii). The socio-cultural view of literacy

(Barton, 1994; Gregory, 1993; Heath, 1983; Street, 1984) demonstrates clearly that literacy could not be separated from language and its wider contexts (Gillen and Hall, 2003). It is based on cultural discourses and practices and draws attention to the context of how children learn.

In educational contexts, the social aspects of literacy learning have been widely accepted and researchers are now beginning to look at 'discourse' to understand what goes on in the classroom in order to comment whether or not the interaction is supportive of literacy learning (Mercer, 1997; Comber and Cormack, 1997; Hall, 2002). There is now a focus in educational research on the joint-enactment of teaching and learning between teachers and learners. Even though this research area is well received, there is still little research carried out in real language classrooms: "There is still comparatively little research that is actually carried out in language classrooms. More research is needed that focuses on what does or does not take place in the language classroom" (Nunan, 2005: 3). Furthermore, Martin (1999b: 135) added that, "there is a dearth of research on teacher-student text engagement in multilingual contexts, and, in particular, how two or more languages are used to unpack meaning in monolingual texts."

In Malaysia, the socio-cultural understanding of literacy is still new (Pandian, 1999) for teachers and parents. According to Ramly (1999), many teachers did not fully understand how literacy experiences, especially interaction with adults, could influence children's language and literacy development.

Masih ramai guru dan ibubapa yang tidak tahu cara literasi dapat membantu perkembangan minda dan emosi anak-anak mereka, kursusnya di peringkat pra persekolahan formal (tadika), sekolah rendah dan sekolah menengah. Guru dan ibubapa tidak diperkenalkan kepada cara-cara kanak-kanak boleh berinteraksi dan berkomunikasi dengan bergembira dengan pendidikan literasi. Gerakan kesedaran terhadap pengalaman literasi harus disegerakan supaya kanak-kanak dapat memenuhi citarasa hidupnya melalui pengalaman literasi yang mereka lalui. Dengan ini

pertumbuhan dan percambahan ilmu akan berkembang selari dengan perkembangan mental, emosi dan fizikal kanak-kanak."

<There are still many teachers and parents who were not aware that literacy experience could enhance children' mental and emotional developments particularly at pre-school, primary and secondary school levels. Teachers and parents had not been introduced to the ways that children could interact and communicate meaningfully during literacy learning. Thus, awareness towards this new literacy approach needs to be raised immediately so that children could develop their full potential as a result of their literacy experience. Consequently, knowledge could be delivered in parallel with their mental, emotional, and physical development>

(Ramly, 1999:18)

He added that literacy learning in Malaysian schools was mainly based on cognitive aspects that concerned developing discrete skills of reading and writing, and not providing children with literacy experiences that could enhance their intellectual, emotional, and physical development. The traditional, behaviourist approach and 'readiness' were still widely practiced in an exam-oriented system like Malaysia (Ramly, 1999; Pandian, 1999). Ramly argues that although the academic achievement received through the well-planned curriculum was something to be proud of, it has ignored the other equally important elements of literacy development such as the socio-cultural aspects.

Konsep dan pelaksanaan literasi di sekolah lebih tertumpu kepada penguasaan dan kemahiran berilmu yang di salurkan melalui pernyataan kurikulum kognitif dan efektif. Masyarakat guru lebih memberi tumpuan kepada pelaksanaan dan pengembangan kurikulum dan mata pelajaran dan ibubapa pula leka dan memberi tumpuan kepada ilmu untuk peperiksaan. Peperiksaan dan pencapaian kognitif yang baik dalam UPSR, PMR, SPM menjadi matlamat akhir pendidikan. Sekolah dan ibubapa merasa puas dan bangga dengan pencapaian ini kerana ia menggambarkan pencapaian asuhan akalbudi dan pengalaman pendidikan anak-anak mereka. Sebenarnya di sebalik pencapaian yang baik ini terdapat banyak kelemahan terhadap isi kandungan kurikulum kerana isi kandungan kurikulum yang dirancang lebih menjurus kepada perkembangan kognitif dan amat kurang memberi perhatian kepada pengisian pengalaman pendidikan dan budaya pendidikan arif-budiman"

< the concept and implementation of literacy at school level was mainly based on the development of knowledge based on the cognitive and affective aspects of the curriculum. Teachers were concerned with the implementation of the curriculum while parents were focusing on providing knowledge for passing examination. Examination and good academic achievement in UPSR (primary school assessment), PMR (lower secondary school assessment) and SPM (Malaysian Certificate of Education) were the final products of the educational system. Schools and parents were satisfied with this achievement as it represents the cognitive development and educational experience of their children. The truth is besides this excellence in academic achievement there are some limitations of the

curriculum content itself. It is very much concerned with developing the cognitive aspect and paying less attention to language learning experience and the socio-cultural aspect of it. >

(Ramly, 1999:18)

With the socio-cultural approach to literacy, and new developments in the use of technology in education, a paradigm shift in teaching and learning particularly in the Malaysian Educational system is required (Jamaluddin, 1999; Pandian, 1999; Mohd Shariff, 1999; Ramly, 1999). Three significant initiatives have been introduced since 2002 to help bring about this paradigm shift: The English Hour, Big Books and CD-ROMs. In line with these issues and recent changes, it is felt that literacy practices as well as the quality of teacher-pupil interaction in the Malaysian classrooms need to be examined in line with the new educational developments. This study hopes to contribute to the knowledge and understanding of the importance of classroom interaction in children's language and literacy development. It can also become the starting point towards a more effective practice and can be used as a foundation in the effort to improve the teaching and learning of English in the country.

1.2 Literacy in the Malaysian Primary Education

The teaching and learning of literacy in English is based on the development of the four basic skills as outlined in the National Curriculum.

1.2.1 The National Curriculum

The national curriculum is developed in line with the National Education Philosophy and the Education Act 1996, which seek to optimize the potential of every individual student and to produce good Malaysian citizens:

Pendidikan di Malaysia adalah suatu usaha berterusan ke arah lebih memperkembangkan potensi individu secara menyeluruh dan bersepadu untuk melahirkan insan yang seimbang dan harmonis dari segi intelek, rohani, emosi dan jasmani, berdasarkan kepercayaan dan kepatuhan kepada Tuhan. Usaha ini adalah bertujuan untuk melahirkan warganegara Malaysia yang berilmu, berketerampilan, berakhlak mulia, bertanggungjawab dan berkeupayaan mencapai kesejahteraan diri serta

memberikan sumbangan terhadap keharmonian dan kemakmuran keluarga, masyarakat dan negara.

<Education in Malaysia is a continuing effort towards developing individual potentials as a whole, to produce well balanced individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically fit and have good faith in God. This effort is taken to produce Malaysian citizens who are knowledgeable, having good personality, good morale, ethical, responsible and able to achieve personal well-being as well as to contribute to the harmony of the family, the society and the country>

(English Language Syllabus KBSR, 2002: iv)

Education becomes a means of fulfilling the government's hopes and aspirations in its effort to prepare the nation to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

1.2.2 The English Language Curriculum for Primary School

The English curriculum for the primary schools is designed to provide learners with a strong foundation in the English language for the purposes of higher education and the workplace. The aim of the English language syllabus for primary schools is "to equip learners with basic skills and knowledge of the English language so as to enable them to communicate, both orally and in writing, in and out of school". (English Language Syllabus KBSR, 2002: 2). The objectives for Year 1 are stated below. At the end of Year 1, learners should be able to:

- talk about themselves and their family;
- talk with friends;
- sing simple songs and recite nursery rhymes;
- follow simple instructions;
- listen to and understand simple short stories where vocabulary and sentence patterns are tightly controlled;
- ask and answer simple questions;
- talk about people and animals in stories;
- copy accurately and write simple phrases and
- show an awareness of moral values and love towards the nation.

(English Language Syllabus Specifications, 2003: 7)

Based on the English Syllabus Specification for Primary School, the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing are integrated within the context of teaching (themes), the sound system (phonics), grammar, functions, and vocabulary. There are three themes to be covered in Year 1: World of Families and Friends, World of Stories, and World of Knowledge. In World of Families and Friends, students are introduced to

topics about oneself, family, friends, school and home. In the World of Stories, they are exposed to animal and children stories, while in the World of Knowledge, they are taught about things in the classroom and home.

The four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing are emphasized in the English Language Syllabus Specifications (2003). The listening skills involve discriminating sounds, pronunciation, stress, and intonation (1.1, 1.2), acquiring and understanding vocabulary (1.3), following instructions and directions (1.4), obtaining information from texts (1.5), listening to a wide variety of texts and predicting outcomes (1.6,1.7). Speaking, on the other hand, encourages students to speak with clear pronunciation (2.1), to ask for information and give relevant information (2.3, 2.3), to tell stories based on pictures and other stimuli, and recite poems (2.4), to talk about people, places and moral values of the stories (2.5), and to express thoughts and feelings and give opinions on things read, seen, heard and viewed in simple language (2.6).

The skill of reading was planned in detail with the ultimate goal to make students become independent readers. Reading skills include acquiring word recognition and word attack skills (3.1), acquiring a wide range of vocabulary (3.2, 3.6), reading and understanding of a wide variety of texts (3.3, 3.5,3.7,3.9), reading aloud expressively and fluently for pronunciation, stress and intonation (3.4); reading for enjoyment (3.8), and reading widely and independently (3.9). Reading aloud, in particular, was stressed quite extensively in the English Language Syllabus Specification (2003:18) as stated below:

- 3.4.1 Read aloud words in lists and labels;
- 3.4.2 Read aloud phrases;
- 3.4.3 Read aloud sentences in signs, notices and simple stories;

Together with this focus on reading aloud, is a suggestion of how Big Books can be used. Reading aloud of stories may be used for pronunciation and for repetition practice, with the teacher acting as a good reader model.

Teachers can use the whole language approach by reading aloud stories from a book (e.g. Big Books) and allowing children to follow the words being read so that they get to know how words are pronounced.

(English Language Syllabus Specification, 2003: 4)

In addition, reading for enjoyment is also mentioned and the students are encouraged to respond to the texts by talking about them, extracting the moral values in them and relating to their live experiences as mentioned in 3.8. Most importantly, reading widely and extensively is also mentioned in 3.9. All of these reading skills are deemed crucial for the development of independent readers.

The skill of writing for Year 1 focuses not only on developing the mechanics of writing but also on introducing writing at the word, phrase and sentence levels. As stated in the Syllabus Specification, Year 1 writing relies on copying to provide practice in handwriting and spelling.

At this stage, pupils must master the mechanics of writing so that they form their letters well, leaving sufficient space between letters and words so that their writing is neat and legible. Pupils then learn to write at the word, phrase and sentence levels. At this stage, copy writing is an essential activity as it not only gives pupils practice in penmanship but also familiarizes them with the spelling of words.

(English language Syllabus Specification, 2003:5)

The English Syllabus Specifications also include the teaching of the sound system (phonics), grammar and language functions and it is clearly stated that, “one good way to teach the sound system and phonics is through rhymes and songs” (English Language Syllabus Specifications, 2003: 8). In addition, learning of the language skills, vocabulary and grammar should be taught using repetition, reinforcement and consolidation.

Language skills, vocabulary, grammar item and the sound system must be repeated often and used constantly to maximize learning. Teachers should get a variety of tasks that will enable pupils to use the specific skills often so that they gradually develop the ability, knowledge and confidence to use the language effectively. (English Language Syllabus Specifications, 2003: 3)

In short, the English language curriculum for primary school is based on developing the cognitive aspects of learning emphasizing on the four language skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening, and despite mention of whole language approaches, little attention is given to the socio-cultural aspects of literacy or the importance of meaningful interaction.

In the next section, I shall present the English Language Teaching issues and the new developments in the Malaysian education system.

1.3 ELT Issues and Recent Developments

At present, there is an urgency to improve the standard of English, which was considered to be declining among the school leavers and the graduates in the country. Yaakub (2002), for example, pointed out that the National Examination Results for English were never satisfactory. The SPM (the Malaysian Certificate of Education) results for English were the lowest compared with the other subjects tested, the UPSR (the Primary School Assessment) rarely even reached 60% passes and the PMR (the Lower Certificate of Education) English results in 1997 were only 63.1%.

Additionally, many studies have reported factors that contributed to the decline in the English standard. Yaakub (2002) discovered in her study that the Malay graduates failed to get better jobs in the private sectors due to their inability to communicate in English while Omar (1998) claimed that the imbalance in terms of linguistic achievement was due to the unequal emphasis on the teaching of Bahasa Malaysia (BM) and English in schools. She reiterated that BM was taught for an average of six hours a week in primary schools while English was taught for an average of only four

hours in both primary and secondary schools. In addition, Omar (1998) argued that another reason for the decline in the standard of English was the lack of opportunity in and outside schools to use English. She felt that as more students master their BM when the pass was required for the school-leaving certificate, there was less need and less opportunity to use English, especially when the English paper was not compulsory for a certificate or diploma. In relation to the problems faced in the rural schools, Ismail, Yaakub, Wan Chik and Yusoff (1999) discovered that the low performance in English among primary school students was attributed to not having enough English teachers, let alone enough well-trained and specialized in the subject matter. In addition, these unqualified teachers resorted to teaching English in Malay (Yaakub and Mohd Noor, 1990). Many research studies conducted in Malaysia, were concerned about finding the contributing factors to the decline in English standards, but none of these studies, looked at the micro-interaction of the classroom itself, let alone analysed the complex relationship of teacher-pupil interaction. Most of these studies used questionnaires or survey to gather information so that generalizations could be made, but very few classroom-based studies of micro- interactions were used to understand the issues surrounding English language teaching in the country.

This perceived decline in standards of English coincides with government commitment to ICT, rural schools and languages:

Efforts will be made to increase accessibility to education and training and reduce the performance gap between urban and rural schools. More schools with better teaching and learning facilities as well as hostels will be built in rural and remote areas to provide a more conducive environment for students. Besides maintaining a high level of proficiency in English as well as other foreign languages will be raised...

The government will give priority to improving facilities and infrastructure and intensifying the use of ICT in all schools and institutions. Greater emphasis will also be given to raising the standard of the teaching and learning of Mathematics, Science and foreign languages.

(The Third Outline Perspective Plan 2001-2010, 2001: 25)

The government is now providing schools with better teaching and learning facilities and infrastructure, with the hope of improving the quality of education and narrowing the performance gap between urban and rural schools. Four specific initiatives are particularly relevant to English: the English Hour and Big Books, the teaching of Mathematics and Science through English and the use of ICT or CD-ROMs.

1.3.1 The English Hour and Big Books

In a briefing on The Revised Curriculum for English Year 1 which was conducted in Kuala Lumpur from 30 June- 5 July 2002, the Curriculum Planning Division provided training for teachers on the revised English Language Programme called “the English Hour” which was based on the model used in the UK “Literacy Hour” (Dfee, 1998). The new English Hour was proposed as a new structure for all English lessons. The daily English Hour comprises a four- step Activity:

- Step 1: Shared reading (15 minutes);
- Step 2: Teaching points – pronunciation, spelling, word-attack skills (15 minutes);
- Step 3: Guided Reading or writing and independent work (20 minutes) and;
- Step 4: Summing up (10 minutes).

(Kurikulum Semakan Bahasa Inggeris: Kursus Orientasi Jurulatih dan Guru, 2002:23)

The focus of teaching in the English Hour is on developing language with story books. It emphasizes quality interaction and active engagement between teacher and pupils. Teachers are encouraged to read with students every day during the shared reading session.

With regard to the training provided for the teachers, a seminar was organized by the Ministry of Education whereby one representative was selected from each school to attend. These selected teachers were responsible to disseminate the information about the new English Hour programme to their colleagues through an in-house training.

This method of selection was criticised by teachers and trainers for not providing adequate training for all teachers.

With the implementation of the English Hour, The Ministry hopes to encourage more interaction between teachers and pupils especially during the shared reading whereby the teacher uses one Big Book and sits together in a non-threatening environment with the whole class of students. This is based on the 'whole language' approach to teaching and learning. Shared reading may be used to enhance talk between teacher and students whereby their ideas should be encouraged, repeated and expanded. For many teachers this represents a significant change in teaching. Following shared reading there is the time for the explicit and direct teaching of reading and writing strategies when the teacher draws attention to the language aspects such as phonics, spelling, pronunciation, grammar and meanings of words derived from the text read.

With regard to the use of CD-ROMs [refer to Sections 1.3.3 and 7.2] the purpose was to expose students to the variety of English usage and the basics of English literacy. There was no indication as to how the CD-ROM could fit nicely with the new English Hour. Additionally, there was also no clear official role of the textbook in relation to the English Hour (refer to 1.2.2, pages 5-7). These three different resources do not seem equally 'tailor made' to fit into the phases of the official English Hour structure.

Another arising issue was a conflict between the English Curriculum and the new English Hour. In an exam-oriented system like Malaysia, the focus has always been in making sure that the students pass the exam set by the Ministry of Education. The headteachers and teachers wanted their schools to perform well in the examination therefore they prepared exam questions to familiarize students with the examination formats based on the syllabus specifications. The contents of these examinations were language-focused [See Appendix 13 for the sample of exam items]. Therefore, when the English Hour was introduced with the purpose of exposing students to more

English and improving their oral skills, it was not well received by some headteachers and teachers themselves as its structure was not helping students to meet the exam standards. More discussion on this perceived conflict is discussed in Section 5.2.3.2.

The Literacy Hour in the UK offers some benefits such as adequate time for literacy each day and useful literacy activities during shared reading and writing especially when seeing someone model the reading (Campbell, 2002). However, Campbell (ibid) argues that many studies conducted with regard to the implementation of the Literacy Hour in the UK have also discovered its limitations. One is that the danger that the former read-aloud practices might not be maintained as there is no obvious time for this in the Literacy Hour structure. Second, “the literacy Hour does not appear to be based on young children and learners constructing meaning from experiences. The emphasis upon instruction in word, sentence and text is also a cause of concern” (Campbell, 2002:77-8). These combine to lessen the emphasis on the enjoyment of the story. Furthermore, the lack of emphasis on writing (Smith and Whitley, 2000; Smith and Hardman, 2000) is a worrying factor.

Although there are criticisms of the UK Literacy Hour, I think that this is a positive step in the Malaysian classrooms. In the structured 60-minute lesson more time is devoted for literacy with emphasis on shared book experience than previously. I think this story reading will bring about a new way of learning as it is not widely practiced in the Malaysian context. Moreover, the word-level work which emphasizes specific teaching of grammar, vocabulary and phonics will provide a systematic way of learning English for ESL learners. Studies have shown that good teachers find ways of bringing in children’s experiences. Not only are generic literacy skills reinforced as children learn to read and write in Malay, but English language skills are also being reinforced through Mathematics and Science.

1.3.2 The Teaching of Mathematics and Science through English

In addition to the English Hour, the teaching of Mathematics and Science through English was also implemented. The Ministry of Education started the teaching of Mathematics and Science for Year 1 in 2003 with the purposes of preparing students to meet the challenges of globalization through the use of ICT, and improving the communication skills in English by making English as the medium of instruction in these subjects. The government has spent billions of dollars funding the national schools for the Mathematics and Science projects. Schools were equipped with better infrastructure, ICT equipment and teacher training in English, Mathematics and Science. On top of that, they were also given an additional 10% of their salary as an incentive for teaching Mathematics and Science in English.

In an interview, Mr. Z, an officer in charge of the Mathematics and Science projects in primary schools, explained that training for the teachers was conducted in two phases. In phase 1, teachers had English training for three weeks whereby they were taught about the usage of English grammar and the language components. In the second phase, the focus was on Mathematics and Science content and teachers were trained to prepare lesson plans and materials, as well as involved in micro-teaching. The training in the first phase was conducted by the English trainers, while the second phase was facilitated by experienced Mathematics and Science teachers selected by the Ministry of Education.

The English Teaching for Mathematics and Science (ETEMS) has also outlined strategies to make the training of these teachers more effective. For example:

1. To stimulate the teaching and learning and make it lively, by setting up the teaching aids and using them effectively;
2. To enrich the subjects, through memorizing of the basic facts in English, drilling in the classrooms, and enriching vocabulary;
3. To provide more enrichment towards the knowledge and understanding of the HSP (The Curriculum specifications) and the scheme of work in the teaching and learning;

4. To redevelop the Mathematics, English and science Curriculum for the primary school;

(ETEMS Panel Strategy for Year 1 and 2, 2004)

1.3.3 The Use of ICT in Schools

In addition to books, the Ministry of Education provides all primary schools with notebook computers, LCD equipment and CD-ROMs for subjects in the school curriculum, including English, Mathematics and Science, to help the teachers teach more effectively. The Ministry of Education hoped to expose students to greater opportunities to use English in an IT rich environment as well as to provide the basis of literacy in the English language (English Language Year 1 Teaching Courseware, 2003).

1.4 Aims and Scope of the Study

The aim of this study is to explore literacy practices with the focus on Year 1 English classrooms. With the desire to make it relevant to the present context and the innovations introduced by the Ministry of Education, I focus on literacy practices surrounding the English Hour, Big Books and CD-ROMs. These innovations were introduced to improve on the 'traditional' drilling and repetition practices. My interest is to examine the extent to which these innovations bring about the changes in interaction and practice as expected by the ministry based on ideas from socio-cultural approaches to literacy development.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study will provide not only profiles of literacy events and practices in Year 1 English classrooms but also will consider the impact of innovations such as the Big Books and the CD-ROM on interaction and practices, the role of drilling and repetition in the context of the literature and the extent to which interaction is now more meaningful in the 'English Hour' in the context of the Ministry's hopes. This study will

be of value to the language teachers, teacher trainers at various teacher-training colleges and local universities, the general public mainly parents and individuals and curriculum developers from Local Education authorities, the District Education department and most importantly the Ministry of Education.

As an early years teacher educator at Universiti Utara Malaysia, I will be in a good position to ensure that this study will benefit in-service and pre-service language teachers in particular, as it will increase their awareness of the importance of teacher-pupil interaction and how they may have influenced the students' learning, and enable them to modify their teaching strategies accordingly to accommodate their learning. It will be essential for improving teacher education in the country and it will also benefit the curriculum developers and policy makers as they are responsible for the future development of primary education in Malaysia. Finally, it will serve as a guide for future research in the areas of English as a second language, and literacy studies.

1.6 Structure of the Thesis

In this chapter, I have introduced the study in its educational context.

Chapter 2 reviews research surrounding literacy practices, reading as a cultural practice, learning to read and write, the use of ICT in the classroom, and the importance of interaction between teachers and learners in teaching and learning. This review provides the basis for analysis and discussion of the study.

Chapter 3 presents the results of a preliminary exploratory study conducted in 2003 where questionnaires were distributed to 50 teachers, and lessons in English, Bahasa Malaysia and Arabic were observed with three pre-schools and two Year 1 classes. The 9 teachers observed were interviewed. This study proved useful in defining the focus, identifying issues, and determining the instruments used in the 2004 study. This

study provides evidence of the traditional drilling and repetition literacy practices from 9 teachers across three languages. It also describes the research methodology adopted in the 2004 study.

Chapter 4 discusses the findings of the English Hour. It includes an overview of the English Hour, the traditional reading and writing practices and the teachers' and the students' perspectives on the English Hour.

Chapters 5, 6, and 7 consist of the analysis of the findings. The analysis is divided into three chapters: Interaction around the traditional texts (Chapter 5), interaction around the Big Book (Chapter 6) and interaction around the CD-ROM (Chapter 7). In each chapter, the nature of Year 1 interaction and literacy practices is examined and discussed in the context of the Ministry of Education's aspirations.

Chapter 8 discusses and integrates the findings in this study, providing implications for the teachers, teacher educators and policy makers. It also includes implications for further research in this field. Finally, I end the chapter with some limitations and contributions of this study to the Malaysian context as well as to the wider research and professional community.

Chapter 2:

Reading, Literacy and Interaction

2.1 Introduction

ELT issues in Malaysia, such as the declining standards of English, and the students' inability to speak English even though they have learnt the language for several years, have led the government to introduce new developments in primary education including the English Hour, the Big Books and the CD-ROM to improve standards and change classroom interaction and practices. My intentions in this study are to look at the nature of literacy events and practices in Year 1 English classrooms and to investigate the impact of innovations on interaction and practices using a naturalistic approach. This type of research is important, as it will provide a clearer picture of what goes on in the classrooms, the literacy practices, and the nature of teacher-student interaction surrounding texts. Besides, this type of research in the Malaysian context is still new and limited. Therefore, I believe that this study could contribute to a new understanding of the English language teaching and learning in the country. It is also expected to inform current understandings of literacy, classroom interaction and literacy practices internationally.

This review looks at key studies related to literacy learning and new developments in education. Particularly, it examines how children learn a second/foreign language, how they learn to read and write in L2 at school, and how innovative practices such as stories and technology can contribute to children's literacy development.

This chapter is divided into several sections. In the first section, I provide a brief review of traditional views of learning to read and write. Then, I present some definitions of literacy by differentiating between literacy events and practices. This is followed by a review of the new developments in education such as stories and literacy development,

the importance of teacher-learner interaction based on the socio-cultural perspectives and the use of computers in literacy learning.

2.2 Literacy and Reading

Wallace (1986) points out that, “ literacy suggests a concern with the social functions of reading while learning to read has traditionally been taken to denote the acquisition of a set of skills which are presumed prerequisites to reading itself” (3). Reading has been defined as the process of making sense of messages that have been encoded in writing and it involves decoding and comprehending (Wallace, 1986; Bielby, 1994). Reading is also interpreted as ‘a message-getting, problem-solving activity’ (Clay, 1991:6) which requires the reader to extract cues from the written text. The process of making meaning and understanding is difficult and complex as it entails not only the skills of recognizing whole words, but also knowing alphabetic principle, word-meaning and the ability to use the background knowledge, linguistic knowledge, and spoken language (Bielby, 1994).

Based on the definitions above, reading involves two equally important skills: *language comprehension* and *decoding*. Often, when we picture a child listening to a story being read aloud to her, she is involved in the process of comprehending it, however, when she reads the story by herself, she is engaged in decoding the text. *Language comprehension* or one’s ability to understand depends on two important aspects: the *background knowledge* or the context that will provide one with a frame of reference and the *linguistic knowledge* such as, *phonology*, *syntax* and *semantics* that will provide the reader with the sound of speech, the structure of the language, and the meaning which are equally essential for reading. Decoding, on the other hand, refers to “the child’s ability to recognize and process written information using *lexical knowledge*, *cipher knowledge*, *phoneme awareness*, *alphabetic principles*, *letter knowledge* and *concept of print*. Research has demonstrated that phonemic awareness

or an awareness of rhyme, syllables, and onsets of words is essential in learning to read as it facilitates later reading acquisition (Adams, 1990; Campbell, 2002).

This conventional view of reading focuses more on the cognitive or psychological aspects of reading but fails to inform the social dimension of learning to read. In other words, learning to read has long been considered mental or '*intrapsychological*' processes and has been criticized for ignoring the influence of culture on literacy learning and development (Bernhardt, 2003; Comber and Cormack, 1997; Cazden, 1988). Cazden (1988) stated that, 'much has been omitted from this account including the important aspects of how language is constrained by the contexts and interactions in which it occurs, how much it depends on cultural knowledge, and how classroom discourse influences the learning of the school child' (cited in Clay, 1991: 90). Much of what is written on L1 reading may not be directly applicable to the L2 context as the L2 reading involves different processes in making sense of the written texts.

Next, I shall discuss some alternative approaches to teaching reading.

2.3 Three Approaches to Teaching Reading

The traditional 'bottom-up' or 'decoding' approach views the reading process as building up the words from letters or rote learning and putting them together into words, sentences and meaningful messages (Adams, 1990; Chall, 1983). This approach originated from Skinner's Behaviouristic theory which emphasized systematic reinforcement and habit formation (Razfar and Gutierrez, 2003). Here, we can see an overwhelming emphasis on drilling practices of isolated sounds and letters. This traditional approach is based on three traditional theories: classic alphabetic method i.e. (see-ay-tee) spells cat; the phonics method such as sounding out routines; and the whole word method using flashcards.

The alternative view, on the other hand, emphasizes the meaning and the use of meaning as a means of identifying words. This approach is sometimes referred to as 'whole language', 'language experience' or top-down' approaches. The top-down model relates to the meaning emphasis and stresses the 'first importance of higher cognitive skills in making predictions' (Chall, 1983:28). This top-down model of reading is also known as 'a psycholinguistic guessing game in which the child predicts or guesses words and uses various contextual clues' (Goodman, 1967, cited in Bielby, 1994:17).

The top-down approach emphasizes the quality of a story and its naturalness of language that can motivate the learning of words and meaning, while the bottom-up views of the reading process as 'developing from perception of letters, spelling patterns and words, to sentence and paragraph meaning, resemble the code emphasis,' (Chall, 1983:29). However, recently reading experts regard reading as an interactive process by combining bottom-up and top-down quest for meaning. They are now beginning to accept the notion that children construct their own meaning using both code and context. This third approach is consistent with broader socio-cultural concepts of literacy and literacy practices. However, L1 reading development cannot be directly used to inform the subjects of this study because the Malaysian students in my context have limited English proficiency and do not have direct exposure to the use of English outside the English lessons. Moreover, it could be seen as problematic and too simplistic to use written texts designed for L1 readers as a focus or starting point when developing English with young children who have very little English.

2.4 Approaches to Teaching Writing

"Writing may be referring to as the psychological and physical processes involved in actively creating a meaningful message" (Whitehead, 1990: 139). In learning to write, young children learn to represent aspects of their world, which vary in terms of place or context, and opportunities. Therefore, what they learn to do in writing is very much

constrained by social and educational practices made available to them (Christie, 2003). Christie argues the role of the teacher in selecting the written patterns that suit a particular culture, and in choosing what's best for children to read, practise, or discuss is essential.

Currently, there appears to be two approaches to writing: traditional and developmental.

The traditional approach to teaching writing is developed based on the assumption that children have little or no knowledge about writing and that they need formal instruction from the teacher to learn. Teachers who practise this traditional approach often have difficulty separating between composition and transcription, emphasize correct spellings and handwriting from the start, pay little attention to audience, purpose and outcome for early writing. According to Browne (2000) a typical traditional programme might involve the children in copying and tracing handwriting patterns, writing and tracing over the teacher's writing, copying underneath the teacher's writing and copying from the board since the main purpose appears to be to gain practice at writing. She argues that traditional writing is rarely drafted, is often expected to be finished in one session, and is generally corrected by the teacher and may be displayed in the writing book once it is copied out correctly after it had been corrected by the teacher.

Traditional approaches to teaching writing have a number of limitations and disadvantages. Browne (2000) argues that copying encourages children to become reliant on the teacher and a great deal of time could be wasted by children as they waited for help from the teacher or waited for the teacher to write their sentence for them to copy in their writing book. Often when assistance was given, it was attempting

in getting the writing to look right rather than responding to what the children have written and encouraging them to develop it further.

“Teaching writing in this way does not acknowledge the degree of linguistic learning children already have and makes it difficult for the teacher to see what children can do alone. It encourages dependence, inhibits children’s willingness to write for themselves, wastes time, causes organisational headaches, puts the emphasis on transcription rather than composition, and generally fails to give children a sense of communicative or personal uses of writing.” (Browne, 2000:94-95)

In addition, the excessive emphasis on the end-product practised in traditional approaches, not only reduces the interest in and knowledge about the psychological process, but also undervalues the first attempts at writing made by children (Whitehead, 1990). She argues that many parents and teachers still think of writing as ‘handwriting’ rather than ‘thinking and communicating’ that this so called ‘manual-skill approach’ is still dominant in many classrooms whereby tracing, copying and practising letters continue to be practised. Unfortunately, if teachers concentrate too much on spelling, they inhibit children’s desire to write and produce writers who are frightened to have a go at writing and ‘play safe’ with the choice of words, limiting themselves only to the words that they can spell correctly.

The other approach to writing is the developmental approach that views children as active learners who take their own initiative and responsibility in their own learning and teachers should take into account of what they know and what they can do (Browne, 1993; 2000). This is based on earlier research on young children’s early writing that many children have some knowledge about writing through exposure from the literate world around them (symbols, advertisings, newspapers) and that they have made earlier attempts at writing by experimenting with symbols, letters, numbers, etc. (Teale and Sulzby, 1986; Hall, 1987; Strickland and Morrow, 1989; Whitehurst and Lonigan, 1998; Browne, 1993; 2000).

According to Browne (ibid), teachers who value this approach provide encouragement and support as the children write, discuss what they think about their writing, place emphasis on composition, structure, and clarity rather than on spelling and handwriting, and most importantly, let them experiment with the writing process from the early stages of writing. She explains,

Teachers who work developmentally, work with the knowledge and ability that children bring to school. From the start, children are expected to try to write for themselves. They are given the opportunity to 'have a go' at writing without copying or waiting for the teacher to help them with spellings before they write. Initially, children are encouraged to write without worrying about spelling and handwriting. This is totally in harmony with good early-years practice since it offers opportunities for learning through active exploration (Browne, 2000:90).

Principally, the developmental approach is about understanding how writing develops and how children learn to write based on the knowledge of how children learn in general. This approach offers some advantages: it encourages children to believe in themselves; to participate actively in their own writing development; to take risks; to be independent; to develop positive attitudes towards writing by not being overly concerned about correct spellings and neat handwriting; to employ certain writing strategies to complete the whole piece of writing; and to understand that writing is about communication of content (Browne, 2000). Kenner's (2000) work on writing in two languages shows that children can write in English and other languages when they are provided with opportunities to explore multilingual writing as they can transfer their knowledge about different writing systems between languages.

These views of approaches to teaching reading and writing tend to be polarized and dichotomous. My aim is not to endorse any particular approach but to explore what happens in particular classrooms. Such dichotomies can provide a useful, if oversimplified framework for analyzing such practices.

2.5 Literacy Events and Practices

The term literacy is widely used but there appears to be no consensus in its definition (Paterson, Jacobs Henry, O'Quin, Ceprano, and Blue, 2003). However, some researchers make distinctions between literacy events and practices. Literacy events are 'activities' (Barton, 1994) in which literacy has a role, while practices are associated with cultural values attached to them (Heath, 1983; Street, 1984; Gregory, 1996). Heath (1983), views a "literacy event" as a distinct communicative situation where literacy plays a major role and it involves "any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of the participants' interactions and their interpretive processes" (23). Thus when a teacher greets the class, this is not a literacy event, but if she writes 'Good morning class' on the blackboard, and then greets them, it is because a piece of writing is integral to the interaction. If this happens regularly, it can be interpreted as an instance of a literacy practice.

Literacy practices, then, are the general cultural ways of utilizing literacy that people draw upon in a literacy event (Barton, 1994; Street, 1995, 1993). Street (1995:133 as cited in Chairney, 1998), for example, defines "literacy practices" as patterns of social activity around reading and writing, and postulated that whenever people engage in a literacy event, they have "culturally constructed models of the literacy event in their minds". He also takes this idea a little bit further by claiming that literacy practices are "inextricably linked to cultural and power structures in society, and to recognize the variety of cultural practices associated with reading and writing in different contexts" (7). Thus in our example it is the teacher who writes, who initiates the interaction, and who decides what to write, whether to write etc. This is a teacher-controlled practice in a cultural context where a class begins with a teacher-initiated greeting.

Heath's (1983) study provides us with detailed descriptions of the use of reading and writing in the home, the community and the school. Such literacy practices enable us

to see what people do, how they do it and what values they place on reading and writing in their contexts. This research was a turning point in literacy studies whereby she managed to get researchers to focus on actual events of people using reading and writing in their day-to-day lives. Her work has been influential in education too, as it has made educators examine in detail, not only the literacy practices in the classroom, but also the reading and writing that learners do at home and the community, and how these relate to classroom practices. Heath comments that “the concept of literacy covers a multiplicity of meanings, and definitions of literacy carry implicit but generally unrecognized views of its functions (what literacy can do for individuals) and its uses (what individuals can do with literacy skills)” (Heath, 1983:123). This means that literacy is a complex phenomenon, and it carries multiple and symbolic meanings of events and practices that can be understood in a specific cultural context.

Literacy practices do not take the same form from one culture to another. Gregory (1996) provides us with some accounts of young learner literacy practices in different cultures. For example, Nicole has story reading practice as a routine practice with her parents and grandparents and she is also provided with books, dictionaries, computer to support her literacy development in two languages English and French; Tony, a Chinese boy, on the other hand, learned his native language in a much more painful manner. Learning to read for him is based on understanding meaning, pronouncing phrases correctly, repeating, memorizing and copying phrases using words in different sentences. Nazema, a Bangladeshi girl learned to read in Bengali and Arabic by repeating and memorizing by heart sections of the holy Quran. The children in Gregory’s study were all in the UK, but the practices described resonate with the different ways Malay, English and Arabic are taught in Malaysia. This suggests that different cultural practices may be associated with teaching different languages in the same school.

In summary, literacy events in this study are activities around written texts in the classroom, while literacy practices are associated with the cultural uses and meanings of those activities. In other words, they refer not only to the event itself but also to the conceptions of reading or writing that people hold when they engage in the events.

Sociocultural perspectives on literacy and learning which originated from the Vygotskian tradition, highlight the important relationships between language, culture and development. “Sociocultural view of learning centres attention on cultural practices, or valued activities with particular features and routines, as fundamental to understanding the nature of literacy” (Razfar and Gutierrez, 2003:34). Thus, in contrast to conceptions of literacy as the acquisition of a series of discrete skills, a sociocultural view of literacy argues that literacy learning cannot be abstracted from the cultural practices in which it is nested. Instead, there is an emphasis on the available tools or artifacts and forms of assistance present in the activity (Gutierrez, 2002 cited in Razfar and Gutierrez, 2003). “Accordingly, the development of early literacy practices (and their study) is understood in relation to the contexts in which those practices are culturally, historically, and ideologically situated” (Razfar and Gutierrez, 2003: 35).

The sociocultural view of literacy has some impact on early childhood literacy (Gillen and Hall, 2003). According to Gillen and Hall (2003) there were two major moves by researchers in early childhood studies during the 1970s and early 1980s: first, there was increasing recognition of the role that young children played in making sense of literacy, that even the very youngest participated in the process by paying attention to the print world around them. Out of this a new field of study appeared- emergent literacy; second, this change involved a redefinition of literacy, in such a way that literacy began to be viewed as a much broader set of print-related behaviours than the conventional reading and writing. Literacy is now based on cultural discourses and

practices in which it is embedded. Studies draw attention to how young children are learning to mean with a much wider notion of literacy such as their relationship to popular culture, or their involvement in new technologies. Questions are also raised about the relationship between literacy as a social practice and literacy in schooling. Thus, from different cultural contexts, children would be bringing very different conceptions of literacy to the autonomous practices of school literacy (Gillen and Hall, 2003: 7).

Many studies on literacy have examined literacy practices (Taylor, 1983; Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines, 1998) and their influence on the children's later academic achievement (Hannon and James, 1990; Senechal and Lefevre, 2002; Beals, Temple and Dickinson, 1994) and have also shown that literacy practices in the classroom are linked to the practices outside school with some evidence of the transfer of cultural practices across languages (Heath 1983; Gregory, 1996; Rosowsky, 2001; Baynham, 1988). Studies have shown that the children who are young followers of Islam and have been attending lessons on how to decode the Quran in their homes and community were using these decoding strategies when reading in English in school (Rosowsky, 2001; Gregory, 1993; Baynham, 1988). Gregory (1993) for example, discovered that the Bangladeshi children in East London were already attending Bengali and Arabic classes for more than 10 hours a week and they were learning to read and write in these two languages other than English. Similarly, in another study conducted by Rosowsky (2001), the bilingual learners were able to decode text in a superior fashion to that of their monolingual peers and these decoding practices have now become part of their cultural practices.

the activity of reading, even though remains formal and ritualistic, it seems to be significant in the individual or social act of reading in this manner. It is not bereft of meaning, but rather, as a social and cultural practice, it is saturated with meaning linking the participants both synchronically with the religious community, locally and globally, of which s/he is a part, and diachronically with the established history of the religion itself (Rosowsky, 2001: 61).

These studies demonstrated the positive effect of the skills transfer whereby bilingual learners who have been learning to read and write in another language in their home and community might have acquired some literacy skills prior to learning English, as a result, they managed to transfer these skills when learning English. Moreover, they show that the traditional ways of learning through decoding and memorizing are associated with the attached cultural values.

A similar practice was also found in Baynham's (1988) study of Moroccan children. He concluded that the reading act or memorization and recitation by heart that they performed seemed to be significant and relevant in their own context and the emphasis on recitation by heart is evidenced in the language itself that the Arabic word for read, "qara'a", has a meaning of 'recite by heart'. In fact, the practice of reciting words by heart is described in religious observations from the very beginning of the Quranic revelation, when the Prophet, who did not read or write, received the revelation in the form of written text.

And Gabriel came to me when I was asleep with an embroidered cloth and there was writing on it and he said to me "read" and I replied, "I can't read". Thereupon he throttled me until I thought death was coming. Then he released me and said "read" and I replied again, "I can't read". Thereupon he throttled me again until I thought death was coming. Then he released me and said again "read" and I replied "I don't know how to read," and Gabriel said, (revealing the first words of the Qur'an) 'read in the name of thy Lord who created humans from clot of blood, read and thy Lord is the most gracious, who teaches by means of pen and teaches humans what they do not know.' And Muhammed said, "I read it and when I awoke from my sleep, it was written in my heart, like in a book".

(Translation based on the account in *Ibn Hisham's Sirat an-Nabi*, Cairo, 1346A.H. as cited in Baynham, 1988: 54)

He also stated that,

"the memorization of the Qur'an was achieved by rote learning, starting with the younger children reading the shorter "surahs" and moving through the longer ones. The emphasis is on faultless reproduction of a sacred text, whose linguistic form literally incorporates the word of God, with in terms of initial acquisition at any rate, no particular emphasis on understanding a text which is anyway of a conceptual and linguistic complexity far beyond the understanding of the young children who memorize it" (Baynham, 1988:54).

Moslems believe that the Quran is the word of Allah (God) and reproduction of its original text is a sin. Therefore, children are taught to memorize the exact words as written in the Quran. For one reason, the meaning of the Holy Quran is highly complex and cannot be interpreted literally without a proper guidance from a religious teacher or 'guru' and for the other reason the practicality of recitation of the shorter "**surah**" or verse is for it to be used in the prayers. Reading in this context, therefore has become a part of worshipping and the more you can memorize by heart the closer you feel to God. Thus, the notion of socio-cultural element of literacy provides a new way of understanding literacy practices from different contexts.

In the next sections, I shall review the literature on literacy practices and innovations which include stories and literacy development, the use of ICT in the classroom, and the classroom interaction. Then, I end with the summary of the chapter.

2.6 Literacy Practices and Malaysian Innovations

In the next section, I present the review of the literature related to Big Books, ICT and classroom interaction.

2.6.1 Stories and Literacy Development

One of the innovations in the Malaysian schools was the introduction of 'Big Books' to use particularly during the Shared Reading section of the English Hour. Storybook reading has become a major area of research in literacy learning over the last decade and many studies have documented evidence of the positive effects of storybook reading on children's literacy development (Teale and Sulzby, 1987; Koskinen, Blum, Bisson, Philips, Creamer and Baker, 2000; Cameron, 2001; Ellis and Brewster, 1991; Neuman and Celano, 2001) particularly on vocabulary acquisition (Senechal, Lefevre, Hudson and Lawson, 1996; Penno, Wilkinson and Moore, 2002; Rosenhouse, Feitelson, Kita and Goldstein, 1997; Elley, 1989; Hargrave & Senechal, 2000) and

interest in reading (Koskinen, Blum, Bisson, Philips, Creamer and Baker, 2000; Senechal et al., 1996; Klesius and Griffith, 1996). This section discusses some of these studies, which were conducted to examine the positive effects of storybook reading particularly the ones that are concerned with reading aloud of stories and adult-child interaction during story reading.

Literacy development begins at the early stages of childhood, even though the children's activities may not be the same with the conventional reading and writing. The children's literacy development is seen as emerging from their oral language development and their initial attempts such as "reading" from pictures and "writing" with scribbles, known as "emergent literacy" (Sulzby and Teale, 1991). In addition to that, with the support of parents, caregivers and teachers who read children stories, talk to them about pictures and print, and provide them with a print-rich environment, they will eventually progress from emergent to conventional reading.

Neuman and Celano (2001) argue that children start to develop some fundamental literacy skills such as recognizing the alphabet and sounds through listening to stories. They suggested that,

Put books in children's hands, whether it is potty time, free-play time, or nap time. Read them stories and let them play with and touch the books and see the pictures and print. Children will learn that words tell stories. They will begin to recognize letters and sounds, and without seeming to try, they will build a foundation for literacy" (Neuman and Celano, 2001:551-552).

Storybook reading is one of the areas that can provide children with invaluable literacy experiences particularly in developing second language literacy (Bialystok, 2002; Gregory, 1994; Ellis and Brewster, 1991; Cameron, 2001). Bialystok argues that the studies investigating children learning to read in a weak language highlight the importance of oral language proficiency and "one aspect of oral competence that has repeatedly been shown to promote the acquisition of literacy is the command of literate

language that follows from experience with early storybook reading” (Bialystok, 2002: 165).

Stories are not only motivating and fun, but the features of the stories such as the repeated patterns and the rich vocabulary with interesting rhythms and sounds are also stimulating and can create a natural support for language development. Additionally, the context created by the story, its predictable patterns of events and language and pictures act to support listeners’ understanding of the unfamiliar words and allow room for growth in vocabulary (Cameron, 2001). Stories also introduce pupils to grammatical structures of English in a natural and authentic way and the rich context helps them understand the meanings they convey” (Ellis and Brewster, 1991:39).

Most importantly, stories can help develop positive attitudes towards language learning and can exercise the children’s imagination when they are personally involved in the story. As a matter of fact, it is a useful tool in linking fantasy and imagination with the children’s real world (Ellis and Brewster, 1991). According to Ellis and Brewster (ibid), listening to stories in class is a shared social experience and unlike reading and writing, which are often individual activities; storytelling provokes a shared response of laughter, sadness, excitement and anticipation which is not only enjoyable but can help build up the children’s confidence and encourage their social and emotional development.

2.6.1.1 Reading Aloud of Stories

Many studies provided evidence on the effect of listening to stories being read aloud on children’s vocabulary acquisition (Elley, 1989; Penno et al., 2002; Senechal et al., 1996; Hargrave and Senechal, 2000), decoding and comprehension (Rosenhouse et al., 1997). Hargrave and Senechal (2000) for instance, examined the effect of storybook

reading on acquisition of vocabulary for preschool children (3-5) who had poor vocabulary skills by testing whether the effects would be greater when children were passive participants (regular shared-reading) as compared to when they were actively involved (dialogic reading) in the storyreading session. Their study revealed that children with poor vocabulary skills learned new vocabulary from shared book reading and that children in dialogic reading session made significantly better gains in language than did the children in the regular reading condition. This study also indicates some evidence of the importance of children's active engagement during shared reading session.

Another interesting study was conducted by Elley (1989) who investigated the phenomenon of incidental vocabulary learning through reading aloud sessions with 7 and 8 years old children. He hypothesized that children would learn the meanings of many new words that they heard in stories read aloud to them with or without any explanation to them. Thus, in his experiments, he compared reading with explanation of word meaning to reading without any explanation. The two experiments provided evidence that reading aloud to children is a significant source of vocabulary acquisition, and that teachers' additional explanations of words can double such gains. In addition to that, the experiments proved that the new learning is relatively permanent, and that children who scored low at the outset could gain at least as much as students who scored high. This study suggests that young children may learn new vocabulary incidentally when having illustrated storybooks read to them by a competent adult. In line with this, Penno et al. (2002) argued that, "although vocabulary learning occurred incidentally while listening to a story, students made greater vocabulary gains when the teacher provided an explanation in context of target vocabulary items " (31).

Brabham and Lynch-Brown (2002) examined three reading aloud styles that teachers could use: just reading, performance reading and interactional reading using experimental design with an attempt to reveal statistical differences on vocabulary and comprehension for first and third graders. They discovered that interactional reading produced the greatest gains, while just reading produced the smallest gains in vocabulary and comprehension. They claimed that reading aloud is a powerful tool for enhancing the children's language and literacy development. This study also supported the notion that teacher's mediation and explanation are critical factors that benefit the children's learning of words, concepts, and construction of meaning in the early grades.

Rosenhouse et al. (1997) on the other hand, conducted experiments to determine the effects of reading aloud to first graders in decoding, reading comprehension and picture storytelling, by comparing different types of literature and they discovered that exposure to any kind of reading enhances children's literacy and increases their skills in decoding, comprehension and picture storytelling. In addition to that, reading aloud sessions affect their world of knowledge "knowledge schemata" and the story structures, which are essential for reading comprehension. The more they are exposed to series of books, the better they understand the story structure and background information, and the more they enjoy them, the more they want to read them for pleasure. They claimed that, "exposing beginning readers to read-aloud sessions in an early stage of reading acquisition improves their reading skills and enhances them to become leisure readers" (Rosenhouse et al., 1997: 180).

Apart from examining the effects of reading aloud of stories on vocabulary and comprehension, and the reading aloud styles of the teachers, other studies have also looked at the children's expressive engagement during story reading (Sipe, 2000) by examining the questions children asked about pictures, story meaning and word

meaning (Yaden, Smolkin and Conlon, 1989). Interestingly, it appeared that learners asked more questions about pictures and story meaning rather than about word meaning. All these studies provided insights into the children's active involvement when listening to storybook read to them.

In summary, previous studies have shown that reading aloud regularly to students at the primary school level, in the context of shared reading or recreational reading produces measurable and sometimes dramatic gains in reading, listening, and vocabulary. However, according to Elley (1989) "few studies have attempted to demonstrate the specific language that children learn from listening to particular stories read aloud" (176) and claimed that, "the research on story reading aloud is thin, and theoretical frameworks hard to find" (Elley, 1989:176). Many studies on storybook reading were experimentally based and not conducted in the actual classroom context. Therefore, it can be argued that they fail to represent the actual interaction that takes place between the teacher and learners during storybook reading sessions. Besides, many of these studies examined the children whose first language is English rather than looking at children whose first language is not English. This study will examine the patterns of interaction surrounding stories in the L2 classroom context.

2.6.1.2 Interactive Reading Aloud of Stories

Many studies provided evidence of the importance of adult-child interaction during storybook reading in the home (Heath, 1983; Heath and Branscombe, 1986; Teale and Sulzby, 1987; Campbell, 2001) and the school contexts (Penno, Wilkinson, and Moore, 2002; Elley, 1989; Brabham and Lynch-Brown, 2002; Hargrave and Senechal, 2000). As a matter of fact, the interaction between parent and child during book reading has been posited as one of the central vehicles by which young children acquire their first notions of the purposes of and elements involved in learning to read. This is true

because on the one hand, parents are the child's first teachers as he spends most of his time with them, and on the other hand, "children, are not born knowing how to connect their knowledge and experience in "literate" ways to printed and pictorial texts. Rather, they must learn strategies for understanding texts just as they must learn the ways of eating and talking that are appropriate to their cultures or social groups" (Cochran- Smith, 1986: 36). Therefore it is crucial to have a competent adult to guide the child through the whole process of learning to read.

One of the issues raised in most research on interactive storyreading between adult and children is the notion of 'mediation', which is found to be crucial for literacy development (Teale and Sulzby, 1987; DeBruin- Perecki, 2004). Researchers agree that the way the adult mediates the story to the child is more important than the total number of interactions between them. Teale and Sulzby (1987) for instance, argue that, "...the effect of being read to is not merely present or absent, or a quantitative issue. How the parent or teacher reads to the child the ways in which the literate text is mediated for the child is of great importance." (116). According to Teale and Sulzby, storybook reading, like literacy itself is a cultural practice whereby two general questions are being addressed: who engages in the practice (and who does not), and how is the practice actually accomplished. The former question raised an issue of whether or not storybook reading is practised. This is important because in many instances, storybooks may be readily accessible in the homes or schools but they are not being read regularly to children. Arguably, in some instances, storybook reading may be considered marginal if compared to the teaching of reading and writing skills (Rooks, 1998; Bloch, 2000).

Wells (1985 cited in Williams and Gregory, 1999:155) argues that the total interaction in which the story is embedded may also determine the child's success in school. He claimed that, " it is not the reading of stories on its own that leads children toward

...success in school but the total interaction in which the story is embedded. At first they need a competent adult to mediate as reader and writer between them and the text" (155). This notion is also supported by DeBruin-Perecki (2004) who stated that, "it is primarily through interactive dialogue that children gain comprehension skills, increase their understandings of literacy conventions, and are encouraged to enjoy reading" (DeBruin- Perecki, 2004:2). This line of research indicated that a competent adult plays an important role in preparing the child for later success in school. As a mediator, parents or teachers can support the children's learning by talking about the literacy conventions, pictures and story meaning, which can help to enhance their literacy development.

Particularly in the school context, Hargrave and Senechal (2000) examined regular reading with dialogic reading of 3-5 years old children and discovered that children in the dialogic reading condition made significantly better gains in language than did children in the regular reading condition. The shared reading interaction between the teacher and the groups of children provides a stimulating environment that enhances language development (Hargrave and Senechal, 2000). Neuman (1999:301) highlights some important features in developing students' literacy development.

"critical features of instruction may shape children's literacy development. These include an environment rich in print with attractive accessible books close by and a caring adult who reads to children, exposing them to the rich vocabulary and linguistic forms of the language, who talks about the events in the stories, who focuses the children's attention on ways to better understand the text; and who shows them how they may also participate as readers by predicting, chiming, and retelling stories" (Neuman, 1999: 301).

Clearly, many earlier studies mentioned the importance of adult-child interaction in fostering the children's literacy development. It is worthwhile to note that the way a competent adult mediates is more important than the total number of interactions between them.

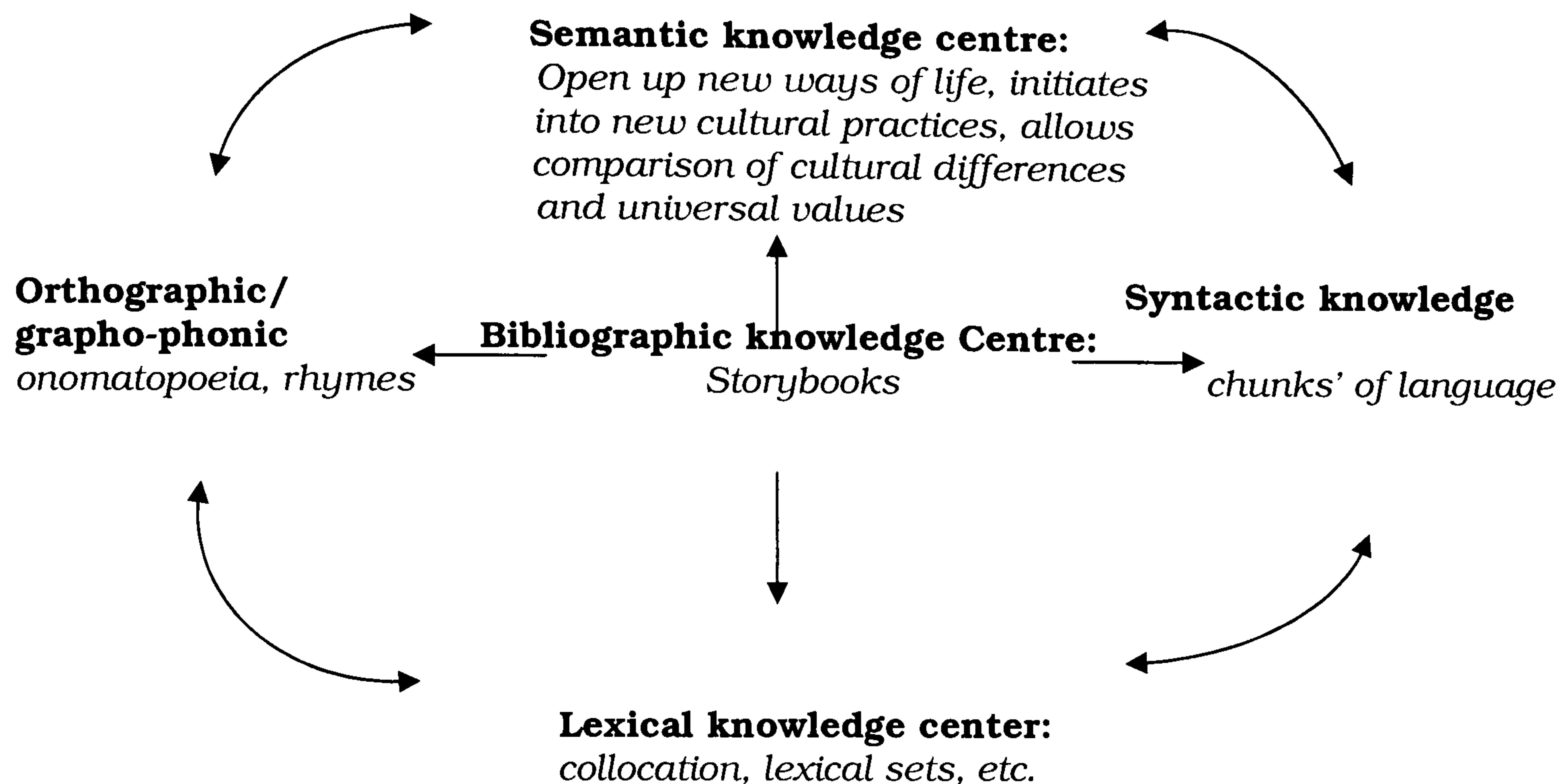
Research on the interaction surrounding the reading of Big Books in the Literacy Hour is scarce. Gardner (2004) illustrates effective scaffolding in a Year 1 EAL classroom in which the teacher builds on students' initiations. This shows in detail how the teacher mediates between the children and the text.

The next section explains how stories can be used to foster second language literacy development.

2.6.1.3 Second Language Reading Model

In the L2 context, Gregory's (1996) "Outside-In Model of Learning" explains the magic of stories whereby stories can provide "scaffold" for beginner bilingual readers in building up grapho-phonics, lexical and syntactic clues" (114). As indicated in Figure 1, storybook is the key to the development of a knowledge center that provides different clues or cues for children to draw upon as they learn to read. This means that, semantically, stories can introduce children to a new way of life, new culture practices and moral values; syntactically, they provide chunks of knowledge learned through rhymes and repetitions; lexically, they reinforce difficult collocations and lexical sets; and, orthographic/grapho-phonically, they draw the children's attention to patterns of letters and sounds through rhymes (117). Repetition of words in the stories are essential in learning to read a second language as they provide readers with the lexical clues during the reading process. Moreover, the more stories are read to them the more words they can store up in their bank of words and the more they understand the story.

Figure 1: Gregory’s (1996) Outside-In Model of Learning (The Five Knowledge Centres)



Gregory (1996) argues that in the outer layer approach, when the teacher reads a wide range of stories, children will acquire the “story language” of the book such as plots, characters etc., and often when the books are meaningful and interesting, they are able to memorize words and phrases of the language which is particularly important for their language development. At the same time, when the teacher tells or reads stories, he or she becomes the initiator of dialogue and the children act as listeners. However, when the children gain more confidence of the language, they will gradually start reading the text and the teacher becomes the listener and the children become partners in dialogue with the text.

Teale (1986) argues that previous studies provide little attention to defining or describing what constitutes a book reading episode. These experiments are purposely designed to fit the particular research context only. Teale and Sulzby (1987: 115) suggested that, ‘the role of adult-mediation therefore needs further examination because of its importance to literacy acquisition’. Furthermore, they added that ‘it is this issue which researchers have only begun to explore and which, because of its

potential significance for helping parents and educators understand how to maximize the likelihood for children's transition into literacy deserves increased attention in future studies" (Teale and Sulzby, 1987: 127). Considering the fact that storybook reading is a culture practice (Teale, 1986; Heath, 1983; Taylor, 1983), it is clear that future studies should take into consideration the nature of mediation in different cultural context. Thus, the present study attempts to investigate the nature of teacher-learners interaction during storybook reading by examining how the teachers interact with students during Big Book reading.

Another innovative tool in developing children's literacy development is the use of ICT in the language classroom, which I shall now turn to.

2.6.2 The Use of Technology in the Classroom

The concept of literacy has been extended to include a wide range of disciplines and one of them is computer literacy. Many studies have looked at the use of technology in the classroom and discovered the positive effects of computer on comprehension (Miller, Blackstock, and Miller, 1994; Reinking, 1988; Reinking and Schreiner, 1985) while others found no difference in terms of the best practices (Paterson, Jacobs Henry, O'Quin, Ceprano, and Blue, 2003).

The help features available in the computer mediated text can influence reading comprehension (Reinking and Schreiner, 1985; Reinking, 1988; Miller et al., 1994) and comprehension increases when manipulation of the text is controlled by the children (Reinking and Schreiner, 1985). In the earlier study, Reinking and Schreiner (1985) discovered that the comprehension of intermediate and poor readers improved by the use of help features in the computer. This finding is supported by his later study that comprehension increased when they read computer mediated texts that expanded or controlled their options for acquiring information (Reinking, 1988). They argue that the

results can be interpreted in the light of metacognitive theory and technological attributes of the computer in text mediation. Similarly, Miller et al. (1994) who examined the reading behaviour of 4 children, aged 8 engaged in repeated readings of CD-ROM storybook and hard-covered books reported that repeated reading of DISCIS storybooks provided with assistance features seemed to enhance the children's reading performance.

Computers can have a role in promoting collaborative learning (Mercer, Fernandez, Dawes, Wegerif and Sams, 2003; Klein Staarman, 2003) and the development of children's talk and literacy. Mercer et al. (2003) provided evidence that computer software can be used as a resource for getting students' involvement in group activities, however, it can only function well if the activity is integrated with the teaching of speaking and listening with proper guidance from adults or teachers. They argue that, "Group discussion can help children's literacy development. However, we have also shown that simply putting children together to talk is not enough; they need to be helped to understand how to use language as a tool for thinking together" (Mercer et al., 2003: 87). In another study, Klein Staarman (2003) discovered that children working in dyads around the computer made more contributions during computer mediated discussion and were more attentive to the collaborative process than individual children.

Computers are an excellent medium for delivering drill and practice programme which can be used for remediation (Adam and Wild, 1997) based on the assumption that the skills can be mastered the more they are practised. According to Honig (1996), the drilling features can offer children who are learning to read or having trouble reading to practise the symbol/sound manipulation in order to develop phonemic awareness of the sound of words. Besides it can also teach word-identification skills and increase understanding of spelling patterns (Honig, 1996:120). Despite the usefulness of the

drilling and practice for remediation, this type of computer programme has been criticized for benefiting the low level skills but not higher level experiences (Paterson et al., 2003). They argue that, “many of these systems stressed assessment of measurable, fractionalised behaviours emphasizing content rather than process and the mechanical rather than the meaningful’ (Paterson et al, 2003:178).

Another benefit of multimedia technology is that it provides many new opportunities for accelerating learning in many different ways, including language learning (Edwards, Monaghan, and Knight, 2000). Edwards et al. argue that bilingual interactive software provides a basis for activities and discussion that could increase language awareness and foster positive attitude among poor language learners (Reinking, 1988). As pointed out by Adam and Wild (1987:123), interactive storybooks may be useful for ‘extending vocabulary...and developing decoding competence”.

Despite the positive effects of computers on learning, these studies have also indicated rather contrasting views towards the use of computer (Paterson et al., 2003; De Jong and Bus, 2002). The study conducted by De Jong and Bus (ibid) which focuses on what emergent readers internalize from repeated reading of books that are similar in illustrations and story content but differ in format (paper book vs. electronic format) found that the paper book reading group improved by 44%, the restricted computer group improved 17% while the unrestricted computer group only improved by 10%. They concluded that the electronic format is a less efficient means of supporting internalizations of story contents and that the many attractive options in the computer divert the children’s attention from the text. In a similar vein, Reinking (1988) has not found consistent difference in reading comprehension when the computer text is displayed in a similar manner of presentation with the printed text.

To further support this argument, Paterson et al (2003) claim that computers alone did not promise best practices but the teachers who facilitated children's active engagement in the activities produced an improvement in their reading and writing skills. Clements (1985) as mentioned in Paterson et al. (2003) cautioned that attractive features in the computer may increase the entertainment value and motivation, but may not produce the most learning. Furthermore, there is the danger of 'set it and forget it syndrome' when the computer is used in the classroom as mentioned by Miller et al. (1994). Thus, more attention is needed to see the complex interrelationships between technology, teachers and literacy as they are central to children's literacy development (Paterson et. al, 2003). Besides, little is known about the role of CD-ROM interactive storybooks in learning to read (Adam and Wild, 1997). Thus, in this study, the impact of computers on interaction and practices will be examined.

In the next section, I provide a review of the literature on classroom interaction in both L1 and L2 contexts. This is followed by a review of code-switching practices and end with a brief summary and conclusion.

2.6.3 Classroom Interaction

Analysis of classroom discourse is one potentially productive path for finding out what our teaching works to do (Comber & Cormack, 1997: 29). Comber and Cormack claimed that the analysis of discourse was to make clear the roles and expectations expected by the teacher and learners and the notions of literacy that were available for learning. "What counts as literacy in a classroom depends on what texts are produced or interpreted, what kinds of talk go on around these texts, and what is assessed as 'good work'" (Comber & Cormack, 1997:25). Additionally, Hall (2002) stated that, "the major assumption underlying this, is that, it is not simply whether one becomes literate but how one becomes literate- what one learns of the sites and practices of reading and writing- that is important..." (192). Hall's study shows the complexity

involved in understanding what counts as an opportunity for literacy learning and how such opportunities are constructed through activity among members on a moment-by-moment basis as they engage in a classroom task (Hall, 2002: 192). This is supported by Gibbons (2005) who calls for more research on the micro-nature of interactions.

While transformation and support at the macro level of school and systems policy is critical, there is a need to focus much more on the possibilities of the micro-nature of interactions (Gibbons, 2005:4).

The movement into the micro-analysis of classroom discourse originated from a socio-cultural approach to teaching and learning which views human development as social not biological. It views learning as a joint activity and that cognitive development can be heightened as a result of participation with adult whereby children are pushed beyond their comfort zone. This interaction is explained by the concept of Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky) or the cognitive gap between what a child can do unaided and what she can do with help.

2.6.3.1 Teacher Talk and the Literacy Hour

Researchers accept that talk is a vital part of learning and language development and yet it is not fully utilized in classroom contexts (Browne, 1998; 2000; Mercer, 1997). Wells (1986 cited in Browne, 2000) discovered that children were granted limited opportunity to express meanings through talk. He found that at school children speak less with adults, and in the conversations that they do have, get fewer turns, express a narrower range of meanings and use grammatically complex utterances. They also ask fewer questions, make fewer requests and initiate a smaller proportion of conversations. In comparison with parents, teachers dominated conversational exchanges, giving children far fewer opportunities to speak in class than at home. Wells concluded that "for no child was the language experience of the classroom richer than that of the home" (9-10). In support of this statement, Mercer (1997:180) indicated that, "talk was often not used very effectively by teachers, and that teachers were largely unaware how and why they talked as they did."

Recently, classroom talk has become a focus of attention within policy guidelines such as the National Literacy strategy, which places emphasis on 'whole-class interactive' teaching. Many related studies on this have indicated that the classroom interaction was heavily teacher-dominated (Burns and Myhill, 2004; Skidmore, Perez-Parent and Arnfield, 2003; Hardman, Smith and Wall, 2003; Hargreaves et al., 2003; Mroz, Smith and Hardman, 2000). Mroz's et al. (2000) study on classroom discourse of 10 lessons in the Literacy Hour suggests that the teacher was predominantly controlling the content, pace and direction of the lessons.

Teacher presentation and teacher-directed question and answer therefore dominated most of the classroom discourse. There was also a notable absence of the higher order questioning and teacher-led discussion which is said to be characterized interactive whole class teaching so as to allow pupils to develop more complete and elaborated ideas. In other words, the findings suggest that teacher-led recitation was the most frequently used form of interactive teaching where the third move was rigidly used to evaluate rather than to extend pupils' contributions. The findings therefore revealed a strong tendency to preserve more traditional patterns of whole class teaching despite the appearance of organisational and curriculum change within the literacy hour (386).

They also argue that the teachers were involved in telling students what to do rather than providing opportunities for them to develop their ideas and thinking. Similarly, in Hargreaves' et al. (2003) study of 30 teachers teaching during the Literacy Hour, it was discovered that even though the teachers managed to increase the level of interactivity by increasing the number of questions asked, they still spent over half of the class time telling children what to do. They concluded that, even when the increasing number of questions asked managed to increase the students' opportunity to answer the questions, they were not considered active learning as their responses were rarely extended. They claimed that, 'teaching in the Literacy Hour, having become 'interactive' in a 'surface' sense, has remained heavily teacher-dominated' (Hargreaves et al., 2003: 234). The interactive whole-class teaching may have found to increase students' contributions but have reduced extended interaction (English, Hargreaves and Hislam, 2002). Some observational data from English's et al. (2002) study also

indicated that the ill-defined concept of 'interactive' has led to pedagogical conflicts for teachers whereby they were urged to encourage pupils' contributions while maintaining the pace and meeting the teaching objectives.

Another study by Burns and Myhill (2004) which analyzed 54 whole-class teaching episodes of the Literacy Hour indicated that teachers controlled the knowledge and used more statements than questions. This implies that teachers were more involved in telling than asking, and students were occupied in listening rather than talking. They argued that this form of teaching goes against the socio constructivist theory of learning that emphasizes pupils as active learners who could construct their own learning. Hardman et al. (2003) claimed that in order to achieve learner centredness, students should be given opportunities to work out their thinking and understanding through talk.

One of the most important ways of working on this understanding is through talk, particularly where pupils are given the opportunity to assume greater control over their own learning by initiating ideas and responses which consequently promote articulate thinking (Hardman, Smith and Wall, 2003:212).

In line with this, Browne (2000) argues that teachers should understand the value of talk in children's learning. She explained that when children speak, it demonstrates that they are active learners responsible for their own learning and the teacher's support during talk enables them to negotiate meaning and understanding. When the teacher extends children's learning experiences, they will demonstrate what they know and what they need to know and gradually they will take over more responsibility in their own learning. Browne stated that, "the teacher's willingness to explore topics collaboratively with pupils, allowing them to negotiate meanings and extend their understanding through talk, is the key to developing children's learning" (Browne, 2000:11). Further studies on the English Hour itself are discussed both in the Introduction (1.3.1) and in the discussion of the English Hour (4.2.5).

2.6.3.2 Teacher Questions

Apart from classroom talk, studies which looked at the questions used by teachers revealed that teachers asked more closed or display than referential questions (Shomoosi, 2004; Wu, 1993; Brock, 1986). Taking Long and Sato's (1983) definitions, display questions refer to those questions for which the questioner knows the answer beforehand; such questions are usually asked for comprehension checks, confirmation check, or clarification requests while referential questions are those questions for which the answer is not already known by the teacher. Such questions may require interpretations and judgments on the part of the 'answerer' (Long and Sato, 1983 cited in Shomoosi, 2004, 97-98). With regards to the responses produced by the learners, it was revealed that in general they were restricted (Shomoosi, 2004; Wu, 1993), while their responses to referential questions were longer and more complex than the display questions (Brock, 1986). This indicated that the referential questions may increase the amount of speaking learners do in the classroom. Brock argues that, "the use of referential questions may be an important tool in the language classroom, especially in those contexts in which the classroom provides learners their only opportunity to produce the target language" (56). This finding is relevant with Swain's (1985) view that output may be an important factor in successful Second Language Acquisition.

In the context of the UK Literacy Hour, Skidmore et al. (2003) discovered that the teacher usually asked questions to which he/she knew the answers, selected students to answer it, controlled the topic of discussion, and did most of the talking. They argued that, 'teacher-pupil dialogue in the guided reading session of the Literacy hour tends to resemble 'pedagogical dialogue' in which someone who knows and possesses the truth instructs someone who is ignorant of it and in error, more closely than 'internally persuasive discourse', in which pupils retell a story in their own words rather than reciting by heart (Skidmore et al., 2003:52). Mroz et al. (2000) and Hardman et al. (2003) also revealed similar findings that the majority of teachers'

questions were closed and students had to display factual answers to most of the questions. In contrast, Gardner (2004) shows teacher questions that do allow for collaborative construction of understanding.

2.6.4 Bilingual Classroom Interaction

In the context of bilingual classroom interaction, studies have suggested that the interaction was very much teacher-controlled with the questions predominantly closed type (Chick, 1996; Arthur, 1996; Martin, 1996; 1999; Baetens-Beardsmore, 1996). Chick's (1996) study indicates the notions of what he calls 'teacher volubility' whereby the teacher talks too much and 'students taciturnity' in which students do not say much and regarded them as features of institution specific rather than cultural specific discourse.

In terms of the questions asked, earlier studies suggest that the questions were merely recall of one-word answer or yes/no responses. This type of question, is described by Heath (1986) as 'label quest', where the teacher attempts to elicit a vocabulary item from the pupils. Arthur (1996) added that most of these questions were 'undemanding, requiring merely recall of previously introduced material' (26). Additionally, Martin (1996; 1999) claimed that these recall questions produce little verbal output and do not provide opportunity for exploratory talk. Furthermore, Baetens-Beardsmore (1996) argues that these questions were used to check students' comprehension and their ability to use the correct vocabulary.

Many teachers in Bruneian schools tend to use a question and answer technique in which the teacher do most of the talking while the children reply on one-word answers, either with yes or 'no' if this was appropriate, or by giving one-word answer which usually indicated comprehension of the question and an ability to produce the appropriate key word (118).

Another striking features of bilingual discourse are choral repetition and chorus completion of the teacher's statement. According to Martin (1996) typically during classroom interaction, students are asked to read aloud the textbook as the whole-

class and the teacher would stop where necessary to check on students' pronunciation and spelling. Baetens-Beardsmore (1996) argues that this form of choral repetition is considered as lack of student comprehension.

Such an approach means that it is impossible for the teacher or the pupils to have any clear awareness of capabilities in the language. The chorally chanted responses provided by the children in no way reflected genuine language usage, reflected no activity that even resembles a real-life situation, and failed to produce even a semblance of negotiation by which language acquisition progresses" (Baetens-Beardsmore, 1996:117).

Chorus completion to the teacher's statement on the other hand, is "a kind of gap-filling exercise' in which pupils' understandings are little probed, and the risk of their responding unacceptably is minimized' (Arthur, 1996:26). According to Chick (1996), choring gives students the opportunities to participate in ways that reduce the possibility of the loss of face associated with providing incorrect responses to teacher elicitation, or not being able to provide responses at all (Chick, 1996). He argues that this helps the students to avoid the loss of face associated with being wrong in a public situation, and provides them with a sense of purpose and accomplishment as well as helping the teachers avoid the loss of face associated with displays of incompetence. Chick calls this 'safe-talk' because it allows the teacher to get through each day without being caught 'not knowing' i.e. so that there can be 'safe-time'. However, he argues that safe-talk contributes to a culture of non-learning and claims that chorus responses signal participation rather than understanding.

This talk creates a space where teacher and students know more or less what to expect and how to behave in class, but a high price is paid in terms of (a lack of) learning. I have suggested that safe-talk is one piece of a larger co-construction of school safe-time which contributes to the continuing marginalisation of historically disadvantaged people in social and policy contexts of long-term oppression (Chick, 2006:9).

Similarly, in Brunei, teacher's prompt using prosodic cue and chorus responses in the first language is not only accepted but is also often encouraged (Martin, 1996b). As is the case in Malaysian schools, choral repetition and choring behaviour have become a widely acceptable practice as they ensure participation and involvement in English classrooms.

2.6.4.1 Code-Switching Practices

It is not uncommon to see the use of code switching in many bilingual classrooms particularly when the participants have limited grasps of the language. Teachers code switch to get their points across but they also attend to the language proficiencies and preferences of the learners (Martin-Jones, 1997). Many studies on code switching suggest that sometimes the practice is acceptable as it enables the learners to make contributions (Lin, 1996; 1997; Martin, 1999a) while in other contexts it is discouraged (Arthur, 1996; Canagarajah, 1995).

In Lin's (1996; 1997) studies patterns of code-switching in English lessons are investigated. She observed that the teachers made ample use of Cantonese in teaching English vocabulary and grammar in highly ordered patterns of alternation between English and Chinese. The teacher first introduced a grammar point in English, then repeated the point and/or elaborated on it in Cantonese. Then, the key elements were reiterated in English. The teachers' acceptance of responses from students in Cantonese served as a means of enabling the students to contribute to the co-production of the body of knowledge. She argues that the main purpose of using Cantonese (L1) is not to establish bilingual knowledge of academic terms but to expediently annotate English key terms, key statements, or texts to students who have limited English linguistic resources. She also claims that code switching practices provided evidence of the dominance of English as the language of academic learning.

Martin (1999a) looked at bilingual interaction around text and discovered that collusion between the teacher and pupils facilitate pupil contribution and comprehension. There were two strategies found in his study: *hetero-facilitative* and *self-facilitating resources*. He mentioned that in the first strategy, the teacher switches into Malay when she assumes that the students are not going to understand while in the second one it is done to narrow the linguistic gap between the teacher and the

learners who undoubtedly have limited grasps of the language. Martin attributed the use of these two languages to the '**dwibahasa**' or the two-languages policy in Brunei.

Arthur (1996:18) suggests that code switching provides some insights into the collusion between the teachers and learners. It becomes a mutual face-saving over the adequacy of their classroom interaction (Arthur, 1996). She argues that the teachers in Botswana were under pressure to adhere to the language policy which is the use of English only in the classroom and their professional and personal instincts to code switch in response to the communicative needs of their pupils (Arthur, 1996:21) and some of them were even ashamed to admit using it in their classroom practice. Canagarajah (1995) reports that learners in English classes in Jaffna switched into Tamil in secretive exchanges when the teacher was not paying attention.

2.7 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter has explored the conceptual basis for the present study. The review has shown that there is a shift in the conception of literacy and it places emphasis on the importance of language, culture and development. This shift has led the researchers in the field to redefine the concepts of literacy with children now viewed as active learners and it stresses the importance of joint construction of meaning, away from the conventional reading and writing practices which involved drilling, repetition and memorization. The new definition of literacy also includes technologies and not just on the ability to read and write. However, little is known about the use of computers for whole class teaching in a second/foreign language context like the present study.

With regard to the classroom interaction studies I reviewed, teacher talk and teacher-centred approaches were still evident in many classrooms with the recall-type questions still widely practiced. Students were getting less opportunity for engaging in classroom talk. Bilingual classrooms in particular, were characterized by chorus

responses, choral reading and code-switching, which were thought to be less contributing to children's learning. However, much is not known about bilingual classroom interaction, particularly, which involves young learners.

Chapter 3: Initial Study and Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter reports the 2003 study findings and the 2004 methodology. The 2003 study proved to be useful not only in shaping the directions or focus of the 2004 study but also in helping me to refine the research instruments for the 2004 study.

The purposes of 2004 study were three fold:

1. To investigate the nature of literacy events and practices in Year 1 English classrooms in the context of the recently introduced English Hour;
2. To investigate the nature of drilling and repetition in the context of the literature;
3. To investigate the impact of innovations i.e. the CD-ROM and the Big Books on interaction and practices.

Richards (2003) argues that educational researchers need to describe the complexity of a phenomenon so that it could be understood rather than merely accepting its complexity. This study is positioned between the traditional classroom practices and beliefs and the new initiatives introduced with the expectation of changing the nature of teacher-student interaction. I hope to uncover some of the complexities in this, rather than adhering to the dogma.

Recognizing the complexity of the study and in order to establish the conclusions identified within this study, I used different methods based on the benefits of triangulation as a 'between method' to avoid bias of any single research approach as well as to increase trustworthiness of the research. In this chapter, I shall provide the research paradigm by explaining my decision to adopt the qualitative research approach, which might best describe the unique nature of my study. I describe my role

as 'observer as participant' in this research and I explain the methods I used for data collection such as observation, interviews, and students' role play. I shall explain why I have preferred some research methods over others and I shall discuss some of the strengths and limitations of those I have chosen. In the proceeding sections, I shall provide some information regarding the participants and the data collection procedures. Finally, I consider the reliability and validity of the study. The summary of the 2003 study is also presented as the findings informed the data collection methods of the 2004 study.

3.2 Research Paradigm and Research Approach

Methodology involves making the choice and the decision, which might determine the data to be gathered (Conteh, Gregory, Kearney and Mor-Sommerfeld (2005). I was enlightened by Conteh's (2005) definition of methodology that it involves more than describing the tools and procedures but it reflects on values and beliefs with regard to your decision and the context of your study.

Methodology, then, is much more than the set of methods that are chosen to answer the research questions, more than a list of ways of doing things or a set of tools for collecting data. Your methodology is, in effect, a reflection of yourself and your values, the product of your decisions and how to act in a particular social and cultural situation in which you have identified a problem, a belief that doing something in that situation is better than doing nothing. The action you take may be entirely to do with the development of your own knowledge and understanding or it may include social and even political outcomes' (Conteh, 2005: 98)

The methodology to me involves the decision you make to explore the issues under study and the tools you use to gather the data. This decision is vital as it will determine the outcomes that you will get in the study.

Initially, in the 2003 study, I used quantitative methods to get a wider picture of many teachers' perceptions of children's literacy acquisition from a larger sample and qualitative methods such as interview and observation to provide a more in-depth

picture of the phenomenon. Although the quantitative research is found to be beneficial in terms of its generalisability and objectivity of the research findings, and that it manages to cover a larger sample of population, it has been criticized for lacking in meaning, being 'artificial', and hindering the connection between research and everyday life (Bryman, 2001). The critiques of quantitative research arise based on the 'phenomenologist's views that social reality has a meaning for human beings and therefore human action is meaningful (Bogdan and Taylor, 1975 cited in Bryman, 2001: 14).

Qualitative research enables the researcher to observe individuals in their ordinary, everyday, natural social settings and to record their accounts of what it was they were doing (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1989: 32) by getting inside the person and to understand from within (Cohen and Manion, 1989: 38). Thus, a qualitative approach was undertaken to record everyday events in ordinary, natural classroom settings. Such research is relatively new in the Malaysian context, so it was also felt that it could contribute to the diversity of research expertise in the Malaysian context.

My motives in choosing qualitative approach include:

- It allows in-depth exploration of the complexity of classroom interaction;
- It leads to knowledge and understanding of classroom practices;
- It provides understanding of the meaning of human behaviours through the participants' [teachers' and students'] own perspectives.

In the naturalistic approach which is 'non interventionist' and 'non controlling' the researcher tries as much as possible not to influence the normal occurring of patterns of interaction and instructions because the main goal is to describe and understand the processes (Allwright and Bailey, 1991). However, this in-depth research is also bound to have the problem of generalization that it might not be applicable for a wider

population. To some extent my 2003 study and my own experience in Malaysian classrooms can counteract this.

3.3 Ethnography and Linguistic Ethnography

In searching for the methods to be used in my study, I was influenced by the work of Shirley Brice- Heath (1983) 'Ways with words' with her vivid descriptions of the literacy events of the two towns: Trackton and Brookville and the influence of these home practices on the children's academic performance and "On Writing Educational Ethnographies: the Art of Collusion" by Conteh, Gregory, Kearney and Mor-Summerfeld (2005). However, it is worthwhile to note that this study is not a full blown ethnography and the term naturalistic will be used throughout the thesis.

Conteh et al. (2005) argue that ethnography is a methodology not a method as it may include the use of a variety of different methods to produce trustworthy evidence and it begins with a question not a hypothesis. Ethnography aims to investigate:

- what is occurring;
- how is it occurring;
- how the participants perceive events;
- what is required to participate as a member of that group;
- what social and academic learning takes place.

Therefore, ethnography describes: the context or environment; the group membership (participant or non participant); the specific social interactions; the product of those interactions- the learning" (Conteh at al., 2005: xviii). In addition, Richards (2003) states that in order to understand the behaviour of a particular group and to see things from their perspectives, extended exposure to the field is required. The two studies in 2003 and 2004, helped meet the extended exposure requirement in ethnographies.

Recently, linguistic ethnography has become widespread in the UK. Linguistic ethnography recognizes the importance of combining language and culture. This is based on the notion that,

language and the social world are mutually shaping and that close analysis of the situated language can provide both fundamental and distinctive insights into the dynamics of social and cultural production in everyday activity.

(Rampton, Tusting, Maybin, Barwell, Creese and Lyntra, 2004)

3.3.1 Roles of Ethnographers: 'Observer as participant'

Cohen et al. (2000) indicated the roles of ethnographers from complete participant, participant as observer, observer as participant, to complete observer. My role in this study was primarily as an observer but at times observer as participant. My role was not only to observe but also to participate where appropriate especially by giving support and encouragement while the students were doing their written work in their classroom. For instance, some students came to me for help with their exercises. However, my involvement in this context was as minimal as possible as I did not wish to interfere with the teaching and later contaminating the data of the study. I sat at the back of the classroom with my observation sheet and a handy camera, avoided eye contact with the students and the teacher so that they could go on with their lesson. Richards (2003:128) argues that when the role is changed from an outsider to an insider, a researcher 'can see things from an actor's perspectives and yet still maintain something of the outsider's detachment" (Richards, 2003: 128). This is supported by Conteh et al. (2005) who claim that 'ethnographers must remain strangers within the group as well as being part of it" (xxi).

One of the advantages of participant observation is that it provides a chance of seeing something unexpected, something which might have been overlooked before, which could be significant for the research.

Participant observation offers the advantage of serendipity: significant discoveries that were unanticipated. In contrast to the survey, which is planned on the basis of what the researcher expects to find, participant observation opens up possibilities for encountering the completely unexpected phenomenon that may be more significant than anything the field worker could have foreseen, suggesting important hypotheses worthy of further research” (Whyte, 1984: 27 cited in Richards, 2003: 110)

3.4 Triangulation

Triangulation entails using more than one method or source of data in the study of social phenomena (Bryman, 2001:274). It also refers to an approach that uses ‘multiple observers, theoretical perspectives, sources of data, and methodologies’ (Denzin, 1970: 310). It is argued that using a combination of data types increases validity as the strengths of one approach can compensate for the weaknesses of another approach (Marshall and Rossman, 1989 as cited in Patton 1990:244). This means that reserachers check out their observations with interview questions to check whether they have misunderstood what they have seen and at the same time, they ‘cross-check’ the findings derived from both qualitative and quantitative research (Bryman, 2001).

By analogy, triangular techniques in the social sciences attempt to map out, or explain more fully the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one stand point and, in so doing, by making use of both quantitative and qualitative data (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000).

Triangulation can take on different forms: data triangulation; investigators triangulation; methodological triangulation; and theoretical triangulation (Denzin, 1970). In this study, ‘methodological triangulation’ was adopted which means that observation data provides a picture of what goes on in the classroom as well as a check on what is reported in the interviews, while interviews and role-play on the other hand, allow the observer to explore the internal state of the person[s] who have been observed. Methodological triangulation was considered appropriate in this study as different methods were adopted to investigate the nature of literacy practices and the interaction around texts in Year 1 English classrooms in the study, but from a wide

range of perspectives. In addition, it is also claimed to strengthen the validity and trustworthiness of the findings (Patton, 1990; Campbell and Fiske, 1959 cited by Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000).

Next, I shall report briefly the 2003 study findings and explain how they influenced the 2004 study.

3.5 2003 Study Findings and Their Influence on the 2004 Study

The 2003 study which involved a survey, observations and interviews in Malaysian primary schools and pre-schools was undertaken as a preliminary exploration with the following purposes in mind:

- (i) To narrow down the focus of the 2004 study;
- (ii) To consider refinements in the methods used for the 2004 study;
- (iii) To explore the teachers' views on literacy learning and gain a sense of classroom practices.

Due to the limitation of this thesis, and in order to avoid repetition, in this section I shall focus on the findings that helped to develop the execution of my 2004 study.

3.5.1 Research Questions: 2003 Study

The following were the research questions for the 2003 study, which became the focus of my enquiry.

1. How do teachers think children acquire literacy in Malaysian primary and pre-schools?
2. Are there differences in terms of teachers' perceptions of the children's literacy acquisition with gender, location, experience and highest qualifications?
3. What are the typical literacy events and practices in English, BM and Jawi in both Year 1 and pre-schools?
4. What approaches do teachers use to teach literacy skills across these languages?

Based on the concern the government had with regard to students' inability to speak English as discussed in Chapter 1 and the insights I gained from the literature (Chapter 2) concerning the teacher-pupil interaction and its effect on children's learning, I carried out observations in 5 schools: two primary schools and three pre-schools in urban and rural areas in Kedah, recorded lessons to understand the context and the participants' actions. 9 teachers were observed to get first hand experience of classroom literacy practices of BM, English and Arabic, while at the same time, 50 questionnaires were distributed to Year 1 and pre-school teachers around the two above-mentioned areas to examine the teachers' perceptions of children's literacy acquisition.

I shall now discuss the summary of the findings derived from the questionnaires.

3.5.2 Questionnaire

A questionnaire was used as a research tool aimed at establishing perceptions about literacy learning. I was concerned in seeing which 'camp/ school of thought' the teachers belong to whether it is the Reading Readiness or the Emergent Literacy as discussed in Chapter 2.

As my interest was to gauge the teachers' perceptions of children's literacy acquisition, I distributed 52 questionnaires to pre-school and Year 1 teachers teaching BM, English and Arabic/Jawi in one urban and one rural district in Kedah using convenient sampling. The samples accumulated 46% teachers in urban schools and 54% teachers in rural schools. All 52 questionnaires were returned but two had to be rejected due to incomplete information. Therefore, 50 questionnaires were analyzed.

The LAPP (Literacy Acquisition Perception Profile) developed by McMohan, Richmond and Reeves-Kazelskis (1998) was adopted as it was designed to examine these

differences in the teachers' perceptions of literacy acquisition. LAPP offers a separate score for the two sub-scales: reading readiness and emergent literacy. (The sample questionnaire is provided in Appendix 1). This questionnaire consists of 20 questions with 10 reading readiness items (1,3,7,8,9,14,15,16,17,18) and 10 emergent literacy items (2,4,5,6,10,11,12,13,19,20). It is based on a 5-point Likert Scale and the answers ranged from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5) where the highest possible score on each subscale is 50. The questionnaire is divided into three parts: demographic information, literacy acquisition perception profile and teaching approaches. The questionnaire consists of multiple choice items as well as open-ended questions. Section C in the questionnaire was added to find the consistency of answers between the questionnaire and the open-ended questions. Besides, these responses provided detailed examples of the teaching approaches adopted in their lessons. Some modifications were also made to the wordings of the questionnaire to fit my context and the Malay translation was provided for each question to make meanings more accessible to the respondents. The Malay translations of the questions were checked by one of my colleagues at my university in Malaysia. One of the difficulties I faced with the analysis of the results is that the majority of the respondents chose not to answer the open-ended questions. For this reason, the open-ended answers will not be reported in this study.

3.5.2.1 Profile of the Respondents: 2003 Study

The respondents consisted of 48 (96%) female and 2 (4%) male teachers with the majority ranged between 31 to over 40 years old. Almost half of them (48%) had been teaching for more than 10 years and one third of the teachers (34%) had 20 years or more teaching experience.

The majority (56%) of the teachers surveyed graduated from the teacher's training college with either a certificate or a diploma in education, while 42% obtained either the Malaysian Certificate of Education or **SPM (Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia)** or the Higher Certificate of Education or **STPM (Sijil Tinggi pelajaran Malaysia)** and only one respondent (2%) held a degree. Teacher training in Malaysia is conducted within three years with the minimum entry requirement of SPM or STPM and the teachers graduated from these colleges were granted a certificate or a diploma of education and are placed in the primary schools. Pre-school teachers on the other hand, normally need only the minimum qualification of SRP (Lower Certificate of Education) to teach in a government funded pre-schools. In addition, these pre-school teachers attended in-service trainings provided by the Ministry of Education regularly each year.

All of the respondents (100%) claimed that their proficiency in BM was either "good or very good", while 37 of 50 (74%) rated their English proficiency as "fair", and Arabic /Jawi proficiency between "fair to good" (51.1% and 35.6% respectively). It seems fair that the teachers rated their BM proficiency as 'good or very good', simply because it is their mother tongue. However, they considered their English proficiency as 'fair' because most of them could read and write in English but could not speak in the language. In many cases particularly in the rural areas, due to the insufficient English teachers, many teachers who were not trained in English were required to teach the subject. This is potentially an important issue to consider because as we know the primary language teachers' proficiency in the language is crucial (Cameron, 2001; Pinter, 2005).

3.5.2.2 The Questionnaire Findings: 2003 Study

One - sample T-test was conducted to examine the teachers' perceptions of the children's literacy acquisition. Table 1 indicates that, there was a significant difference ($p = 0.000$, $p < 0.05$) between the mean scores in the Reading Readiness and Emergent Literacy subscales. This suggests that the teachers were more inclined towards the reading readiness perspective with a higher mean score of 43.36 as opposed to the emergent literacy perspective, with the mean score of 39.70.

Table 1: LAPP scores (RR and EL)

	N	Mean	t	Sig
Reading Readiness	50	43.3600	70.854	0.0000
Emergent Literacy	50	39.7000	56.904	0.0000

$P < 0.05$

Item analysis was done to see which item[s] they agreed with most in the Reading Readiness subscale. Generally, the respondents agreed with most of the questions on Reading Readiness. However, as highlighted, the majority of the respondents agreed most with the statements concerning the necessity to acquire the basic reading sub-skills, knowing the alphabet and recognizing the letter-sounds as evident in Questions 1, 14 and 17 below.

'In order to learn to read, a child needs to know the letters of the alphabet and the corresponding letter sounds' (Q.1-98%)

'Proficiency in the basic reading subskills has to be acquired before one can act in a literate way' (Q.14-96%)

'When presented with an unknown word, children should be taught to sound it out.' (Q.17-96%)

3.5.2.2.1 Location of the School

With regard to the location of the schools and the teachers' perceptions, the survey revealed that there was a significant difference between urban and rural teachers with regard to their perceptions about Emergent Literacy but not Reading Readiness as indicated in Table 2.

Table 2: LAPP by Location

	Location	N	Mean	Sig
Reading Readiness	Urban	23	43.7826	.817
	Rural	27	43.0000	
Emergent Literacy	Urban	23	39.7826	.040
	Rural	27	39.6296	

P < 0.05

The T-test indicated the p value of 0.040 ($p < 0.05$). This can be interpreted that urban teachers were more inclined towards Emergent Literacy perspective if compared to the rural teachers. This could be attributed to the amount of exposure to the new development in teaching and the training received by these urban teachers as opposed to the rural teachers. On the other hand, there was no significant difference detected between urban and rural teachers in the Reading Readiness subscale. The data indicated that both groups scored high in the Reading Readiness subscale. This means that it does not matter where they are located, they perceived reading readiness as essential for beginning reading and writing.

3.5.2.2.2 Highest Qualification

Table 3 indicates teachers' perceptions of literacy acquisition by highest qualification.

Table 3: LAPP by Highest Qualification (ANOVA)

		Mean	F	Sig
Reading Readiness	SPM/STPM Teacher's Training Degree	41.7143 44.7143 40.0000	3.520	.038
Emergent Literacy	SPM/STPM Teacher's Training Degree	38.5714 40.5714 39.0000	.996	.377

P < 0.05

The data revealed that the level of education influenced the teachers' beliefs about teaching. Table 3 shows that there was a significant difference between the groups

with regard to the reading readiness with the p value of .038 ($p < 0.05$). This means that qualification can affect the teachers' perceptions about reading readiness. Clearly, the mean score in the Reading Readiness subscale for the teachers graduated from the teacher's training colleges was higher (44.7) than the other two groups (41.7 and 40.0). This suggests that teachers might have learned about the Reading Readiness from the training received at the teacher's training colleges. However, there was no significant difference observed between the teachers in the emergent literacy subscale. This could be due to its 'newness' in the field of early childhood development.

3.5.2.3 Summary of the Questionnaire Findings

In summary, the questionnaire revealed that the majority of teachers favoured the Reading Readiness over the Emergent Literacy perspective due to the prior training received at the teacher's training colleges. The location of the school and the highest qualification play an important role in shaping the teachers' perceptions of children's literacy learning. This could be due to the exposure to the latest teaching approaches received through the courses and training. It is clear that in order to get the maximum amount of information about teachers' perceptions and the literacy practices, data gathering would need to be based on the qualitative analysis such as observation and interview.

In the next section, I shall present the summary of the observation data of the literacy practices in three languages: Bahasa Malaysia, English and Jawi/Arabic.

3.5.3 Observation Findings: 2003 Study

Five primary and pre-schools in urban and rural areas in Kedah were visited and observations were recorded for one week in each school. At this stage I was interested to investigate urban/rural division in terms of classroom practices as it was revealed in the questionnaire survey that urban and rural teachers were significantly different

in their perceptions of children's literacy acquisition. All in all, I managed to observe between 1 to 3 lessons per teacher for an average of 30 minutes per lesson for 9 teachers. These observation and interviews offered a deeper understanding on the literacy practices and talking to the teachers provided insights into their experiences, concerns, hopes and frustrations in teaching.

3.5.3.1 Setting the Scenes

Table 4a presents the classroom profiles while Table 4b describes the teachers' profiles.

Table 4a: Class Profiles

Class	U/R	Year	Students	Age	State	Seating	Teachers
A	U	1	40	7	Kedah	Rows	BM-U-Nor, E-U-Naz, AJ-U-Baha
B	R	1	32	7	Kedah	U-shape	BM-R-Feez, E-R-Amy, AJ-R-Zai
C	U	PS	47	5-6	Kedah	Groups	PS-U-Siti
D	R	PS	25	5-6	Kedah	Groups	PS-R-Rose
E	R	PS	37	5-6	Kedah	Groups	PS-R-Sue

Table 4b: Teachers' Profiles

Code	Gender	Language Taught	Level	Experience	Qualification
<i>E-R-Amy</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>Year 1</i>	<i>10 years</i>	<i>BA.History from USM Teacher's Training (trained in BM)</i>
<i>E-U-NAZ</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>Year 1</i>	<i>12 years</i>	<i>Teacher's Training (trained in BM)</i>
<i>BM-R-FEEZ</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Bahasa Malaysia</i>	<i>Year 1</i>	<i>13 years</i>	<i>Teacher's Training (trained in BM)</i>
<i>BM-U-NOR</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Bahasa Malaysia</i>	<i>Year 1</i>	<i>8 years</i>	<i>Teacher's Training (trained in Mathematics)</i>
<i>AJ-R-ZAI</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Arabic Jawi</i>	<i>Year 1</i>	<i>12 years</i>	<i>STPM (Malaysian Higher Cert. Of Education)</i>
<i>AJ-U-BAHA</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Arabic Jawi</i>	<i>Year 1</i>	<i>10 years</i>	<i>BA from Al Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt</i>

PS-U-SITI	F	ALL	Pre-school	20 years	SPM (Malaysian Cert. Of Education)
PS-R-ROS	F	ALL	Pre-school	9 years	SPM (Malaysian Cert. Of Education)
PS-R-SUE	F	ALL	Pre-school	10 years	Teacher's Training (trained in pre-school)

E = English; BM = Bahasa Malaysia; AJ= Arabic/Jawi; R= Rural school; U = Urban school; PS = Pre-school

Classroom A is located in an urban area in Kedah and is regarded as one of the premier schools in the state and it has received an 'A' status for academic achievement. This Year 1 classroom consisted of 40 Malay students aged 7 years old. The students were seated in four large rows. There were three separate teachers teaching BM, English and Arabic/Jawi and these subject teachers moved around to different classes while the students remained static in their respective classrooms. I shall name these teachers as BM-U-NOR, E-U-NAZ, and AJ-U-BAHA. BM is for Bahasa Malaysia, E for English and AJ denotes Arabic and Jawi.

Classroom B is located in the rural area in Kedah. Like classroom A, classroom B was also fully decorated with teacher-made materials and charts in all the three languages. It provided an atmosphere that the teaching of these languages was widely encouraged. The floor was covered with vinyl flooring and the students were seated in a U-shaped position facing the blackboard while the students had to sit on the floor with their shoes off. In pre-school, only one teacher teaches all three languages and other subjects in the curriculum like Mathematics, Science etc.

3.5.3.2 The Teachers

As indicated in Table 4b, out of the 9 teachers, 6 were from Year 1 while 3 were from the pre-school. Only one male teacher and the rest were all female teachers teaching in the primary and pre-schools. This could be due to the fact that teaching is not a popular choice for men in Malaysia and it became the last choice of career among

men. 2 English, 2 Bahasa Malaysia, 2 Arabic/Jawi teachers and 3 pre-school teachers from urban and rural schools were observed.

Generally, all are experienced teachers with teaching experience ranging from 8 to 20 years. They were all Malay and were mostly trained from the Teacher's Training Colleges in Malaysia, while two were SPM (Malaysia Certificate of Education) holders and the other two obtained a degree in History and Arts. Interestingly, the two English teachers were not trained to teach English but due to the shortage of English teachers at their schools, they were asked by the school principal to teach English. This scenario is not uncommon in Malaysia but it seems quite a 'risky' business to have untrained English teachers teaching English when they themselves were not confident to teach the language.

The observation data revealed that the reading practices were based on choral reading, drilling and repetition, and the writing practices consisted of tracing, copying and colouring. Table 5 shows the observations related to reading. These were recorded when they occurred and do not reflect the length or frequency. As indicated, choral reading, repeating teacher's reading aloud, and spelling were found in all classes observed.

Table 5: Teaching Events

Teachers	Whole-word Flash card	Phonics by syllables	Teacher reads Students repeat	Ind. Reading aloud	Group Reading (choral) T & SS	Spelling by letters	Memorizing By heart	Repetition or drilling	Code-switching
BM-UA-NOR		√	√		√	√	√	√	
BM-RB-Feez		√	√	√	√	√		√	
E-UA-Naz	√		√	√	√	√			√
E-RB-Amy	√		√	√	√	√	√	√	√
AJ-UA-Baha	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	
AJ-RB Zai	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	

The observation data confirmed my concerns about teachers' perceptions and classroom practices. Teacher beliefs informed their practices and these practices have significant impact on students' literacy acquisition. With regard to practices, more reading and writing were taught as opposed to other skills such as speaking and listening. Reading as a form of decoding words and sentences were evident with drilling and repetition becoming a cultural practice as they occurred across the teaching of the three languages. Writing, on the other hand, involved producing neat handwriting by tracing letters of the alphabet and copying.

In short, the reading practice in this English lesson was found to be similar to the practices in the BM and Arabic lessons with emphasis given on choral reading, drilling and repetition. In English lesson, particularly during choral reading, the teacher sometimes stopped either to ask for the Malay gloss of the English word or to correct students' pronunciation.

3.5.4 Narrowing the Focus

I realized that the scope of the 2003 study was too vast so I decided to leave out Jawi and BM and focused only on English in Year 1 and not pre-school.

With regard to the use of CD-ROM in English lesson, I observed that the CD-ROM brought about some positive impact on the learners' interests in language learning as they sat attentively listening to the story and singing the song in it. At this point I took an interest in studying the impact of CD-ROM on interaction and practices. On the one hand, it is new as it was being implemented in 2002, a year before this 2003 study was conducted. On the other hand, both the teachers and students showed positive responses towards it. However, I was fully aware that this observation does not provide enough evidence to suggest the positive impact of the CD-ROM on interaction and practices in these English lessons. Thus, it is felt that a more detailed analysis of the

interaction and practices surrounding the CD-ROM had to be considered in the 2004 study.

3.5.5 Refining the Instruments

The 2003 study has also helped me to improve on the systematic observation system, the teachers' and students' interview questions and the students' role play situation for the 2004 study.

The observation checklist used in the 2003 study included time, materials, and literacy practices, which consisted of what the teachers and students did. I learnt that a more focussed observation during the 2004 study would provide a clearer understanding of literacy practices with a less complex coding system proved to be useful in recording the classroom events. I learnt that writing down the events manually saved a lot of time rather than trying to memorize the specific codes to describe the events. In the 2004 study, the observation system would include time, literacy events i.e. what the teacher and the students did, patterns of interaction, teacher's language, materials used, focus of literacy events and notes. This systematic observation would be supplemented by the audio and video recording of classroom events.

As mentioned earlier, the purposes of conducting the students' interviews were to trial run the interviewing technique and to look more closely at the genesis of the questions. I learnt from the children's interviews that 'the friendship group' worked. They were comfortable with one another and they supported each others' comments. The questions also worked well for them. They responded freely to all the questions posed to them. My experience supported all that had been mentioned by Lewis (1992). The content of the 2004 study would focus on reading at school and not at home, and in English not Malay.

Taking into consideration the limitation of the 2003 study, the situation for the children's role play in the 2004 study was been changed slightly to suit the Malaysian context. For more details see section 3.9.3.1.

The children's role play data showed not only the children's perceptions about their classroom reading practices but also the social interactions that took place between them and their teacher, and their roles as learners. This confirmed the value of role play for investigating classroom interaction further in the 2004 study.

In the next section I shall present the 2004 study methodology starting with the participants, the schools, the research design and instruments, and some issues on reliability and validity of the study.

3.6 Participants: 2004 Study

Table 6 describes the teachers' profiles in the 2004 study.

Table 6: Teachers' Profiles: 2004 Study

No	Gender	Age	School (U/R)	Subject(s) taught	Qualification	Teaching Experience	Codes
1.	F	35	(UA)	English Y1 &Y2 Music	Teacher Training College (English)	14 years	EUAA
2.	F	48	(UB)	English	Teacher Training College (English)	24 years	EUBZ
3	F	31	(RC)	English Y1 & Y6	Teacher Training College (English)	9 years (1 st year - Y.1)	ERCY
4	F	41	(RD)	English	Teacher Training College (Pengetahuan Am - <i>General studies</i>)	20 years (4 th year- Y.1)	ERDF

3.6.1 Teachers

In the 2004 study, 10 teachers teaching English, Mathematics and Science for Year 1 were selected to take part. I observed 48 lessons of English, Mathematics and Science, throughout the data collection period. However, due to the time and limitation of this

PhD, I have decided not to include the data for Mathematics and Science in this thesis. Therefore, only the data obtained from the four English teachers are presented. They were all female teachers aged between 31 – 48 years, with the teaching experience from 9 to 24 years. All of them graduated with either a certificate or a diploma from the teacher training colleges throughout Malaysia. As indicated in Table 6, three English teachers were trained in English and one teacher (ERDF) took General Studies as her option. In the interview she mentioned that she had to teach English because the school did not have enough English teachers. These teachers were coded based on the subject taught such as E for English, and the location of the schools for instance, two are U for urban and two are R for rural, followed by the name of the school A, B,C and D, and finally their initials.

3.6.2 Students

With regard to the students' interview and role play, initially there were 8 groups, two from each school, however one group from the rural school were reluctant to be interviewed so only 7 groups of students took part in the study. Table 7 below indicates the students' profile based on groups. All the names have been changed to protect the identity of the participants. The participants were grouped based on their 'friendship group' (Lewis, 1992). Some participants were nominated by the teachers while some others volunteered to be interviewed and performed the role play.

Table 7: The Participants for Interview and Role Play

School Code	Participants	Gender	Age
EUA-G1	AE	F	7
	NAS	F	7
	NQN	F	7
	FN	F	7
EUA-G2	NF	F	7
	AIN	F	7
	IN	F	7
	NY	F	7
EUB-G3	Nicky	F	7
	Wani	F	7
	AA	F	7
	FAY	F	7
EUB-G4	HS	M	7
	SW	M	7
	SZ	M	7
	AM	M	7

ERC-G5	NB FAR AS NS	F F F F	7 7 7 7
ERC-G6	AF ZN MK II	M M M M	7 7 7 7
ERD-G7	AAA MA ZI FH	M M F F	7 7 7 7

All the Year 1 students participated in this study were Malay, aged 7 years old, and were selected from national schools. The rationale for choosing Year 1 was that I was interested to study the nature of literacy practices in their English classrooms in line with the implementation of the new English Hour and the use of ICT, which took effect in 2002. The other reason was that these students were not involved in the National examination (UPSR), therefore it was very likely for them to take part in the study. The reason for choosing only Malay students and not Chinese or Indians was simply due to the language preference. As a researcher, having come from the same ethnic background, sharing the same cultural values and speaking the same language make it more feasible for me to analyze the data pertinent to this study. In fact, the four teachers were also Malay.

3.6.3 The Policy Makers/English Language Trainers

Table 8 shows the profiles of the English language trainers involved in the study.

Table 8: The English Language Trainers' Profiles

No	Gender	School (U/R)	Subject(s) taught	Qualification	Teaching Experience	Codes
1	F	U	English	Teacher's Training college (English & Science) Became an English language trainer for the Teaching English for Mathematics and Science (ETEMS) in 2002	18 years	Madam L

2	F	Kedah State Education Department	none	Degree in TESL Diploma in Training and Development. English language officer for primary schools, Kedah State Education	22 years	Madam S
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3.7 Schools

Table 9 indicates the four schools, the number of classes involved, the number of students and the type of schools.

Table 9: Schools' Profiles

Schools	Number of Classes	Number of students	Type
UA	1	38	All girls
UB	1	40	Co-ed
RC	1	38	Co-ed
RD	1	25	Co-ed

Four Year 1 classes from the four different schools in the national primary schools in two purposely selected districts in Kedah were chosen to participate in this study. 2 schools were located in an urban area, while two were from the rural area. The classes comprised of between 25-40 students. Three were co-ed and one all-girls. It is worthwhile to note that students in the Malaysian school system stay in their respective classes while the teachers move around from one class to another.

Purposive sampling with a sample that is fit for the purpose of the research was adopted in this study. Arskey and Knight (1999) argue that if the aim is to make claims about a group, or to give a rounded account of an event, big samples preferably selected at random are needed. However, since my intention was not to make generalization of the whole population of the Malay learners, a small-scale sample that will allow for an in-depth analysis of the case would be appropriate as suggested by Flick (2002) who argues that "sampling decisions always fluctuate between the aims of covering as wide a field as possible and doing analyses which are as deep as possible.

The latter strategy seeks to...permeate the field and its structure by concentrating on single examples or certain sectors” (20).

There are 14 states in the Peninsular Malaysia and Kedah is purposely selected because the main population in this area is the Malays. In Kedah alone, there are 11 districts and two districts namely Kota Setar and Yan districts were purposely selected in order to provide a variety of contexts. In relation to the schools, two schools in the Kota Setar district (urban) and two schools in the Yan district (rural) were selected after considering the constraints that I might have to travel from one school to another within a very limited schooling time. The school hours for Year 1 in the present study, start from 7.45 a.m. to 12.45 p.m. in most rural schools while in some urban schools it begins from 7.35 a.m. and ends at 1.35 p.m. There are basically eight subjects taught in Year 1: Malay language (BM), English, Mathematics, Science, Islamic Studies, P.E., Music and Art. Malay language is being taught for 12 periods (6 hours) in most rural schools but 13 periods (6 ½ hours) in the urban schools. English and Mathematics are taught for 8 periods (4 hours) each, Science for 3 periods (1 ½ hours), Islamic studies for 6 periods (3 hours), P.E. for 3 periods (1 ½ hours), and Music and Art for 2 periods each in all the schools. The urban schools have an hour a week more than the rural schools, so have included a component of Information Technology (IT) or computer in learning, and language classes such as Arabic and Mandarin into their time table.

3.7.1 School (EUA)

UA is an all-girls school. It is situated in the capital city of Kedah. It is a large school which comprised five Year 1, five Year 2, four Year 3, four Year 4, five Year 5 and five Year 6 classrooms. This school is considered one of the premier schools in the state of Kedah and has achieved excellent results in the National examination (UPSR). It has also achieved the status of a “ five stars” school in the state. This school is beautifully

decorated with colourful pictures and motivational phrases on the walls and is well equipped with modern teaching facilities such as computer labs, self-access learning room, a music room etc.

3.7.2 School (EUB)

UB is situated in the capital city of Kedah and is only 2 km from UA. It is also a big school with modern teaching facilities. There are three Year 1 classrooms. UB has also secured a place in the top ten schools in Kedah as it has achieved excellent results in the National examination (UPSR).

3.7.3 School (ERC)

RC is located in a small town in the outskirts of the city, approximately 40 km from Alor Setar, the capital city of Kedah, with the major population working as farmers and fishermen. There are two Year 1 classrooms and this school can be considered as a typical national primary school.

3.7.4 School (ERD)

RD is a small school with only three buildings and is situated at the foot of Mount Jerai in a rural district Kedah. It is located about 2 km from the town area and is surrounded by fruit trees and paddy fields. The major population in the area worked as farmers and fishermen. There are two Year 1, one Year 2, two Year 3, two Year 4, one Year 5 and one Year 6 classrooms with the total of 299 students and 18 teachers. Originally there was only one Year 1 classroom with 44 students. However, it was later divided into two small manageable classes. This school is also considered as a typical national primary school in the state.

In the next sections, I describe my experiences of gaining access and acceptance to conduct this study by presenting some information regarding the data collection

procedures, followed by the research instruments, methodological problems, limitations and summary of the chapter.

3.8 Research Design

3.8.1 Accessibility and Acceptance at the Study Site

The Malaysian Ministry of Education (MOE) has set requirements before one could carry out research in any premises or which involves participants within the education system, approval must be obtained and the Economic Planning Unit (EPU) is the division handling requests and approvals for such research. In this respect, an application form for conducting this research together with the research proposal and the supervisor's support letter were submitted to the Economic Planning Unit, the Prime Minister's Department in February 2004. Realizing the highly bureaucratic nature of the Malaysian government agencies, contacts with the people involved were initially made through formal letters, which consisted of a brief introduction of the researcher and a short explanation of the study. In the case of the present study, getting approval and acceptance at the study site was a frustrating experience as I had to wait for the feedback from EPU for almost three months. Letters were left unanswered and emails sent were not responded to. Finally in May 2004, after a few phone calls, just weeks before my departure to Malaysia, the approval was gained. Upon arrival in Kuala Lumpur the first thing that I did was getting the research pass from EPU at Putrajaya as it had to be shown to the school Principals and the State Education officers during my data collection. The distance from Kuala Lumpur to Alor Setar (the research site) was great. Table 13 explains what I did three months prior to my data collection.

3.8.2 The Duration of the Study

The data in this study was collected for the period of two months from 14 June to 14 August 2004. Bearing in mind the bureaucratic nature of the Malaysian Educational

system, informal school visits were made to all the four schools involved in this study on the first week of school, starting 14 June – 17 June 2004. The purposes of the visits were to meet the principals, the Head Subject Teachers, the participating teachers, the students as well as to get the time tables, the school calendars and also to see the availability of the facilities required for the interviews such as quiet rooms and TV/video players. I only managed to visit one school per day due to the limited schooling time which started from 7.45 a.m. to 12.45 p.m. During these informal visits I was introduced by the school principals to the other staff members and I was also briefed about the school objectives, was shown the national exam results etc. As I recall, there were days, which I had to wait for the principals for a few hours due to their tight schedules. Some participating teachers gave a warm welcome but some appeared to be very nervous after being informed that they were selected by the school principal to participate in this study.

3.8.3 Data Collection Procedures

Table 10 indicates the data collection procedures, which include the duration, date, and activities involved during the data collection.

Table 10: Data Collection Procedures

Purpose	Data Collection Procedures	Duration
Getting the research pass	Gaining access into schools EPU (The Economic Planning Unit)	Kuala Lumpur Early June 2004
Meeting the principals, the Head Subject teachers, the teachers, the students; getting the time table, the school calendar, facilities available (audio-visual room, quiet room for interview, TV/video player, etc.)	Initial Visits to the schools One school per day	Week 1 14 June- 17 June 2004 School A – Alor Setar School B – Alor Setar School C – Yan School D – Yan
To observe classrooms in the two urban schools and to conduct Interview 1	Observation Cycle 1 Classroom Observations Audio and Video recordings	Week 2 20 June –30 June 2004 (Schools A, B Urban)
	Observation Cycle 1 Classroom Observations Audio and Video recordings	Week 3 (Schools A, B Urban)

	Teacher Interview 1	
To observe classrooms in the two rural schools and to conduct Interview 1	Observation Cycle 1 Classroom Observations Audio and video recordings	Week 4 4 July- 15 July 2004 (Schools C, D Rural)
	Observation Cycle 1 Classroom Observations Audio and video recordings Teacher Interview 1	Week 5 (Schools C, D Rural)
To observe classrooms, to conduct teacher's interview 2, students' group interview and role play in the urban schools	Observation Cycle 2 Classroom Observations Audio and video recordings Teacher Interview 2 Students' Interview & Role play	Week 6 18 July – 30 July 2004 (Schools A, B Urban)
	Observation Cycle 2 Classroom Observations Audio and video recordings Teacher Interview 2 Students' Interview & Role play	Week 7 (Schools A, B Urban)
To observe classrooms, to conduct teacher's interview 2, students' group interview and role play in the rural schools	Observation Cycle 2 Classroom Observations Audio and video recordings Teacher Interview 2 Students' Interview and Role play	Week 8 1 August – 12 August 2004 (Schools C, D Rural)
	Observation Cycle 2 Classroom Observations Audio and video recordings Teacher Interview 2 Students' Interview and Role play	Week 11 (Schools C, D Rural)
To return loan materials (text books, etc) to schools	Final visits to all the schools	13-16 August 2004

3.8.3.1 Observation Cycle 1

As indicated in the table above, the observation was divided into two phases: Observation cycles 1 and 2. In Observation cycle 1, the two schools in the urban area were visited in the first two weeks from 20 June-30 June 2004 while the other two schools in the rural area were observed in the following two weeks from 4 June – 15 July 2004. The rationale for doing this was the distance to travel from one district to another and the short schooling period in primary school. The distance from Alor Setar (urban schools) to Yan (rural schools) was about 40 km and it took about 45 minutes to drive. However, the distance between the two schools within the same district was

only 10 minutes away. So I managed to travel back and forth to these two schools every day following the timetable of the three subjects involved namely English, Mathematics and Science. As mentioned earlier, in the first week of this observation cycle, only classroom observations were made. However, in the second week, observations and teachers' interview I, were conducted.

3.8.3.2 Observation Cycle II

During the second Observation Cycle, the researcher intervened with more observations, Teachers' Interviews 2, students' Interviews and students' role play (See Table 10). It was felt that by the second month teachers and students were more familiar with the researcher's presence in the classroom, therefore the second interviews looked feasible.

In the Observation Cycle 2, students were also interviewed for 10 minutes and they were asked to role-play their classroom situation for another 10 minutes.

3.9 The Research Instruments

The data in the 2004 study were obtained from various methods such as classroom observation, teachers and students' interviews, students' role play, documents including KBSR English language syllabus, curriculum specification, and teaching materials for example, text book, activity book, Big books, teachers' lesson plans, and CD-ROM.

3.9.1 Observation

3.9.1.1 Building Trust for Audio and Video Recording of Classroom Data

The benefits of audio and video recording were clear in 2003 study however, as this study was with different teachers in different schools, I was aware of the importance of building trust.

Having been aware of the intrusiveness of the instrument, and the fact that “being on TV” might influence the data, the participants, mainly the teachers and learners in this study were allowed to acclimatize themselves with the video camera and the tape recorder by playing, touching and talking about them before the actual recording took place. In fact, the first few recordings were not considered as data but were treated as warm up exercises in the process of acclimatizing them to the equipment used. Besides, during the first encounters, the participants undoubtedly showed some signs of unwillingness or shyness to be video-taped. However, after talking through it, they finally agreed to be videoed. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) argue that in order to reduce “reactivity effects” or the “effects of the researcher on the researched”, the researcher needs to stay with the participants for a substantial period, and recording what is happening while taking a role in that situation such as participating in the school life and making conversations with them. This idea is further supported by Hitchcock and Hughes (1989) who suggested that, “when the researcher is a familiar participant in the setting as it is likely to be the case with teachers, all of these issues can be compounded” (23).

I agree that establishing trust and rapport with the participants should be developed during the data collection process as suggested by Bryman (2001) that, “the qualitative researcher seeks close involvement with the people being investigated, so that he or she can genuinely understand the world through their eyes” (284). I feel that closeness and trust developed with the participating teachers were very important as they had to be continuously reminded that the purpose of the study was not to find faults in their teaching and that it was different than the way the school inspectors used to observe them. I noticed that after explaining my purpose of observing them, spending considerable hours with them sitting at the staff room, eating lunch at the school canteen, participating in the school celebrations, and ensuring that their names and the names of the schools would not be revealed, I managed to gain their trust and

acceptance. They were more willing to share their ideas and materials they used in the classroom with me, and they were eager to let me observe their teaching. They also started sharing more personal stories about their families, health and professional development as I recorded in my field notes,

At the school canteen, Teacher ERDF talked about her intention of pursuing her education but was discouraged by her family, and with the other teachers at the staff room we talked about personal stuff i.e. family, students, exam, workload etc. I feel that when you have developed a close relationship with them, you can talk about more personal matters with one another.
Field notes 1/8/04

Furthermore, being a secondary school teacher for more than three years has also helped me to acclimatize with the participants and the school environment during my data collection process.

3.9.1.2 Systematic Observation Schedule

The second type of observation method used in the 2004 study was the systematic observation schedule (Appendix 7). This systematic recording using time sampling recording system was devised and used alongside audio and video recordings to record the classroom events. Systematic observation contains “a systematic set of rules for recording and classifying classroom events” (Croll, 1986:1) in an attempt to provide an accurate description of selected features of activities and interactions in the classroom. “Observation schedules help structure observations of talk, and are often used to record systematically the number and type of contributions made by different people” (Swann, 1994:34).

The following are the categories included in the systematic observation schedule (Appendix 7):

- Time
- Literacy events (what the teacher and students do),
- Patterns of interactions,
- The teacher’s language use,
- The materials used,
- The specific focus of literacy events
- Notes.

With regard to the time recording, I noted the beginning and ending of all the events observed after every time the teacher changed the activity. The changes in activities were detected by teachers' use of cues or registers. The recorded time eventually informed me of the length of time spent on an individual event. In the second column, which is the literacy events, I made notes on what the teacher and students did, and where they sat during the activity. In the following column, I recorded the patterns of teacher-pupil interactions whether it was whole class, small group or individual work. The languages used by the participants, the materials used in the classroom and the specific focus of literacy events as to whether it was on syntax, meaning, letter-sound etc. were also noted in the following columns (See Appendix 7). All of these notes were found to be useful during cross checking with the audio and video transcriptions.

This classroom observation schedule provided some evidence not only of the literacy events and patterns of teacher-pupil interaction but also the materials used, and the specific focus of the literacy events, which were essential for this study. In addition to coding and categorizing the classroom activities mentioned above, the time spent on each activity was also recorded using EXCEL spreadsheet to see the distribution of classroom activities across the 60 minutes lesson (see Figure 2, Section 4.2).

3.9.1.3 Ethical Considerations

I was concerned about certain ethical implications surrounding observation. Richards (2003:110) argues that there are at least 3 issues that need to be addressed when observing: the effect on behaviour of the observed (observer's paradox), possible consequences for the observer, and the ethics of the observer's actions. He suggests that these issues should become part of planning an observation because they will have an impact on what is observed.

Having been made aware of these issues, consent from the teachers and the school principals were obtained in response to the letter sent prior to the observation.

Teachers were told that the purpose of observing was to understand the nature of literacy practices in their classroom and to see how children learn, and pseudonyms were given to the teachers involved to ensure confidentiality. The teachers were also informed that the results would not be made public and would only be used for research purposes.

3.9.2 The Interviews

With regard to the teacher's interview, a major refinement of questions has been made. In the 2003 interview, the focus was on curriculum, attitudes towards language learning and teaching in three languages, knowledge and training, literacy practices, teaching approaches, materials and assessment (see Appendix 4). In the 2004 study, the teacher's interview is divided into two parts: Interviews 1 and 2. In Interview 1, the questions have been reduced from 30 to 15 with more focus given to reading and writing practices, teaching approaches and materials, the English Hour, and the use of CD-ROM (see Appendix 8). In Interview 1 also, questions pertaining personal background, were asked, while in Interview II, more specific practices found during observation such as choral reading aloud, drilling, repetition and code-switching practices were included. My intention to include Interview 2 was to get the teachers to reflect on their classroom practices. Apart from that, the 2003 interview has also led me to interview the policy makers to gain an understanding from the Ministry's perspectives and children to try and find out how they perceive the literacy practices. A revised interview protocol was developed to meet the evolving focus of the study. Its piloting is described in the next section.

3.9.2.1 Teachers' Interview: 2004 Study

In relation to the 2004 study, interview was used mainly to complement the observation data which proved to be pertinent to the research objectives as it allows for

greater depth (Cohen et al., 2000; Borg and Gall, 1983). Furthermore, it was used as a form of triangulation with other methods.

In the 2004 study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the four teachers of Year 1 English, 8 groups of their students, and 2 State Education Officers were interviewed (see 3.6).

The semi-structured interviews were carried out along side the classroom observation to further investigate:

- i. the teachers' perceptions of literacy events and practices in the English Hour;
- ii. the students' perceptions of literacy learning;
- iii. stakeholders' perceptions of the implementation of the English Hour.

The advantage of using a semi-structured interview is that it incorporates a set of questions that are to be answered by the respondents which become the researcher's locus of control and it also allows the researcher to probe further into the topic. In the following sections I present some information on the different types of interviews used, the description of the instruments and a brief discussion on reliability of the interview method.

As a researcher and interviewer, I feel that tape recording is a convenient way of getting information as taking full notes during the interview seemed to be difficult at the speed of normal conversation. Furthermore, full note taking during interview can disrupt the flow of the interviewees' responses and can interfere with the interviewer's concentration. Additionally, tape recordings can also benefit a novice researcher like me, as I can study my own interviewing technique to improve upon it. Since it is expected to have all the interviews to be recorded, consent from the participants were obtained prior to the interview. All the interviews were conducted either in Malay or in English based on their preferences. Most teachers preferred to use a mixture of both.

Moreover, the preferred place and time of the interview were also chosen by the participants considering the possible effect of time and place on the participants (Arskey and Knight, 1999). The interviews were conducted in a quiet room during the teachers' free time.

All the interviews were recorded using a mini recorder with a built in microphone and transcribed verbatim for the analysis as they could promote insights into the techniques and content (Richards, 2003).

3.9.2.1.1 Teachers' Interview Procedures: 2004 Study

The teachers' interviews were conducted in two phases: during observation cycle 1 and during the observation cycle 2. In the interview 1, the teachers were asked questions related to: personal particulars and teaching experience, perceptions of literacy events and teaching approaches, and perceptions of the English Hour and the teaching of Mathematics and Science through English (ETEMS). Table 11 demonstrates the break down of the interview questions based on themes (Appendix 8).

Table 11: Interview 1: The Descriptions of Interview Items by Theme

	Themes	Interview Items
1.	Personal Profile and teaching experience	Items 1 &2
2.	Perceptions of English Hour	Items 3 & 4
3	Belief about language learning	Item 5
4	Perceptions of ETEMS project	Item 6
5	The teaching and learning in urban and rural schools	Item 7
6	Aspects of literacy practices	Items 8,9,10,11
7	Teaching materials	Items 12,13,14,15,16

Interview 1 lasted approximately 45 minutes to an hour.

In the second interview, new questions pertaining to the general aspects of teaching, the literacy practices, and the code switching practices were asked. The following table explains the interview items and the themes discussed in the second interview.

Table 12: Interview II: The Descriptions of Interview Items by Theme

No	Themes	Interview Items
1	General Teaching Aspects	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,
2	Literacy Practices	8,9,10
3	Code switching practices	11,12,13,14,15,16,17

The second interview is not a 'stimulated-recall' as described by Gass (2001). I transcribed one lesson for each teacher and noted down some questions to ask for further clarification from the teacher. The purpose was to probe further into perceptions of drilling and repetition, and code-switching. At this stage, the teachers were given an opportunity to comment on the lessons that had been observed, particularly in terms of their performance and the students' performance as well as on their teaching patterns and to justify their choices of action. More specific questions with regard to reading aloud, drilling, repetition, memorization and code switching practices were asked for further clarification. Reason and Rowan (1981) as mentioned by Silverman (2000) argue that good research goes back to the subjects with tentative results, and refines them in light of the subjects' reactions. This is partly because the subjects may have additional knowledge in the context of their actions (Fielding and Fielding, 1986 cited in Silverman, 2000). Participants' feedback does generate further data and interesting insights for the research (Silverman, 2000). The second interview lasted half an hour.

Next, I shall now turn to the students' group interviews.

3.9.2.2 Students' Group Interviews

We are used to thinking of the interview as something that involves an interviewer and one interviewee. Group interviews involve more than one interviewee at least four (Bryman, 2001). Lewis (1992) suggested the rationale for using group interviews.

Group interviews have several advantages over individual interviews. In particular, they help to reveal consensus views, may generate richer responses by allowing participants to challenge one another's views, may be used to verify

research ideas or data gained through other methods and may enhance reliability of children's responses" (413)

It can also be less intimidating, and can overcome children's feeling uncomfortable or threatened. Lewis (1992) also mentioned some difficulties when interviewing children such as: children can easily be distracted, they might be hesitant and nervous, they can be too extreme or too disruptive of each others' views, they have poor memories, they might feel too exposed in front of their peers or they might tell lies. Therefore, careful planning and skills are required when interviewing children.

3.9.2.2.1 Conducting the Group Interview: 2004 Study

In the 2004 study conducted in Malaysia, students' interview was done in groups of four. Barnes and Todd (1977) as cited in Lewis (1992) recommended three to four as the ideal number. In this study, 8 groups of 7 year-old children from four different schools in urban and rural areas were interviewed to elicit information about their perceptions of literacy learning in two languages as well as their perceptions on how reading and writing are being taught in the classroom.

In this study, the students were taken out of the classroom into a quiet room either selected by the researcher or recommended by the teachers and were asked to sit around a table with some storybooks, text book, magazines, encyclopedia, dictionary on it. The tape recorder was placed on the table and the students were allowed to touch both the mini cassette recorder and read the books before the interview took place. They were also asked to record their voices and listen to them. The purpose of doing this was to familiarize them with the instrument used in the study. They seemed so excited after having heard their voices on tape. I also noticed that after doing so, the children were more relaxed and they started talking freely.

Having been aware that the students could be hesitant or shy to talk (Lewis, 1992), at the beginning of the interview they were asked to talk about themselves, their favourite stories and the storybooks they had at home. The rationale for doing this was to establish rapport and trust with them. Besides, these simple questions would not put them in so much pressure as they were quite familiar with the topic. Apart from that, the advantage of having group interview was that there was no appropriate order given as to who should talk when as they were encouraged to say whatever they feel about the topic without waiting for their turn like in the normal classroom.

Table 13 explains the descriptions of the interview items and themes covered in the students' interview. The two main foci for using students' interview were to gain students' perceptions of literacy learning in their English and Malay classrooms and to examine their attitudes towards learning. Questions 4,6,8,11,14,5,7,8,12,15 were asked about students' literacy learning while items 1,2,3,8,10 were used to obtain information about students' attitudes towards reading (Appendix 9).

Table 13: Students' Interview: Interview Items by Theme

No	Themes	Interview Items
1	Story book reading at home	Items 1,2,3
2	Home literacy practices	Items 16,17,18
3	Reading in BM	Items 4,6,8,11,14
4	Reading in English	Items 5,7,8,12,15
5	Reading in other languages (Arabic)	Item 9
6	Attitudes towards learning BM, English and Arabic	Items 8, 10

It is worth noting here that group interview is also bound to have some limitations such as the problems of coding the responses because of overlaps. Thus, having a recorded interview proved to be useful at this stage as I could listen again and again for the different voices and at the same time recheck the data during the transcribing process.

3.9.2.3 The Policy Makers and the English Language Trainers' Interviews: 2004 Study

Interviews with the English Language trainers and the District Education Department officers were also carried out to provide data on the perceptions of the teaching and learning of English, Mathematics and Science through English from the policy makers' point of view. These interviews highlighted some issues pertaining to the language and educational policies and their implementation at school and district levels in Kedah. Two State Education officers from the State Education Department of Kota Setar were interviewed on 2 August 2004. One officer was an English language Officer in charged of the national primary school particularly in the rural areas, and the other officer was responsible for the Mathematics and Science for primary school. In addition to that, an English language trainer for the ETEMS (English Teaching for Mathematics and Science) project was also interviewed.

The interview questions were mainly based on: the educational policies, the implementation of the English Hour, the Big Books, the use of ICT in the classroom, and the ETEMS project. Table 14 demonstrates the interview questions based on themes.

Table 14: Policy maker's Interview: The Descriptions of Interview Items by Theme

No	Themes	Interview Items
1	Educational policies	Items 1,2
2	The implementation of the English Hour	Item 3
3	The code switching practices	Item 4
4	The use of ICT in the classroom	Item 5
5	The Implementation of the ETEMS project	Items 6,7,8,9,10

3.9.2.4 Validity and Reliability of an Interview

As an interviewer, I was very much concerned with some issues surrounding interviews such as interviewer's bias and subjectivity, leading interviewees into responding just to please me and power relations between the interviewer and the interviewees which might influence the data. Perhaps the most practical way of

achieving greater validity is to minimize the amount of bias as much as possible. The sources of bias are:

- The attitudes, opinions, and expectations of the interviewer;
- The tendency for the interviewer to see the respondent in her own image;
- A tendency for the interviewer to seek answers that support her preconceived notions;
- Misconceptions on the part of the interviewer of what the respondent is saying;
- Misunderstanding on the part of the respondent of what is being asked.

(Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000:121)

Having been aware of those issues, I tried very much not to interfere during the interview whereby I just let the respondents express their ideas freely without much interruption. The experience I had when interviewing my participants during the 2003 and pilot studies have helped me to solve this interviewing problem. Besides, the recorded versions of the previous interviews gave me insights into improving my own interviewing techniques.

In response to the issues of validity and reliability of an interview, as both the interviewer and the researcher, I adopted some of the techniques of enhancing validity as suggested by Arskey and Knight (1999). First of all, the interview times and place were arranged based on the participants' preferences bearing in mind the possible effects of the interview times and settings on the participants. Secondly, I adopted some of the interview techniques that build rapport, trust and openness that can give participants scope to express the way they see things. Powney and Watt (1987) claim that good rapport with the interviewees needs to be established prior to the interview. Similarly, Richards (2003) argues that "we cannot ignore our relationship with the interviewee and the effect this might have on the way the talk develops." (85)

Being an insider in the school community and participating in a wide range of activities within the school context such as sitting and talking with the teachers at the staff room, and eating at the canteen with them for the period of two months, have helped me in establishing trust, rapport and openness with the participants. Besides,

my experience of being a secondary school teacher has also eased the process of acclimatization with the school culture. The more I spent time with the teachers, the more I understand their problems, burden and responsibilities they carry on their shoulders. But I was concerned not to be too attached to the group or 'going native' (Cohen et al., 2000) as this would have made me unable to see the reality.

Since most of the interviews were conducted using a mixed language of Malay and English, some portions of the relevant data had to be translated for analysis. However, the original wordings of the interviewees were retained to ensure its originality. In addition to that, I also recorded the teachers' comments, which were made immediately after the tape recorder was switched off. Powney and Watts (1987) claimed that, "one of the most basic rules of interviewing is that the most interesting material emerges when the recorder is switched off" (139). I absolutely agree with this as lots of interesting comments emerged immediately after the interview ended, that I had to ask for their consent to record for the second time. These data proved to be very relevant for this study.

3.9.3 Students' Role play

The third instrument used in this study was students' role play. Having been aware of the difficulties in interviewing children (3.9.2.2) it was felt that another method had to be adopted and used alongside with interviews and observation to gather information about students' perceptions of literacy learning in their English classrooms. Hence, "playing school activity" was used instead. It has been argued that role play like this, or better known as *pretend* or *imaginative play*, can promote a higher level of thinking skills (Lyle, 2002; Marjanovic-Umek & Musek Lesnik, 2001; Bergen, 2001; Kitson, 1994) and power of imagination (Martin & Dombey, 2002; Smith, 1994) in young

children. Play is not only useful for children, but it also allows adults or educators to learn more about the children's needs and perceptions.

Play is essential in the children's lives as it is something enjoyable for them. Studies on children's play suggest that there are four main types of play namely, functional play, constructive play, rule-governed play, and socio-dramatic play (Kitson, 1994) which increase in terms of complexity depending on materials and play contexts (Marjonovic-Umek et. al 2001). However, among the different types of play mentioned, socio-dramatic play is seen as crucial for children's social, intellectual, creative, and physical development (Smith, 1994). According to Martin and Dombey (2002:48),

...play has frequently been ascribed a crucial role in early childhood education. And within play in general, spontaneous social role play has occupied a privileged position. It has been seen to develop children's power of imagination as they transcend the here and now, free themselves 'temporarily from the burden of the future' and develop their powers of imagination through the exercise of collaborative autonomy rather than under the direction of a teacher.

Many studies acknowledge the values that role play brings to the children's learning. Play is considered a learning process for as they engage in play activities, they learn more about themselves and what they can do. In line with this, Froebel (1887) as mentioned by Badzis (2003) believed that children's learning was most effective when they engaged in imaginative and pretend play, which involved them in deep thought. In education, play is not only useful for children, but it also allows adults or educators to learn more about the children's needs and perceptions (Moyles, 1992; Gregory, 1996). Moyles (1992) argues that, 'Play at its best in educational situations, provides not only a real medium for learning but enables discerning and knowledgeable adults to learn about children and their needs' (xi).

Gregory (1996) postulated that "playing school" is like a bridge that connects home and school learning and when these two are linked, it offers new insights on learning

in different contexts. As Gregory (1996) posits out, when the children engaged in role play, they were trying to make sense of the world by reproducing adult roles and recreating their own interpretation of it using their power of imagination and creativity. In doing so, they were creating their own unique and productive space which Gutierrez and her colleagues (2001) call 'third space' or 'hybrid space'. What is important to highlight here is that role play produces a hybrid space in such a way that we do see things that the teachers did not enable us to see during observation. In other words, students' role play helps us to overcome the 'researcher's paradox'.

3.9.3.1 The Students' Role Play Procedures: 2004 Study

Based on the observation I had during the 2003 study, I was aware that reading a story is not a common practice in many Malaysian schools, therefore, the role play situation is changed from a more specific instruction '*read them a story*' to a slightly more general situation, '*role play what happens in your English classroom*'.

Role Play Situation: 2004 Study

Let's pretend that some nursery children are coming to your classroom to see what it is like to be in Year 1. They don't know how to read so you have to teach them how to read. One of you will be the teacher and others are students. Role play what happens in your English classroom.

This situation would provide a more 'open' and 'flexible' context for students to focus upon. In addition, the age of the children also has to be considered. Thus, in the 2004 study Malaysian children from the same age group [7 years old] from the same classroom were selected as they shared the same perspective about things that go on in their classroom and they can relate to the same teacher.

In the 2004 study, 7 groups of four students (two groups per class) based on their friendship group, from four different schools were asked to role play a reading session in their English classroom. The students were selected by their class teacher and were

grouped separately based on gender due to culture purposes. They were then taken out of the classroom into a quiet room such as the library, the resources room, or a computer lab for the observation. They were asked to pretend that one of them was a teacher and the others were students and they had to role play how the reading was taught in their classroom. They immediately picked up their English text book and to my amazement, they did not take a long time to do the activity as they were quite familiar with the situation. The role play lasted for about 10 minutes and the episodes were video taped for analysis. The data obtained from students' role play proved to be useful in understanding students' perceptions of literacy learning in their English classrooms.

3.9.4 Field Notes

Field notes can be used to supplement other forms of recording, to date notes and to provide brief contextual information (Swann, 1994). Field notes are "the most important determinant of later bringing off a qualitative analysis. Field notes provide the observer's *raison d'être*. If he is not doing them, he might as well not be in the setting" (Lofland, 1971 cited by Patton, 1990: 239). Field notes, then, "contain the ongoing data that are being collected. They consist of descriptions of what is being experienced and observed, quotations from the people observed, the observer's feelings and reactions to what is observed, and field-generated insights and interpretations" (Patton, 1990:242). In the context of the present study everything that I feel was worth noting during observations such as the date, the observation setting, the people involved, the activities that took place and the interactions that occurred were recorded in my research journal for further analysis and reflections.

3.9.5 Documents and Materials

Materials used in the classroom such as the text books, the activity books, the students' written work, the Big books, the CD-ROM were also collected for analysis.

The English language curriculum and syllabus were also beneficial. The purpose was not only to obtain a permanent record of the materials being used but also to support the findings derived from other data. The text book, the students' activity book, the students' written work, and the CD-ROM provided the context for the analysis while the curriculum, syllabus and the training modules obtained from the Ministry of Education provided information about the educational policy, and the contents in line with the Ministry's aspirations and needs. These documents were useful for triangulation with the interview and observation data.

3.10 Data Collection Problems

At this stage, based on the experience of conducting the 2003 study, I managed to foresee some problems regarding the data collection process. As mentioned earlier, besides the time constraint, there were limited hours of English lessons to be observed as the students were also learning other subjects such as Mathematics, Science, Arabic, etc. I had to follow the fixed observation schedule based on the timetables of the respective classes, which were given to me during informal visits with the Principals or the Deputy Principals of the selected schools. Besides, I was also advised by one of the teachers to conduct the study between June to August because from January to March, students were engaged in the transition period whereby they would be doing play activities. Moreover, in the third term, they would be busy preparing students for the examinations. Therefore, my only option was to conduct the observation between June and August.

Another problem that arose during data collection was the difficulty of setting the interview time and date with the teachers and the stakeholders involved. Undoubtedly teachers have tight schedules. They normally have an hour free time per day and that hour break was spent at the school canteen and this problem seemed quite apparent in the rural schools with the shortage of teachers. Other than teaching, these teachers

were also occupied with other administrative tasks or school activities. On top of that, the schools seemed to have their own activities and events for instance teacher EUAA in an urban school had to cancel her classes and asked not to be observed for a few days as she was busy preparing the students for the Prize Giving Ceremony whereby they invited the King and Queen of the state as the Guests of Honour. In another occasion, a teacher from a rural school had to accompany her students to the Storytelling competition on the day of the observation. Other than that, during the data collection, two teachers had to attend a seminar for a week.

In relation to the stakeholders' interviews, it was quite difficult to arrange interview time and date with them as they were too busy with their administrative tasks, attending seminars or conducting trainings for teachers. In the case of the present study, I had to go to the State Education Department three times in order to meet them and set interview times.

Apart from the time constraint, another problem that I faced during the data collection concerned the use of audio and video recordings. On one occasion, an officer refused to be recorded and reminded me of the confidentiality of the data gathered, and on another occasion a teacher from a rural school asked not to be video-taped during the second observation cycle. With due respect, the officer's interview was not recorded while the rural teacher finally agreed to be audio-taped after being assured of her anonymity in this study.

All of the problems encountered during the data collection made me aware that conducting research in social sciences involved human behaviour and sometimes things did not go as planned and therefore, alternative plans have to be devised instantly.

3.11 Reliability, Validity and Generalisability

One of the goals of a naturalistic enquiry is to gain local understanding of a certain situation, therefore, the issue of generalisability is not so crucial (Allwright and Bailey, 1991). In language classroom research Van Lier (1988) as cited by Allwright and Bailey argued that generalisability cannot be a major goal because ‘ the first concern must be to analyse the data as they are rather than to compare them to other data to see how similar they are’ (1988:2). Thus the goal in naturalistic enquiry is to understand what happens in the individual classroom, which in itself is a potentially unique social context (Allwright and Bailey, 1991: 51). Naturalistic enquiry offers us unique ways of seeing things that are neither true nor false but simply seem meaningful to other readers (52). “Indeed the premises of naturalistic studies include the uniqueness and idiosyncrasy of situations, such that the study cannot be replicated-that is their strength rather than their weakness” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000).

3.12 Summary of the Chapter

I began the chapter by positioning myself in the qualitative, naturalistic paradigm. Then, I presented the 2003 findings and discussed how they influenced the 2004 study. I also stated the research questions that guided this 2004 study and presented the methods used: observation, interview, role-play, documents analysis, and field notes by detailing the instruments and the procedures before discussing the methodological triangulation, which was used for analyzing the data. This is followed by the descriptions of the participants involved: the teachers, the schools and the students, and the preparation stage such as how to gain access in a highly bureaucratic system like Malaysia.

In the following chapters, I shall discuss the findings of the study, which are divided into four chapters: the English Hour (Chapter 4), Interaction around the Traditional

Texts (Chapter 5), Interaction around the Big Books (Chapter 6), and Interaction around the CD-ROMs (Chapter 7).

Chapter 4:

The English Hour

4.1 Introduction

The Malaysian government realised that in order to meet the challenges of globalisation and the desire to become a developed nation by the year 2020, Malaysians should be well equipped with new knowledge and technologies (section 1.3.1). One of the ways is to make education and training more accessible by providing better infrastructure such as building new schools and providing more computers as well as upgrading the teaching and learning through teacher training. There is also an urgent need to improve the declining standard of English. Therefore, innovations have been made to include the teaching of Mathematics and Science through English and the use of ICT so as to provide greater exposure and opportunities to the language. In addition, the English language curriculum has been revised to include the English Hour with the hope to improve the classroom interaction with active engagement and high quality interaction. This study focuses on these developments in English language teaching at primary level by examining the micro interaction of the classrooms to see the extent to which these new policies are being implemented.

The chapter sets out by presenting an overview of the English Hour in 4.2. The micro-analysis of the traditional writing practices is discussed within 4.2.4. The findings from the teachers' interviews are highlighted within 4.2.3.1 whilst the students' perspectives are presented within 4.2.4.6. The aim of this chapter is to give an overview of how the English Hour is being implemented in terms of literacy practices and interaction.

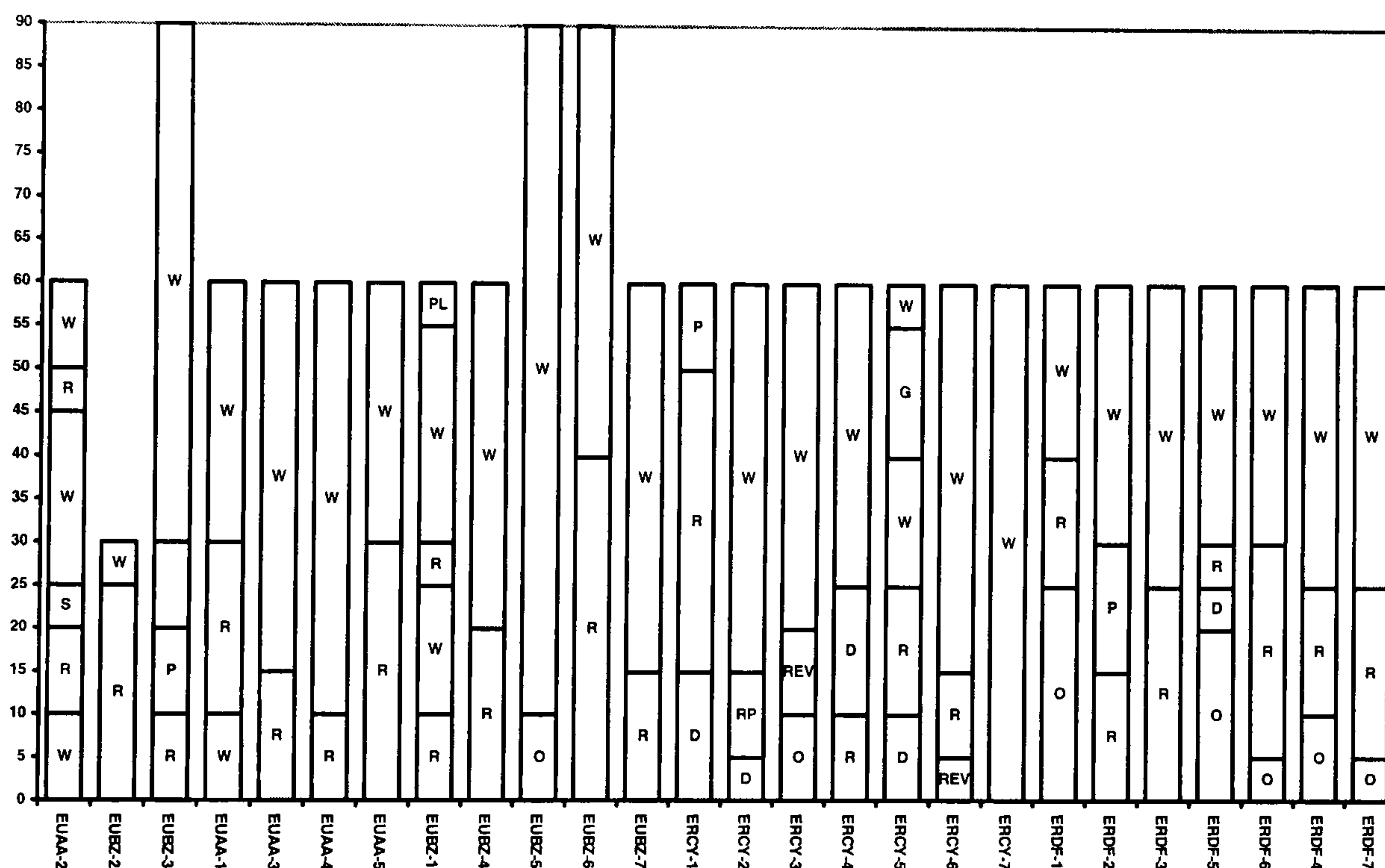
I shall now start with an overview of the English Hour.

4.2 Overview of the English Hour

One of the major thrusts of this study was to examine the implementation of the English Hour to find out whether or not it brings about changes in terms of interaction and practices ever since its implementation in the Malaysian primary schools in 2002.

As described in 1.3.1 the English Hour should start with a fifteen minute shared reading, a fifteen minute teaching points, a twenty minute guided reading or writing and a ten minute summing up. Figure 2 shows what happened in the lessons I observed.

Figure 2: Literacy Events by Time



Keys

W = writing events; R = reading events; P= phonics practice; O= others; PL = plenary;
 REV = revision; S = song; RP = role play; D = demonstrations; G= games

As indicated in the graph, more time was spent on writing and reading as opposed to other activities and the teachers did not seem to be following the English Hour guidelines closely. None of the lessons conformed to the English Hour guidelines. Most of the lessons were missing several key components, particularly the plenary session at the end of each lesson. 1 of 26 lessons EUBZ-1 had a plenary session

while the rest of the teachers ended their lessons with individual writing. There was no group work observed in any of the lessons. Teachers seemed to prefer individual writing as opposed to shared writing. In some cases teachers did spend time working with slow learners individually helping them with their reading or writing. Besides, the initial shared reading stage and the second teaching points stage were conducted simultaneously with more emphasis given to word-level work (vocabulary and spelling) as opposed to sentence or text-level work.

These observations of literacy events strongly suggest that the structure of the English Hour has had little impact.

In this section, I shall also present some descriptive statistics to give a flavour of how frequently various activities are conducted and the amount of time spent on them. Table 15 indicates a profile of the literacy events of the 26 Year 1 English lessons from the four classrooms observed between June and August 2004. As shown in Table 15, the literacy events involve reading, writing, vocabulary and phonics practice in the CD-ROM, revision, warm up activities, giving oral instructions and directions, song and games. In relation to the amount of time spent, writing was the longest with 980 minutes (60.5%) followed by reading 405 minutes (25.0%), 'others' 90 minutes (5.6%), vocabulary and phonics practice in the CD-ROM 35 minutes (2.2%) and revision 30 minutes (1.9%). 'Others' in this category include the time spent before actual teaching is taking place such as teachers doing administrative work, distributing books or entering the classroom late due to assembly, meeting etc. Under 'writing' I have grouped copying from the textbook or the board into exercise books, filling in the blanks, matching, and tracing letters in the activity book or worksheets. Under 'reading' I have grouped reading aloud texts, stories, nursery rhymes and poems from the CD-ROM, the textbook or the Big Book.

Table 15: The Time spent on Literacy Events

Literacy Events	Time Spent (mins)	Percentage of time spent (%)
Writing	980	60.5%
Reading	405	25.0%
Others	90	5.6%
Vocabulary and Phonics practice in CD-ROM	35	2.2%
Revision	30	1.9%
Warm up activities	25	1.5%
Giving Oral instructions and directions	20	1.2%
Song	15	0.9%
Games	15	0.9%
Summing up	5	0.3%
Total	1620	100%

4.2.1 Writing Events

Table 16 reveals the time spent on writing events in the 26 lessons observed. As indicated below teachers spent an average of 38 minutes on writing in each lesson, or 60.5% of the class time in 96.2% of the lessons. In 16 lessons this was continuous time, and in the remainder it was broken up. For instance, EUAA-1 had 10 minutes of writing events at the beginning, then 30 minutes at the end of the 60- minute lesson.

Table 16: Time Spent on Writing Events

Lessons	Time Spent (mins)	Total Time per lesson (mins)	Average time spent per 60 mins
EUAA-2	10 20 10	60	40
EUBZ-2	5	30	10
EUBZ-3	30 25	90	36
EUAA-1	10 30	60	40
EUAA-3	45	60	45
EUAA-4	50	60	50
EUAA-5	30	60	30
EUBZ-1	15 15 10	60	40
EUBZ-4	10 30	60	40
EUBZ-5	80	90	53
EUBZ-6	50	90	33
EUBZ-7	45	60	45
ERCY-2	45	60	45
ERCY-3	25 15	60	40
ERCY-4	35	60	35
ERCY-5	15 5	60	20
ERCY-6	45	60	45
ERCY-7	15	60	60

	45		
ERDF-1	5 15	60	20
ERDF-2	30	60	30
ERDF-3	35	60	35
ERDF-5	30	60	30
ERDF-6	30	60	30
ERDF-4	35	60	35
ERDF-7	35	60	35
25/26 (96.2%)	965	1560	38.6

4.2.1.1 Types of Writing Event

A variety of events were observed including students copying, filling in the blanks, drawing, colouring and matching. They were the most frequently used activities in the classroom. The breakdown of the time spent on each writing activity was not calculated. For example, when doing the exercises from the Activity Book, the students were engaged in matching, filling in the blanks and correcting spellings. At the same time, they were also copying sentences from the board. Therefore only the length of time allotted for writing i.e. the beginning and ending of the writing session were noted.

There were 11 different types of writing event observed:

1. Copying sentences/ poem/news/information text/drawing from the text book and the board
2. Filling in the blanks
3. Matching pictures with words
4. Writing sentences/ directions
5. Tracing letters of the alphabet or joining dots
6. Underlining, circling or ticking the correct answers
7. Writing a book report
8. Writing a composition
9. Correcting spellings
10. Drawing (copying or free drawing of symbols or pictures)
11. Colouring pictures

Some of these (e.g. 4, 5, 7) are more readily associated with teaching writing than others (e.g. 3, 6). These have all been grouped here as writing events because they required the children to physically write something on paper.

Table 17 shows which activities were used in each lesson observed.

Table 17: Types of Writing Events

Lessons	Copy	FIB	Circle	Trace	WS	IW	UCA	CS	Draw	Match	Tick	WBR	WE	Colour
EUAA-1		√												
EUAA-2	√	√						√√						
EUAA-3				√	√	√				√				
EUAA-4	√	√√					√						√	
EUAA-5								√						
EUBZ-1	√								√					√
EUBZ-2	√													
EUBZ-3		√												
EUBZ-4	√	√			√							√		√
EUBZ-5	√													
EUBZ-6	√								√					√
EUBZ-7	√√	√						√				√		
ERCY-1	no	writing												
ERCY-2		√								√				√
ERCY-3			√						√					√
ERCY-4		√			√						√			√
ERCY-5	√								√		√			√
ERCY-6									√		√√			√
ERCY-7		√							√					√
ERDF-1	√													√
ERDF-2														√
ERDF-3														√
ERDF-4			√							√				
ERDF-5	√								√					
ERDF-6	√								√					√
ERDF-7	√									√				√
TOTAL	14	10	2	1	3	1	1	4	8	5	4	2	1	14

Keys:

Copy- copying	FIB- fill in blanks	Circle- Circle the correct answer	Trace- Trace the alphabet/sentence/join the dots
WS- write sentences	IW- Identify and write	UCA- Underline the correct answer	CS- Correct spellings
Draw- Draw pictures/symbols/map	Colour- colour pictures	Match- Match words with pictures	Tick- Tick the correct answer
WBR- Write a book report	WE- Write an essay		

There was writing in all but 1 of the lessons where the teacher was late starting the lesson due to technical problem with the computer. The most frequent activities found in 14 of the 26 (54%) lessons were copying and colouring, 10 of the 26 (38%) lessons were fill in the blanks and 8 of the 26 (31%) were on drawing. Hence, copying, colouring, filling- in- the blanks and drawing are central writing practices in these Year 1 English classrooms.

4.2.2 Reading Practices

With reference to the reading practices, reading aloud was a common practice found in all four English classrooms observed in this study. It was used as a strategy to teach reading. Reading aloud was conducted in such a way that the teacher read a piece of text, either from the storybook, the text book or any other materials, and invited the students to read chorally by chanting the words, phrases or sentences loudly. This was done as a whole class, in groups or individually.

Table 18 below demonstrates the time spent on reading aloud from the CD-ROM, the Big Book and the textbook.

Table 18: Time Spent on Reading Aloud

Literacy Events	Lessons	Number of lessons	Time Spent (mins)	Total Time per lesson (mins)	Average Time spent per hour (mins)
Reading Aloud Story from big book	EUBZ-4	5	20	60	21
	ERDF-3		25	60	
	ERDF-4		15	60	
	ERDF-6		25	60	
	ERDF-7		20	60	
Reading aloud story in CD-ROM	EUBZ-3	4	10	90	17.5
	ERCY-1		35	60	
	ERDF-1		10	60	
	ERDF-2		15	60	
Reading Aloud from text book	EUAA-4	7	10	60	17.1
	EUAA-2		5	60	
	EUBZ-1		15	60	
	ERCY-4		10	60	
	EUBZ-2		25	30	
	EUBZ-7		15	60	
	EUBZ-6		40	90	
Reading Aloud sentences on board/word and picture cards/chart	EUAA-1	7	20	60	14.3
	ERDF-5		5	60	
	EUAA-5		30	60	
	EUAA-3		15	60	
	ERCY-5		15	60	
	ERDF-1		5	60	
	ERCY-6		10	60	
Reading Aloud poem on board	EUAA-2	1	10	60	10
TOTAL		24/26 92.3% of the lessons	405	1530	

The table shows that teachers read aloud in 92.3% of the lessons with the amount of time spent per 60- minute lesson, on average, ranged between 10 to 21 minutes. This means that on average, the teacher spent about 21 minutes when reading

aloud a story from the Big Book, around 17 – 17.5 minutes when reading a story in the text book and the CD-ROM. These results informed that more time was spent when reading aloud stories in the Big Book as opposed to reading from the CD-ROM or the textbook.

4.2.3 Participant Perspectives on the English Hour

4.2.3.1 Teachers' Perspectives on the English Hour

Generally the English Hour concept particularly the shared reading was well received by all the teachers in this study and they considered it as something new and useful. Teacher EUAA provided a clear description of what shared reading was such as reading stories from the Big books, CD-ROM or rhymes before asking some comprehension questions.

kalau ikut curriculum yang baru kita apply last year lesson kita literature lesson kita kena start dengan shared reading. Step one tu shared reading tu selalu dia tunjuk cerita pendek ke kita bacakan big book ke kita bacakan kalau tak the whole story pun half of the story pun cukuplah macam tadi saya start dengan ...sebab saya tak dapat cari cerita dalam CD yang berkaitan dengan topic ni 'Days of the week' jadi saya bacakan rhymes. So shared reading for 15 minutes tu kan lepas tu actually shared reading tu cikgu hanya bacakan murid hanya dengar dan cikgu proceed dengan questions apakan...."

<based on the new curriculum implemented last year for the literature lesson we had to start with shared reading. Step one is shared reading. Normally we show short stories or we read big book or we read half of the story if not the whole text that should be enough like just now I started with ...because I could not find any story in the CD which was related to this topic 'Days of the week' so I read them a rhyme. So shared reading is for 15 minutes after that actually during shared reading teacher reads and students only listen and then teacher proceeds with comprehension questions>

(Teacher EUAA- Interview 1-28/6/04)

Teacher EUBZ also shared the same understanding of shared reading whereby every lesson had to start with either a reading passage, a story or a rhyme, followed by comprehension questions, word-level or sentence-level work and ended with writing. She mentioned that even though at the beginning it would involve more preparation time, it would get better after a few sessions.

Well for every period you have to do a reading passage **kan <right>** things like stories a passage rhymes everything **lah kan <right>**...yes yes that's the shared reading xxx it's up to you it's up to you for a start maybe it will take more time **kan < right>**. **Bila** you **dah mengulang < when you do revision>** maybe you will take about 5 minutes then you ask them questions or what

like WH questions for grammar based on the things sentence pattern and all writing all these

(EUBZ-Interview 29/6/04)

Less Pressure

Similarly, Teacher ERDF supported the use of stories during shared reading. She claimed that stories made her more relaxed in her teaching as they diverted her attention from thinking about the examination. She explained that examination prescribed the content and the directions of the lessons.

ERDF ingat apa ni English Hour tu ERDF bersetuju sangatlah hak bercerita dengan budak- budak dulu lepas tu kita pergi exercise lain xxx berdasarkan cerita tadi jadi kitapun tak terasa tertekan sangat [syllabus] (laughs) kalau kita fikir sangat pasal exam ni kita akan ok hari ni kita belajar ni esok kita belajar tu semua nak arah pergi ke cara examkan jadi kalau kita ikut cara tu kita taklah tertekan sangat rilex sikitlah dari segi fikiran kita nak sampai dekat budak-budak tu

< I think I agree with the English Hour like telling a story first then do exercises based on the story so we won't feel so pressured [syllabus] if we think so much of the exam we will become like ok today we learn this tomorrow we learn that everything will be geared towards the exam so if we follow that [English Hour] we won't be so pressured a bit relaxed and calm when we want to deliver to the children>

(ERDF- Interview 1- 12/7/04)

The English teachers in the interview saw the use of stories in the English Hour as relaxed, with no fixed topic or syllabus.

4.2.3.2 Policy Makers and the Trainers' Perspectives on the English Hour

Two English language officers, Madam S and Madam L were interviewed with regard to the policy and the implementation of the English Hour. Madam S was an English language officer for the State Education Department and was responsible for conducting courses or training for English teachers in Kedah state. Madam L, the Head Subject teacher for English was also an English language trainer for the ETeM (English teaching of Mathematics and Science) project. Their comments proved to be useful in providing insights from the policy makers' and the trainers' perspectives.

Madam S provided a thorough explanation of what English Hour was by stating its purposes and implementation whereby the focus was on reading and the teaching of language contents, forms, functions, grammar, vocabulary and phonics could be derived from it.

The beauty of the English [literacy] Hour to me it's actually not something very new you know it's what my teacher did when I was in the primary school it's based on any text or make use of the text for over a week and from the text you exploit the text you can teach phonics you can teach pronunciation of words you can teach spelling right you can teach vocab there are so many things that you can teach the language content and through teaching the language contents for example phonics the sound system the vocab and also the language functions forms and functions and grammar through all these language content you are actually involving all the skills. So the English Hour is good in a sense that focus is given on reading. By reading that text you can learn so many other things everything is incorporated in the text all the language contents that is the sound system the grammar and the word list meanings the vocabulary are taught in that particular text.

(Madam S- Interview 1)

Conflict of Interests

She also identified some problems associated with the implementation of it at the school level. One of them is the conflict between the implementation of the English Hour and the school's expectation. She mentioned that the teachers did not receive the support they required from the school managers, i.e. the headteacher. She reported that in an exam-based curriculum the intention was always to improve the standard and to maintain the high percentages of passes. In conjunction with this, the **Majlis Guru Besar** (MGB) < *the Headteachers' Association* > prepared examination papers to help familiarise students with the examination format so as to make them pass the examination. Therefore, the teaching was purposely geared towards ensuring students to pass the examination. She stated that with the new English Hour, the teaching was a bit relaxed as there was no fixed topic to cover within a certain period as opposed to the structured MGB's examination format. Consequently, teachers were in dilemma in deciding whether to use the English Hour or to satisfy the school's expectations.

Syllabus

In addition, she also reported on the teachers' pressure to finish the syllabus. Many teachers told her that if they teach using the English hour, they would not be able to finish the syllabus.

They are so scared of the headmaster and they are scared they did not finish the syllabus. They keep telling me no S if I were to do this then I won't be able to finish the syllabus so I said excuse me it takes 6 years to finish the syllabus and the skills are cyclic.

(Madam S- Interview)

Resistance to Change

Madam S mentioned that the teachers were resistant to change. She claimed that it was difficult to change their mind sets as they did not want to move away from their comfort zones.

But there are teachers who have been living in this kind of a norm the environment whereby it's so teacher-focused and they teach nothing but exam exam exam to them and now you ask them to let go this and try this new approach some of them are willing to try but some of them aren't they are just not sure as to whether I should let go what I have been doing you know...do some change in my style of teaching some are so afraid and they tend to listen to their friends say no no no I think we better go back to what we have been doing. But this kind of process it takes a while for a person to change you know actually it's not a drastic change you know I would say that teachers they are so used to their comfort zones you know so the willingness to change is not there. **(Madam S- Interview)**

She claimed that teachers were reluctant to change their teaching approaches and they knew that by adopting the English Hour, they had to modify their teaching. Apart from that, there was always peer pressure from their colleagues who influenced their beliefs about teaching.

Training

Madam L reported about the adequacy of training provided by the Ministry of Education. She mentioned that not all the English teachers received the training on the English Hour. In many occasions, only one representative was chosen to represent the area and this teacher was responsible to disseminate the information to the other teachers through an in-house training. Madam L claimed that this training method was not effective as the selected teachers were unclear of the

concept presented, therefore failed to channel the information to all the teachers. As a result, those who did not understand the concept resorted to using the traditional method of teaching.

[training] no no no not all teachers only one representing one centre one level so there were two levels you see the first set was Y.1 and Y. 4. So these two teachers went they did come back giving some a little bit of in-house you see which we are supposed to carry out after every course but some teachers are not very clear with the system of how to go about implementing the English Hour so they just continue with the old methods of teaching but it's not so much different from the old method you see it's just that in the EH where they have more specific steps actually even the old system you still do it but we didn't know what is actually shared reading you see but you see we do carry out but it was not differentiate out in such segments you see so some teachers do carry out but some...

(Madam L, Interview)

Time Factor and Tight Schedule

Madam L also felt that the English Hour had not been successfully implemented in many primary schools due to time factor, and teachers' tight schedules inside and outside schools.

I wouldn't say it's not a good programme. It is in a way good but how they carry out ...with the constraints the teachers have I would say not fully...at time huh not fully it depends on the situations you know as we all know the school is always busy with activities not only the school activities even outside activities very involved the teachers here are very involved. **(Madam L – Interview)**

In summary, the trainers claimed that teacher factor was one of the reasons why the implementation of the English Hour was not successfully achieved. Teachers were reluctant to change and to try new approaches, they did not get the support from the Headmasters, they had heavy teaching load and tight schedules. All these issues influenced their beliefs about teaching. In addition, there were also some problems with the training provided for them and the conflict of interests between what the teachers wanted and what the school hoped to achieve.

We now turn to the nature of interaction in these practices. In the subsequent chapters we shall explore the writing and reading practices with the traditional text book, the Big Books and the CD-ROMs. We start here with writing practices surrounding the traditional textbook.

4.2.4 Writing Practices

In Section 4.2.1 the observation data revealed that the class spent most time on writing and the most frequent activities were copying, drawing and colouring. In this section, I shall give some examples of copying, drawing and colouring as practiced in the Year 1 English English Hour that relate to the textbook, and writing on the board.

4.2.4.1 Copying

Extract 1 exemplifies copying from the board.

Extract 1: Copying: EUAA- 4

239	T	ok copy these questions because after this we're going to write
240		from all these information we're going to write short composition
241		about my school XXX right copy. Copy now. Salin. < copy> Duk
242		angguk-angguk apa salin! < why are you nodding your head,
243		copy!>
244	S	Teacher selang dak? < do we use alternate lines>
245	T	Yes. Leave the line. Draw margin.
246		(pause)
247	T	Write bigger!
248	S	Finish!
249	T	(Teacher checks student's work as she walks around the
250		classroom) Classrooms. Got 's' there. Write S A [in full] not SK SK
251		only. Only you understand the short form.
252		(pause) Ok the composition later I want you to write here in the
253		blank page hak <the> short composition karangan pendek yang
254		kita nak buat nanti buat di sini < short composition that we will
255		do later do it here> understand? (shows how to do it in the
256		exercise book)
257	SS	Yes!
258	T	You don't have to write the day and date you only write the topic
259		"My classroom" here. Must be parallel with your XXX (pause)

(EUAA-4)

In lines 239-243, Teacher EUAA asked the students to copy the questions written on the board into their exercise book when she said, "ok copy these questions because after this we're going to write from all these information. we're going to write short composition about my school XXX right copy. Copy now. **Salin.** < copy> **Duk angguk-angguk apa salin!** < why are you nodding your head, copy!>". From this example, copying is represented as routine practice which students are

expected to do without wasting any time and the teacher was angry with them for not copying immediately.

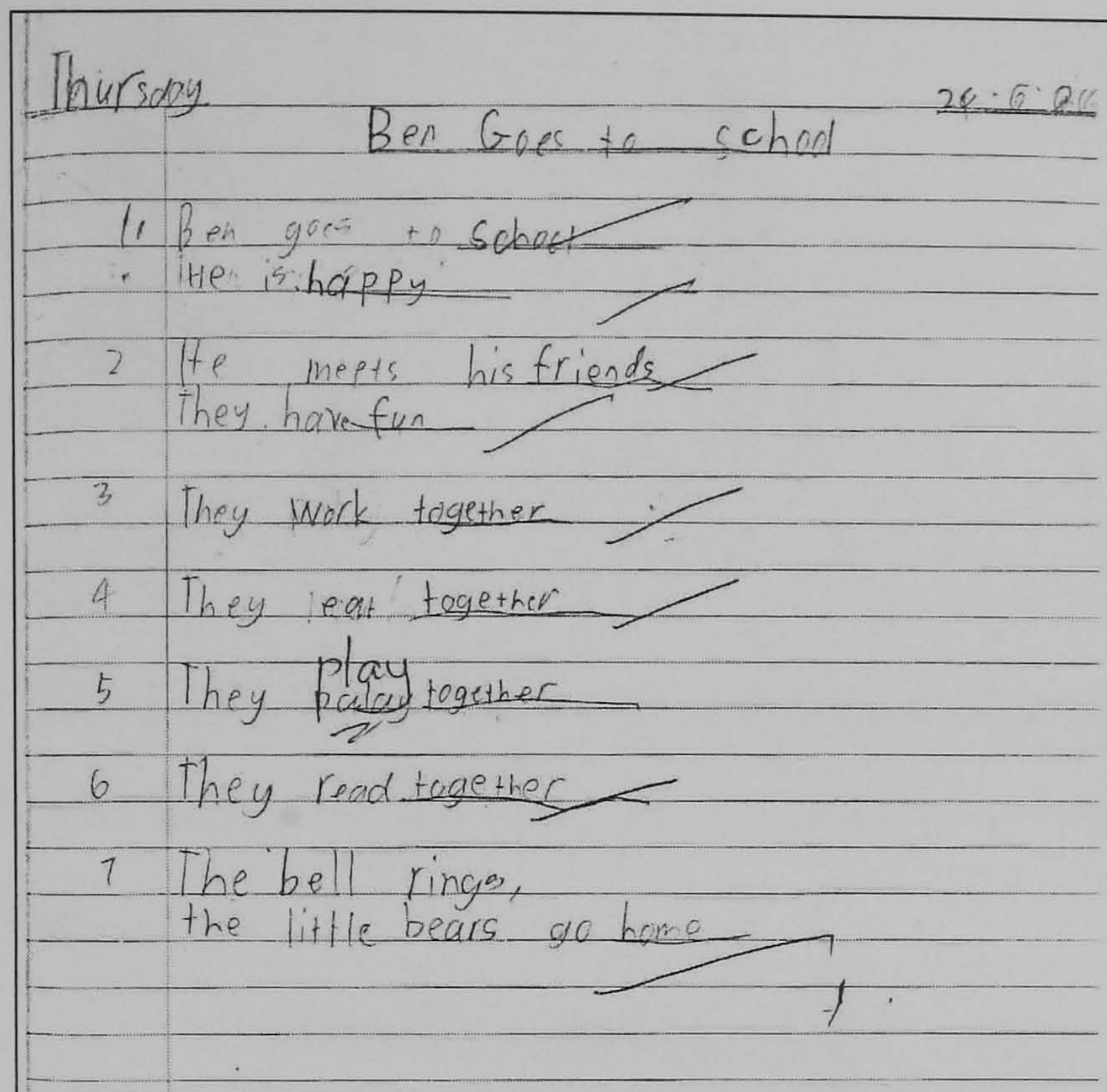
It also illustrates the strong emphasis on producing neat handwriting. Teacher EUAA emphasized the mechanics of writing such as leaving the line, drawing a margin, “*Yes. Leave the line. Draw margin*” (line 245) and producing legible handwriting, *Write bigger!*” (line 247). And when the students have finished copying the questions, she discussed the answers once again to make sure that they knew not only the correct answers, but also how to read the sentences. This can be seen in lines 266-291 when she read aloud the sentences and asked them to repeat after her.

Similarly, Extract 2 illustrates copying from the textbook.

Extract 2: Copying: EUBZ- 2

254	T	Ok sit down. (Students make noise)
255		Today I want you to write the sentences. You are going to write
256		seven sentences. Berapa ayat kamu kena tulis? < <i>how many</i>
257		<i>sentences do you have to write?</i> >
258	SS	Tujuh < <i>seven</i> >
259	T	Tulis ayat < copy sentences> and you’re going to read at home
260		for next week. I want you to copy the sentences in your folio
261	S	Kena lukis? < <i>Have to draw?</i> >
262	T	You draw and you copy the sentences. Ok take out your folio
263		(students take out their folio and teacher distributes the book)
EUBZ-2 Ben Goes to school		

This example indicates that students were asked to copy seven sentences (line 259) from the text, “Ben Goes to school” and were required to draw a picture that represents the story. The following Figure 3 illustrates a student’s sample of writing.

Figure 3: A Sample of Student's Copying

The next Extract 3 illustrates copying with gap filling. These two exercises were written on the board for the class to complete with the teacher's guidance. Students then copied them into their exercise books.

1. Today is _____
2. The date is _____
3. I read a story _____
4. The title of the story is _____
5. My new words are _____

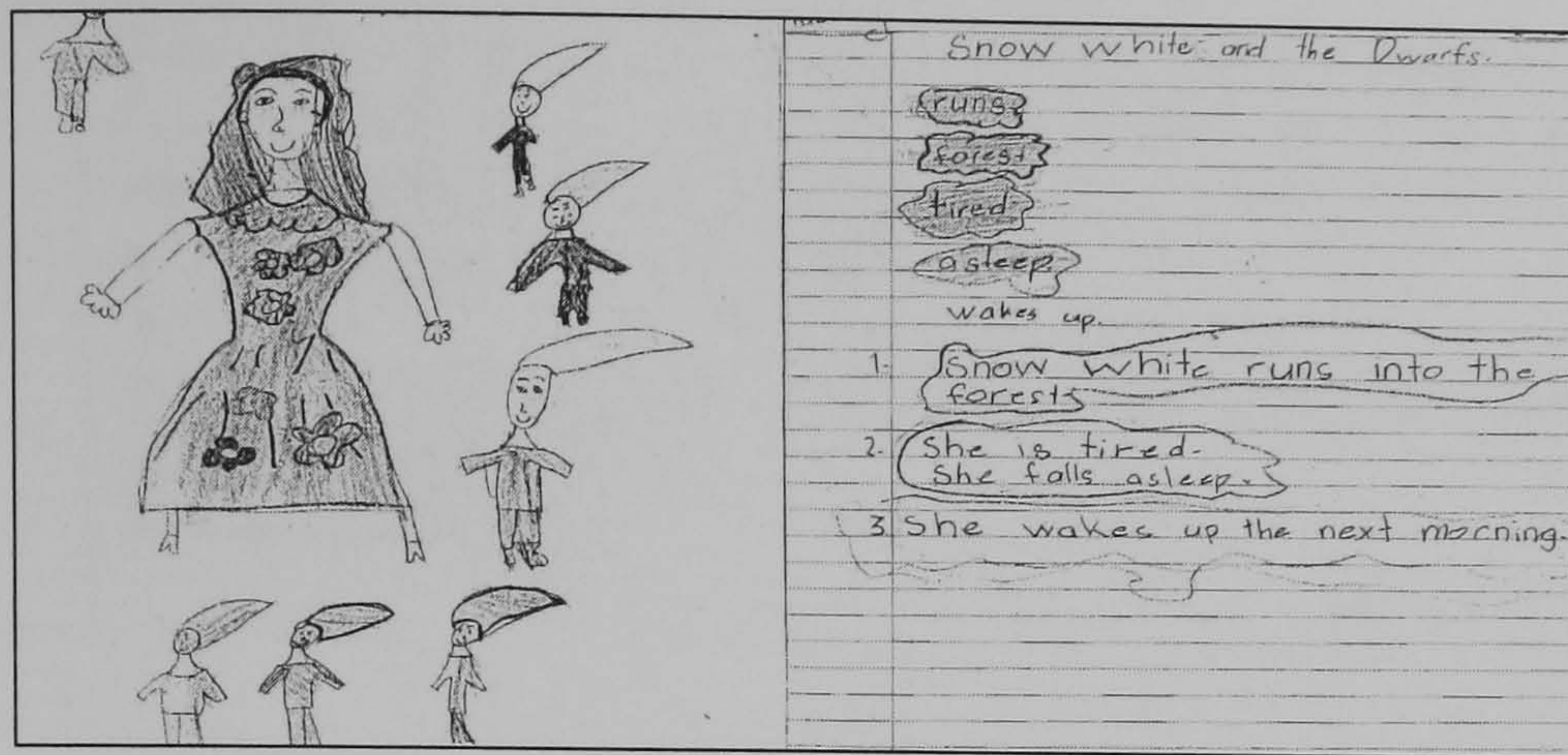
EUBZ-7 "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs"

In addition, they also had to provide the correct spelling of the words and copied the answers into their exercise books:

1. for ___ _ t
2. ru ___ s
3. tir ___ d
4. asl ___ _ p
5. morn ___ _ g

Figure 4 illustrates a sample of student's writing in this lesson.

Figure 4: Student's Work on 'Snow White'



In this particular lesson, there was so much copying involved that three students became confused with the tasks that they were supposed to copy as illustrated in lines 227-234 of this extract.

Extract 3: Copying: EUBZ-7

215	T	Ok I want you to copy this in your folio. Ok can start now.
216		{ folio!! (SS start making noise) XXXX Ok start now come on!!
217		XXXX
218		Ok what date is today?
219	SS	Today is Sunday... (students chanting loudly and make a lot of noise)
220		
221	SS	Teacher dalam apa? < in which book?>
222	T	In your folio. Come on
223	S	{ tak bawa <didn't bring>
224	S	{ kami tak beli lagi < I haven't bought>
225		XXXXX (students are having a conversation with one another while doing the exercise)
226		
227	S1	Cikgu salin yang mana? < teacher which one to copy?>
228	S2	Salin yang tu < copy that one>
229	S3	Salin semua < copy all>
230	S2	salin dua-dua < copy both>
231	S1	salin dua-dua ha teacher? < copy both teacher?> (asking for confirmation from the teacher)
232		
233	S2	Teacher! Salin dua dua ke? <copy both ?>
234	T	Yes! Yes.
235	S	{ saya dah salin dah! < I have copied>
236	T	Ok those who have copied this, you copy this ok. What is the title of the story?
237		
238	S	Snow white and the Seven...
239		XXX
240	T	Yang ni dah salin kan! Yang ni dah salin dah kan... < you have copied this one right?>
241		
242	SS	{ dah! <yes. Finished>
243	SS	{Yes!
244	SS	{ Salin dah < copied>
245		XXXX
246		(Teacher walks around the classroom checking students' work. She loses her temper and is so furious with their work and their behaviour)
247		
248		
249	T	dalam buku ni jangan conteng! < don't scribble in this book!> Kan teacher dah cakap. < I have told you about this, right> Cikgu cakap jangan bising kan <I told you not to make noise right!>... kamu ni nak tunjuk perangai ni pasai apa? <why
250		
251		
252		

253		<i>do you want to show off your bad behaviour?></i> Hey !!! duduk
254		tempat masing-masing! < <i>Hey sit down at your own place!</i> >
255		(Teacher scolds the students) Salin dalam buku!! < <i>Copy in your</i>
256		<i>book!</i> > (students continue with their work) ha perkataan baru
257		kamu yang baru jumpa apa dia? < <i>what are the new words that</i>
258		<i>you have just learned?></i> Forest.
259		XX
260	T	Ha bubuh ejaan dia. < <i>yes write the spelling of the word</i> > You're
261		going to fill in. XXX
262	S	Fill in the blanks

(EUBZ-7 Snow White)

In this episode, a few students were talking among themselves while copying the exercises. Student 1 asked, “**Cikgu salin yang mana?** < *teacher which one to copy?>* (line 227) and Student 2 replied, “**Salin yang tu** < *copy that one*> (line 228). And Student 3 said, “**Salin semua** < *copy all*>(line 229)”. The Student 2 reinforced, “ **salin dua-dua** < *copy both*> (line 230). Student 1 was not happy with his friends’ answers and decided to ask the teacher for confirmation, “ **salin dua-dua ha teacher?** < *copy both teacher?>* (line 231) . Unfortunately, he did not get the response from her. So Student 2 asked with a louder voice, “**Teacher! Salin dua dua ke?** <*copy both ?*> (line 233). Finally, Teacher EUBZ replied, “Yes! Yes. (line 233) and then she immediately explained that those who had completed would have to copy the questions for the Book report exercise and she went on checking other students’ work. Copying was used as a “time out” for the teacher to disengage from whole class interaction and to continue with her other tasks such as marking the students’ written work or checking their ongoing tasks.

The following examples illustrate the drawing activity as one of the typical writing practices in the classrooms under study.

4.2.4.2 Drawing and Colouring

Extract 4 shows an episode where Teacher EUBZ was showing the students how to draw an elephant on the board.

Extract 4: Drawing and Colouring: EUBZ-1

148	T	OK today I want you to draw an elephant ok listen listen
149		(students talk) Ooi cik kak < Miss>are you ready?
150	SS	Yes
151	T	Ha oK. Today you're going to draw an elephant (pause) very
152		simple Do you know how to draw an elephant? (students laugh).
153		I'm going to teach you how to draw an elephant. Ok first you draw
154		a big circle. (She draws a circle on the board). Ok are you ready?
155	SS	Yes (say together)
156	T	You're going to draw a big circle. Ayuni! (who is misbehaving) Ok
157		next, inside the small circle you draw another circle
158	SS	Oh wow (students express awe)
159	T	Satu aje < only 1>elephant ok. How many ears? How many ears?
160	SS	Two (together)
161	T	Ok one big ear another two. Ha next you draw the eyes. How
162		many eyes?
163	SS	Two (together)
164	T	What about the nose?
165	SS	One (together)
166	T	Long or short?
167	SS	Long (together)
168	T	Long or short?
169	SS	Long (even louder)
170	T	Long one. A long nose (draws the trunk on the board) Can you
171		draw that?
172	SS	Yes
173	T	What about the legs?
174	SS	Four
175	T	How many legs?
176	SS	Four
177	T	How many legs?
178	SS	Four
179	T	Ha four legs. One two three (pause) Oh what about the tail?
180	SS	One.
181	T	One
182	T	One. A what tail?
183	T	A tiny....tiny A tiny tail
184	SS	A tiny tail
185	T	So where is the tail? Ok just a tiny tail. Ha ok. I'm going to name
186		this elephant Jumbo
187	SS	Jumbo (whole class)

EUBZ-1 Elly Elephant

While drawing, this teacher elicits some vocabulary by asking asking students to recall the previously learned knowledge as evidence in lines 159-187. This example illustrates a similar language work as found in the reading practice.

Below is a sample of student's work in the lesson which includes drawings of 'big ears' and 'a long nose'.

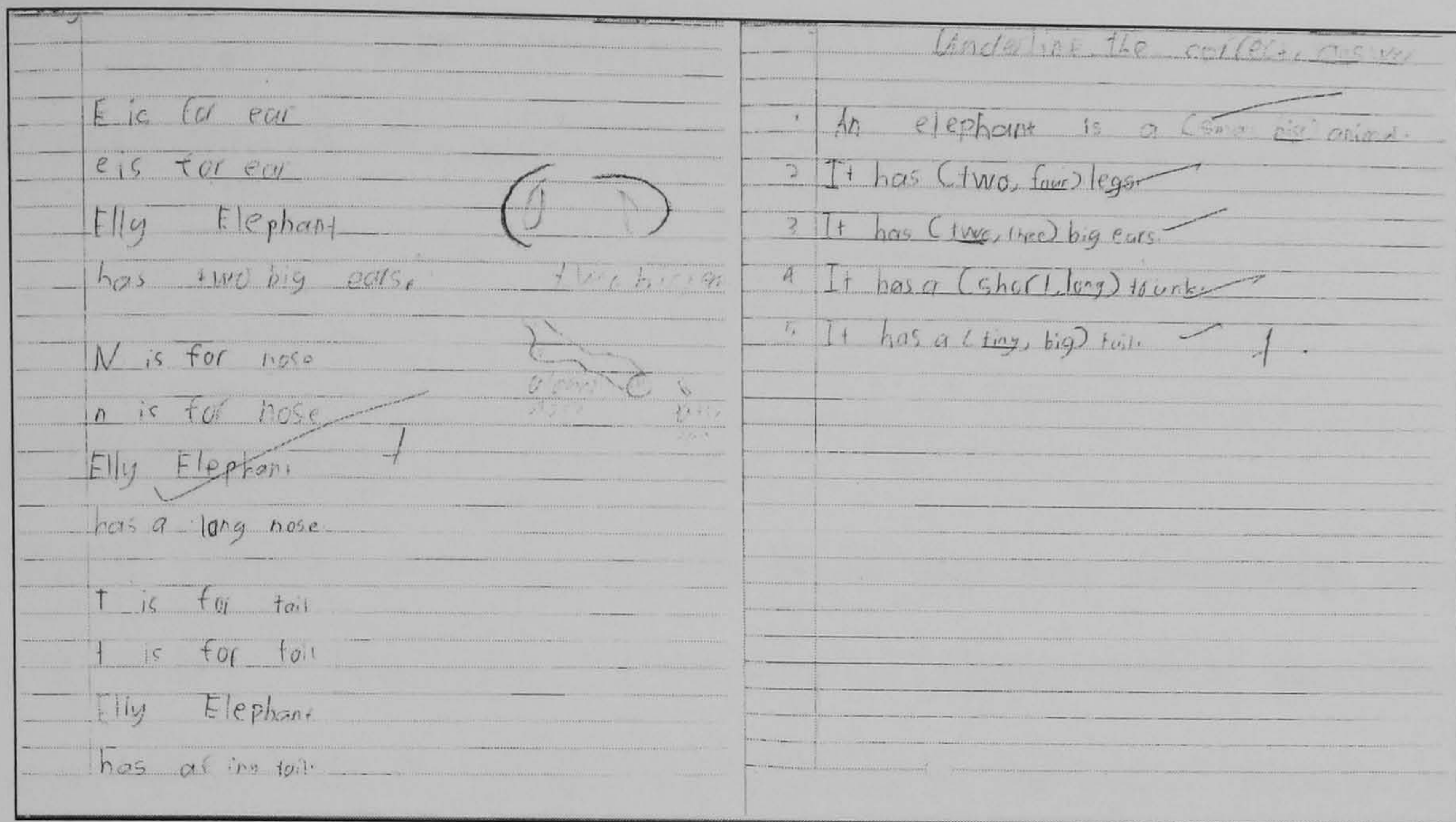


Figure 5: Student's work on 'Elly Elephant'

Teachers of Year 1 English also gave pictures for students to colour at the end of the lesson or asked them to draw some pictures and colour them. These examples are shown in Figure 6.

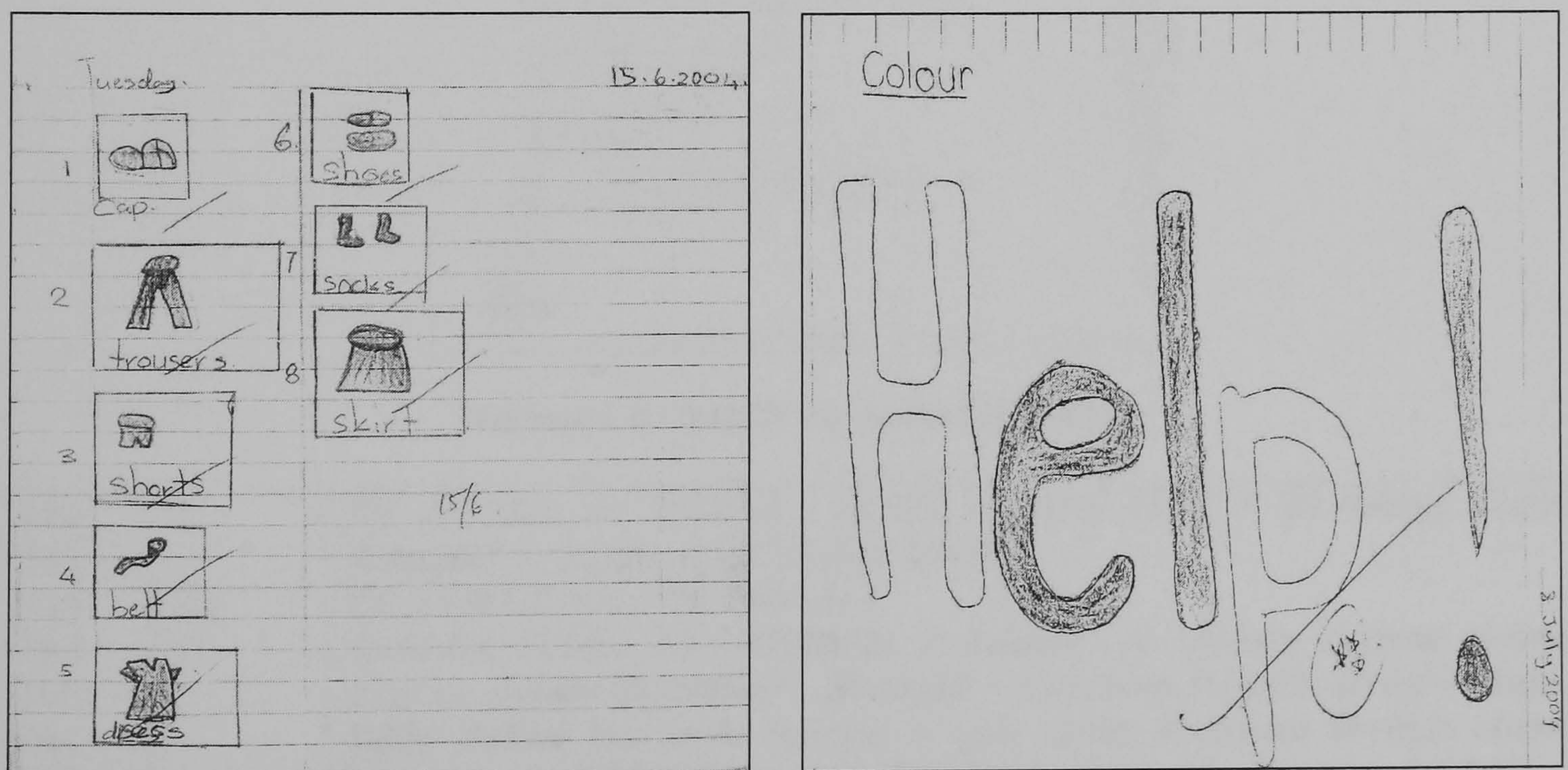


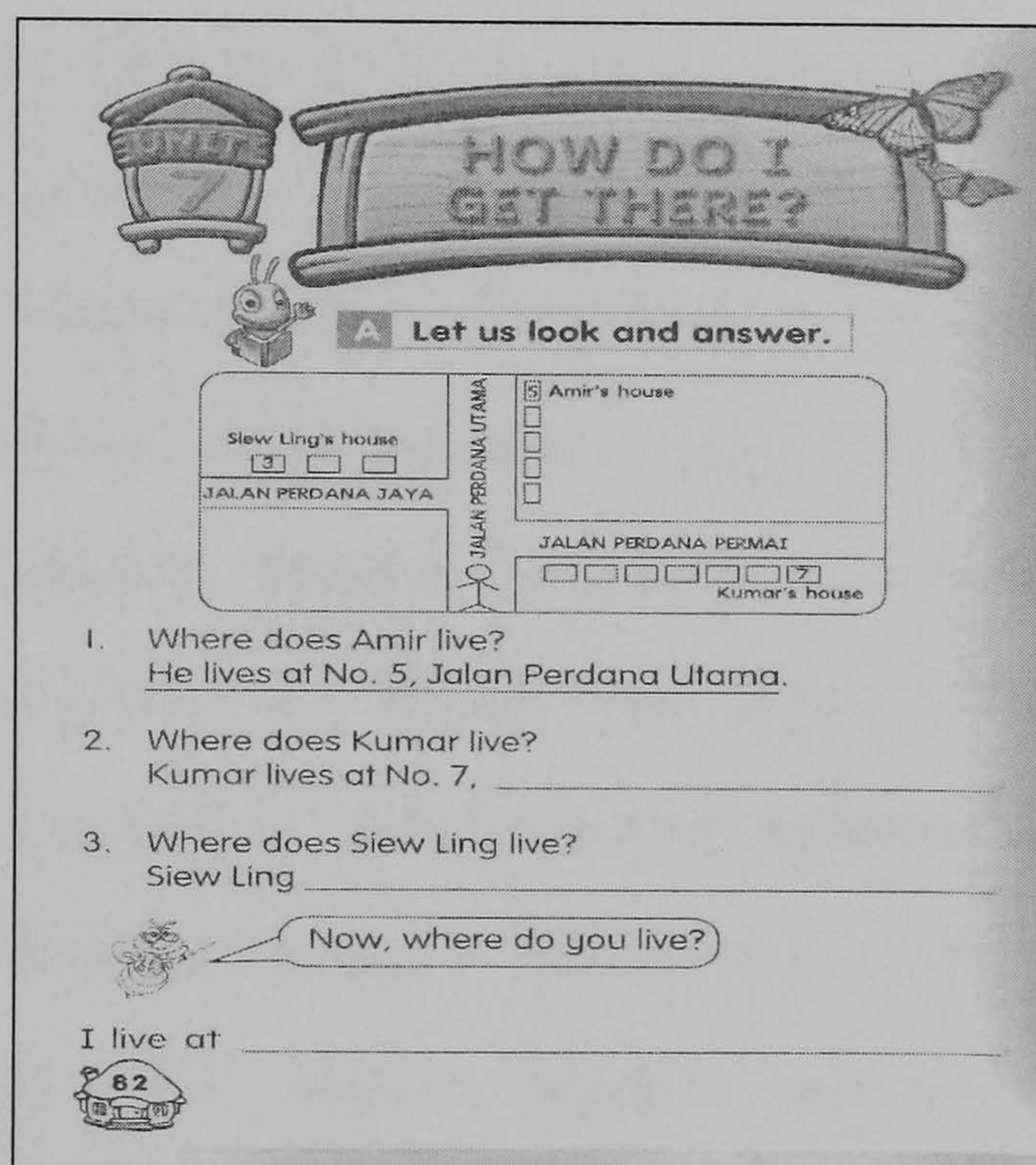
Figure 6: Students' work on drawing and colouring

In the next section, I shall illustrate some examples of filling-in-the blanks exercises from the Activity book. Activity books provide practice on the lesson taught.

4.2.4.3 Filling-in-blanks

Filling- in-the- blanks from the Activity Book was also frequently used by the teachers in Year 1 classrooms. In Extract 5, Teacher ERCY was discussing a writing task taken from the Activity book based on the topic, “How to get there?”. This written exercise consists of a map of a residential area with the names of the street written down, blocks of houses, and a stick man as shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Filling-In-Blanks



Extract 5- ERCY- 4 Activity Book

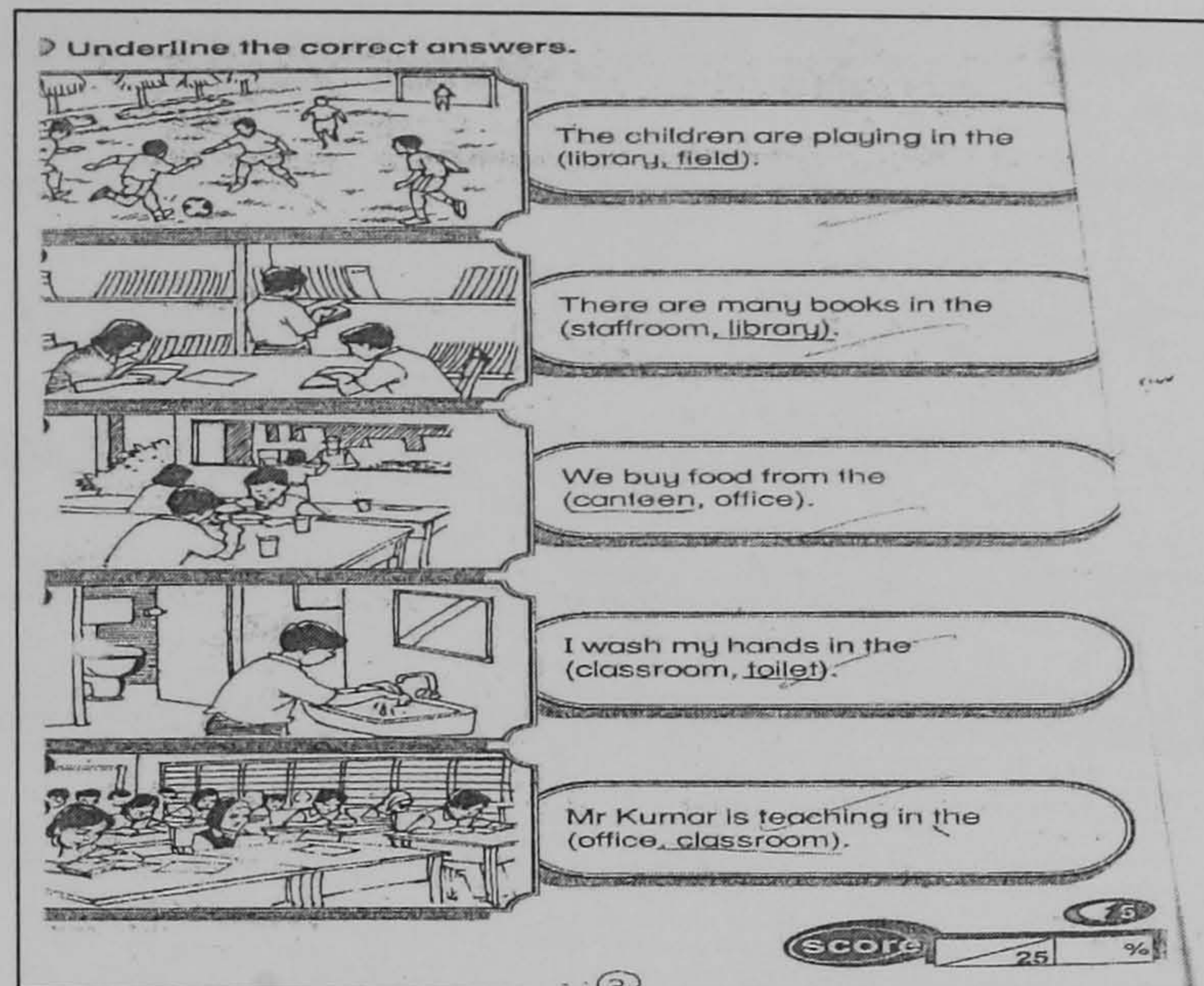
346	T	Ok number 2. WHERE DOES KUMAR LIVE ? Di mana Kumar
347		tinggal? < where does Kumar live?>
348	SS	KUMAR LIVES....NUMBER 7
349	T	KUMAR LIVES AT NUMBER 7 Jalan ^...< street> Kumar Kumar
350		Kumar Jalan Perdana ^... Permai < Perdana Permai Street>. Kamu
351		tulis Jalan Perdana Permai < you write Perdana Permai street>
352		Number 7 Jalan < street> Perdana Permai . Kumar tinggal di
353		Nombor 7 Jalan Perdana Permai < Kumar lives at Number 7
354		Perdana Permai Street >
355	S	Di Alor Setar... < in Alor Setar>
356	T	Tengok macamana Amir ni tulis huruf besaq semua . < Look at
357		how Amir write he used all capital letters> Perdana huruf besaq
358		capital letter P < for Perdana you use the capital letter for 'P' only>
359		tengok tengok muka duk di mana? < look look properly where

360		<i>did you put your face</i> > XXX Ada siap number sama < <i>how come</i>
361		<i>you have the same number for all?</i> >
362	SS	Number 7!!
263	S	Cikgu! < <i>teacher</i> >
364	T	Where's your book? Where's your book? Jalan ^.... < <i>street</i> >
365	S	Teacher semua kena huruf besaq? < <i>must we use all capital</i>
366		<i>letters?</i> >
367	T	Ha huruf pangkal depan tu capital letter. J jalankan J. Lepas tu
368		Perdana P. < <i>yes, the initial letter at the front. For J put capital J</i>
369		<i>after that Perdana put capital 'P' </i> >(T writes the answer on the
370		board)
371	S	Teacher finish!!
372	T	Finish answer number 3. Number 3. WHERE DOES SWEE LING
373		LIVE? Swee Ling pulak < <i>what about Swee Ling</i> > Swee Ling lives...
374		live tinggal < <i>live</i> > Swee Ling lives... (pause)
<i>ERCY- 4 How to get there? Reading Aloud in Text Book</i>		

The questions were guided, with a model answer given in the first question with more and more words reduced as they reached question 4. This episode shows that Teacher ERCY was observed giving the answers to the students. In lines 245-250, she was trying to elicit information about Kumar's address. However, when the students failed to provide her with the 'right' answer after two attempts made using prosodic cues, "KUMAR LIVES AT NUMBER 7 **Jalan**^...< *street*> (line 349) and "Kumar Kumar Kumar **Jalan Perdana**^...(line 350) she immediately supplied them with the correct answer, "**Permai**" (line 350). In addition, she mentioned what to write for question number two, "**Kamu tulis Jalan** Perdana Permai < *you write Perdana Permai street*> Number 7 **Jalan** < *street*> **Perdana Permai. Kumar tinggal di Nombor 7 Jalan Perdana Permai** < *Kumar lives at Number 7 Perdana Permai Street*> (lines 350-354). This example indicates that the focus was getting the students to produce the right answers in the Activity Book.

In Extract 6 the writing event is given as a test where students are expected to be able to complete the task individually.

Figure 8: Underline the Correct Answers



Extract 6: EUAA-4

139	T	Ok do now! Now do your exercise! (students do their exercise)
140		(students are given a handout)
141	T	now page 1 look at page 1. look at the pictures one by one. You
142		have 10 pictures of all. Fill in the blanks with the words given. The
143		answers are below. Jawapan dia di bawah. Jawapan di bawah. <
144		<i>the answers are given below</i> > Toilet, music room, canteen, library,
145		office, staffroom, classroom, hall. You identify those places and you
146		fill in the sentences below. Number 1 is for picture number 1.
147		Number 2 is for picture number 2. understand?
148	SS	Yes!!
149	T	If you don't know how to spell the answers are below. You know the
150		pictures. Ok next page. Page 2. Page 2 underline the correct
151		answers you can find the answers in the brackets dalam kurungan
152		ada jawapan < <i>there are answers in the brackets</i> >. There are two
153		answers. Choose the correct one. One only. 1 correct answer.
154		Match. Garis bawah tu <underline>. Opps sorry underline garis
155		bawah tu bukan <underline but not > match bukan suaikan <not
156		<i>match</i> > underline understand?
157	SS	Yes.
158	T	You have learned this topic for 3 years already. I hope you can do
159		on your own. Ok sit down. (students sit down and do their own
160		work) (pause) Number 1 this is the place where we can exercise,
161		play football what is it?
162	SS	Field!!
163	T	Toilet? What do you say? What is it? What is it?
164		(pause)
165		now that you have work to do don't make noise. (students continue
166		to make noise)
167		leave a line er er leave a line!

EUAA-4 " Places in the school"

When giving the instructions, Teacher EUAA made sure that the students understood what they were supposed to do, so first she read in English, and then translated it into Malay. In lines 142-143, she said, "Fill in the blanks with the

words given. The answers are below. **Jawapan dia di bawah. Jawapan di bawah.** < the answers are given below. Answers are below>” Similarly, in the proceeding lines, she read, “Page 2 underline the correct answers you can find the answers in the brackets” (lines 150-151) and immediately after that she translated it into Malay, “**dalam kurungan ada jawapan** < there are answers in the brackets> (line 151-152). Later on, in lines 160-161, she proceeded by discussing the first question as a sample. Both exercises were tightly controlled and the students were instructed to work individually.

In this particular lesson, there were two writing exercises involved: the first two were underlining the correct answers from the handout, as presented in Extract 6, and the second one was filling in the blanks from the board as can be seen in Extract 7. Extract 7 below, follows on from the joint reading performance (lines 01-138) and demonstrates the teacher’s explanation of the matching exercise in the handout.

Students were asked to fill in the blanks in order to complete a short composition about “My classroom”. At the beginning of this writing task, Teacher EUAA wrote the following six sentences on the board for the students to copy and complete.

My classroom Composition (EUAA-4)

1. My school is _____
2. It is a _____ school
3. There are _____ classrooms
4. I am in Year 1 _____
5. There are _____ pupils in my classroom
6. I like to keep my classroom clean.

Extract 7: EUAA-4

163	T	Ok girls look here. (at the blackboard) You still have one space to write down so I will continue here on the side but you continue below in your book understand? (pause)
164		
165		
166		(pause)
167	T	faster! Faster! (tapping on the blackboard with a ruler)
168		(pause)
169	T	Ok look at the questions. Name of school. What is your school’s name?
170		
171	SS	SKSA
172	T	SK stands for SK capital letter S

173	SS	A!
174	T	Is your school big or small?
175	SS	Big!
176	T	Our school big or small?
177	SS	Big!!
178	T	Ok so answer big B.I.G. (teacher spells). Number of classrooms.
179		How many classrooms do we have in our school? Twenty... I told
180		you before twenty^
181		Can you...
182	SS	29!!
183	T	Yes 29 what? Canteen?
184	SS	Classrooms! (The whole class answer loudly)
185	T	Yes classrooms. Good. 29 classrooms (Teacher writes the answer
186		on the board). Which class are you in? What is the name of your
187		class?
188	SS	1 U
189	T	1 U. Very good. (Teacher writes the answer on the board). Number
190		of pupils in your classroom. Ok put down your pencil. Put down
191		please and look at the blackboard. Ok say this word. Pupil.
192	SS	Pupil (students repeat)
193	T	Again
194	SS	Pupil
195	T	Again
196	SS	Pupil
197	T	Again
198	SS	Pupil
199	T	Spell
200	SS	P.U.P.I.L. (Students spell)
201	T	Ok another one student
202	SS	Student
203	T	Student
204	SS	Student
205	T	Student. Spell student
206	SS	S.T.U.D.E.N.T. (Students spell)
207	T	Student
208	SS	Student
209	T	Student
210	SS	Student

(EUAA-4 Places in the school

Teacher EUAA, then discussed the task with her students by going through all the questions, one after another, eliciting information about the name of the school (line 169), "Name of school. What is your school's name?", the size of it, "Is your school big or small?" (lines 174, 176), and the number of classrooms, "Number of classrooms. How many classrooms do we have in our school? Twenty... I told you before twenty^" (lines 178-179). Here, she also provided them with a clue, using prosodic cue, "twenty^" and asked them to recall the answer based on the discussion that they had had in the previous lesson similar to what we have seen in the reading practices.

In relation to the questions asked, in her attempt to guide students in completing the writing task, they were very much controlled and in many cases required only one specific answer, for example in line 174, when she asked, *Is your school big or small?*, the students answered “*Big*” (line 175). Then she proceeded by spelling the word ‘*big*’ and wrote the answer for question number 2 on the board. The questions she used did not allow for expansion of ideas and the students were not given any opportunity to include their own thoughts about the classroom or the school they were writing about. Once all the six questions were discussed, she proceeded with the pronunciation and spelling practice of the words, “*pupils*’ (line 200) and ‘*students*’ (lines 206) before discussing the difference between the two words. What is observed here is that, she was concerned in getting students to produce the ‘right’ answer, written with the ‘correct’ spelling. Therefore, she asked the students to say and repeat the words a few times in order to get them right. Besides, with the answers written on the board, she could ensure that they were completed correctly when they copied into their exercise book.

In summary, the observation data reveals that the writing practices surrounding the textbook and the board include copying, drawing, colouring and filling-in the blanks. In the next section, teachers’ insights on these writing practices based on the interviews are presented.

4.2.4.4 Teachers’ Perspectives on Copying

Table 19 below, shows the English teachers’ rationales for using ‘copying’ as one of the writing tasks in their classroom.

Table 19: Teachers’ Rationales for Copying

Teachers’ Rationales
1. Self- involvement
2. Copying and reading
3. Curriculum
4. Recognition and memorisation
5. Handwriting practice
6. Helping weaker students

Self Involvement

During the interviews, when asked why copying was so important in teaching, Teacher EUAA mentioned that copying was carried out as a form of involvement because if students were not asked to copy, they would not have a sense of responsibility for their own learning and expect the teacher to give everything to them. Copying was regarded as an 'expected norm' in her classroom, that whenever she wrote on the board, she expected the students to copy and read the sentences or the text. To her, copying would eventually lead to reading whereby as they copied they began to read some of the written words.

Actually shared reading **tu cikgu hanya bacakan murid hanya dengar dan cikgu** proceed dengan questions **apakan tapi murid-murid ni kalau kita salin apa benda tu di board tapi kalau kita tak involvekan dia orang lepas ni lagi** never bother about it **tak kesahlah. Lepas ni bila saya masuk saya tulis apa pun dia orang dah tak ambil kesah bialq pilah** teacher **tulis** teacherlah yang nak baca nanti ha nampak dak? Jadi bila saya masuk saya tulis lepas tu saya ajar dia orang baca at least the next time **bila saya masuk bila kita menulis tu budak dah membaca bila dah boleh membaca itu dah jadi satu kepuasan pada diri kita**

< actually during shared reading the teacher reads only and the students listen and then he/she proceeds with some questions but these students if we copy/write on the board without involving them they will never be bothered to do. After this when I enter the classroom and I write something they will not be bothered about it let the teacher write as she will read it later can you see what I meant? So every time I enter the classroom I will write and after that I will teach them to read at least next time when I enter and write they have started reading it and when they can read it, it will bring some kind of satisfaction for me>. (EUAA- Interview 1 – 28/6)

Curriculum

In addition to that, Teacher EUAA also lamented that copying, and tracing words or letters of the alphabet were mentioned in the curriculum for Year 1.

Ya ya writing copy **saja Tahun 1** copy **saja** trace...**kalau** reading read and understand simple short stories

< yes yes for writing is copying only Year 1 copy only and trace...if for reading, read and understand simple short stories>

(EUAA- Interview)

Recognition and Memorisation

Teacher Amy viewed writing as copying whatever the teacher wrote on the board and this would lead to recognition and memorization. She believed that when students were copying, they would be able to recognise the words and the sentence

patterns and eventually memorise them and it was even more useful when guided with pictures.

Writing dia kena meniru apa yang cikgu tulis dia kena tiru dulu kemudian apabila kita bagi latihan macamanapun dia kena tahu ayat ni masuk dalam sini maknanya dia dah cam satu perkataan ni ayat ni tentang apa selalunya saya bagi berpandulah ada gambar. Ayat ni ok 'cat' dia cari perkataan cat masuk dalam ayat tu. Menulis pulakkan saya tak bagi budak buat karangan sendiri selalunya berpandulah

<Writing they have to copy whatever the teacher writes. They have to copy first then when we give an exercise whatever it is they should know this word should be in here. It means that they have to recognize the word and what the sentence is about normally it's guided with pictures. For instance in this sentence ok 'cat' they have to search for the word 'cat' to fill in, in the sentence. In terms of writing I don't let them write an essay on their own most of the time it's guided>

(AMY -2003 Interview)

Manageable for Weaker Students

Copying was used as an activity for the weaker students as it would be more manageable for them.

Selalunya saya buat kumpulan budak yang lemah ni memang tak boleh ikut kadang kadang kita buat yang tinggi dan berat dia tak boleh buat. Kalau kita bagipun dia tak boleh jawab jawapan yang dia bagipun salah jadi kita akan bagi exercise yang lain yang lebih mudah misalnya kita buat ayat ok salin ayat ni dengan tulisan yang cantik dan ejaan yang betul. Kadang kadang dia menyalinpun dia tak betul b terbalik c terbalik activity dia menyalin...

< I normally do group work. These weak students can't follow [the lesson] sometimes when I do difficult tasks they can't do it. They can't answer even if we give them the task and the answers are wrong so we give them simpler exercise for instance we make sentences ok copy this sentence with beautiful handwriting and correct spellings. Sometimes they copy wrongly "b" is upside down and "c" is upside down so their activity is just copying.>

(AMY-Baseline Interview)

4.2.4.5 On Free Writing

Teachers did not introduce free writing or composition as they thought that students were not ready. Therefore, guided writing with pictures was used and answers were supplied during writing exercises. Teacher ERDF for example, mentioned that she had never tried essay writing before, as she was not confident in her students' ability to write. Teacher ERDF stated that she would wait until they were ready which meant that they have acquired sufficient vocabulary and skills necessary for writing a composition before she would allow them to write freely. What she had been doing was guiding them with pictures and supplying them with the answers or the sentences related to the pictures.

Setakat hari ni I tak cuba lagi writing yang bebas yang lepas untuk mereka kan macam bagi satu gambar ok you write sentences daripada gambar tu kan...setakat ni masih lagi guided bahan tu I sediakan I nak try bagi satu gambar contohnya 'pen' ok you talk about your pen apa dia sekarang ni kitalah habaq This is a pen. It is a blue pen. I guidelah yang tu. Free writing tu I think kalau masuk bulan ni kalau budak yang boleh ni bulan 8 bulan 9 tu sebelum dia naik Year 2 kita boleh trylah kan tapi kita tak boleh haraplah the whole class dapat mungkin sebahagian tak sampai sebahagianpun kan drp 20 tu dapat 10 pun kira habis kuatlah kalau kata kat luarbandar ni (laughs)

<Until now I haven't tried free writing yet with them like giving them a picture and say ok you write sentences based on the picture. Now it's still guided and I prepare the materials I want to try and give them a picture for example 'a pen' ok talk about your pen. But now I tell them 'This is a pen. It is a blue pen.' I guide them. Free writing I think for the good ones by August or September or before they go to Year 2 I can try but we cannot expect the whole class will be able to do it perhaps half or not even half 10 out of 20 is good enough for rural school students>

(ERDF- Interview 1 12/7)

This statement indicated that Teacher ERDF saw 'free writing' as 'the next stage', once they had mastered the building blocks of enough words and sentences through guided writing. She gave them simpler and more manageable tasks such as drawing, colouring and matching which worked for both of them. The teacher delayed the composition writing until she thought that the students were ready for the task, and her expectations of the rural children was that many would not be ready in Year 1.

4.2.4.6 Students' Perspectives on Copying

Although the teachers saw the controlled writing practices as steps towards reading and free writing, none of the children's role plays on teaching reading extended to copying or writing. These were some observations on the interviews, however.

Extract 8 indicates students' perspectives of the traditional copying practices in the classroom.

Extract 8: Copying

150	Nicky	Dalam kelas BI yang paling tak suka tulis-tulisan tiru dalam buku <i><In English class I don't like writing copying from the textbook></i>
151		
152	I	Ada tiru macam kelas BM jugak ke? <i>< do you have copying like in your BM lesson too?></i>
153		
154	ALL	Ada <i>< yes></i>
155	I	Cerita sikit <i>< could you explain a little bit></i>

156	Nicky	Macam Ben Goes to School tu ingatlah < like Ben Goes to school that one I remember>
157		
158	All	Ha < yes>
159	Nicky	Tapi itu susah sikitlah < but that's a bit difficult>
160	I	Kenapa susah sikit? < why is it difficult?>
161	Nicky	Kena buat jawapan dia jugak. < have to answer the questions too>
162		Cuma senang aje senang tapi cuma tak larat nak buat < it's easy except it's too much to do>
163		
164	Wani	Hmm banyak < yes too much>
165	Ayu	Banyak kena buat dua muka surat < a lot have to do two pages>
166	Nicky	Lepas tu kena lukis pulak < after that we have to draw>
167	All	Ha < yes> (All)
168	Nicky	lepas tu lukis < after that have to draw>
169	Ayu	Lepas tu sampai berapa tah? < can't remember have to write how many [sentences]>
170		
171	Nicky	Satu sampai tujuh < 1 till 7>
172	I	Selalu dalam kelas BI teacher selalu buat apa lagi? < what else does your teacher do>
173		
174	Ayu	Teacher suruh salin Elly Elephant dalam buku < teacher asked us to copy Elly Elephant into our book>
175		

This extract suggests that students did not enjoy copying from the textbook into their exercise book as can be seen in line 150 because it's difficult (line 159) and they had to complete the answers (line 161). Nicky explained that copying was easy but tiring (line 162), while her two friends added that it was too much work (line 164) that they had to copy for two pages (line 165) and on top of that, they had to draw the pictures (lines 166-168). They also mentioned that copying was a routine writing practice as they also had to copy 'Elly elephant' in the other lesson as indicated in line 174.

In summary, the routine writing practices surrounding the textbook including the Activity Book and writing on the board are copying, filling-in-the blanks and colouring. Teachers informed that copying was conducted with the purposes of ensuring involvement, helping the weaker students and providing a basis for word-recognition, memorization and neat writing. Students on the other hand, stated that copying was tiring and it was 'too much work'. When it comes to the writing practice itself, particularly when using the Activity Book or handouts, the emphasis was in getting the 'right' answer, written neatly.

4.2.5 Discussion

- **The English Hour**

The interview data revealed that generally, the four English teachers were positive about the implementation of the English Hour with the reasons given as useful, effective, and focused on reading. One of them mentioned that the use of stories made her more relaxed that she did not have to think of the examination when delivering her lessons to students. These findings are consistent with Fisher and Lewis's (1999) study which reported the teachers' positive views about the UK National Literacy Strategy. They highlighted the positive comments given by teachers like clear structure of the framework, increased emphasis on literacy, better use of shared reading and writing, and teachers' confidence in implementing and delivering the framework. In addition, there was also substantial evidence in support of the raising literacy standards (Beard, 1999; 2003) that the UK National Literacy Strategy was having an impact on schools with improving results but maintaining the standards was difficult (Smith and Hardman, 2000).

The four Malaysian teachers and two trainers mentioned some constraints regarding the implementation of the English Hour. They voiced their concern over the time factor, the adequacy of training and the lack of resources. One teacher thought that the English Hour was effective but she had no time for it due to the syllabus constraint and her tight schedule. There were also comments that the training was inadequate and the selection method was inappropriate. One of the trainers reported that not all the teachers had the opportunity to attend the training. The distribution method was considered inappropriate that sometimes the selected teacher who was responsible to re-train her colleagues failed to deliver the concepts accurately. The problems such as increased preparation time, adequacy of training and the lack of resources were also evidenced in many studies in the UK (Fisher and Lewis, 1999; Smith and Hardman, 2000; Smith and Whiteley, 2000).

In an exam-oriented system like in Malaysia, the pressure from the school to raise the standards has always been the case. Therefore, introducing new idea or strategy like the English Hour is not always easy. One of the trainers mentioned about the conflict between the English Hour and the National curriculum that there was lack of support from the Headteacher who wanted the teachers to make students pass the examination. Teachers were in conflict in deciding whether to comply with the schools' expectations or to follow their personal and professional instincts. One of the trainers highlighted that it might be a slow process to gradually change the teachers' mind-sets as they would not move away from their 'comfort zones'. It would be difficult to have them to change their teaching methods which have been found to work well for them for so many years.

- **The Traditional Writing Practices**

With regard to writing, copying, drawing and colouring were discovered to be the most frequently used activities in the four classrooms observed. No free writing was introduced because the teachers were not confident with the students' knowledge and skills in English that they had to wait until they were ready and equipped with sufficient knowledge and skills to write. The purpose of writing was to internalise the words and sentences and promote reading and neat handwriting. Writing exercise were guided and tightly controlled by the teacher so that students were not given opportunities for expanding their ideas and opinions. What was discovered is that the writing practices observed in the four classrooms were very traditional, tightly controlled, and lacked purposes in writing. In this type of practice where opportunity was not given to try out free writing, students would not be able to develop their creative thinking and fail to express their ideas. And when this continues, it would eventually lead them to become too rigid in their writing and would become too dependent on the teacher's answers or choices of words.

Earlier studies have indicated the limitations of such a controlled approach that lacks the purpose of writing, pays limited attention to audience, relies on

transcription rather than composition, and does not allow the teacher to see what the children already know (Browne, 1993; 2000). For the teachers however, copying was 'meaningful' and 'effective' for students' learning based on the following reasons: it was part of self-involvement and responsibility for own learning; it was associated with reading; it led to recognition and memorisation; it produced neat handwriting; it was beneficial for the weaker students and most importantly, it was part of the curriculum.

Whitehead (1990) argues that writing that emphasizes the finished product ignores the psychological process of writing and undervalues the first attempt that children make at writing. In other words, teachers who practise a controlled approach fail to recognise that children are now considered active learners who take initiative in their own learning, who learn a great deal about writing from their literate world around them, and experiment with symbols, letters, numbers and early attempts at writing.

The very fact that there is always a tangible end-product to the activity of writing concentrates attention on the 'final' or 'finished' piece of writing. Not only has this tended to detract from interest in and knowledge about the psychological process, but it has also placed excessive emphasis on notions of beautiful, tidy, perfect, grammatical or correct writing. Until recently, this school tradition of concentrating on the correct-end product inevitably undervalued the first attempts at writing made by children (Whitehead, 1990:139).

The traditional writing practices observed in these classrooms were found to be connected with the issue raised about students' inability to expand ideas and opinion in the writing test among Year 6 students. Teacher EUAA, for example, claimed that students' inability to write and expand ideas could be attributed to the teachers' limited knowledge and competency in English particularly in vocabulary. She stated that,

writing **dia tak boleh nak** expand **mungkin** ideas **dia banyak tu aje tahu sikit aje tahu** ataupun **mungkin** kita dah makin kurang essay competition **ke bengkel** essay **ke ...sebab apa ada** murid-murid di tahun 6 sekarang **kan kita buat** ada 5 papers **sekarangkan** BM saja dah 2 paper **satu kefahaman** objective **dan satu lagi penulisan** ada budak yang dapat A **kefahaman 90 lebih** tapi penulisan dia B **dia tak boleh menulis** apakan idea dia pada tulisan dia...saya rasa tak berapalah...mengenai hal hal lain ok **katalah ayat dia tu** buah rambutan manis dia akan cerita **kan buah rambutan tu**

manis saja kotlah dia nak cerita buah rambutan berwarna apa ke waktu muda berwarna apakan idea tu lebih kembangkan bila masak warna apa isi warna apa dia manis juicy tu...

*<they can't expand their ideas in writing perhaps they have limited ideas or perhaps because we have fewer essay competitions or essay writing workshops[these days]...because there are Year 6 students... now that we have five papers even in BM there are two papers one is comprehension test which is an objective paper and the other one is writing. There are students who got A for comprehension with more than 90 marks but got B for writing. They can't express their ideas into their writing...I think it's not good enough...let's say for instance, the sentence is 'the **rambutan** is sweet' they will only talk about the fruit is sweet that's all. They didn't mention the colour of the **rambutan** or its colour when not ripe. They can't expand the ideas about the colour when ripe, the colour of the fruit, or whether it's sweet and juicy>*

(EUAA-Interview 1- 28/6)

She also blamed some teachers who only taught the suggested vocabulary items from the list given by the MOE rather than adding more words and vocabulary on their own. She suggested that English teachers should expose students to a variety of vocabulary and synonyms to help them in their writing.

Mungkin cikgupun kalau dia ajar mungkin vocab itulah yang diproposekan untuk dalam topic tu daripada Kementerian dia ajar yang tu aje padahal scenery contohnya ambience perkataan lain big sama dengan hugekan kalau dia tak ajar budak-budak pun tak tahukan so vocab cikgu jugaklah at least at least vocab cikgu tu kalau mengajar Darjah 1 macam dengan darjah 1 kena sama dengan Tingkatan 1 ke lebih sikitlah sebab murid ni dia dah belajar dari mak dia ke dari tadika dia ke yang asas asas why not cikgu ajar dia something else for example kita tanya 'where do you live?' dia dah tahu sebab dari tadika dia dah belajar bila kita tanya 'where do you stay?' stay tu dia tak tahu. Cikgu tu kalau tak ada effort dari Kementerian at least dia punya own effort lah bagi varietieslah pada dia punya murid tu sebab tu murid tu dapat vocab tu boleh lah dia tulis dalam writing dia kan

<perhaps teachers only teach the limited vocabulary items proposed by the MoE for that particular topic rather than introducing new words for example the word 'scenery', the similar word to that is 'ambiance' or another word, 'big' is similar with 'huge'. Students won't know if teachers don't teach them so the teachers' vocabulary is important at least if the teacher teaches Year 1, his/her vocabulary must be equivalent to Form 1 level or slightly higher than that because these students have learned the basics from their mother or from the kindergarten teachers so why not teach them something else for example when we asked them, "Where do you live?" they knew that from their kindergarten but when we asked, "Where do you stay?" that they don't know. As teachers, if there's no effort from the MoE at least they should have their own effort to provide varieties for their students. If the students have different vocabulary they can use them in their writing>

(EUAA-Interview 1-28/6)

Teacher EUAA's comments regarding the teachers' competency in English and students' overall language performance sound valid. However, what she failed to realise is that students acquire language based on what was made accessible to them, and how literacy (reading and writing) was taught had a significant impact

on their learning and development. If the teacher places greater emphasis on transcription rather than composition, what they will get are students who become too dependent, who are afraid to have a go at writing, and who are too cautious in their attempts to produce correct writing. Tang (2002) argues that, "Theories in Language learning have told us that it is the quality of input and the teaching conditions that matter in facilitating acquisition and attaining pedagogical goals" (Tang, 2002:89).

Evidence has also suggested that teachers adhered to the demand made by the curriculum. They were pressured to cover the syllabuses and they rigidly followed the contents as they felt much safer to comply to it. As stated in the curriculum

The focus is on developing learners' writing ability, beginning at the word and phrase levels and progressing towards developing the sentence and paragraph levels. For those who are able and capable, they are encouraged to write simple composition comprising several paragraphs.

(English Language Syllabus, 2002: 8).

Based on this statement, teachers were seen to rely on teaching and introducing words, spelling, and sentences in isolation rather than in context. Furthermore, the curriculum also indicated that only those who are able are encouraged to write simple composition, therefore, teachers were found to delay the composition as they felt that not all of them were capable of doing so yet. In conjunction with that, copying is also clearly stated in the curriculum whereby students are encouraged to copy correctly (4.1 (a)), copy words and phrases (4.1.3) and copy three word sentences (4.1.4) in clear, legible print and cursive writing (4.1 (b); 4.1.3; 4.1.2). This could be one of the reasons why copying was widely practiced in most classrooms observed. The teachers in this study treated syllabus as a directive from higher authorities that the demand from the curriculum, and the 'washback' effect of the examination have made the traditional teaching inevitable.

In the following chapter I shall discuss the English Year 1 reading practices by examining the interaction surrounding traditional texts.

Chapter 5:

Interaction Around the Traditional Texts

5.1 Introduction

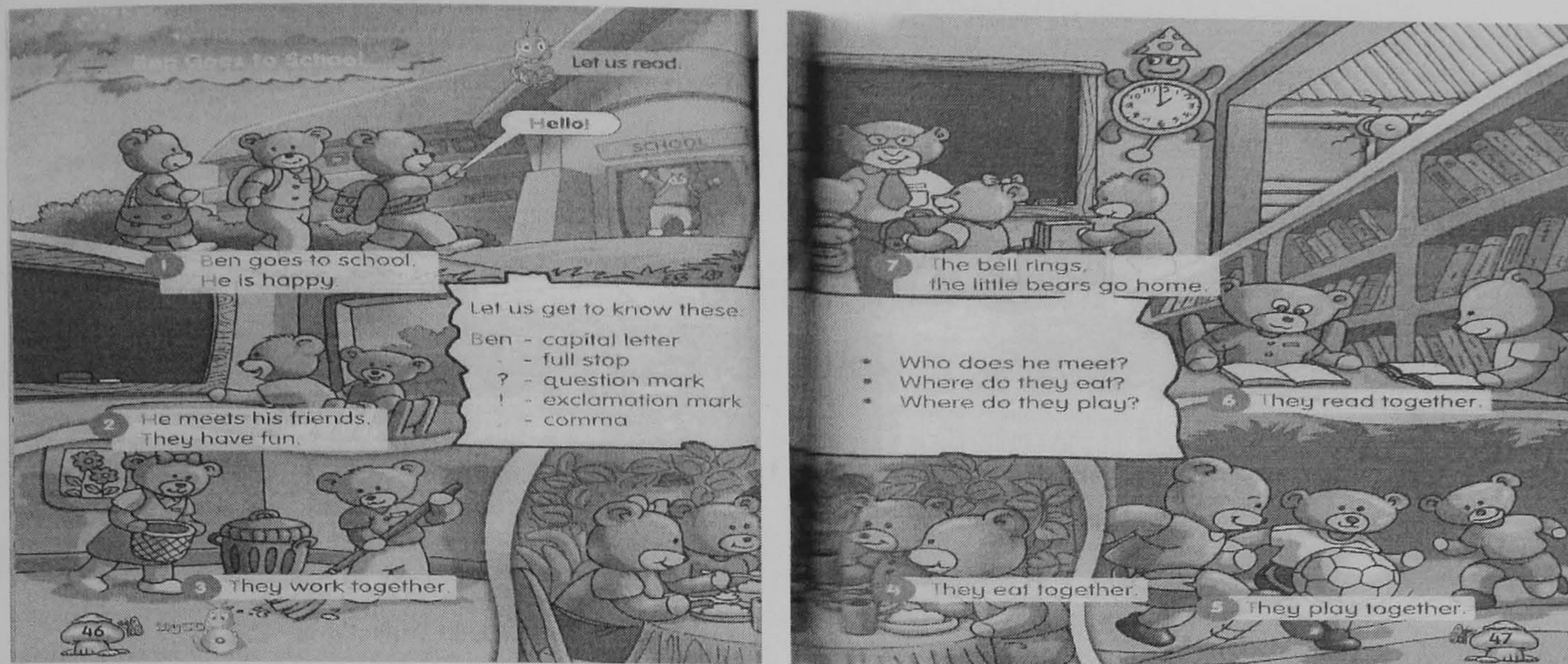
The relevant literature discussed in Chapter 2 has shown that choral reading with drilling and repetition has been viewed as culturally appropriate practice (Heath, 1983; Gregory, 1996; Tang, 2002; Marton, Dall'Alba and Kun, 1996) and has been associated with developing long-term memory and deep understanding (Chan, 1999; Kember and Gow, 1991). Many studies claim the positive effects of choral repetition and drilling on memorization by heart as evidenced in the Quranic teaching (Baynham, 1988; Rosowsky, 2001; Gregory, 1993). The 2003 study has shown this traditional way of teaching is still widely practiced with choral reading, drilling and repetition viewed as significant for teaching reading for ESL/EFL learners.

In the next section, I shall illustrate these claims through a detailed analysis of classroom extracts taken from interaction surrounding textbook. I shall present the traditional teaching and learning practices, which include choral reading aloud with drilling and repetition, the word-level emphasis, teacher-control interaction, code-switching practices, and the questions used within text book teaching.

5.2 Choral Reading Aloud with Drilling and Repetition

The observation data revealed that when using the textbook, teachers adopted the technique of choral reading aloud with the traditional drilling and repetition methods. The emphasis was placed on developing students' language skills and practice at reading. Choral reading aloud was conducted as the whole class and in groups to gain the practice at reading with some focus given to pronunciation and spelling. Mistakes were corrected immediately and sentences were repeated a few times.

Figure 9: Ben Goes to School



Extract 9, demonstrates the typical reading practices around the text in the text book as shown in Figure 9.

Extract 9: Drilling and Repetition: EUBZ-4

38	T	Ok that's all right. Ok today you're going to listen to a story about
39		Ben. (Teacher goes to the board and points to the title)
40	T	BEN GOES TO [^]
41	SS	SCHOOL
42	T	Ok let's say it together. BEN GOES TO SCHOOL!
43	SS	BEN GOES TO SCHOOL
44	T	BEN GOES TO SHOOL
45	SS	BEN GOES TO SCHOOL
46	T	Ok let's read the story here. HELLO HELLO (Teacher reads from the
47		text book) BEN GOES TO SCHOOL
48	SS	HELLO. HELLO
49	T	BEN GOES TO SCHOOL
50	SS	BEN GO TO SCHOOL
51	T	Ahah not Ben go to school BEN GOES TO SCHOOL (Teacher corrects
52		the mistake)
53	SS	BEN GOES TO SCHOOL
54	T	HE IS HAPPY
55	SS	HE IS HAPPY
56	T	Ha again! HELLO HELLO. BEN GOES TO SCHOOL
57	SS	BEN GOES TO SCHOOL
58	T	HE IS HAPPY
59	SS	HE IS HAPPY
60	T	Oh this is Ben. Ben goes to school and he is happy. Are you happy to
61		come to school?
62	SS	Yes
63	T	Oh Number 2. HE MEETS HIS FRIENDS (Teacher reads from the text)
64	SS	HE MEETS HIS FRIENDS
65	T	Again. HE MEETS HIS FRIENDS
66	SS	HE MEETS HIS FRIENDS (students read from the book by repeating
67		after the teacher)
68	T	THEY HAVE FUN
69	SS	THEY HAVE FUN

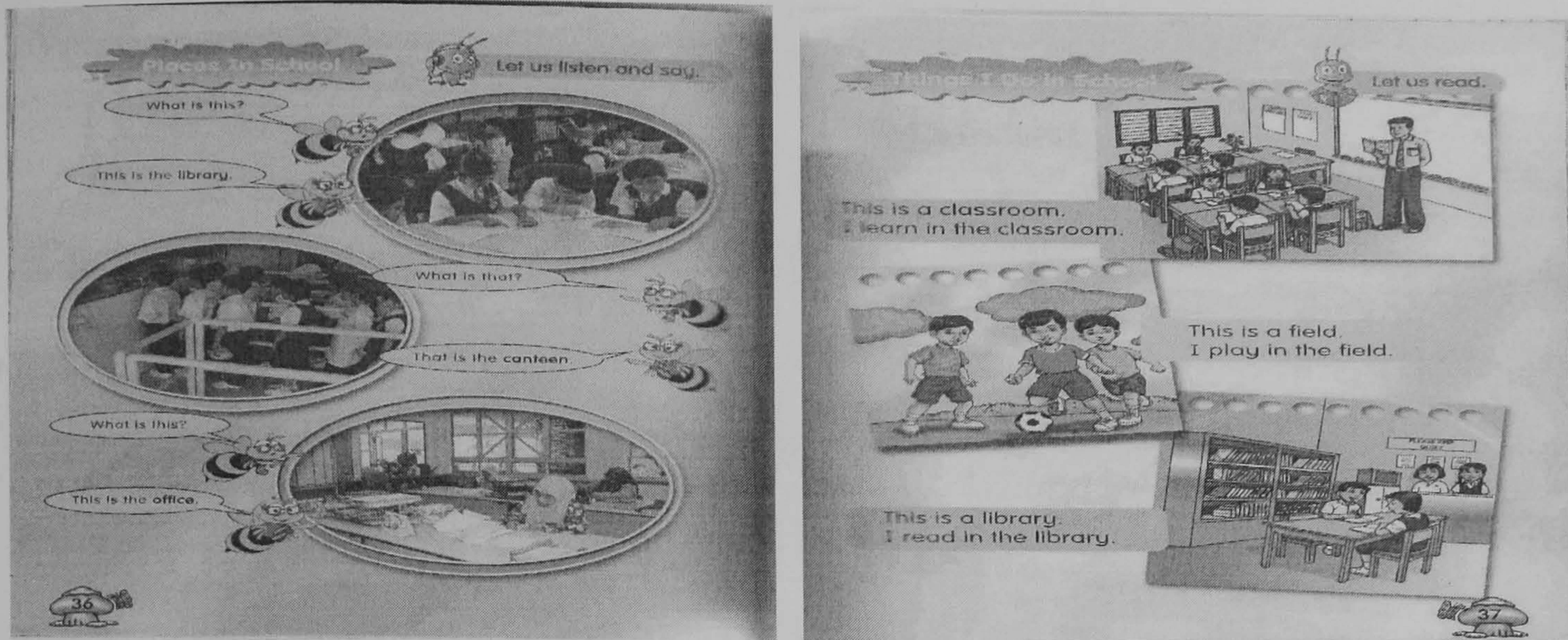
70	T	THEY HAVE FUN
71	SS	THEY HAVE FUN
72	T	THEY WORK TOGETHER
73	SS	THEY WORK TOGETHER

EUBZ-4 "Ben Goes to School"

What can be seen throughout this episode is that students repeated every single sentence read by the teacher. In lines 38-50 "BEN GOES TO SCHOOL" was repeated five times, HE MEETS HIS FRIENDS (lines 63-66) was read twice and THEY HAVE FUN (lines 68-71) also twice. Altogether, this same sentence was repeated four times. Furthermore, in line 51, when the teacher noticed that the students read 'go' instead of 'goes' she corrected it immediately "Ahah not Ben go to school Ben goes to school".

In addition, teacher-initiated choral reading aloud like this one was conducted nine times throughout this lesson, three times as the whole class with the teacher, two times as the whole class without the teacher and four times repeating after children who were identified by the teacher as good readers.

In another example taken from a lesson on "Places in the school" on page 36 and "Things I Do in school" on page 37 of the textbook as shown in Figure 10, a similar practice emerges. Like Teacher EUBZ in the previous extract, Teacher EUAA also used choral reading with a strong emphasis given to pronunciation and spelling. The following are the texts used in the lesson.

Figure 10: Places in the school and Things I Do in School

Extract 10 illustrates the choral reading aloud conducted in groups, prior to the whole class reading as an overall check of students' reading performance.

Extract 10 Drilling and Repetition- Group Reading

01	T	Ok 1 2 3. WHAT IS THIS? Again! Again!
02	G1	WHAT IS THIS? THIS IS A LIBRARY
03		WHAT IS THAT? THAT IS THE CANTEEN
04		WHAT IS IT? IT IS A OFFICE!
05	T	'a' or 'the' erm?
06	SS	The
07	T	Next. Good.
08	G2	WHAT IS THIS? THIS IS A LIBRARY
09		WHAT IS THAT? THAT IS THE CANTEEN
10		WHAT IS IT? IT IS A OFFICE!
11	T	Good. Ok. Next 123
12	G3	WHAT IS THIS? THIS IS A LIBRARY
13		WHAT IS THAT? THAT IS THE CANTEEN
14		WHAT IS IT? IT IS A OFFICE!
15	T	Sit down. Look at page 37. Ok read after me.
16	T	THIS IS A CLASSROOM
17	SS	THIS IS A CLASSROOM
18	T	I LEARN IN THE CLASSROOM
19	SS	I LEARN IN THE CLASSROOM
20	T	Learn. This is the word (Tapping on the blackboard) I teach I taught
21		this word before learn. Spell learn
22	SS	L.E.A.R.N.
23	T	Ok next one. THIS IS A FIELD.
24	SS	THIS IS A FIELD.
25	T	I PLAY IN THE FIELD
26	SS	I PLAY IN THE FIELD
27	T	Ok the word play here. Spell play
28	SS	P.L.A.Y
29	T	THIS IS A LIBRARY
30	SS	THIS IS THE LIBRARY
31	T	I READ IN THE LIBRARY
32	SS	I READ IN THE LIBRARY

33	T	The word read. Spell read
34	SS	R.E.A.D.

EUAA-4 Places in the school 21/7/04

What can be seen in the example above is that reading aloud was conducted first of all in groups (lines 2-14) to check an overall reading performance and after that, it was done by repeating after the teacher sentence by sentence (lines 16-32) where pronunciation and spelling mistakes were corrected. The reading episodes in this lesson were conducted briefly and there was no attention to meaning as the teacher moved on rather quickly to another page of the textbook.

When Teacher EUAA modelled the reading for the students, she focused on developing their reading accuracy by correcting their pronunciation and spelling mistakes. From lines 16-34, Teacher EUAA read the sentences and the students repeated after her. Here the emphasis was given to the key words such as 'learn' (line 20), 'play' (line 27) and 'read' (line 33) and she asked them to spell the words (lines 21, 27, 33). This suggests that, her emphasis was not only placed on practising reading alone but also in getting the correct spelling and pronunciation of the words.

In another example, reading aloud, drilling and repetition were used to increase students' memorization and deep understanding as Extract 11 illustrates. In this example, students read aloud as the whole class three times (lines 221-222, 237-238, 241-242), and in groups four times (lines 225- 234). Students were asked to memorize the days by closing their eyes, "*Ok now can you close your eyes and memorize the days. Close your eyes. Close your eyes. Ok start Sunday 1 2 3*" (lines 239-240). This act of memorization is typically practised when learning to recite verses of the Quran (refer to Section 2.5).

Extract 11: Group Recitation and Memorization EUAA-2

220	T	Now we have seven days. Start with number 1. Say again.
221	SS	SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY
222		SATURDAY (students read aloud together)
223	T	Ok this group stand up (students stand up) Stand up everybody.
224		This group this group. Sofea! Ok read the days 1 2 3
225	GR	SUNDAY MONDAY uhhh (one student cries)
226	T	Again
227	GR	SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY
228		SATURDAY (students read in a group)
229	T	Next one! (the other group stands up) Read 1 2 3
230	GR	SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY
231		SATURDAY
232	T	Good. Next one. Ok 1 2 3
233	GR	SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY
234		SATURDAY
235	T	Good. Sit down. Ok all together read again. Sure read again. Look
236		at the blackboard Ok start with Sunday again 1 2 3
237	SS	SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY
238		SATURDAY
239	T	Ok now can you close your eyes and memorize the days. Close
240		your eyes. Close your eyes. Ok start Sunday 1 2 3
241	SS	SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY
242		SATURDAY (students close their eyes and read aloud)
243	T	Ok ok I'm sure you can memorize the days. Now I want to teach
244		you one song about the days lagu <song>...the song is like this
245		(teacher sings 'Old my darling Clementine' by using the days as its
246		lyrics and students join in) (EUAA-2 Days of the week)

Within the traditional practices, teachers were also found to use their own creativity in making the reading practice more varied for students such as allowing them to sit on the table while chanting aloud the rhymes as Extract 12 illustrates. In this extract, Teacher EUBZ and her students are reading "Elly Elephant" from the text book as shown in Figure 11.

Figure 11: Elly Elephant

Extract 12: Reading Aloud EUBZ-1

03	T	E IS FOR (teacher starts reciting the rhyme)
04	SS	EAR! (students shouted loudly)
05	T	We shall start now
06	SS	E IS FOR EAR E IS FOR EAR ELLY ELEPHANT HAS TWO BIG EARS
07		(students sing while clapping their hands)
08	T	Next
09	SS	L IS FOR LONG L IS FOR LONG ELLY ELEPHANT {HAS A LONG
10		NOSE}
11	T	{HAS A LONG NOSE} Ok next
12	SS	T IS FOR TAIL T IS FOR TAIL ELLY ELEPHANT HAS A TINY TAIL
13	T	Ok stand up (students stand up)
14	T	OK breathe in. Tarik nafas panjang-panjang. < take a long deep
15		breath> In and out. We're going to say the rhyme again. Are you
16		ready?
17	SS	Yes!! (together chorally)
18	T	Ok now you're going to move your body. E IS FOR EAR (teacher
19		clapping hands)
20	SS	E IS FOR EAR ELLY ELEPHANT HAS TWO BIG EARS
21		L IS FOR LONG ELLY ELEPHANT HAS A LONG NOSE
22		T IS FOR TAIL ELLY ELEPHANT HAS {A TINY TAIL}
23	T	{A TINY TAIL}. Come on where is your tiny tail? Ok now I want you to
24		sit on your (pause) desk. Take off your shoes buang kasut cepat
25		cepat cepat naik kat atas < take off your shoes quick get on your
26		desk> one two (teacher hitting the desk and students start to giggle)
27		XXX Are you ready? Class are you ready?
28	SS	Yes !!!(students answer chorally)
29	T	Now you're going to clap your hands. Hey Boy! Sshh . Ok you're going
30		to clap your hands one two (clapping hands)
31	SS	One two (students repeat after her, clapping hands)
32	T	One two (clapping hands)
33	SS	One two one two (clapping hands)
34	T	Ok. Shall we say the rhyme again? Ok one two start no no sorry one
35		two start
36	SS	E IS FOR EAR E IS FOR EAR ELLY ELEPHANT HAS TWO BIG EARS
37		L IS FOR LONG L IS FOR LONG ELLY ELEPHANT HAS A LONG NOSE
38		(students read aloud again)

EUBZ-1 Elly Elephant

What is shown in this example is that students were asked to read the rhyme aloud sentence by sentence (lines 6-12) before reading the whole text (lines 20-22, 36-37) and the teacher was checking on students' accuracy in reading. In lines 23-26, they were asked to take off their shoes and sit on the desks. Though this might be an embarrassing experience for some of them as they giggled, it seemed to be an enjoyable one too, as they were shouting excitedly while reading the rhymes. This shows the variation possible within the traditional choral repetition practices.

Apart from teacher-initiated reading aloud conducted in groups and whole-class, peer reading aloud is another type of reading aloud observed whereby a good reader was selected to read aloud for others to repeat. Extract 13 shows an example where a fellow student M, acted as the teacher and took the lead the reading session. In this particular lesson peer reading aloud was conducted four times and the students participated actively during this session.

Extract 13: Peer Reading Aloud EUBZ-2

103	T	Ok Mukhriz read number 1 (Mukhriz stands up. He reads the
104		sentence and others repeat)
105	M	BEN GOES TO SCHOOL
106	SS	BEN GOES TO SCHOOL
107	M	HE IS HAPPY
108	SS	HE IS HAPPY
109	M	HE MEETS HIS FRIENDS
110	SS	HE MEETS HIS FRIENDS
111	M	THEY HAVE FUN
112	SS	THEY HAVE FUN
113	M	THEY HAVE FUN
114	SS	THEY HAVE FUN
115	M	THEY WORK TOGETHER
116	SS	THEY WORK TOGETHER
117	M	THEY EAT TOGETHER
118	SS	THEY EAT TOGETHER
120	M	THEY PLAY TOGETHER
121	SS	THEY PLAY TOGETHER
122	M	THEY READ TOGETHER
123	SS	THEY READ TOGETHER
124	M	THE BELL RINGS
125	SS	THE BELL RINGS
126	M	THE LITTLE BEARS GO HOME
127	SS	THE LITTLE BEARS GO HOME

EUBZ- "Ben Goes to School"

In brief, within the traditional teaching, choral reading was conducted frequently as the whole class and in groups for the purpose of providing practice at reading, with the teacher and the good readers modelling the good reading. Accuracy became the main focus, thus, words were repeated frequently and pronunciation mistakes were corrected immediately. In addition, access to the textbook, and fewer sentences to read made the reading practice more manageable as they had more time for practice. Nevertheless, lack of content discussion was observed as the teachers moved on rather quickly to cover a few short texts within the same topic.

In the next section, I shall provide some examples to show the teaching of word-level work that emerged in the traditional reading practices surrounding the textbook.

5.3 Word-Level Work

The word-level-work found in this study is associated with the traditional 'bottom-up' or 'decoding' approach (Adams, 1990; Chall, 1983) where the reading process is associated with building up of the words from letters and sounds and that the teaching of reading is done as a set of discrete skills.

The data shows that the word-level work was taking up most of class time and the teaching of vocabulary, pronunciation and spelling were conducted in repetitive manner as the following examples illustrate. Word-level teaching was usually conducted after the choral reading session whereby the teacher began extracting key words and grammar points to teach.

Extract 14: Word-Level-Work: EUBZ-1

77	T	And what about the long nose? What do you call the long nose?
78	SS	Trunk! Trunk!
79	T	A^
80	SS	Trunk!
81	T	A trunk. How do you spell trunk?
82	SS	T.R.U.N.K. trunk
83	T	How do you spell elephant?
84	SS	E.L.E.N.H. A. N.T. elephant
85	T	huh huh huh huh! (disagrees with the answer) How do you spell
86		elephant?
87	SS	E.L.E.P.H.A.N.T elephant
88	T	Ok Trunk?
89	SS	T.R.U.N.K. trunk
90	T	Trunk elephant er er ears?
91	SS	E.A.R.S.
92	T	Two?
93	SS	T.W.O.
94	T	Nose?
95	SS	N.O.S.E nose
96	T	Tail?
97	SS	T.A.I.L. tail
98	T	Tiny?
99	SS	T.I.N.Y tiny

EUBZ-1 Elly Elephant

Extract 14 shows an episode where teacher EUBZ was eliciting information about the parts of an elephant such as a trunk (line 77), ears (line 90), nose (line 94), tail

(line 96) and asked them to spell the words (lines 89, 91, 94, 97, 99). She started by introducing the vocabulary (line 81, 83, 88) followed by the spelling (line 82, 84, 89) and this teaching pattern continues throughout this episode.

Similarly, Extract 15 illustrates the work-level work shown in another lesson.

Extract 15: Word-Level-Work: ERDF-5

17	T	Ok spell stand
18	SS	S.T.A.N.D.
19	T	Up?
20	SS	U.P. up
21	T	STAND UP. Ok good. Spell sit
22	SS	S.I.T. sit
23	T	Down?
24	SS	D.O.W.N. down
25	T	SIT DOWN. Read properly SIT DOWN
26	SS	SIT DOWN
27	T	SIT DOWN
28	SS	SIT DOWN
29	T	Spell go
30	SS	G.O. GO
31	T	Straight?
32	SS	S.T.R.A.I.G.H.T. STRAIGHT
33	T	GO STRAIGHT
34	SS	GO STRAIGHT
35	T	Ok spell turn
36	SS	T.U.R.N. TURN
37	T	Spell left
38	SS	L.E.F.T. LEFT
39	T	Ok read
40	SS	TURN LEFT (students read from the board)
41	T	T.U.R.N
42	T	Spell around
43	SS	A.R.O.U.N.D
44	T	TURN AROUND
45	SS	TURN AROUND
46	T	Ok read again
47	SS	TURN AROUND
48	T	Ok read again
49	SS	STAND UP SIT DOWN GO STRAIGHT TURN RIGHT
50	T	TURN RIGHT
51	SS	TURN RIGHT TURN LEFT TURN ROUND (students are not sure how to
52		read 'around')
53	T	TURN AROUND (Teacher corrects)
54	SS	TURN AROUND (students repeat)
55	T	TURN AROUND
56	SS	TURN AROUND
57	T	Say again
58	SS	TURN AROUND
59	T	RIGHT (Teacher reads)
60	SS	RIGHT (students repeat)
61	T	RIGHT

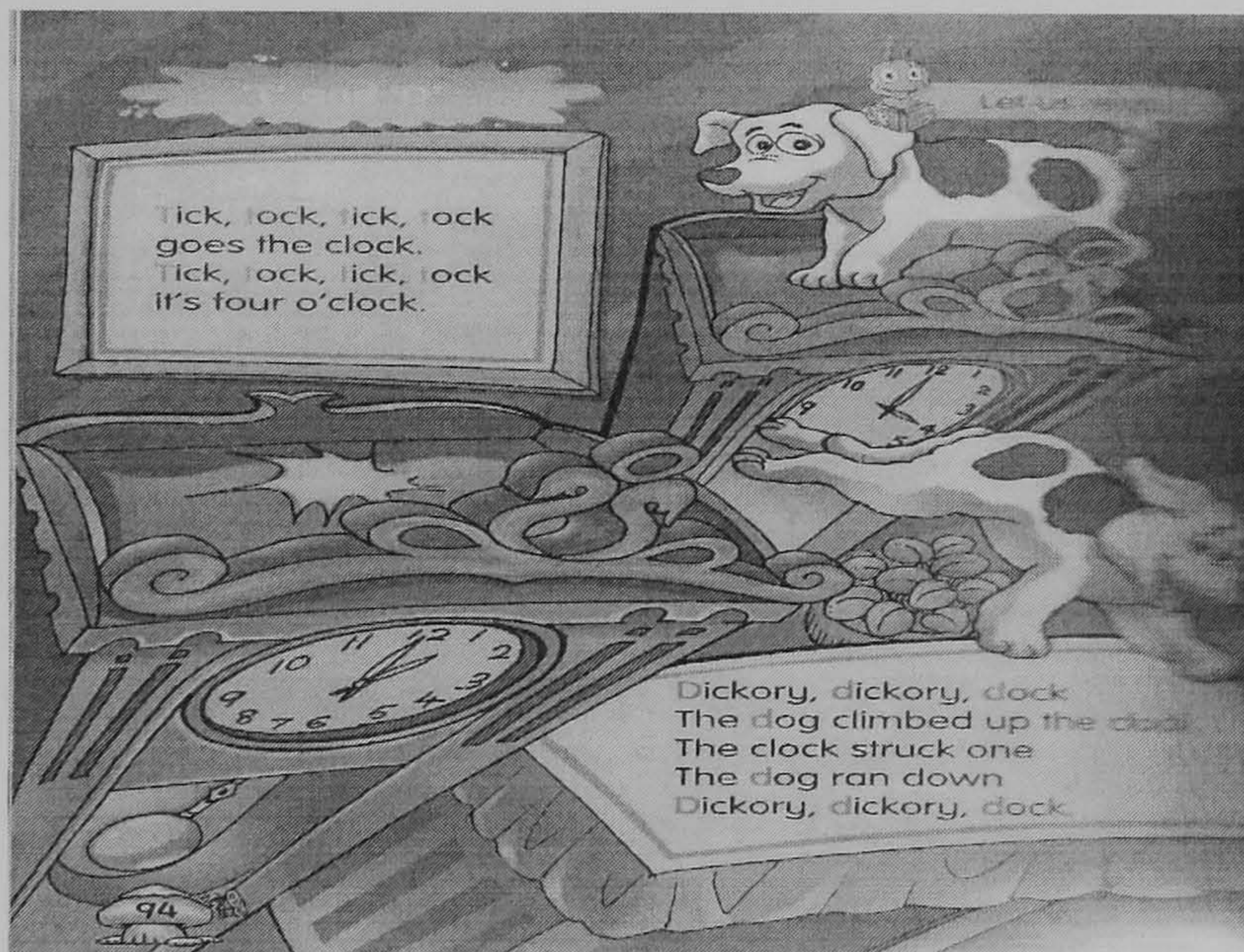
62	SS	RIGHT
63	T	RIGHT
64	SS	RIGHT

ERDF-5 'Directions'

In this example, Teacher ERDF was teaching instructions such as 'stand up', 'sit down', 'go straight', 'turn right', 'turn left', and 'turn around' which she had written on the board. However, her teaching approach was slightly different from that of the previous teacher whereby the students were asked to spell the words (lines 17, 19, 21, 23) first, then read them together (lines 21, 25) before they were asked to read the phrase again and again to get the phrases correct (lines 26-28). This repetitive practice continues throughout the episode.

Extract 16 also shows the emphasis given to pronunciation and spelling taken from a text as illustrated in Figure 12.

Figure 12: Tick Tock Tick Tock



Extract 16: Pronunciation and Spelling: EUBZ-6

52	T	Ok. Wait wait wait wait. Nanti dulu < wait a minute>. THE DOG
53		CLIMBED UP THE CLOCK XXXX (a bit uncontrolled) XXX Ok let's sing
54		together. DOG
55	SS	DOG
56	T	DOG
57	SS	DOG
58	T	CLIMBED UP
59	SS	CLIMBED UP
60	T	Please open your mouth. CLIMBED UP
61	SS	CLIMBED UP
62	T	Again.
63	SS	CLIMBED UP
64	T	CLOCK

65	SS	CLOCK CLOCK
66	T	THE DOG CLIMBED UP THE CLOCK (T sings)
67	SS	THE DOG CLIMBED UP THE CLOCK (SS sing)
68	T	Ok Again.
69	SS	THE DOG CLIMBED UP THE CLOCK (SS sing)
70	T	Again.
71	SS	THE DOG CLIMBED UP THE CLOCK (SS sing)
72	T	Ok next THE CLOCK
73	SS	{THE CLOCK STRUCK ONE (SS sing)
74	T	{ THE CLOCK STRUCK ONE
75	SS	{ ONE ONE
76	T	Ok. CLOCK
77	SS	CLOCK
78	T	STRUCK
79	SS	STRUCK
80	T	STRUCK
81	SS	STRUCK
82	T	STRUCK
83	SS	STRUCK
84	T	STRUCK
85	SS	STRUCK
86	T	's' 's' STUCK
87	SS	STRUCK
88	T	STRUCK
89	SS	STRUCK
90	T	STRUCK
91	SS	STRUCK
92	T	Ok sit down first. XX Ok sit down first. XXX (ss make noise)
93		OK. Let's say together.

EUBZ-6 Hickory Dickory Dog

In this extract, which is taken from a lesson "*Hickory Dickory Dog*", the teacher checked the students' pronunciation by making sure that they opened their mouth and said the words properly as can be seen in line 60, "*Please open your mouth. CLIMBED UP*". And in following lines she corrected the students' pronunciation of the word, "struck" which is repeated seven times (lines 79, 81, 83, 85, 87, 89, 91). Clearly, her focus was on developing words, followed by sentences and later extended for further practice.

In the following section, I will illustrate some examples of the teacher-students interaction by looking closely at the questions used, which are mostly display/closed questions, the use of prosodic cues, and chorus responses during textbook reading.

5.4 Teacher- Controlled Interaction

As discussed in Chapter 2, many studies have shown that classroom interaction was mainly dominated by the teacher (Skidmore, et al. 2003; Shoomosi, 2004; Wu, 1993) who was in complete control over the turn taking and directions of the classroom. The teacher has more and longer turns while the students are given far fewer opportunities to speak in the classroom. In relation to the questions used, they were overwhelmingly of the closed type (Arthur, 1996; Martin, 1999) with little output and simply recall (Martin, 1996, Arthur, 1996) of previously learned knowledge.

Extract 17 illustrates a typical interaction, which demonstrates teacher-control over the content of discussion.

Extract 17: Teacher-Controlled Interaction: EUAA-4

47	T	In this school we have rules to follow. Kita ada undang-undang kita
48		ada peraturan untuk ikut bukan main ikut suka aje < we have law
49		<i>we have rules to follow not to do what we want only</i> >. Di rumah < at
50		<i>home</i> > we also have rules to follow ump siapa yang tak dak < who don't
51		<i>have</i> > rules? Siapa yang tak gaduh ada undang-undang ikut suka
52		dia aje nak buat apa saja ? < who don't care about law do whatever
53		<i>they want only</i> >.... nak makan kat mana pun boleh siapa? < eat
54		<i>wherever they like who?</i> > Betul ke? < is that right?>
55	SS	Betul! <right>
56	T	Ha binatang <yes animals>. Good Shahida. Animal. Animals they don't
57		have rules tak ada undang undang ikut suka dia aje < don't have rules
58		<i>so they do whatever they like</i> > XXX isn't it ? Betul tak teacher kata? <is
59		<i>what I said correct?</i> >
60	SS	Betul! < right>
61	T	But in school at home we as human being we have rules to follow. Here
62		on page 38 there're a few examples of instruction arahan yang selalu <
63		<i>instructions that I always</i> > teacher beri < give> in the classroom. Ok
64		look at the first one. PLEASE STAND (Teacher reads the text)
65	SS	PLEASE STAND
66	T	The teacher always says this PLEASE STAND
67	SS	PLEASE STAND
68	T	As for me I also say Girls stand up. Everybody stand up. (Students
69		stand up) PLEASE STAND. Thank you very much.
70	T	PLEASE SIT (Students sit down)
71	SS	PLEASE SIT
72	T	Again PLEASE STAND (Students stand up)
73		PLEASE SIT (Students sit down)
74		PLEASE PUT UP YOUR HAND (Students raise their hands)
75		Thank you. Please put down your hand. PLEASE PUT UP YOUR HAND
76		(students follow the teacher's instruction)
77		Ok now put down your hand

78		PLEASE OPEN YOUR BOOK. Open bukak <open>
79	SS	PLEASE OPEN YOUR BOOK
80	T	Please close your book
82		PLEASE OPEN YOUR BOOK. Ok good.
83		That's right. PLEASE KEEP QUIET! PLEASE KEEP QUIET! Tolong
84		jangan < please don't make >
85	SS	Bising! <noise>

EUAA-4 Places in the school

In the extract above, the teacher was having a total control over what to talk about, and when to talk. In this episode where the topic of discussion was “Things I do in the classroom”, the teacher was telling students the importance of rules to be followed at home, and at school by comparing animals with human beings as illustrated in lines 47-60. What can be seen here is that, the questions asked (lines 50-53) were not intended for students to answer, but they were used to increase students' awareness of the points that she was making. This is further enhanced by her questions to make students agree with her statements as shown in line 54, “**Betul tak?**” < *is that correct?* > and later re-emphasized in line 58, “**Betul tak teacher kata?**” <*is what I said correct?*>. Clearly, the students' responses were merely accepting and agreeing with the teacher when they responded chorally, “**betul**” < *correct*> (lines 55 and 60). In this episode, students became passive recipients. On the one hand, they simply agreed with the teacher telling, and they followed the teacher's instructions to stand (lines 68-69, 72), to sit (lines 70, 73) and to repeat (lines 65, 67, 71, 79) and they were not provided with opportunity to comment or raise question concerning the topic under discussion. This is one example of teacher-centred classroom with the teacher telling students what to do.

In the following examples I shall illustrate the types of questions used during interaction and other typical features such as the use of prosodic cues and chorus responses that are predominant in these classrooms.

5.5 Teachers' Questions

The relevant literature suggests that teacher questions are important to measure display knowledge (Lynch, 1991) required in the classroom context and also to

promote interaction or to stimulate complex and lengthy language output (Ho, 2005) depending on the type of questions asked. Most questions in classroom contexts are used for comprehension checks (Extract 18), confirmation check or clarification requests rather than to promote lengthy interaction.

Extract 18 shows the questions used which are mainly closed/display type questions, the use of prosodic cues and chorus responses.

Extract 18: Teachers' Questions: EUBZ-1

46	T	Ok. Where can you find elephant?
47	SS	{Zoo Zoo
48	SS	{In the jungle
49	T	Ok in the jungle In the^
50	SS	Zoo (together)
51	T	Yes. In the jungle or the zoo. How many elephants can you find in
52		the zoo?
53	SS	{Many
54	SS	{Very very many
55	T	Have you been to the zoo?
56	SS	Yes
57	T	How many of you have been to the zoo? (students raise their
58		hands) Huh one two three. Ok There are many animals in
59	SS	the^{zoo}
60	T	{Zoo}
61	SS	And you can also find elephants in the^
62	T	Zoo!
63		Ok. Er er Yesterday what did you learn about elephants? An
64	SS	elephant is a big animal. Ok It has how many legs?
65	T	Four!!
66	SS	How many legs?
67	T	Four!
68	SS	Ok four legs. Ok how many eyes?
69	T	Two!
70	SS	And what about its ears?
71	T	Two!
72	SS	Two? Two?
73	T	Two big ears! Two big ears!
74	SS	Two big^
75		Ears!

EUBZ-1 Elly Elephant

In this extract, Teacher EUBZ asked some open questions (lines 46, 51, 57) to kick start the conversation. Then she asked some display questions (lines 64, 66, 68,70) for students to recall some previously learned knowledge. These questions became a check for students' understanding of what had been learned in the previous lesson. They were not required to resolve any new problems but rather to recall what had

been learned. Prosodic cues were also used to re-emphasize the answers given earlier. In lines 49, 59, 61, 74 students were required to repeat the previous answers to ensure that everybody in the classroom had acquired the same answers. As in the previous lessons discussed, all the responses were provided in chorus (lines 50, 56, 60, 62, 65, 67, 69, 71, 73, 75) to represent students' overall performances.

These closed-type display questions are typical in many lessons as a further example illustrates.

Extract 19: Teachers' Questions: EUAA-2

418	T	Ok Now. That we have five days at school. We have five days for us to go to school to learn. Ok girls look here ok what day. What
419		are the five days that we go to school?
420		
421	SS	Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday
422	T	Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday ok five and we
423		have two days to rest. FOR FUN AND REST TO HELP ME DO
424		MY BEST. What day like that? What days for us to rest? Friday
425		and^ Friday and...Saturday. Ok Seven days of school and two
426		days for rest. These five days Sunday Monday Tuesday
427		Wednesday and Thursday are called weekdays. Are
428		called...weekdays. Jadi panggil apa? <so what do we call it?>
429		Weekdays. Ok tell me what are the weekdays? Sunday^
430	SS & T	Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday
431	T	The days that you go to school the days that your father go to
432		work your mother go to work they are week days. And Friday
433		and Saturday is called weekends. Everybody say weekends
434	SS	Weekends
435	T	Weekends
436	SS	Weekends
437	T	Ok we have five days weekdays (pause) and two days weekends.
438		Look at here everybody say weekends
439	SS	Weekends
440	T	Weekends
441	SS	Weekends
442	T	Hujung minggu <weekends>
443	SS	Hujung minggu <weekends>
444	T	Hujung minggu <weekends> weekend hujung minggu hari
445		yang kita cuti. <weekends are the days that we don't work>

EUAA-2 Days of the week

Clearly, all the questions asked in this example (lines 419-420, 424, 428) were display questions which the teacher has some predetermined answers and the students had to recall the answers from previously learned knowledge. However, the striking difference is that she answered her own questions as can be seen in lines

424, 425, 427-428. Furthermore, she used prosodic cues to prompt or signal the expected answers as shown in lines 425 and 429.

In the following example, I shall illustrate the different types of teacher-students interaction particularly in relation to students' responses when some 'referential questions' are used. Extract 20 is taken from the lesson "Ben Goes to School".

Extract 20: Teachers' Questions: EUBZ-2

18	T	Ok. Are you ready?
19	SS	Yes
20	T	Oh do you like coming to school?
21	SS	Yes
22	T	Do you like coming to school?
23	SS	Yes (even louder)
24	T	Ok very good. Why? Why do you like to come to school?
25	S	To be a good boy
26	SS	To be a good boy (some students repeat after the boy's answer)
27	T	Have many friends. Do you have any other answer? Why do you like to come to school? XXX Yes?
29	S	{Make friend
30	S	{Teacher teach
31	T	Yes?
32	SS	Teacher teach
33	T	Teacher will teach you and then you'll be good and then you'll gain what?
35	S	Teacher teacher saya terlupa bawak buku < <i>I forgot to bring my book</i>
37	T	Ok that's all right. Ok today you're going to listen to a story about Ben. (teacher goes to the board and points to the title)
38		EUBZ-2 Ben Goes to school

Extract 20 illustrates an episode of the Introduction to the lesson whereby Teacher EUBZ asked some warm up questions concerning students' experiences at school. These closed questions (lines 18, 20, 22) are basically an appropriate way to activate school schema in preparation for the story. By introducing more personalised questions, students are encouraged to participate interactively in the discussion as they would feel at ease with the topic and could relate to their own personal experience of attending school. Though limited, referential questions like "Why? Why do you like to come to school?" (line 24) provided an opportunity for students to express their ideas in the language. Their responses 'to be a good boy' (lines 25-26), and 'teacher teach' (line 30) were genuine responses that could promote meaningful

interaction when extended upon. However, as shown in line 33, the teacher did not finish her question or waited for students to answer when she stopped the discussion after being interrupted by another student.

As clearly indicated in this extract, undoubtedly, referential question may provide opportunity for students to express their ideas if the opportunities were given to them but this teacher did not wait for answers or made use of students' answers.

In short, the interaction between the teacher and students in these classrooms was still very much controlled by the teachers despite the Ministry's hopes of more meaningful interaction in the context of the English Hour. Teachers had more and longer turns while students became passive recipients in a sense that they waited for cues from the teachers as to when to repeat, to read or to complete the sentence. They were rarely given opportunity to express their opinions.

The use of closed/display questions dominated the practices. These questions, which were mostly display/closed type required them to recall from previously learned knowledge and often resulted in short and restricted responses from the students. Furthermore, prosodic cues were used as signals to the expected answers. The students were invited to complete the teachers' sentences or to repeat the answers given earlier. This was done for the purpose of ensuring that everybody in the classroom got the same answers. Teachers were also found to complete their own sentences or provided the answers to their own questions.

In the following section, I shall illustrate the use of code-switching to explore its impact on interaction around textbooks.

5.6 Code Switching

As found in earlier studies (Chick, 1996; Arthur, 1996; Lin, 1996; Martin, 1996; 1999; 2003), code-switching is widely used in many ESL/EFL classrooms to

facilitate contribution and understanding (Martin, 1999), to annotate English key terms (Lin, 1996) and as collusion and face-saving strategy (Arthur, 1996). The teachers in this study, code-switched to provide the Malay gloss for the English words, to narrow the linguistic gap between them and to help them understand.

Extracts 21, 22 and 23 show the use of code-switching to provide the Malay gloss of English words or phrases.

Extract 21: Malay Gloss to Check Comprehension: EUBZ-2

72	T	THEY WORK TOGETHER
73	SS	THEY WORK TOGETHER
74	T	Not /there/. THEY WORK TOGETHER. Ha so you come to school you
75		also will meet your friends same like Ben. Ben comes to school and he
76		meets his friends and they have fun in school. They work together.
77		Apa dia work together? <what is >
78	SS	Belajar bersama-sama <learn together>
79	T	Belajar... buat kerja bersama ok. < learn...work together> You learn
80		together work together. Ok Number 4. THEY EAT TOGETHER
81	SS	THEY EAT TOGETHER
82	T	Again. THEY EAT TOGETHER

EUBZ-2 Ben Goes to school

Extract 21 shows the use of code-switching to make the English text more accessible for students. In lines 77-80, for example, the teacher used Malay to elicit the students' understanding of 'working together' when she asked, ' **Apa dia** work together?' < What is work together?> and accepted the students' answer "**Belajar bersama-sama**" <learn together> even though it was given in Malay. Here, she managed to check the students' understanding of 'working together'. Not only that, her use of Malay in the question prompted the students to answer in Malay and her willingness to accept Malay answers has granted students the opportunity to respond which would possibly not have otherwise achieved if it was in English.

Similarly, in the following example taken from an extract, "Elly Elephant" the teacher and students were discussing about a tiny tail that elephant has. Clearly, what can be seen here is the use of code switching to provide the Malay gloss of an English word.

Extract 22: Malay Gloss and Near Synonyms: EUBZ-1

124	T	Tiny What do you mean by tiny?
125	S	Kecik < small>
126	T	Small
127	S	Kecik kecil < small small>
128	T	Ha tiny is small. Small er...What other words?
EUBZ-1 Elly Elephant		

In line 126 she gave the synonym of the word 'tiny', as 'small' thus using code-switching to relate the two English words. Clearly, the use of two languages helped to explain the meaning better as the student managed to answer successfully even though it was given in Malay (lines 125-127).

Code switching that reveals gaps in students' understanding can be followed up by drilling translations:

Extract 23: Mistakes Lead to Drills: ERCY-4

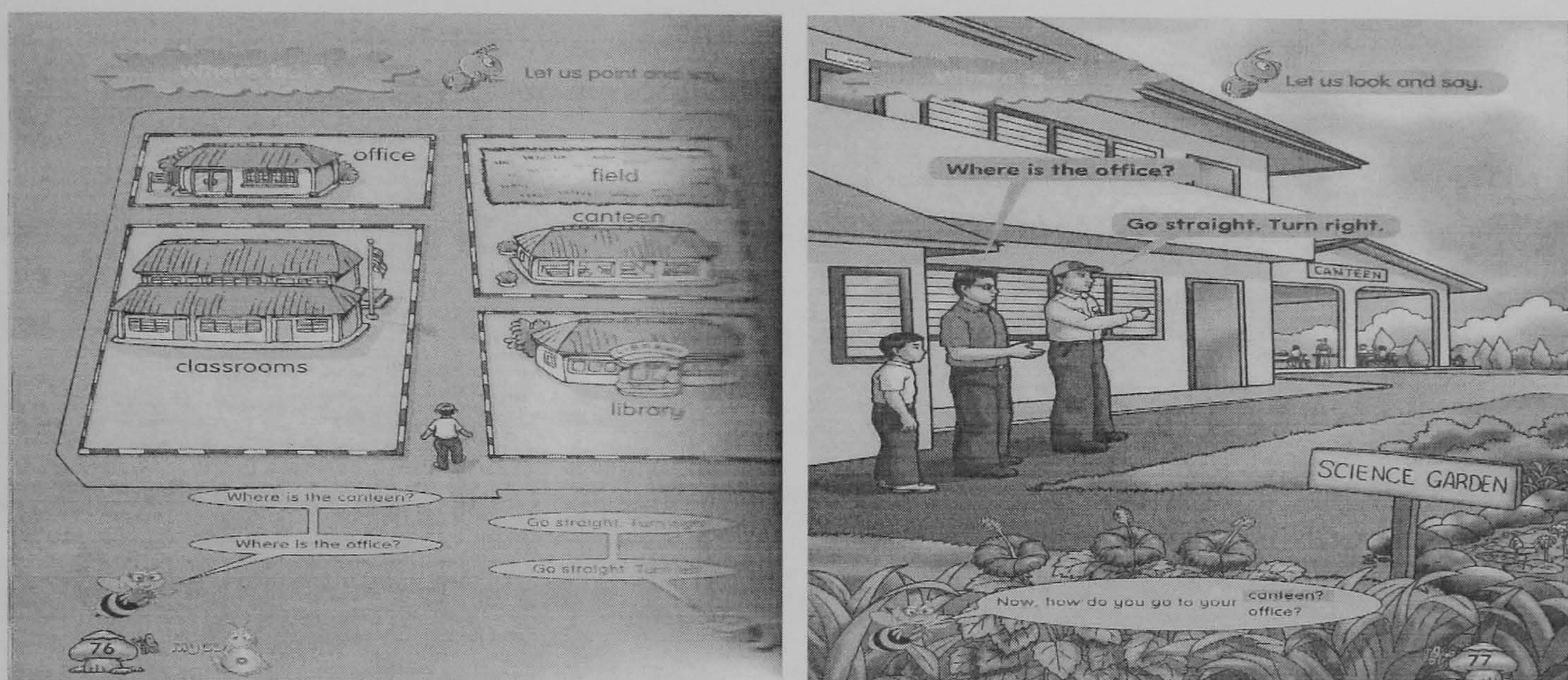
208	SS	Naik atas naik atas < go up go up>(other students are distracting him)
209		
210	T	Don't turn around turn right. Turn right! Apa dia turn right? < what is turn right?>
211		
212	SS	Patah balik! < turn back>
213	T	Kanan! Patah balik pulak dah! Right? < turn right! not turn back>
214	SS	Kanan < right>
215	T	Left?
216	SS	Kiri! < left>
217	T	Right?
218	SS	Kanan! < right>
219	T	Left?
220	SS	Kiri! < left>
221	T	Right?
222	SS	Kanan! < right>
223	T	Left?
224	SS	Kiri! < left>
225	T	Right?
226	SS	Kanan! <right>
227	T	Left?
228	SS	Kiri! < left>
ERCY-4		

Extract 23 is taken from a lesson on 'How to get there?' and the teacher was asking a student to follow her instructions in front of the classroom. In line 210, the fact that she started the question partly in Malay indicates that she expected them to provide the Malay gloss which in most cases, she allowed the students to answer in

Malay (lines 212, 214,216,218,220,222, 224,226,228). In line 212, when the students gave the wrong answer, which suggests that they were still unsure of the meaning of the words, she drilled them in both languages to make them remember (lines 214-228).

In the following examples, I shall discuss the more extensive use of code-switching as shown in Extract 24, based on the texts illustrated in Figure 13.

Figure 13: Where is?



Extract 24: Code-Switching to Preview Text: ERCY-4

132	T	Now turn to page 76
133	SS	Seventy six!!
134	T	Seventy six. Yang ni kita semua dah belajaq masa unit 1 lagi < All these we have learned since Unit 1>. Unit ..one lagiXXX ok tengok < look here> WHERE IS... ? WHERE IS THE OFFICE? Office lagi sebelah ni yang hijau hijau ni? <what about the green one on this side?>
135		
136		
137		
138		FIELD!!
138	SS	Belajaq lagi dak? <have you learned this?>
140	T	Dah!! <yes>
141	SS	Apa dia FIELD? <what is field?>
142	T	Padang!! <field>
143	SS	Ni? CLASS^ < this one? >
144	T	ROOM!!!
145	SS	Bilik darjah < classroom>
146	T	Bilik ^ < room>
147	T	Darjah <class>
148	SS	Bilik darjah ok next <classroom>
149	T	CANTEEN! CANTEEN!
150	SS	What do you do in the canteen?
151	T	Eat!!
152	SS	Eat very good. Ok now LIBRARY

153	T	Tandas!! <toilet>
154	SS	Hah library tandas!? (some students laugh) < toilet>
155	T	Toilet!!!
156	SS	Ha toilet baru tandas. < 'tandas' is toilet> LIBRARY?
157	T	Perpustakaan < library>
158	SS	Perpustakaan < library>
159	T	Perpustakaan < library> (students repeat)
160	SS	ERCY-4

In this extract, Teacher ERCY was discussing places in the school such as office, classroom, field, canteen and library based on the given map in the textbook. As indicated in this example, more Malay was used in order to bridge the linguistic gap between them. First, she discussed the pictures and invited the students to contribute to the discussion by asking her questions in both languages, “*Office. lagi sebelah ni yang hijau hijau ni?*” <what about the green one on this side?> (lines 136-137) and successfully received the correct response from the students, “*field*” (line 138). Then in the following lines, she checked their understanding of the word again by asking them to provide the Malay gloss of ‘field’, “***Apa dia field?*** <what is field?> (line 142) and managed to get the correct answer from them. A similar strategy was employed when checking their understanding of the places such as ‘classroom, library and toilet’ in the proceeding lines. Malay was used alongside English to enhance students’ understanding of the given text.

This teacher also code-switched when asking questions as shown in lines 136 and 142, and she used prosodic cues to signal the responses expected from students as to which language to be used. For example in line 144, she wanted the answer to be given in English. Similarly, in line 147, the cue was given in Malay “***Bilik^***” < room> for the expected answer in Malay, ‘***darjah***’ <class> (line 148).

In Extract 25, code-switching was used to narrow the linguistic gap between the teacher and students and also as an error prevention strategy.

Extract 25: Code-switching to help explain meanings: ERCY-4

196	T	Macam ni maksud dia < this is what it means by> go straight!
197		(Teacher demonstrates) Apa dia go straight? < what is go
198		straight ?> Macam ni < like this>(she demonstrates again)
199	Nabila	Jalan lurus < walk straight>
200	T	Ok macam ni konon kononlah Anas lah ni (she walks
201		straight) Ok go straight. Ada dak teacher pusing kiri kanan? <
202		did I turn right or left>
203	SS	Tak dak!! <No!!>
204	T	Yang tu maksud dia go^ < that's the meaning of go>
205	SS	Straight!!
206	T	Kita tak pusing mana mana. < we don't turn anywhere>Not
207		turn anywhere. Ok go straight again. Anas come. Stand here.
208		(Anas moves to the front)
209		Ok walk straight Anas (He walks straight). Ok now turn right.
210		Turn right. Jangan turn around. <don't turn around>
		ERCY-4

In this extract, Teacher ERCY was explaining the meaning of 'go straight' by demonstrating that she did not turn left or right as indicated in line 201. Her question, " **Ada dak** teacher **pusing kiri kanan?**" confirmed it. Throughout this episode, her use of code-switching somehow suggests that she wanted to help the students understand English better rather than to check their comprehension as in earlier extracts.

In summary, the use of code-switching exists in this study as evidenced in the examples provided. Teachers code-switched for different purposes: to check comprehension, to provide Malay gloss and near synonyms, to identify mistakes that could lead to drills, to preview texts and to help explain meanings as they lacked exposure to the target language outside school.

So far, I have described the traditional practices based on the observation data. In the next section, I shall present some insights and reasons for their practices obtained from the teachers' interviews.

5.7 Teachers' Perspectives on Choral Reading, Drilling, Repetition and Code-Switching

5.7.1. Teachers' Perspectives on Choral Reading

In this study, the teachers were interviewed twice: once during observation cycle 1, within the first month of observation, and again during observation cycle 2, I had observed them teaching a few lessons. In the second interview, I asked the teachers to reflect on their choral reading practices: *"Why did you read aloud and ask students to repeat after you?"*

All the teachers observed used the technique of choral reading aloud with strong emphasis on repetition and drilling whether they read stories, rhymes, or poems in the textbook, the drilling practice was still pervasive. In fact, during the interviews, all the four teachers said they approved of the effectiveness of choral reading aloud for imitation, pronunciation and confidence, and claimed that it was used as a reading strategy in their classrooms for different purposes.

Table 20 below portrays the teachers' rationales for reading aloud in their English lessons.

Table 20: The Teachers' Rationales for Reading Aloud

Rationale for Reading Aloud	Number of teachers (n = 4)
1. Imitation	4
2. Pronunciation practice	3
3. Oral practice	2
4. Confidence	2
5. Language Model	2
6. Team work and harmony	2
7. Large class	1
8. Competitive spirit	1

Imitation

The first reason given to the use of choral reading was for imitation or copying. All the four teachers involved in the study believed that choral reading aloud was a good technique for the weaker students to copy the good readers when they read. Teacher EUAA, for example, claimed that in a mixed ability classroom like hers,

during reading aloud, the weaker students would imitate or copy the good ones as they read together. She believed that some students who were shy or ashamed of their ability in English would constantly evaluate their peers' reading performance and eventually would motivate them to try after noticing that their friends who were of the same reading ability could say or read the words and sentences correctly. Additionally, reading aloud allows her to evaluate their overall performance.

Bila baca ramai-ramai kita memang ada budak yang different level jadi ada pandai dan tak pandai dalam masa yang sama jugak budak yang kurang (pandai) dia akan meniru budak yang bolehkan. Jadi among yang banyak macam tu 40 it helps the teacherlah. Lepas tu bila kita dengar dah ramai budak yang boleh dah kuasai kita punya apa kita ajar tu barulah kita bagi card tu macam tadi I bagi sorang-sorang macam test tell them I want to listen to them one by one. Lepas tu ...macam tadi ada budak takutlah tak nak lah tapi sebenarnya bila dia cuba bukannya susah sangat. Sebab English Year 1 very simple very passive er sebelum tu mungkin dia malu tapi bila dia tengok kawan dia yang sama level dengan dia katalah dia dari kumpulan yang akhir kawan dia dari kumpulan yang akhir tu boleh mestilah dia boleh sebab tu lah dia try dan memang bolehpun macam tadi tak lah teruk sangat ayat tu ' I like to eat' dia tertinggal perkataan eat saja ke...tapi kira 80% of the sentence tu dapat tak lah sampai " I like" sampai tak boleh nak sebut dengan betulkan...
< when they read aloud together we have students with different abilities some are good and some are not so good and at the same time those who are not so good will imitate/copy those who are good so when we have a large number of students like 40 it helps the teacher too. After that when we realize that many students are able to understand what we teach on that day, we give them cards one by one like what I did just now test them tell them I want to listen to them one by one. Besides like just now there were students who were scared who didn't want to do it but actually when they tried it wasn't that difficult because English Year 1 is very simple very passive er before this perhaps they were shy but when they watched their friends from the other group with the same ability were able to do it certainly they could do it too that's why they tried and definitely they can and it wasn't that bad> **(EUAA- Interview)**

Similarly, Teacher EUBZ also agreed that choral reading aloud could encourage the weaker students to try and say some English words when observing and imitating their peers' reading performance.

[helping the weaker students] I hope so **lah** because when I do it in groups so they tend..oh their friends can produce a sentence so they will try**lah** some of them>
(EUBZ- Interview 2)

Pronunciation Practice

Another reason given for the use of reading aloud was for pronunciation practice. Two out of the four English teachers said they viewed reading aloud as a good technique for teaching pronunciation and intonation of the English words.

Throughout the interviews, the teachers expressed their concern about the students' communication skills. They associated the failure to speak English with the lack of exposure, practice and inability to pronounce the words. As a result, they used choral reading aloud as a means of making them speak the language clearly by pronouncing words correctly. Teacher EUBZ for example, wanted to make her students speak well with proper pronunciation and explained that she felt frustrated with the Malay slang of some of her students when speaking in English.

Well...I usually use chorus choral because to let them speak you know in fact **macam tu pun** < even when you do like that>you find a few who cannot even get a sentence right...their pronunciation hah they will have the Malay slang they felt so difficult to call sometimes just to say a word is so difficult you know the back boys
(EUBZ- Interview)

Like Teacher EUBZ, Teacher EUAA thought that the pronunciation practice would familiarise students with both the correct pronunciation of words and the sentence structure, and eventually enabled them to detect their own mistakes.

ehh! Sebab- bila dia boleh pronounce dia biasa dengan sentence tu dengan ayat tu lain kali bila ayat tu salah saya harap dia orang akan rasa peliklah bunyi dia tu peliklah. Harap harap gitulah! <ehh because when they can pronounce they will be familiar with the sentence and the in the future when the sentence is wrong they'll be able to detect that it is wrong they'll feel like the word sounds strange. That's my hope>

(EUAA-Interview 1)

Oral Practice for All

Another reason mentioned by the English teachers with regard to the use of choral reading was to help all students to speak up and to practise saying English words. Teacher ERCY, for example, wanted her students to practise saying English words and she stated that teaching in a rural school made it even harder to make them speak. Therefore, by using choral reading, they managed to open their mouth and said some English words.

Eventually, they would learn from one another by imitating the sounds of the English words.

Satu saya fikir untuk depa bercakap kalau ramai-ramai depa bukak jugak mulut. Dia mengikut kalau yang tak reti tu dia mengikut at least somethinglah dia sebut jugak perkataan BI dalam satu hari kalau dia

ikut...kalau kita suruh dia tak mau cakap suruh sorang-sorang kalau dia tak mau cakap tak ni kan...Berkesan...

<one is I think it's for them to speak up. If they read together as the whole class at least they open their mouth. They will follow especially those who don't know they will follow. At least it's something when they finally said the English words on that day if they follow. If we ask them to speak one by one they refuse. If they don't speak it's not (pause) effective>

(ERCY-Interview 2)

EUBZ also argued that reading aloud was necessary for the quiet ones to speak up.

She expressed her frustration as she could not understand why the method was not encouraged by the Ministry of Education.

Read chorally no no **tak digalakkan** *< not encouraged>* you know in our **apa ni masa** , *<during>*lectures no...but in class you have to because **tambah kita punya Malayskan** *<on top of that the Malays you know>* ...that's why I don't know I don't know...XXXX **memang perlu memang perlu** *< it's necessary it's necessary>* because for the pronunciation for the intonation and all you have to **kalau tidakkan budak yang diam tu dia akan diam***< if not those who are quiet will remain quiet>* infact **yang bukak mulutpun tak semestinya** *< those who open their mouth do not necessarily indicate that they >* catch the words really **ye tak kan...***< right>*

(EUBZ-Interview 1-29/6/04)

Confidence

Some teachers also reported that students refused to speak English because they lack confidence due to their limited vocabulary, poor pronunciation and exposure to the language. Teacher EUAA, for example, felt that reading aloud was effective in developing students' self-confidence. She claimed that when they read aloud chorally, they started to develop competitive spirits among themselves which was good for improving their confidence. She mentioned that the louder they read, the more confident they would become.

Itulah yang berkesan jadi bila dia baca ramai-ramai tu dia boleh berlumba macam nak tonjol kan suara dia kan. Kalau sebelum ni suara dia perlahan the next time **dia jadi lebih yakin sikitkan** *< that's what makes it effective so when they read aloud together, they can compete among themselves by increasing their voice. Perhaps before this their voices were softer but next time they will be more confident>*

(EUAA- Interview 2- 28/7/2004)

Language model

Reading aloud provided good reading model to students. Many teachers felt that they had to model the language by saying the words correctly, and reading to them

because they were not exposed to English outside the classroom. Teacher ERCY for example, claimed that she had to read aloud to them because some of them could not read on their own yet. On top of that, she believed that learning was a two-way process that in order to get something in return, she had to give it to them first.

Semuanya kita kena buat dulu...macam budak Darjah 1 kita tak boleh bagi dia baca dulu kadang-kadang ada yang tak boleh baca pun jadi sebagai cikgu kita kena bantu dululah kalau kita nak sesuatu daripada depa kita kena bagi dulu kalau tidak tak dapat....pasai kita tak dak baca ejaan ejaan macam bukan jadi kita sebut sebut.

< we have to say it first...like the Year 1 students we can't let them read first sometimes there are students who can't read so as a teacher we have to help them first. If we want something from them we have to give it to them first if not we'll never get it...because we don't have to spell syllables by syllables that's why we say and say (repeat) the words> **(ERCY- Interview 2)**

Team work and harmony

Finally, the last reason mentioned for the use of reading aloud was to foster team-work and harmony among students in the classroom. Two teachers explained that the beauty of choral reading aloud was to foster team-work and harmony among themselves.

Di mana-manapun macam tu Ha kita mengajar pun ok sama-sama mesti nak sama-sama. Cikgupun nak sama-sama. Satu mungkin nak sikap harmoni tu Satu sebalik dia bukan. Suasana sama berkerjasama...Nak terap banyak bendakan *<everywhere it's like that. Yes when we teach we want to be together must be together. Teachers also want to be together. One thing is perhaps we want to foster the concept of harmony. That's the symbolic part of working together>* **(Teacher M-Interview 2)**

In brief, choral reading aloud was viewed as a good practice for weaker students to imitate the good readers, for pronunciation and oral practice, and for developing confidence and team-work.

In the following section, I shall present the teachers' insights on drilling and repetition.

5.7.2 Teachers' Perspectives on Drilling and Repetition

One of the questions asked in the interview was "Why did you ask the students to repeat?"

Table 21 shows the teachers' perspectives on using drilling and repetition.

Table 21: The teachers' reasons for drilling and repetition

Reasons for using drilling and repetition	Number of teachers (n=4)
1. Long term memory	3
2. Revision	2
3. Familiarity with English words	2
4. Imitation	1
5. Attention	1
6. Weaker students to catch up	1
7. Examination	1

Long Term Memory

The observation data revealed that the teachers placed a strong emphasis on drilling and repetition. During the second interview, the teachers were asked why drilling was found to be effective in their teaching. Three out of four teachers mentioned that drilling was associated with memorisation and that it was useful to make them remember. When asked what drilling meant, Teacher ERCY claimed that drilling was saying something repeatedly until it became engrained in the brain. She stated that drilling was a good technique because when the students said something repeatedly and continuously, they could memorize what was taught whether it was vocabulary or the sentence structure, and eventually this would help them remember for a long time.

Yang tu konsep drillinglah kita kira masukkan perkataan tu cuba masukkan masukkan mula -mula tu kita dulu sebutkan lepas tu... Masuk dalam kepala...(laughs) kita kena drillah ha memorize...supaya budak boleh ingat sampai bila-bilalah tu yang kita harapkan macam tulah... <that's what we called drilling. It's like inserting the words try to insert the words...we say it first then...go inside their heads (laughs) we have to drill yes memorize so that they can remember forever that's what we hope for>

(ERCY-Interview 2)

Similarly, Teacher EUAA claimed that she used repetition and drilling, not only to make them remember, but also to make them listen to and imitate the correct pronunciation produced by the teacher and other students.

salah satu nak bagi budak budak ni ingatlah.bagi ingat dan Satu lagi kalau kali pertama dia sebut salah hoping that next time bila kita suruh repeat repeat repeat tu kalau dia dengar orang sebelah dia kata lain, Cikgu dia sebut macam lain, dia akan sebut dengan betul. < one of the{reasons} is to make them remember and another thing is if they say it wrongly for the first time we hope that the next time when we ask them

to repeat, repeat and repeat and when they hear their friends say it differently and the teacher say it differently too they will say it correctly>

(EUAA- Interview 1 28/6/04)

In addition, Teacher ERDF said she believed that it was the nature of Year 1 students to be forgetful, so she used repetition to make them remember. Besides that, they had to be reminded frequently because they rarely used English words in their daily lives.

Tujuan utama lah kalau sayalah saya ulang saya nak budak tu ingat. Kadang-kadang kalau saya ajar saya tak ulang lah ha dia akan lupa. Budak budak ni lupa...kalau kita ingat lagi Dr Mahathirpun dia kata lebih baik kita ulang repeat banyak kali kita habaq satu satu nak bagi orang tu ingat. Tapi budak budak saya rasa ...tambahan pulak kita jarang guna perkataan tu ha kalau sekali saja dia jumpa kalau dah lama dia tak jumpa pulak dia tanya balik benda tu apa dia> *< My main purpose of repeating is to make them remember. Sometimes when I teach and I did not repeat they would easily forget. These children are forgetful..if we recalled what the Prime Minister said. He said it's better if we repeat so many times we explain one by one to make them remember. But for the children I think...besides we seldom use the words if they see the word once and when they don't see it for a long time they will ask you about the word again>*
(ERDF- Informal chat after class, 5/7/04)

Revision

Two teachers mentioned that drilling could also be used for revision. Teacher ERCY, for example, explained that drilling had to be used continuously, and that students had to be asked to repeat the key words many times so that they remember. Not only that, more exercises on the related key words had to be given for enrichment, and revisions had to be conducted often so as not to make them forget.

drilling drill and drill and drill berterusan berterusan berterusan sebut perkataan tu kadang kita ajar key words kan banyak latihan pasal key words....supaya lekat perkataan tu dalam minda dia sebut banyak banyak kali kalau nanti besok atau kita guna next week ke depa masih ingat. Dia kena drill kena drill kena drill vocab pun kena guna selalu kalau kata minggu ni pasal clothing esok kena ingatkan lusapun kena ingatkan kena repeat repeat repeat walaupun dah ajar vocab ni tapi still tambah satu ke dua vocab ke macam tu lah

< drilling drill and drill and drill continuously saying the word. Sometimes we teach key words right give plenty of exercises on the key words so that they will remain in their minds because they have said it for so many times even if we use it again the following day or the following week they can still remember them. We have to drill have to drill have to drill and vocabulary has to used often. For instance if this week we do a topic on clothing the following day we have to remind them have to repeat repeat repeat even though we have taught the vocabulary but still have to add one or two more vocabulary items>
(ERCY- Interview 2)

Clearly, these issues presented by the teachers are very much Audio Lingual Method.

Imitation and Familiarisation

Like Teacher ERCY, Teacher EUBZ also felt that drilling was a good technique for helping the weaker students to learn English by imitating the good readers reading and repeating words.

Drilling I think Year 1 you have to drill (pause) to let the weaker ones to catch up the good ones ok so they will lead the weaker ones...XXX Yes you have to do drilling for year 1 **I ingat...memang kalau kita pergi** courses **kan dia kata** < I remember really when I attended courses they said> no you cannot drill them you don't have to drill so many times it's not good or what but no I tell you **kalau** situation **macam ni** < in this kind of situation> you can't help it **tu pun dalam dok** drill **tu** < even when you drill them> there are a few of them who can't make up a sentence correctly because they are not used to the words and all **kan**
(EUBZ- Interview 1)

During the interview, she asserted that she had to use drilling as the students were generally weak in English, particularly in spelling due to the lack of familiarity and exposure to the English language.

They are weak you know it's a problem **kalau** < if> you **tengok** < see> good results for English but not spelling results they are very weak in spelling XXX exposure **lah**...when I compared to the previous years **masa kita ada** < when we had> only English **kita tak ada** < we didn't have > Math and Science in English worse you know now not bad but still not that good
(EUBZ-Interview 2-26/7/04)

Attention

In addition, Teacher EUAA added that drilling was useful to focus students' attention especially after recess when they were still in their playful moods and that they could not remember anything, so she had to ask them to say the words repeatedly in order to get them focused. She mentioned that at times she had to hit the blackboard with a long ruler and said, 'Say it again! Say again!' in order to get their attention to the lesson she was teaching.

lagi satu kadang-kadang waktu selepas rehat mind **dia masih waktu dia main tadikan kalau kita tak** repeat **dia tu tak ingatpun kadang kadang dia kata apa dia tak ingatpun kalau sebut sekali aje macam tu, sebab itulah** repeat again **hah** repeat again. **Lagi satu dia tak bagi** attention **kat cikgu. Cikgu ketuk meja** Say it again! say again!, **baru dia** pay attention!

baru dia sedar 'I'm in the class now'. <another thing is sometimes after recess their minds are still not in tuned for learning so if we don't repeat they don't remember sometimes they don't remember anything that they say if we do it once only, that's why I said repeat again! Repeat again! Another thing is they don't give attention to you so when I hit the table, 'Say it again! Say it again! Then only they pay attention and they realize that, 'I'm in the class now.'>
(EUAA- Interview 1-28/6/04)

Examination

Teacher ERCY reported that teachers in the rural schools were pressured to maintain the percentage of passes in the English language. She expressed her frustration that rural teachers had to put extra effort into their teaching as the students had limited knowledge in English. As the last resort, she used drilling in order to force them to say some English words.

Rasa kalau kalau kat sekolah luar Bandar ni tekanan paling banyak kat guru BI cikgu BI ni seolah olah macam pegang peratus sekolah kebanyakan sekolah semuanya macam tu peratus sekolah kalau markah BI rendah peratus sekolahpun rendahlah. Semua terletak kat situ jadi bebanlah beban. Kalau peratus 20% pun peratus BI peratus sekolahpun 20lah. Peratus sekolah di kira atas semua lulus (semua mata pelajaran) 5 subjek lima lima kena lulus barulah dapat peratus sekolah kalau budak tu kebanyakan dialah hak lain semua lulus satu je BI je kalau gagal termasuk gagallah. Fail satu semua fail maksudnya dia gagallah 4A1C memang luluslah 4A1D memang tak pakai. Depa punya pengetahuan English rendah sangat sebagai cikgu English dia perlu kalau tak katakanlah kalau kita bagi percentlah kalau luar Bandar kita kena bagi 100% usaha atas cikgu dan sikap murid. Kalau Bandar mungkin cikgu 50% saja. Budak dah tahu dah (Bandar) sebab tulah darjah 1 tu pakai drill tu at least dia sebut jugak perkataan BI paksaan

<I think the greatest pressure teaching in the rural school lies on the English teachers. The English teachers are sort of like holding the school percentage of passes and most of the schools are like that. If the English results are low the school percentage of passes will be low too. Everything depends on that so it becomes a burden it's a burden. If the English percentage is 20%, the school percentage is 20% because the school percentage is calculated based on all the subjects passed. We have to pass all the five subjects in order to get the school percentage. If for instance one student passed all the subjects except English, he would be considered fail in the exam. If they fail one subject they fail the exam. 4A1C is considered pass but 4A1D is useless. Their knowledge in the English language is so low, so as an English teacher we have to if not...take for instance if we give the percentage for teaching in the rural schools we have to give 100% for the teachers' effort and the students' attitude but if in the urban schools we give only 50% for the teacher's effort because students have some kind of knowledge (in English) that's why I use drilling in Year 1 at least they say the English words even through force>

(ERCY-Interview 1)

In brief, drilling and repetition were being associated with developing long-term memory, word recognition, familiarization and imitation. They were also useful for

getting attention, doing revision and preparing for examination. Next, I shall now move on to teachers' perspectives on code-switching practices in English lessons.

5.7.3 Teachers' Perspectives on Code-Switching

Code switching was also asked during the second interview, as it seemed to be a bit 'sensitive' among the English teachers. During the interview, Teacher EUBZ explained that she had to use Malay because students particularly the weaker ones would not understand if the instructions were fully given in English, as they did not have enough exposure to English outside school. However, she was aware that the use of Malay was not encouraged in English classroom.

Tak di benarkan langsung. Dia kata < Not allowed. They said> you have to use English so that the pupils will understand you. **Memanglah kita guna English tapi** < of course we use English but>XXX we have to **lah** [Math and science] teachers **macam tu jugaklah campur- campur Cikgu N semua** < are similar. They mixed the two languages Teacher N and all> sometimes we have to **kan macam** <right for instance>you **nak** <want to >explain 'add' **'tambah'** kan < add > **kalau tidak** < if not> the words they never listen some of them...**kita rasa macam tak puas** you know **orang tak boleh understandkan** < we don't feel satisfied when people don't understand>" (EUBZ- Interview 2)

Although code-switching is seen as an essential tool for teaching and learning English as a second or foreign language, teachers admitted feeling guilty when using Malay in their English classroom. Teacher EUAA for example said that she was also aware that code switching was not permitted in the classroom, but her inclination to help students understand and to participate in the learning process has triggered her to use it.

sepatutnya tak boleh. Sepatutnya tak boleh sebab language should be fully in English **tapi** we cannot help them **kan kalau tidak jadi makin tak jalankan tak jadi proses pembelajaran tu.** But make sure we correct them in English and we continue in English **janganlah cakap BM banyak nanti dia akan beri jawapan dalam BMkan"**

< by right we can't. we can't because [when teaching] language should be fully in English but we cannot help them right otherwise the learning process does not take place. But make sure we correct them in English and we continue in English. Don't talk in Malay too much because later they will answer in Malay>
(EUAA - Interview 2)

Code-switching in the Malaysian context functions to provide Malay translations of the English words, to increase participation, and to narrow the linguistic gap between the speaker and the hearer.

So far, I have discussed the findings from the observation data and the teachers' interviews. In the next section, I shall present the students' perspectives on the traditional ways of teaching reading.

5.8 Students' Perspectives on Reading Practices

7 groups of students were interviewed and immediately after were asked to role play to find out about their perceptions of literacy learning in English classrooms. The interview took about 10-15 minutes while the role play lasted between 5-10 minutes. It was found that all the eight groups of students demonstrated similar reading patterns in their role play of their classroom literacy practices. They were all involved in 'choral reading' whereby the teacher read the textbook and the students repeated.

In this section, I present students' perspectives on drilling and repetition as evidenced in their interviews and role play. During the interviews, students did not report any information with regard to drilling and repetition when asked about the literacy practices in their classrooms. However, during role play they managed to reveal the existence of drilling and repetition practices as they acted out their English lessons. They also demonstrated clearly their understandings of the teacher and learners' roles that they had to follow the teachers' instructions and particularly during reading aloud, they had to repeat after the teacher. They showed to the researcher that their classrooms were teacher-controlled with no evidence of self-expression practiced.

In this section, I provide three extracts of the role play taken from three different groups EUA-G1, EUB-G3 and EUB-G4 which exemplify their understandings of the typical reading practices of their English classrooms.

In Extract 26, like in the other examples, all the students picked up their English textbook when asked to role play their English lessons even though other reading materials such as story books, magazines and pictures were available at the setting and they also demonstrated the greetings at the beginning of their play.

Extract 26: Students' Role-play: EUA-G1

01		(The students chose the text book to read. Everybody stands up and they seem eager to do the role play)
02		
03	Sofea	Hey duduk lah dulu < sit down first >
04		(Fatin, the teacher enters the classroom and all the students stand up to greet her)
05		
06	Fatin	Good morning class
07	ALL	Good morning teacher
08	Fatin	Sit down
09	ALL	Thank you teacher
10		(Teacher flips the pages of the textbook)
11	Tina	Cikgu ambik buku mana? < which book to take teacher? > (They giggle)
12		
13	Anna	Muka surat berapa cikgu? < what page teacher? >
14	Fatin	Muka surat thirty < page thirty >
15	Anna	Tiga puluh < thirty >
15	Tina	Tiga puluh ke tiga belas? < thirty or thirteen? >
17	Fatin	Tiga puluh satu < thirty one >
18	Tina	Tiga puluh satu hah? < is it thirty one? >
19	Fatin	Thirty eh thirteen thirteen
20	Tina	Thirtylah < it's thirty >
21	Fatin	Thirteen thirteen
22	Sofea	Tiga belas < thirteen >
23	Fatin	Heh tu nineteen (raising her voice) < hey that's nineteen >
24	Sofea	Tiga belas tiga belas < thirteen thirteen > (They finally open the correct page)
25		
26	Fatin	Ok. HELLO MY NAME IS AHMAD (teacher reads from the textbook)
27		
28	ALL	HELLO MY NAME IS AHMAD
29	Fatin	WHAT IS YOUR NAME?
30	ALL	WHAT IS YOUR NAME?
31	Fatin	HELLO MY NAME IS AMIR
32	ALL	HELLO MY NAME IS AMIR
33	Fatin	WHAT IS YOUR NAME?
34	ALL	WHAT IS YOUR NAME?
35	Fatin	HELLO. I'M KUMAR
36	ALL	HELLO. I'M KUMAR
37	Fatin	I LIVE IN TAMAN PERDANA TOO
38	All	I LIVE IN TAMAN PERDANA TOO
39	Fatin	HAVE SOME CAKES

40	ALL	HAVE SOME CAKES
41	Fatin	THANK YOU SWEE LING
42	ALL	THANK YOU SWEE LING
43	Fatin	YOU ARE WELCOME
44	ALL	YOU ARE WELCOME

EUA-G1

In Extract 26, lines 01-09 show the greetings between the teacher and students and in lines 11-24, they were choosing the topic to read together and the conversation was conducted in both Malay and English. From lines 26 onwards, the students showed us how reading was practiced in their English classroom whereby the teacher took the lead by modelling the reading with the students repeating after her. As can be seen in this extract, there was no discussion of the text conducted during the reading.

Similarly, in Extract 27, EUB-G3 demonstrates a similar reading practice of the lesson "Ben Goes to School".

Extract 27: Students' Role Play: EUB-G3

Lines	Participant	Transcription
01		The students open their text books. Nicky who acts as the
02		teacher stands up while others sit and read their books.
03	Nicky	BEN GOES TO SCHOOL (she reads from the text book)
04	All	BEN GOES TO SCHOOL (other students repeat loudly after
05		her)
06	Nicky	HE IS HAPPY
07	All	HE IS HAPPY
08	Nicky	HE MEETS HIS FRIENDS
09	All	HE MEETS HIS FRIENDS
10	Nicky	THEY HAVE FUN
11	All	THEY HAVE FUN
12	Nicky	THEY WORK TOGETHER
13	All	THEY WORK TOGETHER
14	Nicky	THEY EAT TOGETHER
15	All	THEY EAT TOGETHER
16	Nicky	THEY PLAY TOGETHER
17	All	THEY PLAY TOGETHER
18	Nicky	THEY READ TOGETHER
19	All	THEY READ TOGETHER
20	Nicky	THE BELL RINGS
21	All	THE BELL RINGS
22	Nicky	THE LITTLE BEARS GO HOME
23	All	THE LITTLE BEARS GO HOME
24	Ayu	Muka surat 31 < page 31> Elly Elephant (suggests the next
25		topic to read and everybody opens the text book to that
26		particular page)
27	Wani	Ha yang ni yang ni < yes this one this one > (showing
28		excitedly to the page)

What can be seen in this example is that Nicky, the student who played the role of the teacher stood in front of her friends while reading the textbook. This informed us of the teacher's behaviour when reading aloud in the classroom. Meanwhile, lines 03-23 indicate the repetitive practice involved whereby the teacher modelled the reading and the students chanting out the sentences loudly. Clearly, there were many similarities between this role play and the classroom observation data.

Extract 28 also illustrates students' understanding of reading practices in their English classroom. In lines 04-17, they were teasing each other about the fact that they had to 'act out' a scene. However, as soon as the role play started, they became more disciplined as they followed the teacher's instructions.

Extract 28: Students' Role play: EUB-G4

01		(The group decides to read about "Elly Elephant" from the
02		textbook. Awie flips the pages and points to Mokhsin (teacher) to
03		read that one.)
04	Haziq	Bukak kat mana? < which page did you open?>
05	Afiq	Ni ha <this one> Wei ni bukak < open this page> (he opens the
06		page for Husaini) Shaza 'Elly Elephant' (Everyone helps Shaza to
07		find the page)
07	Mukhriz	Shaza 'Elly Elephant'
09		100 lebih dah ni sebelah ni < it's over 100 now turn back>
10		(They quickly help him to find the correct page)
11	Afiq	Cepatlah berlakun < Quick act out> E IS FOR EAR (Awie starts
12		reading from the text book)
13	Said	Elly elephant has a long ear (Shaza continues)
14	Afiq	Heh gilalah < hey this is crazy> (He hits Shaza on the shoulder.
15		Others laugh) Buatlah betul betul < Do it properly> E is for ear
16		ada dua kali < twice> Kena buat lain mula lain mula lain <
17		have to do it again. start again. Start again.>
18		(Mukhriz stands up and reads the text. Others repeat after him)
19	Mukhriz	E IS FOR EAR
20	ALL	E IS FOR EAR (Afiq makes a signal for Said to stop and not to go
21		over board)
22	Mukhriz	E IS FOR EAR
23	ALL	E IS FOR EAR
24	Mukhriz	ELLY ELEPHANT
25	ALL	ELLY ELEPHANT
26	Mukhriz	HAS TWO BIG EARS
27	ALL	HAS TWO BIG EARS (They all laugh)
28	Mukhriz	N IS FOR NOSE
29	ALL	N IS FOR NOSE (Afiq touches his nose)
30	Mukhriz	N IS FOR NOSE
31	ALL	N IS FOR NOSE

32	Mukhriz	ELLY ELEPHANT
33	ALL	ELLY ELEPHANT
34	Mukhriz	HAS A LONG NOSE
35	ALL	HAS A LONG NOSE (Afiq laughs and touches his nose again)
36	Mukhriz	T IS FOR TAIL
37	ALL	T IS FOR TAIL
38	Mukhriz	ELLY ELEPHANT
39	ALL	ELLY ELEPHANT
40	Mukhriz	HAS A TINY TAIL
41	ALL	HAS A TINY TAIL (They flip to the next page)

EUB-G3

In lines 18-41 for example, Mukhriz who acted as a teacher, modelled the reading for his friends. He also broke up the longer sentences such as '*Elly Elephant has two big ears*' (lines 24-27) into phrases or more manageable chunks for them. All of this reflected on the reading practices of their actual classroom whereby the teacher modelled the reading and simplified the sentences to make them more readable for students.

The role play data demonstrated students' understandings of the typical reading practices in their classrooms whereby it was tightly controlled, with the teacher modelled the reading and there was no content discussion of the text. These data also indicated that the students were aware of the teacher and learners' roles in the classroom. Clearly, it informed us that children as young as 7 years old, could internalise the teacher's expectations of them. As portrayed in lines 10-16 students also viewed reading as something serious that it had to be done properly and that they had to repeat after the teacher as indicated in lines 19-41.

In summary, there were consistencies between observation data, teachers' interviews and students' role-plays. The observation data supported the teachers' comments of their use of reading aloud, drilling and repetition in the classroom. Teacher beliefs informed their classroom practices. The teachers reported that choral reading was effective and useful based on the following reasons: to let the weaker students imitate the good readers; to provide pronunciation and oral practice, to improve confidence, to act as a language model, to develop competitive

spirit; and to foster team work and harmony. The teachers also thought that drilling and repetition was useful in their context in order to make them remember, to imitate correct pronunciation, to improve spelling and to gain their attention. One of them also mentioned that the pressure to cope with the examination led her into using drilling with her students. In addition, students managed to show their understandings of classroom reading practices in their role plays.

This study set out to examine literacy practices in the English Hour using the traditional textbooks and the board. So far, I have presented the reading practices, which are associated with the traditional interaction around the texts.

5.9 Discussion

• Interaction around the Traditional Texts and Board

The analysis of the English Hour (4.2) shows that reading events were frequent in the initial phases of the lessons. Such reading events include choral reading, drilling and repetition. All the teachers in this study supported the effectiveness of these methods. Teachers claimed that choral reading aloud was effective in their contexts based on a few assumptions: students' lacked exposure to the language, they lacked confidence, they could not pronounce properly due to their Malay slang, they were passive and forgetful, the class size was large therefore it was easy to manage, and the influence of the washback affected their teaching. Therefore, they used choral reading, drilling and repetition to help students remember, to imitate the good readers read, to practice pronunciation, to make them speak up, to boost their confidence, to model the language and finally to provide enough exposure to the English language.

With regard to the students' perspectives, the findings of this study indicated that there were strong correspondence between the students' role-play and the observation data. Students acted out similar choral reading practices as observed in their actual classrooms. These events are all consistent with those observed in the

2003 study for English classes, and as such show no clear impact of the English Hour.

- **Culturally appropriate practice**

The traditional practices such as choral reading aloud, drilling and repetition have many advantages. Reading aloud can promote enjoyment, positive attitudes towards books, motivate them to become readers, give opportunity to hear book language, and provide a model of good oral reading. Furthermore, it is particularly useful to encourage reading among shy or reluctant children as suggested by Durkins (1976), “For the child whose potential is diminished by shyness, choral reading can be especially productive because it allows him both to participate and, as it were, to hide within the group” (202). I agree with this statement that in a situation like Kedah where English is a foreign language to most of its population, one way to make the students actively involved in learning the language is through choral reading aloud. Firstly, it is a good way to imitate good reading and pronunciation produced by the teacher and other good readers in class. Secondly, it helps shy and reluctant students to read or say something in English because when they read together, they have a sense of security in themselves. For one thing, they can ‘hide within the group’ as the teacher would not be able to detect their mistakes and the other thing is it will prevent them from losing face in front of their peers when asked to read alone. Consequently, it would help to boost their confidence.

Repetition and drilling were widely accepted by the Malaysian teachers as ‘effective’ practices. They reported that the methods worked well in their contexts and they were pleased with its outcomes. Students were actively involved in practicing the language as heard in their loud voices every time they read aloud together and they performed quite well in the given tests. My findings resonate with earlier studies conducted by Tang (2002) and Marton et al. (1996) in China, Badzis (2003) in Malaysia, Baynham (1988) in Morocco, Rosowsky (2001) and Gregory (1993). Tang (ibid) argues that in Chinese culture repetition and drilling were necessary to acquire imitation.

Repetitive practise has become a means to achieve imitation. Today it is usually conducted in the form of oral drills and written exercises. Since imitation is taken to mean successful learning, oral drills are considered an important classroom activity for learners to follow and remember (Tang, 34).

Marton et al. (1996) who interviewed Chinese teacher educators stated that the teachers' concepts of learning were found to involve understanding and memorising and asserted that memorising could facilitate understanding. Similarly, in my study there was the impression that drilling and repetition may lead to memorisation and deep understanding. Memorisation or recitation by heart is highly acceptable and widely practiced in the Malay culture particularly when learning Arabic or Quran. It is believed that repetition and drilling could improve students' memorization.

It was also discovered that drilling and repetition were somehow being associated with examination. Some teachers felt that they had to use these methods to help their students pass the examination. They claimed that it was much easier and safer to use repetition and drilling for that purpose. Badzis (2003) argues that the Malaysian Educational System, which is exam-oriented and places too much emphasis on academic achievement has produced a sense of pressure for teachers as they felt accountable for the students' achievement. This is further supported by Tang (2002) who claimed that, "The washback effect of the examination therefore, prescribed the teaching and learning methods" (Tang, 2002:27). This is also the case in the Malaysian context.

Smith (1994) argues that some considerations will have to be made before deciding whether rote learning can be considered serious drawbacks such as the subject taught, the class size, the staffing resources and the cultural traditions and values. Considering his comments, cultural traditions and values play a significant role in determining the Malaysian teachers' choices of appropriate methods to be used in their teaching. Their strong beliefs in the usefulness of repetition, drilling and memorization on learning have led them to pursue the methods into their daily teaching practice not only in English, but across the curriculum in BM, Arabic and

Mathematics and Science as well. This is a widespread educational practice, not restricted to reading in a foreign language. Furthermore, unlike classrooms in the Western countries, the Malaysian classrooms were large and the teachers were not provided with any assistants or support staff to manage their classrooms. Thus, choral reading, drilling and repetition were adopted to ensure participation and to manage the classrooms.

The teaching of reading and writing could be associated with the practices outside school particularly the teaching of Quran which involve letter recognition, sound manipulation, and choral repetition. Students were taught by drilling and memorisation to achieve perfection. The classroom interaction between the teacher and students could also be attributed to the cultural practices of the Malay society in which Malay children are taught to show respect to teachers by listening to what they have to say and never question their authority. Children are encouraged to speak only when addressed by the teachers and rarely express their ideas freely without being asked. These repetitive practices and choral reading are all good practices, but the problem is that they are done all the time and no time is left for more spontaneous or creative work.

- **The Ministry's Views of Choral Reading, Drilling and Repetition**

The Ministry of Education has mentioned the importance of reading aloud for pronunciation, sound manipulation and initiation. It is stated that reading aloud is considered an acceptable practice whereby children are "to follow the words being read so that they get to know how words are pronounced" (English Language Syllabus Specifications, 2003:4) and the teachers are encouraged to model good reading so that "they imitate the sounds produced" (English Language Syllabus Specifications, 2003:5). The curriculum also specifically advised the teachers to read aloud the vowels and consonants (3.1.4), to read aloud for correct stress, intonation and sentence rhythm (3.4) and to read aloud words (3.4.1), phrases (3.4.2) and

sentences (3.4.3). Most importantly, the significance of repetition to maximize learning was stressed in the curriculum.

“Language skills, vocabulary, grammar items and the sound system must be repeated often and used constantly to maximise learning. Teachers should set a variety of tasks that will enable pupils to use the specific skills often so that they gradually develop the ability, knowledge and confidence to use the language effectively.” (English language Syllabus Specifications, 2003:3)

Drilling was not mentioned at all in the above statements. However, it was clearly emphasized in the training for teachers on the revised curriculum that teachers should not use drilling. It is stated that, “Second, you must introduce these key words again and again so that pupils will master them and never forget them. Third, you do not use drills, but you repeat these key words in different stories or reading texts” (Kurikulum Semakan BI KBSR: Kursus Orientasi Jurulatih dan Guru, 2003:18).

Although repetition where the teacher models the reading was mentioned in the curriculum, the teachers treated it as a directive from higher authorities and that it was perceived to be ‘effective’ to maximize learning. As a result, the language components became the major focus of teaching reading and a lot of time was devoted to that. Consequently, the ministry’s hopes to promote other purposes of reading such as reading habit (English Language Syllabus, 2002:6) and extensive reading (English Language Syllabus, 2002:6) in the new English Hour were neglected. Thus, the Ministry of Education has to reconsider this issue and make sure that the underlying principles were delivered clearly to the teachers to avoid misunderstandings, which will eventually have significant impact on the students’ learning.

The Ministry’s desire to improve competency in English and to develop the computer skills among Malaysian learners should be praised. Efforts to improve the infrastructure and the teaching facilities, the implementation of the English Hour, and the use of CD-ROMs in English language lessons are all positive future

developments of the country. However, do these innovations promise radical changes to our complex educational system? This question will be answered in the next two chapters whereby I shall examine two vehicles of change proposed by the Ministry Of Education: the use of Big Book and the CD-ROM with the hope to improve interaction and practices in primary ESL classrooms.

Chapter 6:

Interaction Around Big Books

6.1 Introduction

In chapter 5, I presented the traditional reading and writing practices surrounding the textbook and board. In this chapter, I shall examine the use of Big Books, one of the innovations proposed by the Ministry of Education by analysing its impact on interaction and practices.

The UK Literacy Hour, known as the English Hour in Malaysia was implemented in Malaysia (1.5.1) with the hope to promote teacher-pupil interaction through the use of stories from Big Books and CD-ROMs. Teachers are encouraged not only to interact more with students but also to value students' talk, to accept their ideas and opinions and to extend upon them. Active engagement and high quality of interaction was one of the goals stated in this new curriculum (Section 1.0). Besides providing active learning and high quality of interaction, the Ministry of Education also hoped that stories could bring about changes in students' interests in books and attitudes towards language learning.

Stories are not only motivating and fun, but the features of the stories such as the repeated patterns and the rich vocabulary with interesting rhythms and sounds are also stimulating and can create a natural support for language and literacy development (Bialystok, 2002). Many studies have provided evidence on the effect of listening to stories on children's vocabulary acquisition (Cameron, 2001; Elley, 1989; Penno, et al., 2002; Senechal et al., 1996; Hargrave and Senechal, 2000).

Relevant literature has also suggested that stories can help develop positive attitudes towards language learning when children are actively involved (Ellis and Brewster, 1991). It is also argued that stories can affect the 'knowledge schemata' and the story structure which are essential for reading comprehension

(Rosenhouse, Feitelson, Kita and Goldstein, 1997). Rosenhouse *et al.* (1997) explain that the more exposure to stories students have, the better they understand the story structure and the background information and the more they enjoy and want to read for pleasure.

This chapter focuses on the interaction and practices around Big Books. It sets out to examine some common features found in the classrooms which are quite different from the traditional methods particularly the use of pictures to increase students' interests and motivation, the content talk which have led to more and varied questions used and the fact that Big Books could promote active learning whereby students took initiative to answer questions, to make comments and to read independently. Furthermore, the teachers', the policy-makers' and the students' perspectives on the use of Big Books obtained through interviews are also presented. These perspectives provided invaluable insights to this study.

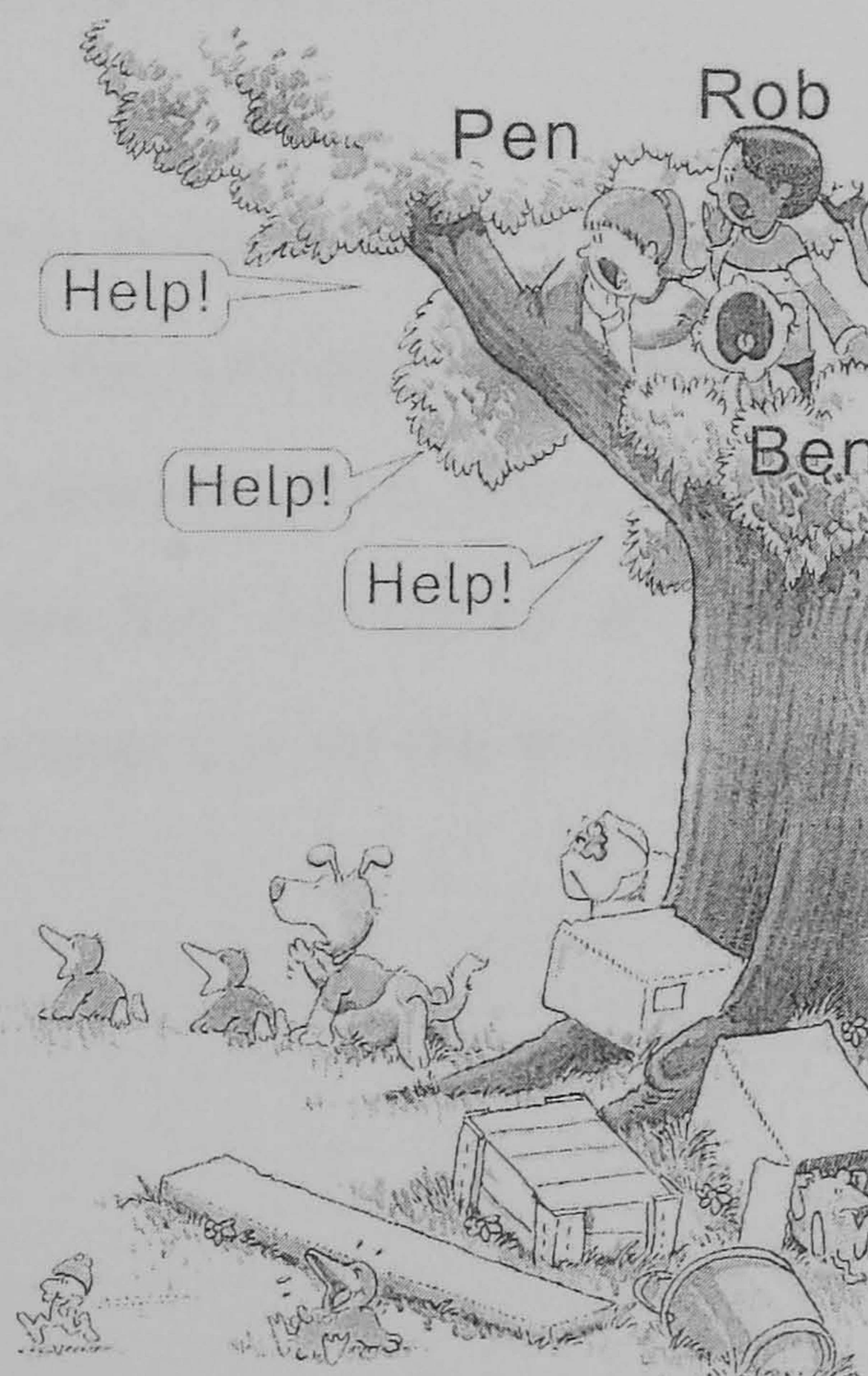
Five of the 26 lessons used Big Books and four were by the same teacher (ERDF). These four lessons were based on two stories. In ERDF-3, she introduced the story and its characters and in ERDF-4, she repeated reading it. Lessons ERDF-6 and ERDF-7 were from the same story and Teacher ERDF took two lessons to finish it, which means that ERDF-7 was the continuation of the story. In contrast, Teacher EUBZ read the story, 'The Hare and The Tortoise' only once. In this chapter, I present the role of pictures in increasing students' interests and motivation within 6.2, followed by the questions used within 6.3, the content discussion in 6.4 and the vocabulary development within 6.5. The role of Big Books in improving students' participation and providing active learning are presented in 6.6 while the teachers, perspectives are provided in 6.7. This chapter ends with a brief summary of the findings and discussion (6.8).

I shall begin my discussion with the use of pictures to increase students' interests and motivation to language learning.

6.2 The Use of Pictures to Increase Students' Interest and Motivation

Big Books were designed with beautiful pictures and large print that could be visible for children from a distance of 15 to 20 feet and they were developed so that the teacher could model the reading process by pointing to the words to enable the children to hear the reading and to follow the print (Campbell, 2002). The size of the book, the prints and the beautiful pictures are striking features of the Big Book that can stimulate students' interests and provide the natural support for language development. The observation data has shown that pictures increased students' interest and motivation when the teacher flipped the pages of the Big Book. Students became excited and began to make positive remarks regarding the pictures. This can be seen in Extract 29. It is based on the story, "The New Club Hut" from a series of stories from Big books which the students have read and thus recognise most of the characters. In this episode, the students sat on the floor at the back of the classroom, listening to the teacher reading the story as she sat on a chair holding the Big Book. Page 1 of the Big Book is illustrated in Figure 14.

Figure 14: The New Club Hut



Extract 29: Interest and Motivation: ERDF-6

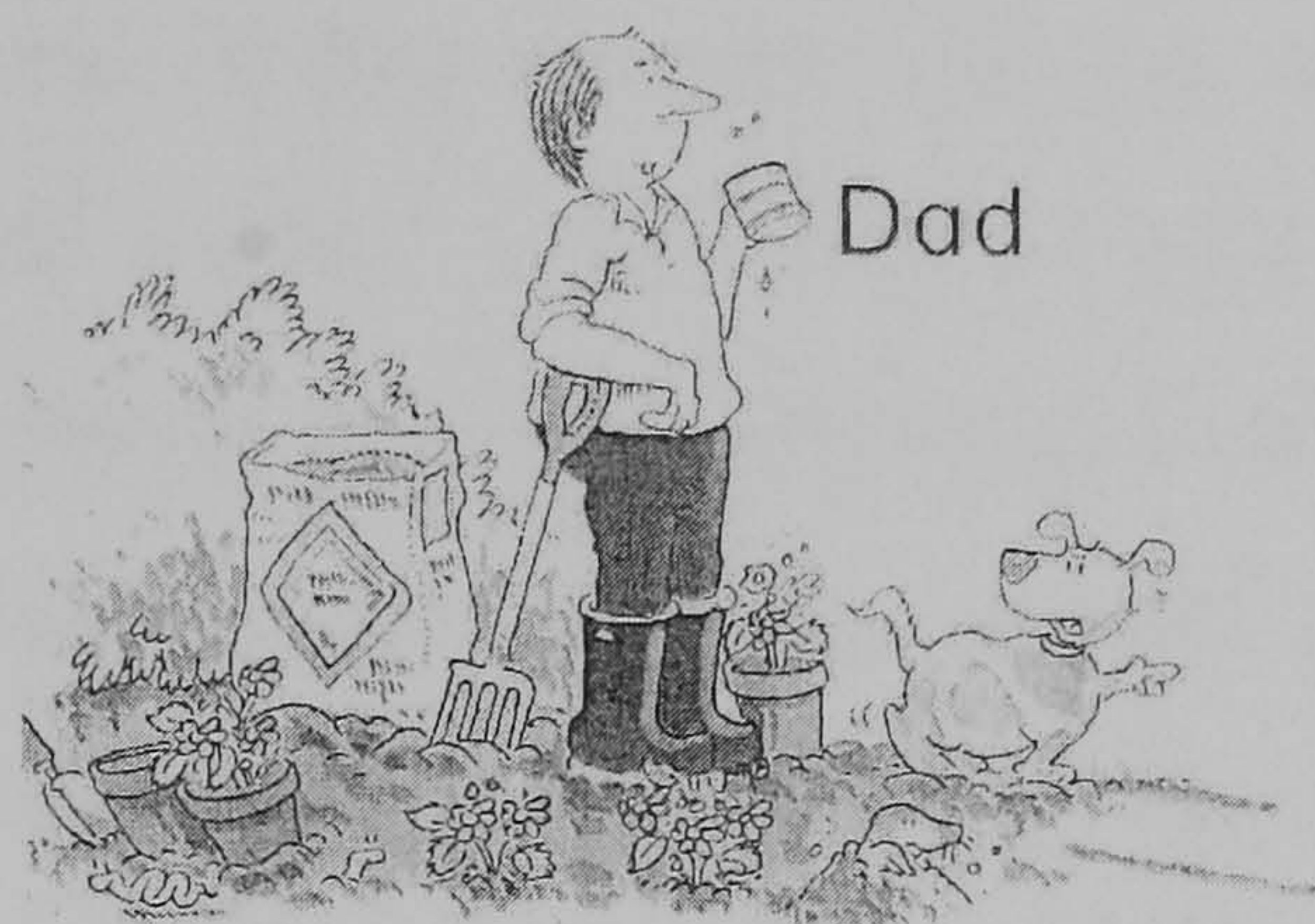
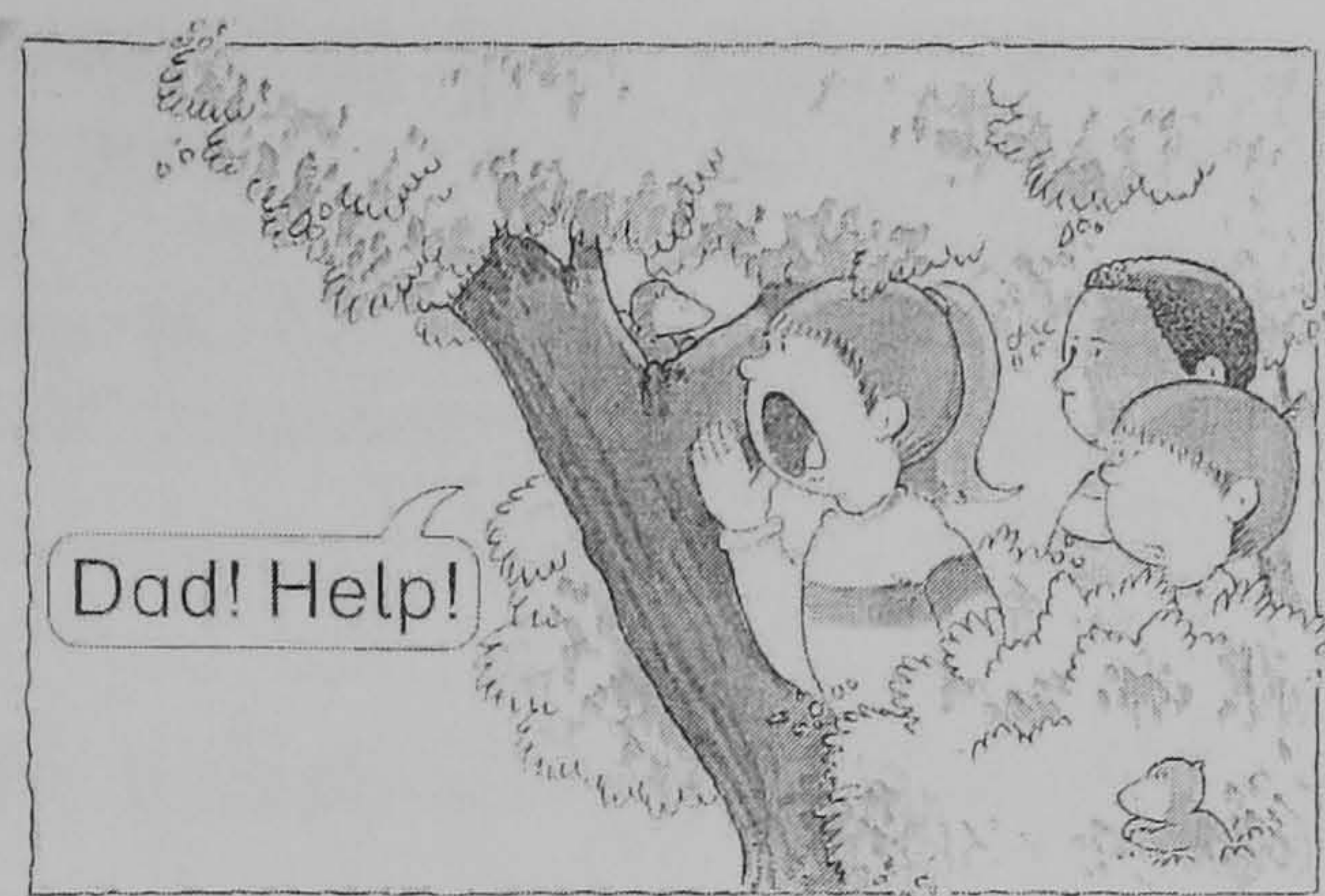
01	S	PEN!! (a student shouts as the teacher opens the first page)
02	T	Pen. So what is the name of the big brother?
03	SS	Bob!
04	T	ROB (T corrects) What is the name of the smallest brother?
05	SS	BEN!!
06	T	Ben. Ok. Look here.
07	S	Ha ni lawa nya!!! < <i>ha this is beautiful</i> >
08	T	Hmm. (T agrees)
09	SS	Tak nampak tak nampak <can't see>
10	T	Ok.
11	S	Teacher tak tinggi < not high enough> (teacher holds it higher)

ERDF-6 The new club hut

What can be seen in this extract is that, students were so full of excitement and enthusiasm that as soon as the teacher opened the Big Book, a student shouted the name of the character as shown in line 01. They also managed to name the other characters as indicated in lines 03 and 05. In the following line 07, another student commented about the attractive picture on the page, “**Ha ni lawa nya!!!** < *ha this is beautiful*>”. This student’s comment has made the other students stand up to get a better view while insisting the teacher to hold the book higher (lines 09-11). This episode shows that pictures and prints play an important role in motivating students to listen to the story.

Extract 30 also shows that students were excited as they shouted the answers and read the words written in the book when the teacher flipped the pages. This lesson is a continuation to the previous lesson where the teacher discussed the ending of the story, “The New Club Hut”. In Extract 30, Teacher ERDF was revising the beginning of the story on page 2 of the Big Book as illustrated in Figure 15.

Figure 15: The New Club Hut



Extract 30: Interest and Motivation: ERDF-7 "The New Club Hut"

01	T	Ok. Where are they now?
02	SS	HELP! HELP! HELP!(some students read the text)
03	T	On the^
04	SS	Tree!! (Students shout the answer)
05	T	On the^...on the^
06	S	Tree!!(S)
07	T	They are on the^
08	SS	Tree!!
09	T	They cannot come down. Ok. They cannot come^
10	SS	Down
11	T	So they are asking for^
12	SS	Help!!!
13	T	So they keep on shouting. HELP!
14	SS	HELP! HELP! HELP! (Students shout the word)
15	T	Ok three of them look at their mouth open so big. Ok. Can you see
16		Akmal? Can you see? They are asking for^
17	SS	HELP! HELP!
18	T	Help. Ok look at the dog. The dog also want to help them so the dog
19		run and try to get help from dad. (Teacher shows the picture)
20	SS	DAD! HELP! HELP!! (Students read as the teacher flips the page)
21	T	Ok this is Pen. Pen is on the...(Teacher shows the pictures)
22	SS	Tree!!
23	T	Pen is on the^
24	SS	Tree
25	T	Rob is^
26	SS	On the tree
27	T	Ok three of them are...on the tree. Pen ask for help. Shouting DAD!
28	SS	HELP! (students read excitedly as the teacher flips the pages)
29	T	Dad was in the garden. This one is the^ ...
30	SS	Garden!!

31	T	Dad plant many flo [^]
32	SS	Wers!!!
33	T	Flowers. Good. Dad plant many flowers. Look at the dog. The dog
34		tells dad something. Maybe the dog said dad dad come Pen, Rob and
35		Ben are on [^] ... the tree. So look at the dog. The dog is waiting the dog
36		ask for help. Ok look at this picture.
37	SS	MUM! HELP! (Students read as the teacher shows the picture)

What can be seen in this episode is that students were full of excitement as they shouted the answers most of the time and they read the words in the Big Book. In addition to the traditional drilling and repetition (e.g. lines 03-08), they also read without waiting for the teacher to ask them to read as can be seen in lines 02,20,28,37. This is different from the repetitive practices found in the traditional lesson discussed in Chapter 5. In line 02 for example, the teacher was showing a picture where all the three children were stuck on the tree and shouting for help. When she asked where they were (line 01), instead of answering the teacher's question, they shouted the words, 'HELP! HELP! HELP!' written on the page. This indicates that the large prints attracted their attention and motivated them to read the words accompanying the pictures. Similarly, in line 20, when the teacher flipped the page, they immediately read "DAD HELP!" before the teacher explained what happened in the picture. This evidence suggests that the features in the stories such as beautifully illustrated pictures have created interest and motivation for them to read independently.

In the next section, I shall illustrate some examples to show that Big Books enable more varied questions to be used, particularly the prediction questions which are vital for activating students' thinking.

6.3 Teachers' Questions

I shall now illustrate some evidence of the use of more prediction questions in Big Books as shown in Extract 31.

Prediction questions are useful for language learning as they can make students more alert and active in the learning process.

Extract 31: Prediction Question

42	T	They are asking help from the mum. Ok What happened then?
43	S	Nanti orang mai mum dengan semua < after this people came Mum and everybody>
44		
45	T	Ha MUM AND DAD RUN
46	SS	MUM AND DAD RUN

ERDF-6

Extract 31 demonstrates how Teacher ERDF managed to get the students to predict what happened in the story by asking, "Ok What happened then?" (line 42) and a student replied successfully, "**Nanti orang mai** mum **dengan semua** < after this people came Mum and all>(line 40). What can be seen in this example is that prediction questions activated students' thinking. When students are predicting, they certainly want to listen more to the story to find out what is going to happen. This will eventually sustain their interests and motivation to the story read. In addition, the fact that the student managed to answer the question correctly indicates that she has the knowledge and understanding of the story but not the linguistic knowledge to deliver the answer in English.

Extract 32 also shows the use of prediction questions to activate students' schema.

Extract 32: Prediction question: ERDF-4

118	T	Pen ask Rob. Rob! Help! Then they try to make...then they arrange all the things together again and then Rob go up the plank until he reach...at the top of the tree. Then haa Pen also join them. Ok Look at Rob. Rob help Pen and...
119		
120		
121		
122	T&SS	PEN AND ROB HELPED BEN (T helps students to read)
123	T	Ok now what happen to them? All of them at the top of the tree already. Look here please happy. Ok. What happen to the dog and the rat? They are chasing each other...
124		
125		
126	S 1	{Rat ambik tulang dog < rat took the dog's bone>
127	T	Haa the rat take the bone. This bone belongs to the dog. But the rat take it away. So the dog was very angry. The dog chase the rat around the ...
128		
129		
130	S 2	Dia marah ke? < is the dog angry?>
131	T	Ha <yes> around the tree there. Ok So what happen? They knock all the boxes again. The boxes fell down again. Ok.? What happened?
132		
133	SS	HELP!! HELP!!!HELP!!! (ss read the text)
134	T	Ha three of them they cannot come down they called for...help.

135	SS	HELP! HELP! HELP!
136	T	Ben asked for help. Rob asked for help! And Pen asked for help. So
137		they shouted HELP!
138	T & SS	HELP!! HELP!! HELP!!
139	T	cried pen and Rob.
140	T&SS	PEN AND ROB AND BEN (Teacher and students read the text).
141	T	Three of them on the top of the tree. Can you see?
142	SS	Yes.
143	S	PEN AND ROB AND BEN (one student reads from the book)
144	T	Where? Where's the rat?
145	SS	Ni!! < here!> (students pointed to the picture excitedly)
146	S	Nampak dia gelak <I can see it laughing>. Bird bird.
		' Stuck'

In this episode, the teacher was explaining that the youngest boy, 'Ben' was stuck on the tree and his brother, Rob and his sister, Pen were trying to rescue him. In line 123, she asked what happened to the children in the story, but she provided the answer to her own question. However, in line 124, when she asked them to predict what was going to happen next in the story as the dog was chasing the rat, one student managed to explain that the rat took the dog's bone as shown in line 126. This shows that prediction questions enabled students to become more involved in the discussion of the story. Furthermore, one of them initiated the question as illustrated in line 130, "**Dia marah ke?**" <Is the dog angry?>. Clearly, this example illustrates that not only this student initiated the question to the teacher she also managed to get the agreement from her (line 131). This type of student-initiation is not usually found in many traditional lessons observed. In fact, students were also found to make comments freely regarding the story as indicated in lines 145 and 146. More examples of students' participation will be discussed in Section 6.6

I shall now move on to the content discussion of the Big Book which produced more talk between the teacher and students.

6.4 Content Discussion: More Questions and More Talk

One might wonder why more questions were asked in the Big Books as opposed to the textbook. The reason is that Big Books involve content discussion with the

focus of getting students to understand the storyline rather than to develop reading accuracy. In this section, I shall provide some examples of content discussion found in the Big Book, which is quite different from the nature of talk or discussion in the traditional textbook teaching.

Extract 33 illustrates the content talk found in the Big Books.

Extract 33: Content Discussion: ERDF-6

13	T	This is our friend up in the tree. Ok. In our last story three of our
14		friends are at the top of the ^ tree They are still asking for help. They are
15		shouting HELP! {HELP! HELP!}
16	SS	{HELP! HELP! HELP!}
17	T	Three of them. Can you see? PEN (Teacher reads from the book)
18	SS	PEN!
19	T	Who is he?
20	SS	Ben
21	T	Who is he?
22	SS	Rob!!
23	T	Ok This is Pen. This is Ben and this is Rob. Can you see the birds the
24		dog and what is this?
25	SS	Rat!!
26	T	Ok the rat is hiding the box ok? Now look at the second one. (Teacher
27		flips the page)
28	S	Ha yang ni cerita lain < <i>ha this is a different story</i> >
29	T	Cannot see? Ok they are asking for help they asked DAD HELP! Pen
30		calls her dad for help. DAD HELP. And then this is^
31	SS	Dad.
32	T	Hah this is Dad. Dad is in the garden. Ok Dad is in the ^{garden}
33	SS	{Garden}
34	T	This is Pen's dad. This is also Ben's dad and Rob's dad. They all called
35		for help. DAD HELP! and then they asked for^
36	SS	DAD HELP! HELP! (students repeat)
37	T	They asked for their mum. This is their mum (shows mum's picture).
38		Their mum is at the house. Can you see? Can you see Syafik? This is
39		their mum. Their mum is at the ^ house. Mum is at the kitchen ok.
40		MUM HELP! (teacher reads)
41	SS	MUM HELP!

ERDF-6 "The New Club Hut" 8/8/04

What can be seen in Extract 33 is that the teacher introduced the characters of the story as shown from lines 17-25 and described the scenes as evidenced in lines 32-39. Characters and settings are important elements in a story since they provide students with the story structure and the background information.

Extract 34 below also illustrates the content discussion, which leads to more talk in Big Book. The story chosen in Classroom EUB was "The Hare and The Tortoise",

a popular animal story in Malaysia, which most students were familiar with as they have heard or read it in Malay. The students seemed to be very interested to listen to the story as they remained seated at their own desks.

Extract 34: Content discussion: EUBZ- 4

01	T	(Teacher writes the title on the board)
02		Ok today I'm going to tell you a story about the Hare (teacher writes on
03		the board)
04		Ok let's say together the HARE {AND THE TORTOISE}
05	SS	{AND THE TORTOISE} (students read from the board)
06	T	Ok Again.
07	SS	THE HARE AND THE TORTOISE
08	T	Ha this is the hare and this is the^ (teacher shows the picture in the
09		Big Book)
10	SS	Tortoise
11	T	The hare and the^ {tortoise}
12	SS	{tortoise}
13	T	Ok. One day (teacher holds the Big book and begins the story. Students
14		sit at their own place and listen to the story)
15	SS	One day (students repeat)
16	T	A hare met a tortoise. Ha hare berjumpa dengan ^ < met with whom?>
17	SS	Tortoise
18	T	One day a hare met a^{tortoise}
19	SS	{tortoise}
20	T	Ok then the hare made fun of the tortoise. Ha dia gelak-gelak pasai
21		apa? Dia kata <ha he laughed why did he laugh? He said> 'HA! HA!
22		Ha! YOU MOVE SO SLOWLY' (teacher sticks the dialogue card on the
23		board)
24	T	Ok. The ^ (pause) ...who said that?
25	SS	The hare
26	T	Yes. The hare. Ha the hare said 'HA! HA! Ha! YOU MOVE SO SLOWLY.
27		YOU WILL NEVER GET FAR.' (Teacher reads from the dialogue card on
28		the board) Ha dia gelak kat tortoise ni tortoise on this side. The hare is
29		here. (she divides the blackboard into two sides one for the tortoise and
30		one for the hare)
31	T	So...what does the tortoise said. Ha this is what the tortoise said
32		(Teacher sticks another dialogue card on the tortoise side) 'LET'S HAVE
33		A RACE
34	SS	LET'S HAVE A RACE
35	T	Ha what is a race?
36	SS	Lumba <race>
37	T	Ha dia nak berlumba. < he wants to have a race> LET'S HAVE A RACE
38		AND SEE WHO IS FASTER (teacher reads from the card) AND SEE
39		WHO IS FASTER

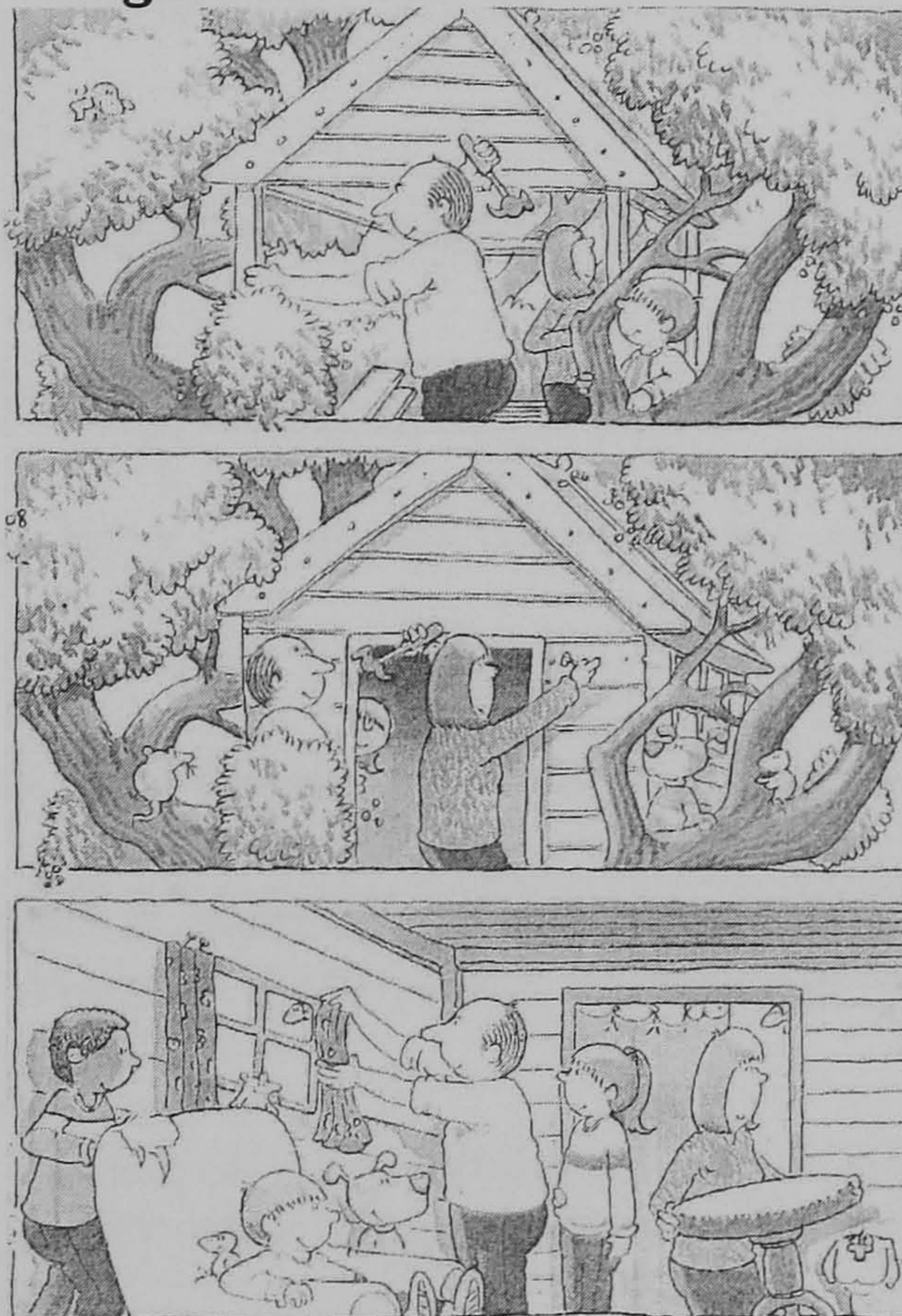
EUBZ-4 "The Hare and the Tortoise" 26/6/2004

This example describes the interaction between Teacher EUBZ and her students during the introduction to the lesson. She began the story by introducing the characters and explained the storyline through the use of illustrations in the Big book. She also invited the students to provide choral responses to her questions

through the use of prosodic cues when she introduced the “*Tortoise*’ by repeating it in four attempts. In her first attempt, she showed the picture in the Big book and said, “*Ha this is the hare and this is the*^ (line 8) and the students responded chorally, ‘*tortoise*’. In the following line, she repeated it again by asking, “*The hare and the*^ {*tortoise*}” (line 11). Clearly, the use of illustrations in the Big Book and the explanation of the storyline were for the purpose of enhancing students’ understanding of the story whereby they managed to provide answers to most of the teacher’s questions on the characters (lines 10, 12, 17, 19). Unlike the traditional textbook lessons which emphasized accuracy, content talk in the Big Book encourages more talk between the participants.

Extract 35 also shows another example of content talk used in the Big Book. The discussion was based on the picture illustrated below.

Figure 16: The New Club Hut



Extract 35: Content talk: ERDF-7

137	T	Ok this is very easy. It's a bird. Who sits on the sofa? Ben and the...
138	SS	Bird!!!
139	T	Who is this?
140	SS	Dad!!
141	T	What is dad doing?

142	SS	Window! Window!
143	T	Put the curtain
144	SS	Put the curtain
145	T	On the...
146	SS	Window!!!
147	T	Ok. What did mum do?
148	SS	Mum!!
149	T	Carry a^
150	SS	Table!!
151	T	Table. Ok. Can they play in this hut now? Can they play here? Yes or
152		no?
153	SS	Yes!!!

ERDF-7 The New Club Hut

In this episode, the teacher was explaining about one of the events in the story in which the children and their parents were decorating their tree house. The teacher talked about the pictures by showing what each character was doing. For example in line 141, she elicited information about what dad was doing and in line 147, what mum was doing. Clearly, Big Books can provide a good basis for vocabulary and language development especially for learners with limited English proficiency like these students which I shall illustrate in the following section.

6.5 Vocabulary and Language Development

Extract 36 below shows some evidence of vocabulary and language development through the use of Big Book. It is taken from the story, "The Hare and The Tortoise".

Extract 36: Vocabulary Development: EUBZ-4

66	T	Ok after a while the hare stopped to wait for the tortoise. The
67		hare stopped here under a tree (shows the picture) The hare
68		stopped under a^
69	SS	Tree!!
70	T	And waited for the tortoise. While waiting the hare fell asleep.
71		Apa jadi? < what happened?> The hare fell^
72	SS	Asleep!
73	T	The hare felt sleepy and the hare have a short nap (shows
74		picture) Tu kat tepi tu. < there by the roadside> So what
75		happened? What happened to the tortoise? The tortoise keep
76		walking and walking and walking. Ha although the tortoise
77		walks slowly but steadily. Dia berterusan perlahan lahan <
78		<i>slowly but continuously</i> > until the tortoise came here. Can you
79		see the picture here? (shows the picture)
80	SS	Yes
81	T	Ok when the tortoise passed the sleeping hare she walked so
82		slowly and steadily. By the time the hare woke up and the

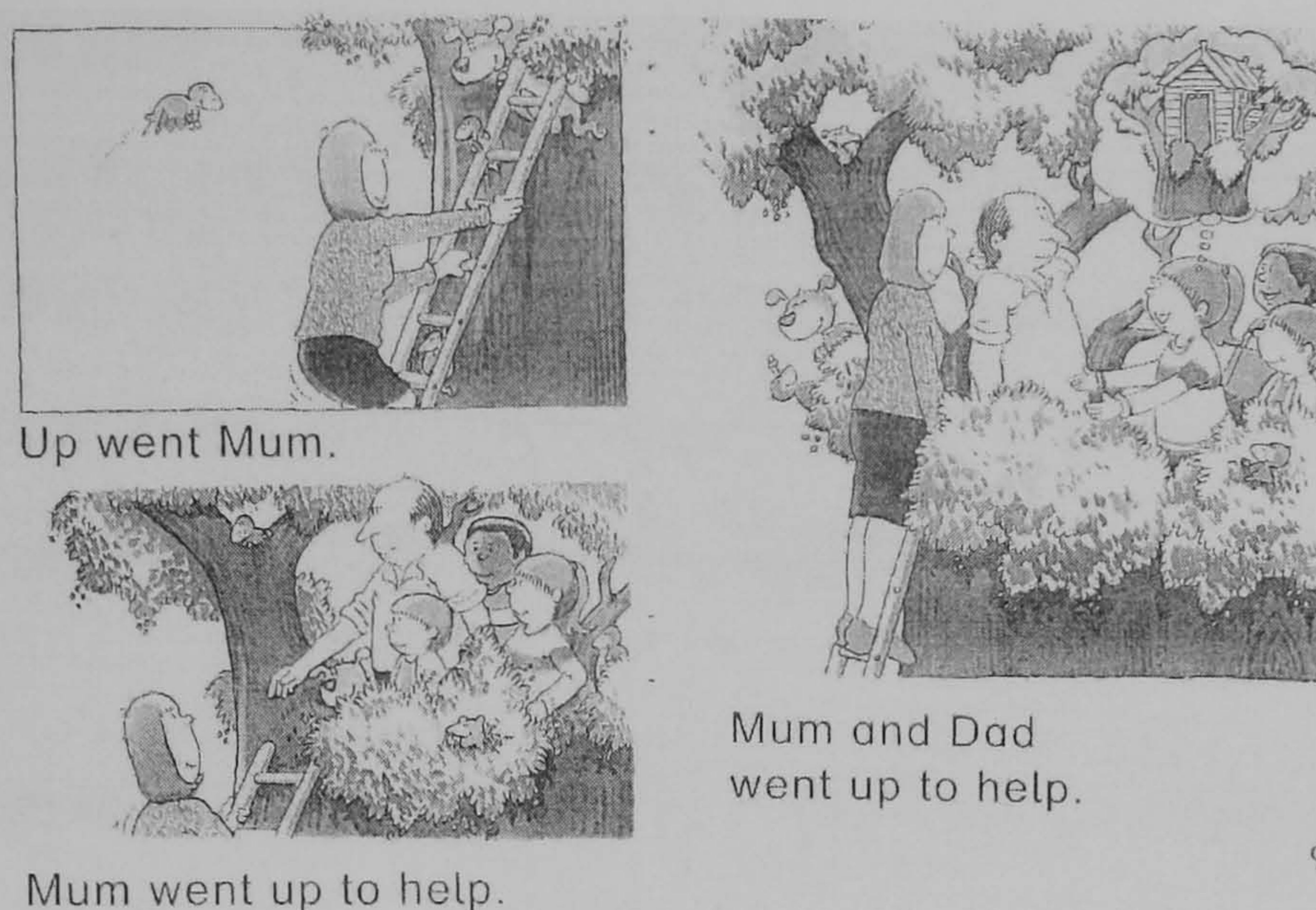
83		tortoise was near the finishing line. Tortoise dah dekat mana
84		dah? < where is the tortoise now> Dekat < near> finishing line
85		dekat penghabisan dah < near the finishing line> Who won the
86		race?
87	SS	Tortoise!!
88	T	Ha the tortoise won the race. Ok what are the two animals
89	SS	here?
90	T	Tortoise and the hare
91		Come on I want Salina to answer me. The^ Come on Stand up!
92		The^ the^
93	T	(Salina stands up but says nothing)
94		Salina what's wrong with you today? Dreaming again? Ayu the
95		hare and the^
96	AYU	Tortoise
97	T	Tortoise. Ok. What did the hare and the tortoise do? They have
98		a^
99	SS	Race
100	T	They have a^ {race}
101	SS	{race}
102	T	What happened to the hare on the way?
103	NICKY	The hare is sleep.
104	T	The hare is sleep! The hare fell asleep. All right the hare fell^
105	SS	Asleep
106	T	Ok what happened to the tortoise? The tortoise keep on^
107	SS	Walking
108	T	Keeps on^
109	SS	Walking
110	T	Yes. Keeps on walking until the^
111	SS	End
112	T	Yes until the end until the finishing line. Ok boy ok what is the
113		moral value you can get here? Slow and steady wins the race
114		Perlahan lahan pun berterusan akan^ < slowly and
115		continuously will>
116	SS	Menang!! < win>

EUBZ-4 "The Hare and the tortoise"

What can be seen in this episode is that students have acquired some language that they managed to answer the teacher's question independently even though earlier on in the discussion, the teacher provided answers to most of her questions. In lines 70-72, first of all she explained, "while waiting the hare fell asleep. **Apa jadi?**< what happened?> *The hare fell^*" and the students answered, "asleep", however, it was found that at the end of this episode when the teacher asked again, "What happened to the hare on the way?" (line 102), the students managed to answer independently as indicated in line 103, when Nicky said, "*The hare is sleep*". This shows that through Big Books, students learned to acquire new words and began to adopt some necessary phrases. This is not clearly seen in the traditional lessons where students were engaged in memorizing the text.

The following Extract 37 also illustrates some evidence of vocabulary development acquired during Big Book reading.

Figure 17: The New Club Hut



Extract 37: Vocabulary Development: ERDF-7

103	T	Ok four of them are on the tree now comes mum. Four comes
104		mum^
105	SS	Five!!
106	T	Very good. MUM WENT UP TO HELP.
107	SS	TO HELP!!(Students repeated)
108	T & SS	Ok MUM WENT UP TO HELP
109	T	Ok now. So when they reach on the tree dad asked why are you
110		here children? Why are you on the tree? So Pen explains to her
111		dad. " I want to make a ^...
112	SS	Hut
113	T	Hut. He want to make a hut on the^
114	SS	Tree
115	T	house..on the tree sorry. On the...tree. Very good. Ok He wants
116		to play with the hut. Pen said we want to play in a hut. And dad
117		ok mum and dad went up to help. Ok. What happen then? So
118		mum and dad come down....
119	SS	Mum and dad
120	T	And set the planks and this is the two stairs ok. Mum also give
121		help This one is Pen Pen brings a box full of nails. And then
122		they help. What what is this?
123	SS	Mat!!
124	T	Very good. Who holds the mat? This one?
125	SS	Rob!!!
126	T	Rob holds the mat. What colour is the mat?
127	SS	Green! Green!!!
128	T	Good. The colour of the green..ops the colour of the mat is
129		green.
130	SS	Green!!
131	T	Where is the bird?
132	S	Head. .. Atas head
133	T	On the^
134	SS	Head. On the head.

ERDF-7 The new club hut

What can be seen in this extract is that students were learning vocabulary in a meaningful context. They learned about numbers (line 105), and some vocabulary items such as 'hut' (line 112), 'tree' (line 114), 'mat' (line 123) and 'colours' (lines 127, 129) from the story. In line 130 when the teacher asked, "Where is the bird?". Students managed to answer, "head **atas** head" < *head on the head*> (line 132). This shows that they still did not have adequate vocabulary to complete the phrase in English. However, when the teacher supplied them with the word, they were able to say the whole phrase in English, "on the head" (line 133).

Next, I shall illustrate the use of Big Books to promote students' participation and active learning.

6.6 Students' Participation

Big Books were found to increase students' participation and active involvement in the lessons observed. Extract 38 shows that students participated actively by taking their own initiatives to answer the teacher's questions and to read the words written in the book independently.

Extract 38: Active Participation: ERDF

50	T	What happened to dad? Dad bring the ladder and put it at the
51		tree against the tree Mum also there. Look at the dog they are
52		also helping. Can you see Sham?
53	S	Dia naik naik naik < <i>he went up up up</i> >
54	T	Ha there you are. DAD WENT UP (Teacher refers to the picture)
55	SS	UP! UP! UP!!(students read the text)
56	T	Dad went up the ladder
57	SS	UP! UP! UP! (students read)
58	T	DAD WENT ^
59	SS	UP!!
60	T	And then? And then?
61	S	Dia naik naik naik < <i>she went up up up</i> >
62	T	And then went UP WENT MUM (teacher continues reading) UP
63		WENT^
64	SS	MUM!!! (students shout the answer)
65	T	Ok look at Mum. Mum also go up. MUM WENT UP TO HELP.
66		MUM WENT UP TO^
67	SS	HELP!!!

What can be seen in Extract 38 is that students explained what happened in the picture without being asked by the teacher. In line 53, when the teacher was

explaining that everybody helped building the tree house, one student commented about the picture that the Dad went up the ladder, "**Dia naik naik naik** < *he went up up up*>. This comment was taken up by the teacher and later read the text, "DAD WENT UP". Again, in the following lines, when the teacher asked them to predict what was to happen next (line 60), another student explained that the Mum went up the tree, "**Dia naik naik naik** < *she went up up up*> (line 61). Clearly, students became actively involved in the lesson when they were interested in the story.

In the following Extract 39, students actively participated in the discussion whereby they managed to answer most of the questions particularly, the prediction questions and provided comment about the pictures.

Extract 39: Active Participation

80	T	So where are they now? They are on the tree. They are on the^
81	SS	Tree!!
82	T	Can you count how many of them? Father mother
83	SS	Sister
84	T	And two?
85	SS	Boys!!
86	T	Two brothers. The boys are the^
87	SS	Brothers
88	T	Shah! Zaid! Look here! What happened then?
89	S	Bawak benda < <i>carried things</i> >
90	T	Ha mum and dad helped them to make a hut. They bring the
91		planks they bring the tools the mat the hammer they bring up
92		to the tree. Rob brings the mat. This one is the^
93	SS	The mat!!
94	T	Ok and then what happened? Look (points to the picture)
95	S	Wow! Hah jadi dah rumah dia (excited) < <i>the house is ready</i> >
96	T	Ha father built a hut on the tree. Can you see? Father is holding
97		a hammer ha look at mum also. Mum is also holding a hammer.
98		Now the house the hut is ready. They bring up all the furniture
99		table sofa put on the curtains at the window ok? This one is the
100		curtain. What colour is the curtain? What colour is the curtain?
101	SS	{red}
102	SS	{purple}

ERDF-6 "The New Club Hut"

What can be seen in this extract is that students managed to answer the prediction questions although they were given in Malay. In line 89, they managed to respond by saying all the characters helped by carrying objects and tools for their new tree house, "**Bawak benda** <*carried things*> and the teacher took it further by explaining

in great detail the specific objects and tools shown in the picture. In addition, students also managed to name some of the words learned in the story such as, “mat” (line 93) and colours (lines 101, 102). For EFL learners like these students, being able to name some of the English words is considered quite an achievement, considering the limited exposure to English they received in their everyday lives. In another example in line 95, a student also provided a comment about the new tree house, “Wow! **Hah jadi dah rumah dia** (excited) < *the house is ready*> in response to the teacher’s question. Another interesting feature is that even though L1 answers were given, the teacher did not translate them like in the traditional lesson as students could understand the meaning from the contextual clues. Clearly, this example indicates that students were actively involved that they were not shy to make spontaneous comments about the story.

Extract 40 also shows that students took an active part in explaining the story.

Extract 40: Active Participation (ERDF-6)

34		(Teacher shows the picture of the tree)
35	T	They want to do something on the top of the tree so Pen tells
36		Ben and Ben also follow Pen and Rob. Look at the rat. The rat
37		also follow them.
38	S	Ha ha ha lari < <i>yes yes yes they ran</i> >(students laugh)
39	T	The rat runs. Ok Ben runs. Rob and Pen also run.
40	S	Dia nak buat rumah atas tu < <i>they want to make a house on</i>
41		<i>top</i> >
42	T	Here you are. Look at Pen. They plan to make a hut not a house
43		(teacher shows the picture). They want to make a small hut on
44		the top of the tree.
45	T	PEN AND BEN (teacher reads and points to the words) This one
46		Pen and Ben
47	SS	PEN AND BEN
48	T	Ok now they are three of them. Pen and {BEN AND ROB}
49	SS	{BEN AND ROB}
50	T	They are in the store. They take the planks, they take the boxes
51		they take the rope they take the pail ok can see here what are
52		they doing now? They put the box on the top of the pail and
53		then they put a plank here (shows the picture)
54	SS	Ha!!! (students are getting excited)
55	T	They want to make a way to the top of the tree
		ERDF-3 Stuck

In line 38, students were actively involved as they described all the children running excitedly to the tree when one of the students commented, “ **ha ha ha lari**” < *yes yes yes they ran*>(lines 38) and later on, in the following line, another student

commented that they wanted to make the house on top of the tree (line 40). What can be seen here is that, these students took their own initiatives to make spontaneous comments about the story. It is worthwhile to note that students' initiation and comments are not common in the Malaysian classrooms. Therefore, it is felt that these students' comments should be encouraged as they signal participation and involvement.

In Extract 41, students were also able to make simple sentences from the words used in the story as a follow-up activity.

Extract 41: Active Participation

254	T	Who can make a sentence using 'hare' Yes
255	S	HARE
256	T	A sentence. Buat ayat < make a sentence> This^
257	S	This is a hare
258	T	Good
259	Nicky	This is a tortoise
260	T	Yes
261	S	This is a tortoise (other student repeat the answer)
262	T	Other than that? The tortoise walks^
263	Nicky	A tortoise walks slowly
264	T	Slowly
265	Nicky	A tortoise walks slowly
266	T	A tortoise walks slowly. Other than that? What other animals
267		walk slowly? I walk slowly (Students laugh) Yes I walk slowly
268	Nicky	A crocodile walks slowly
269	S	A crocodile mana walk < a crocodile doesn't walk>
270	T	Ok what else?
271	Nicky	A snail walks slowly

EUBZ-4

This episode is taken after they finished the story "The Hare and the Tortoise" and the teacher listed down the new words that they have learned from the story on the board and asked them to make oral sentences using them. What can be seen in this extract is that they managed to make the sentences as shown in lines 257, 259, 263, 268, 271. In line 269, Nicky made a sentence, "A crocodile walks slowly" but one student commented that a crocodile doesn't walk. He has got a valid reason if he thought that only animals with two legs walk. This example shows that Nicky uses her own ideas and linguistic resources available for her.

In summary, the observation data has shown that some features of the Big Book such as beautiful illustrations and large print increased students' motivation and interest in the lessons observed. Although the number of lessons observed were small, they showed some evidence that students contributed actively in the discussion by volunteering and making spontaneous comments regarding the storyline and the pictures. This is not commonly seen in the traditional method of teaching whereby everything seemed to be dictated by the teacher. Students also managed to read independently as the teacher flipped the pages. Big Books made them lively and alert in the discussion. There was more content talk which involved discussion of the characters, setting and plot in addition to word-level discussion found in much traditional teaching. Furthermore, more questions were asked particularly the prediction questions that were useful for activating schema. The data also suggests that stories could be used as a basis for vocabulary and language development within a meaningful context.

In the previous section, I have presented the observation data to illustrate the interaction surrounding Big Books. In the next section, I shall present the teachers' and the English language trainers' perspectives that provide invaluable insights into the use of Big Books in the classroom practices.

6.7 Teachers' Perspectives on the Use of Big Books

One of the questions asked during the interview was about the use of Big Book during shared reading.

Interest and Motivation

Teacher ERDF commented that students enjoyed listening to stories and that they increased their level of concentration and interest in language learning.

Sebenarnya diri saya saya suka English Hour ni kita bercerita dengan peringkat Year 1 ni memang suka bercerita. Kalau kita bercerita dengan depa macam anak anak kita kat rumah kalau kita bercerita dengan depa ternganga jugak mulut depa

< actually I really like the English Hour telling stories to them. Year 1 students really like stories. When I tell them stories like the way I read to my

children at home they listened with their mouths wide open>
(ERDF- Informal conversation)

She explained that she received overwhelming responses from her students that they asked for more stories every time she entered the classroom.

Big book tu saya baru cuba pada kelas saya macam bukan tengok oklah. Saya dah prepare bahan dia dua tiga story dah memang nak masuk tapi tak masuk lagilah mungkin saya nak masuk bulan depan saya katakan tu pun bila dah cuba bila masuk dalam kelas 'Teacher tak sambung ke cerita hari tu?' 'Teacher tak dak ke cerita lain?'. Cerita tu tak habis lagi handout yang saya beripun setengah aje cerita tu ada lagi sambungan dia tu jadi depa tanya 'Teacher tak dak ke cerita?' (laughs) kata nanti sat dulu nanti sat dulu kita sambung hari lain.

< I have just introduced Big Book to my class and it looked ok. I have prepared the materials for two - three stories and I planned to start but I didn't perhaps I would start next month that was what I thought. But when I introduced to them every time I entered the classroom they asked, "Teacher aren't you going to continue the story?", "Teacher don't you have another story?". The story I read to them was not finished and I haven't given them all the handouts, so they kept asking "Teacher don't you have stories?" (laughs). I told them, wait a minute wait we'll continue some other time>
(ERDF- Interview 1)

Teacher ERDF's comments explained that she was satisfied with the students' responses and their increasing interest in stories. Clearly, this indicates that stories have increased students' interests and motivation to learn English.

Next, I shall include the teachers' comments about Big Books such as lack of resources, lack of training on how to use the Big Books, and fear to try a new teaching approach.

Lack of Resources and Adequacy of Training

Teacher ERCY mentioned about the lack of resources such as the Big Books, the adequacy of training provided for teachers and the lack of time to use it in her classroom.

Belum lagi dok tunggu tu lah bahan tu..Big book tu sampai sekarang tak dapat dapat. Sekolah project dibekalkan sekolah ni tak dapat..depa ada kursus jugak....kalau saya nak buat Big book pun tak dan (laughs) sekarang ni pun tak ni ha dah penuh

<not yet I'm still waiting for the materials until now I haven't received the Big books. The project schools were supplied with the materials but this school did not get...they attended courses too...if I were to use Big Book I don't think I have enough time...even now my time is already full>
(ERCY- Interview 2)

Teacher ERCY reported that she did not use the Big Books because she was still waiting for them to arrive. Besides, she had not attended the training provided by the Ministry of Education.

Tight Schedule and Heavy Teaching Load

She also mentioned her constraint in using the big books due to her tight schedules and heavy teaching load.

mungkin sesuai tapi kita nak buat ni tak sempatlah tapi rasanya kalau cikgu tu mengajar Year 1 tiap-tiap tahun dia mengajar Year 1 dia boleh preparelah dah mahirkan dia tahu dah ok lepas ni kita buat shared reading yang ni ni ni..." (ERCY- Interview 1)

< perhaps it's effective but I don't have time to do all this but I think if the teacher teaches only Year 1 every year she can prepare she has mastered it she knows it already right ok after this we do shared reading this and that >

Fear to Try Some New Approaches

One of the teachers mentioned her fear to try a new teaching approach. Teacher ERDF mentioned that at the beginning she was anxious to try out the Big Book as she had never tried it with her students before. She was afraid that she could not manage the classroom and students were not interested in the story. Besides, she never read them stories other than the textbook.

Saya rasa macamana budak nak buat Big Book ni pasal saya tak pernah cuba dengan dia cuma saya sedia bahan beberapa buku dah photostate buh colour kat diakanXXX takut tak boleh kawal nanti kita tunjuk buku dia berjalan ke lain kan manalah tahu takut dia tak interested dengan bukukan pasal tak pernah tunjuk kat dia. Kita pun tak pernah ambik buku cerita baca kat dia selain daripada kita guna textbook. Textbook dia ada sorang satu ni dia nak bagi tumpuan kat kita ni

<I was wondering how the students would react to the Big Book because I never tried it with my students before except that I have prepared the materials from a few books, photocopied and coloured them XXX I was afraid that I could not control the classroom when I showed them the book and they walked away or perhaps they would not be interested in the story because I never showed it to them. In fact, I never took any storybook and read to them. I never used anything except the textbook. Each of them had a textbook but for this one they had to give their full attention to me >

(Teacher ERDF-Interview 1)

In summary, the teachers were positive with the implementation of the English Hour particularly the use of stories during shared reading. Some teachers mentioned that stories could increase students' motivation to language teaching. However, they also mentioned their worries about the lack of resources, adequacy

of training provided for the teachers, the tight schedules and heavy teaching load. Although the number of lessons observed was small, they reflected the state of affairs at the time I undertook the study.

6.8 Discussion

The use of stories in the Big Books observed in the 5 lessons was found to be a successful innovation in the context of the English Hour. Pictures in the Big Books were appealing, and the language was easy and readable. These features have increased students' interests and motivation to the stories read to them. Better interaction pattern was also observed between the teachers and students during the Big Book reading as they spent more time talking about the content and characters of the stories as I recorded in my field notes.

“there were meaningful interactions between the teacher and students. They were interested in the story as they talked about it among themselves in Malay. Some could read the words as they appeared on the page and some even asked the teacher to continue with the story when it ended.” (Fieldnotes 8/8/04).

At the time of my study, however, the English Hour was still new and there were many concerns about the process of change (see 5.2.3.2). In fact, only 5 of the 26 lessons were observed using Big Books during the three months observation period in this study and they came from two of the four teachers involved (see 5.2.2). Therefore, I cannot claim that the results are representative of the other teachers.

For these two teachers, the Ministry of Education's hopes to provide more active engagement and to increase students' interests and motivation to stories were achieved. The data revealed that students were actively involved whereby they contributed to the discussion, made comments regarding the pictures and shouted the answers when the teachers flipped the pages of the Big Books. These were all positive developments in students' learning. However, the Ministry's aim to produce high quality interaction was not achieved. Even though more questions were found in the Big Book lessons as opposed to the traditional textbook lessons, they were mainly recall-type which produced short and restricted answers from students.

These questions were mainly used to check students' comprehension of the story but not to develop their thinking skills. Even though Big Book lessons showed some discussion of the content, characters, and settings of the story, which are all essential for comprehension, they were not extended to develop productive speaking or writing skills.

In relation to writing practices around Big Book lessons, there was very little change in terms of practices from the traditional teaching discussed in Chapter 5 whereby students were also involved in copying, drawing and colouring pictures.

In the next chapter, I shall examine another innovation, which is the use of CD-ROM to facilitate English language learning.

Chapter 7:

Interaction around the CD-ROM

7.1 Introduction

In Chapter 6, I analysed one of the vehicles of change in the Malaysian Education System, which is the introduction of Big Books to implement the English Hour. Even though the Big Book lessons observed were few, they were found to increase students' interests and motivation, produced more talk and increased teacher questions. In this chapter, I shall examine another type of innovation proposed by the Ministry of Education which is the use of CD-ROM. I was interested to find out the extent to which technology could bring about changes in terms of interaction and practices.

In this chapter, I shall first describe the English CD-ROMs (7.2), then I analyse some common features of interaction surrounding CD-ROMs (7.3) which constitute teacher controlled interaction, short discussion of the text and phonics drilling practices. I shall also present the teachers' and students' perspectives on the related issues within 7.4 and 7.5 respectively. This is followed by a brief discussion (7.6) and conclusion (7.7).

7.2 The English CD-ROMs

For Year 1 English, eight CD-ROMs were supplied by the MOE. These consist of 36 units in total, which centre around the three major themes: World of Family and Friends, World of Knowledge, and World of Stories. Each unit is organised to include an animated story as the main content, new words and letters. Each of these sections is followed by interactive activities and exercises which emphasize developing listening, speaking and reading skills. In addition, lesson plans complete with objectives, learning outcomes, suggested activities, resources, time allotment and remarks are also provided in the CD-ROM. Most importantly, the question and answer sets for stories in each unit are also available for the teachers

to access. These questions are simple, requiring Yes/No or one-word answers and/or naming people and animals in the story. Finally, worksheets such as tracing, colouring and matching words to pictures are also available as handouts.

As stated in the CD-ROM for teachers, the lesson plans are divided into five sections: introduction, content-watch and listen, listen and speak, speak and record, and finally conclusion and exercise. During the introduction, general greetings are played as warm up. Then, students watch and listen to the animated story and at the end of it, the teacher can discuss the gist by asking questions to gauge the students' understanding. Most of the questions asked require Yes/No replies and naming people and animals of the story. At this stage, students are also encouraged to talk about themselves in relation to the story. Next, during listen and speak, students listen to the sentences and repeat them. The meaning of the sentences should be clarified whenever necessary. Teachers also can get individual students to record their voices during speak and record in order to develop their confidence. Teachers can playback the recordings so that students can listen to their own voices. Finally, during the conclusion session, handouts, which reinforce the sentences learned, are given and the teacher is to sum up by going through the content and the sentences again (English Language Year 1 Teaching Courseware, 2003)

7.3 The Common Features of CD-ROM Interaction

The interaction around the CD-ROM in these lessons was found to be very much teacher-controlled with the teachers getting more turns than the CD-ROM or the students. The teachers were observed directing students as to when and what to read or repeat.

Table 22 below shows the number of turns each participant received during the CD-ROM lesson.

Table 22: Number of Turns per Participant per Lesson

Story	'Nazri and His Mangoes' ERDF-1	'Ahmad Cried Wolf' ERDF-2	'Mother's Present' ERCY-1	The Mousedeer and The Crocodile EUBZ-3
CD	41	29	118	49
Teacher	118	40	164	42
Students	117	27	146	64

As shown in the table, 4 of the 26 (15.4%) lessons observed were computer-based teaching. In terms of the number of turns, the teachers were found to have more and longer turns with an average of 91 turns in comparison with the students' turns of 88.5 and the CD-ROM's turns of 59.3. This suggests that the teachers had more control over the lessons. This table also shows that in ERDF-1, both the teacher and students got about equally the same amount of turns. This was because the students repeated after the teacher and not the CD-ROM (Extract 45 discussed below). This means that while the CD-ROM was reading the story, the teacher explained every single word that the CD-ROM read to the students. In contrast, in EUBZ-3, the students had more turns than the CD-ROM or the teacher (Extract 43 discussed below). Here, the teacher expected the students to repeat what the CD-ROM read *and* what she read. This suggests that the teachers approached the computers in different ways.

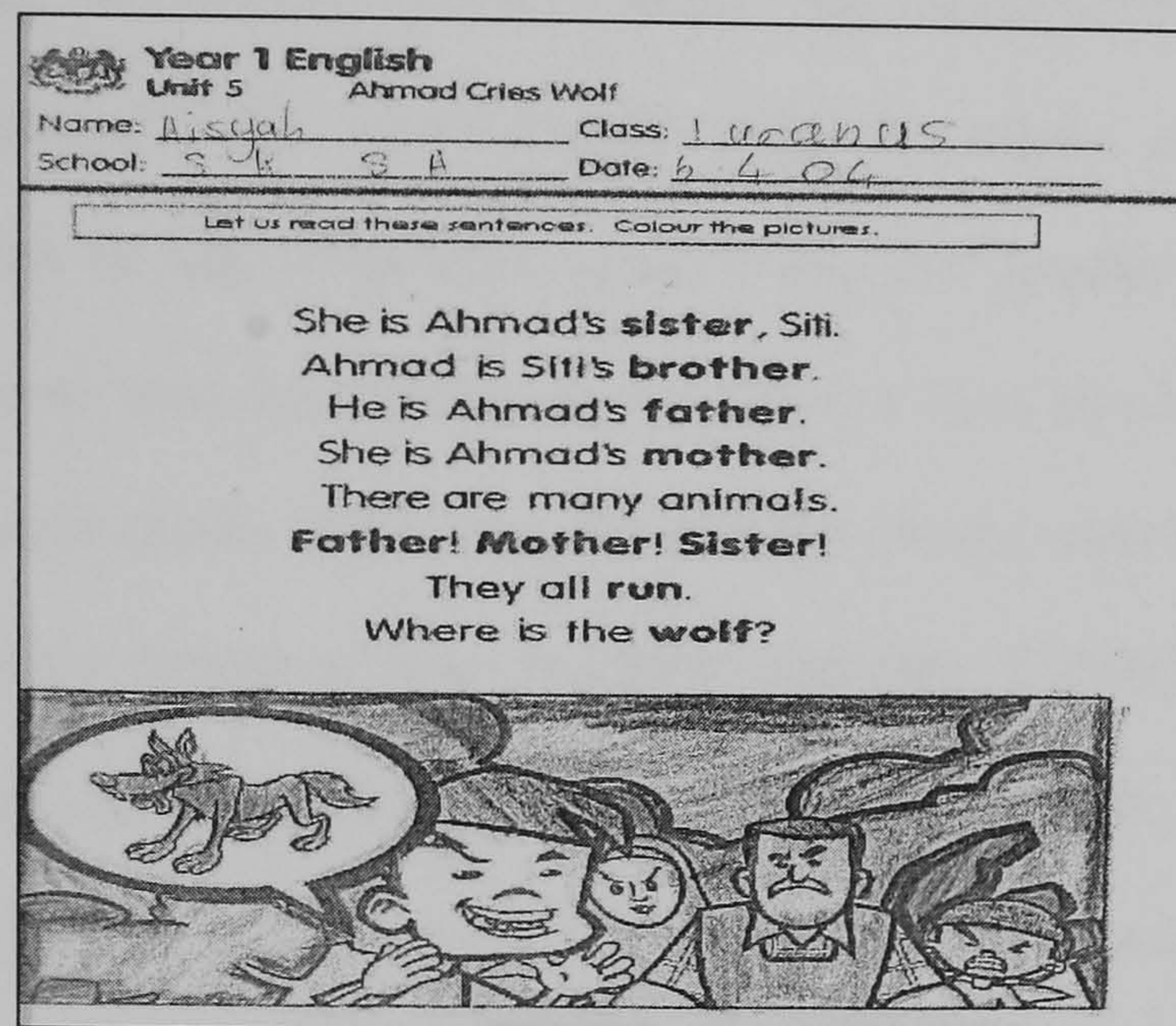
In the next section, I shall illustrate the different patterns of interaction in these lessons to provide a clearer picture of what goes on in the natural setting of the classroom. As mentioned earlier, there was only one computer used for the whole-class teaching and the teacher was in complete control over it by choosing the programs, selecting the exercises or the practices needed as well as deciding what and when to read.

7.3.1 Teacher-Controlled Interaction

This extract is taken from the story, "Ahmad Cried Wolf", a simplified version of "The Boy Who Cried Wolf". The teacher used a lap top computer and put it on the

table facing the students who sat in a semi-circle on the floor, at the back of the classroom. The teacher then sat on the chair and explained the story as they watched it from her lap top computer. Figure 18 is a page of the story from the CD-ROM which is given out as a worksheet for students to colour and paste into their exercise books.

Figure 18: 'Ahmad Cried Wolf'



Extract 42: Teacher- Control: ERDF-2

17	T	Ok. 'Z' 'Z' Today we're going to hear a story about "Ahmad cries wolf".
18		Ok. Hear the story first. Look at the picture carefully. Look
19		at the picture and listen to the story. What happened? Ok. Listen.
20	CD	SHE IS AHMAD'S SISTER SITI
21	T	Ok This is Siti. This is Ahmad. They are brother and sister.
22		(points to pictures)
23	CD	HE IS AHMAD'S FATHER
24	T	Ok this is their father.
25	CD	SHE IS AHMAD'S MOTHER
26	T	This is mother.
27	CD	THIS IS A FARM
28	T	Ok This one we call farm. Ok. Daniel!! So many animals Ok what
29		animals are there? What it is?
30		This one is duck, goat, chickens duck and goats. (Teacher
31		explains the pictures shown in the story)
32	CD	AHMAD IS VERY LAZY
33	T	Ha...very lazy Ahmad is very lazy. Ha look at Ahmad. He shouts
34		FATHER! MOTHER! SISTER! WOLF! What animal is the wolf?
35		Look at father. Look at mother. Mother runs, ha. Look at sister.
36		Sister also runs. Ooo run. WHERE IS THE WOLF?
37	CD	HA! HA! HA! THERE IS NO WOLF!
38	T	Is there any wolf? No! No wolf at all. Look at the mother very
39		angry with Ahmad. They are very angry because there is no...
40		wolf. All of them are very angry. Ok what happened to the next
41		stage? Next stage...ha he wants to play a trick again.
42	CD	FATHER! MOTHER! SISTER! SHOUTS AHMAD. THERE IS NO
43		WOLF!
44	T	Look at father, father runs. Mother also runs. Sister also runs.
45		They all run ok.

45	CD	WHERE IS THE WOLF?
46		HA! HA! HA! THERE IS NO WOLF!
47	T	What happened to the father? Father very...very angry. Angry
48		yeah...very very angry. Najmi look here. Listen to the story again. ERDF-2 "Ahmad cried wolf"

What can be seen in this extract is that when the CD-ROM read, the teacher talked through it by explaining the words and the concepts to the students. In line 20, for example, when the CD-ROM read, "*SHE IS AHMAD'S SISTER, SITI*" she instantaneously explained the relationship between them, as she pointed to the characters. "Ok. *This is Siti. This is Ahmad. They are brother and sister*" (line 21). At this instance, there was no interaction between the teacher and her students. The students remained quiet, listening attentively to the teacher's explanation. The interaction was mainly between the teacher and the CD-ROM and together they provide multi-modal comprehensible input using English and no Malay. This suggests that the CD-ROM is perhaps replacing the code-switching to Malay seen in the textbook interaction. This pattern of interaction continues throughout this episode.

In Extract 43, I illustrate another episode from a different lesson which shows that the teacher was in control over what to read and when to repeat from the CD-ROM. In Extract 43, Teacher EUBZ was discussing the story "*The Mousedeer and the Crocodile*", a popular animal story in Malaysia. Unlike the classroom setting that we have seen in the previous example, in this lesson, the students watched the CD-ROM from the big screen in front of them. During this viewing session, Teacher EUBZ inserted the CD-ROM in her lap top computer, which was located in the middle of the classroom, and sat on a student's desk by the door instructing students to read or repeat.

Extract 43: Teacher control: EUBZ-3

01		(Teacher goes to the LCD which is situated in the middle of the
02		classroom and plays the CD. Teacher moves to close the door and sits
03		on a student's desk next to the door. The students sit at their own desks
04		and watch the big screen in front of them.)
05	CD	MOUSEDEER WALKS THROUGH THE JUNGLE
06		HE IS THIRSTY

07		'I'M THIRSTY,' HE THINKS
08		'WHERE IS THE RIVER?'
09		HE SEES THE RIVER
10	T	Come on read. HE SEES THE RIVER.
11	SS	HE SEES THE RIVER (a few students follow)
12	CD	HE IS VERY HAPPY
13	SS	HE IS VERY HAPPY
14	T	{HE RUNS TO THE RIVER (teacher reads from the screen)
15	CD	{HE RUNS TO THE RIVER
16	SS	HE RUNS TO THE RIVER
17	CD	THE MOUSEDEER STARTS TO DRINK
18		THE WATER IS COLD
18		HE DRINKS AND DRINKS AND DRINKS AND DRINKS
20		CROCODILE COMES TO THE RIVER
21		HE IS HUNGRY
22		'I'M HUNGRY,' HE THINKS
23	SS	I'M VERY HUNGRY
24	CD	WHAT CAN I EAT?'
25	SS	WHAT CAN I EAT?'

EUBZ-3 "The Mousedeer and the Crocodile"

What can be seen in this extract is that Teacher EUBZ expected her students to repeat the phrases in the CD-ROM as shown in line 10 when she said, "Come on read. HE SEES THE RIVER". There was a time where she read the sentences in the CD-ROM and insisted that the students repeated after her. This can be seen in line 14. At this moment, there was minimal interaction between the teacher and the students and the CD-ROM has taken the teacher's role in the traditional drilling and repetition. As with the earlier extract, there was no L1 used.

Extract 44 shows a different mode of interaction during the CD-ROM reading whereby the students listened attentively without making any comments regarding the story.

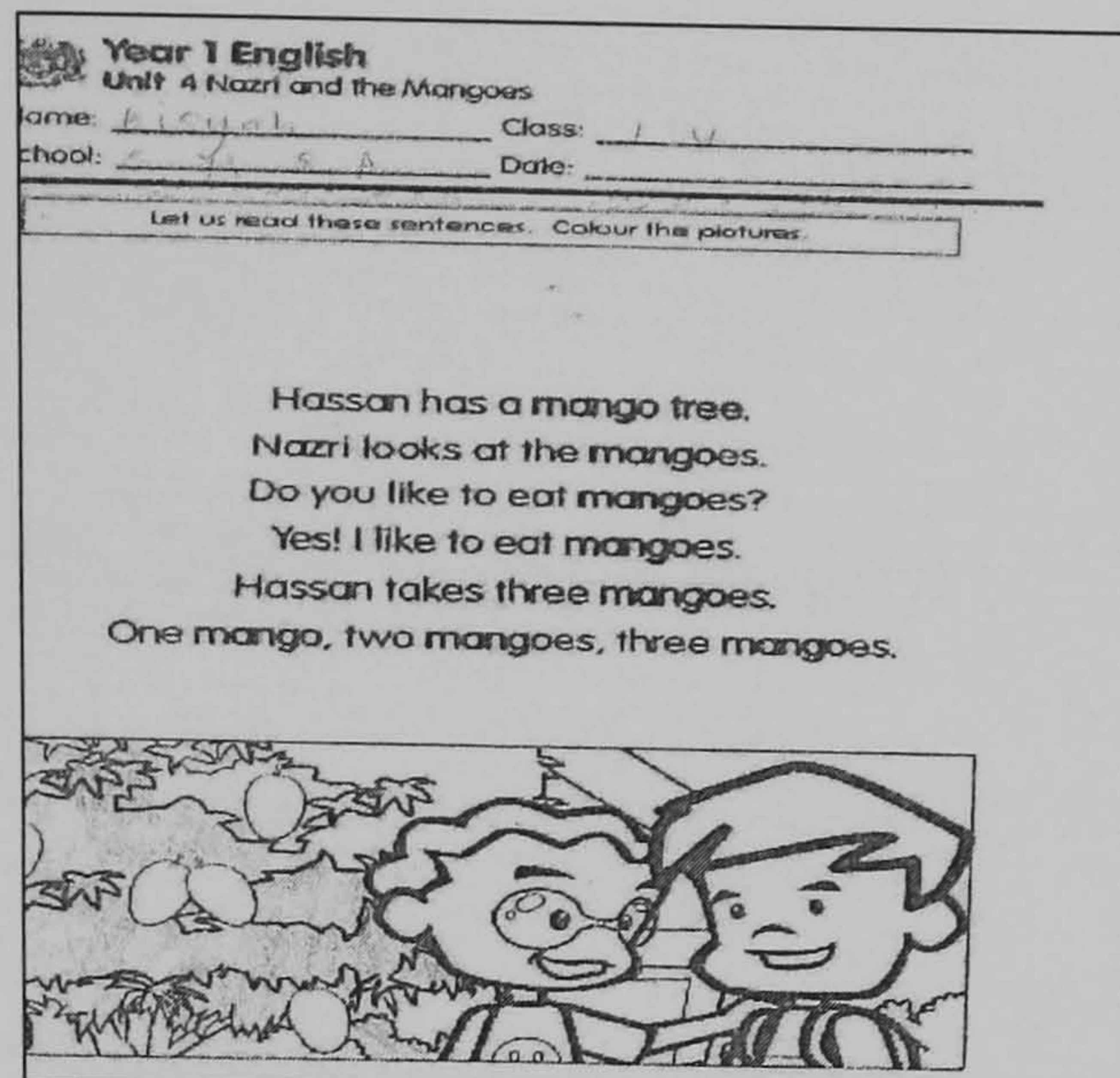
Extract 44: Teacher Control: ERCY-1

51		(Students sit at their own desk and watch the story from the big screen in front of the classroom. Teacher stands by her table watching the story from her lap top computer.)
52		
53		
54	CD	ONE DAY MOTHER SAYS TO MING AND LING. 'CHILDREN, HERE IS SOME MONEY. GO AND BUY SOME NEW CLOTHES.' (a picture of Ming, Ling and their mother appear on the screen)
55		
56		
57		LING SAYS, 'BROTHER, LET'S BUY SOME NEW CLOTHES FOR MOTHER.'
58		
59		'YES' MING SAID MOTHER WOULD BE VERY HAPPY. MING AND LING ARE VERY HAPPY. THEY RUN. THEY RUN TO THE SHOP THAT SELLS CLOTHES. PING! PANG! 'OH NO!' LING IS AFRAID. SHE DROPS A VASE. IT'S BROKEN. 'BROTHER CAN WE GO HOME NOW?' LING ASKS.
60		
61		
62		
63		

64		MING IS NOT AFRAID. 'NO, WE CANNOT.' MING AND LING DO
65		NOT RUN AWAY. "WHO HAS BROKEN MY THINGS?" THE OLD MAN
66		ASKS.
67		HE IS VERY ANGRY. ' I CANNOT SELL THEM ANYMORE.' HE
68		SAYS.
69		'I'M SORRY.' MING TELLS THE OLD MAN. 'HERE'S SOME MONEY.'
70		THE OLD MAN TAKES THE MONEY. HE IS NOT ANGRY ANYMORE.
71		'LET US GO HOME NOW.' MING TELLS HIS SISTER.
72		LING CRIES. SHE IS VERY SAD. MING IS SAD TOO.
73		'WHAT HAPPENED?' THEIR MOTHER ASKS. MING TELLS THEIR
74		MOTHER WHAT HAPPENED. MOTHER IS HAPPY. SHE TELLS HER
75		CHILDREN. 'YOU HAVE DONE THE RIGHT THING. THAT IS THE
76		BEST PRESENT FOR ME.'
77	T	Ok finished. Ok we will listen again. (Teacher sits by the computer
78		and replays the CD) Alia pay attention! Ok. Listen one more time.
ERCY-1 "Mother's Present"		

In this episode, Teacher ERCY was sitting in front of her lap top computer in the middle of the classroom, monitoring the lesson while the students sat at their own desks watching the story from the big screen in front of their classroom. The children seemed to be enjoying the story but there was no interaction between the CD-ROM or the teacher and the students at this early stage. They sat quietly listening to the story without saying anything or repeating any words as seen in the previous two examples. Lines 51-71 show that the CD-ROM was played till the end without any explanation or interruption and once it was over, the teacher concluded that it was finished and explained that they would listen to it again when she said, "*Ok finished. Ok we will listen again. Alia pay attention! Ok. Listen one more time.*" (lines 72-74). She then replayed the CD-ROM. Like in the previous lessons, this episode also indicated that the session was mainly conducted in English.

In Extract 45 below, the teacher gained control over the computer by pausing whenever necessary to correct the students' pronunciation.

Figure 19: Nazri and the Mangoes**Extract 45: Teacher control: ERDF-1**

14	T	We start again. Start again. Listen and you repeat.
15	CD	HASSAN HAS A MANGGO TREE
16	SS	HASSAN HAS A MANGGO TREE!!!
17	T	Ok next. Second sentence.
18		(pause)
19	CD	NAZRI LOOKS AT THE MANGOES.
20	T	NAZRI...
21	SS	NAZRI
22	T	LOOKS...
23	SS	LOOKS..
24	T	AT...
25	SS	AT
26	T	THE..
27	SS	THE MANGGOES
28	T	Ok look at the next sentence
29	CD	DO YOU LIKE TO EAT MANGOES?
30	SS	DO YOU LIKE TO EAT MANGOES?
31	T	Ok. Next one. Listen and repeat.
32	CD	YES. I LIKE TO EAT MANGOES.
33	SS	YES. I LIKE TO EAT MANGOES.
34	T	Next one.
35	CD	HASSAN TAKES THREE MANGOES
36	SS	HASSAN TAKES THREE MANGOES
37	T	Next one.
38	CD	ONE MANGO TWO MANGOES THREE MANGOES
39	SS	ONE MANGO TWO MANGOES THREE MANGOES
40	T	XxX second page
41	CD	NAZRI WALKS HOME
42	SS	NAZRI WALKS HOME
43	CD	THIS IS FOR MOTHER
44	T	No!!! That is...
45	SS	No. The is...
46	T	This is...
47	SS	The is...
48	T	This!
49	SS	This!!

50	T	Ha bukan < not > the not /dis/ this! (correcting their pronunciation)
51	SS	This!!

This extract shows that the teacher controlled when to read (lines 14, 17, 31, 34, 37) and what to practise. As indicated in line 14, when she said, “*We start again. Start again. Listen and you repeat*”, it clearly explained what she expected from the students. In the following lines she made them listen and repeat the sentences before deciding which particular sentences they needed to practise further. This can be seen in lines 20-27 and 44-51. In line 20, when the CD-ROM read, NAZRI LOOKS AT THE MANGOES” she paused the CD-ROM to allow more time for them to practise saying the words by repeating after her before moving on to the next sentence. Similarly, in lines 44-51, she corrected the students’ pronunciation until she was quite satisfied with it. This reading practice resembled the traditional reading with emphasis on accuracy and pronunciation discussed in Chapter 5.

In brief, the examples presented above indicate that the teachers approached the CD-ROM differently depending on whether they wanted to help the students understand (Extract 42), model English to repeat (Extract 43), or provide passive listening (Extract 44) or pronunciation practice (Extract 45). They had one thing in common. The teachers all controlled the interaction as to when and what to read and there was noticeably very little use of Malay.

In the next section, I shall present another typical feature of the CD-ROM interaction, which is the short discussion of the story content as Extract 46 illustrates.

7.3.2 Short Discussion of the Story

Unlike the Big Book reading sessions discussed in Chapter 6, what was noticeable during the CD-ROM sessions is the limited discussion of the story content which was conducted at the end of the reading aloud session. This discussion was purposely done to check students' comprehension of the story.

Extract 46 shows a brief comprehension check session conducted immediately after the second viewing of the story, "Mother's Present".

Extract 46: Short Discussion: ERCY-1: Mother's present

89	T	Ok that's the end of the story. Mother present. Hadiah untuk [^]
90		mother < A present for [^] > What is mother? Noni what's the meaning
91		of mother?
92		(no answer)
93	T	Farah, Norma. Tengok dak? < <i>Did you see?</i> > Mata tak dak? <
94		<i>Don't you have eyes?</i> > (raises her voice) What's the meaning of
95		mother? Mother mother? Makna mother? < <i>what's the meaning of</i>
96		<i>mother?</i> >
97	N	Emak < mum>
98	T	Very good Nabilah. Ok yang ni sekarang ni < <i>ok now this one</i> > who
99		is this? (points to the picture on the screen)
100	SS	Ling!!
101	T	This one? His sister Ming. Who is this? Their mo [^] ther
102	SS	Mother!!!
103	T	Ni? Ni? < <i>this one? this one?</i> > Ling and Ming. Tengok their clothes
104		compang camping < look at their clothes all ripped> . That's show
105		that they are poor. They are [^] poor. Mis[^] mis[^] kin. < poor> Ok.
106		There's a lot of vocabulary we are going to learn today. Ok listen
107		carefully. New words. (Teacher sits down and clicks on the new
108		words icon)

ERCY-1 "Mother's Present"

What can be seen in this extract is that even though the teacher managed to elicit some information about the characters of the story (lines 100,102) and explained the concept of poor (lines 103-107), the session was very short and the students' responses were limited. In fact, this is the only question and answer session

conducted in this lesson. Here we see a focus on vocabulary similar to the traditional practices discussed in Chapter 5.

Extract 47 also illustrates a short discussion session during CD-ROM interaction.

It is taken from the lesson on "Ahmad Cried Wolf".

Extract 47: Short Discussion: ERDF-2

50		(Teacher plays the CD again)
51	T	Listen. Listen carefully.
52	CD	THIS IS SITI.
53	T	Ahmad is Siti's brother. OK. Who is he?
54	SS	Father!!!
55	T	Father. Ahmad's father. Who is she?
56	SS	Mother.
57	T	Ahmad's mother.
58	T	This one we call farm. Many animals in the farm. Look at the
59		animals.
60	SS	{goat!!! Goat goat! chicken}
61	T	Ok chicken good. These are chickens. This one?
62	SS	Duck.
63	T	Very good. This one?
64	SS	Goat!!!
65	T	Goat very good. Chicken duck and goats. Ok. Who is he?
66	SS	Ahmad!!
67	T	Very good. Is Ahmad a good boy?
68	SS	No!!
69	T	No. Ahmad is not a good boy. He is very lazy ok.
70	CD	FATHER! MOTHER! SISTER! SHOUTS AHMAD
71	T	He said there is a...wolf. The wolf wants to eat animals. He wants
72		to eat the chickens. Ok father, mother sister, all of them run.
73		They want to help. Haa they all run. Ahmad where is the wolf?
74		Ok what Ahmad says?
75	CD & SS	HA! HA! HA! (students read from the CD)
76	T	Emm Ahmad laughs.
77	CD	THERE IS NO WOLF!
78	T	Is there any wolf, class? No. Look at Ahmad's father. Ahmad's
79		father is very angry. Nazmi look at the picture. All of them angry.
80		Father mother sister also angry. This one is the next day the next
81		day. Ahmad wants to play a trick again.
82	CD	FATHER! MOTHER! SISTER! THERE'S A WOLF! HE SHOUTS.
83	T	He calls for his father. Imran sit down Imran. Look at the mother.
84		Mother and the sister run very fast.
85	CD	WHERE IS THE WOLF?
86	T	WHERE IS THE WOLF? Father asked where is the wolf?
87	CD	HA! HA! HA! THERE IS NO WOLF. AHMAD'S FATHER IS VERY
88		ANGRY
89	T	Look at the father. Very angry. Ok. The mother also very angry.
90	CD	AHMAD'S SISTER IS VERY ANGRY. THY ARE ALL VERY ANGRY

91	T	Ok, All of them are very angry. Is there any wolf in the farm? Any
92		wolf? Ha? Any wolf?
93	S	Serigala <wolf>
94	T	Serigala is wolf. Is there any wolf in the farm? Yes or no?
95	SS	Yes!!!
96	T	Hah? Is there any wolf?
97	SS	No!!!

ERDF-2 "Ahmad Cried Wolf"

This extract indicates different interactional behaviours between the teacher, the students and the CD-ROM. In the first half of the extract, the interaction took place between the teacher and the students (lines 50 –69) whereby the teacher was checking the students' understanding of the major characters of the story and she elicited from them the characters (lines 54, 56, 66), and the names of the animals (lines 60, 62, 64). However, in the second part of the extract from lines 70-92, the minute the CD-ROM started reading the story, the teacher immediately repeated the words or phrases and explained them to the students using simple words. What can be seen is that the limited interaction during this brief discussion restricts students' opportunity to contribute actively in the discussion. In terms of the questions used, questions like "Who is he?" (lines 53, 65), "Who is she?" (line 55), "This one?" (lines 61, 63), "Is Ahmad a good boy?"(line 67) were mostly closed-type or display which required minimal outputs from students. As commented earlier, there was hardly any L1 used in this episode.

In Extract 48, I present another example taken from the comprehension session of the CD-ROM session. It illustrates the discussion of the story whereby Teacher EUBZ was trying to elicit the students' understanding of the characters and the plot of the story, "*The Mousedeer and the Crocodile*".

Extract 48: Short Discussion: EUBZ-3

72		(Teacher pauses the CD, turns to the students and starts asking
73		some questions about the story)
74	T	What are the two animals in the movie?
75	S	Crocodile and the mousedeer.
76	T	Crocodile and the.^.?
77	SS	Mousedeer
78	T	Ok. Ok. Who is thirsty? Ha which animal is thirsty?
79	SS	Mousedeer .mousedeer.
80	T	And what about the crocodile?
81	Nicky	Hungry
82	T	The crocodile is^
83	SS	Hungry
84	T	Hungry so?
85		(students do not give any answer)
86	T	the crocodile is hungry, so what does the crocodile do?
87	Nicky	The crocodile bites the... (unable to complete the sentence)
88	T	The crocodile is looking for food so he bites the mousedeer's^
89	Nicky	Leg
90	T	What happened? what happened Nicky? What happened? Hah?
91		(Nicky laughs unable to answer)
92	T	After biting the leg then? (pause) Did the crocodile eat the
93		mousedeer?
94	SS	No
95	T	Why? The mousedeer plays a trick, right. Ha. The crocodile bites a
96		stick. Ok now you look at the words.

EUBZ-3 "The Mousedeer and the crocodile"

In this episode, the teacher managed to elicit responses about the two main animals (line 75), and the plot of the story by using a variety of questions such as 'What, Who, Which, What happened, and Why' as well as using prosodic cues as illustrated in lines 76 and 82. Most of the questions were display/closed types. However, in line 84, she extended on the student's answer using a referential question when she said, "hungry, so?" and when she did not get the response from them, she rephrased it "the crocodile is hungry, so what does the crocodile do?" (line 86). At this point she was interested to get the response from Nicky, but when she failed to complete her answer, she completed it for her and asked simpler questions instead. Nicky is a good student and is always prepared to contribute in English lessons, and since she has the ability to communicate in English, she was frequently asked by the teacher to answer the question.

Teacher EUBZ also tried to get them to talk about the story, by asking questions such as *'What happened next?'*(line 90) and *why?* (line 95) but she did not wait long for them to answer the questions and eventually provided them with the answer herself, for example, in line 92, she asked *"Did the crocodile eat the mousedeer"*, and *"Why? The mousedeer plays a trick, right. Ha. The crocodile bites a stick"* (line 95).

In summary, the examples presented earlier indicate that all the teachers were observed to interact well with students during comprehension check by asking some questions regarding the story, paraphrased in simple words for students to understand, and translated some parts of the stories into Malay. However, the interaction during this comprehension check was limited and the amount of time spent on it was quite short if compared to the vocabulary and phonics practice which will be discussed in the next section. In addition, there were more closed questions asked just like in the traditional teaching thus restricting students' responses and limiting their interaction.

In the next section, I shall provide some examples of the vocabulary and phonics practices conducted within the CD-ROM session. Vocabulary and phonics practice in the CD-ROM has become a useful resource for ESL teachers and students in this study as they provide systematic and accurate practices on phonics.

Extract 49 shows the vocabulary and phonics practices in the CD-ROM which were conducted through drilling and practice. It is taken from the story, *'Ahmad Cried Wolf.'* The drilling practice resembled the traditional lessons discussed in Chapter 5.

7.3.3 Traditional Drilling Practices

Extract 49: Traditional Drilling Practice: ERDF-2 Ahmad Cried Wolf

103	T	Ok Look at the words. Listen first. (Teacher continues with word
104		practice in the CD)
105	CD	FATHER
106	SS	FATHER
107	CD	MOTHER
108	SS	MOTHER
109	T	Listen first lah ok listen first hah. Are you ready?
110	CD	FATHER
111	SS	FATHER
112	T	Say again!
113	SS	FATHER
114	CD	FATHER
115	SS	FATHER
116	CD	FATHER
117	SS	FATHER
118	CD	THIS IS MY FATHER
119	T	Ok read the sentence. This^ ...
120	SS	THIS IS MY FATHER
121	CD	MOTHER
122	SS	MOTHER
123	T	Ok say it. Mother
124	SS	MOTHER
125	T	MOTHER
126	SS	MOTHER
127	T	Listen and say
128	SS	MOTHER
129	T	Read the sentence.
130	CD	THIS IS MY MOTHER
131	SS	THIS IS MY MOTHER
132	T	This is my^...
133	SS	Mother
134	T	Ok.

ERDF-2 "Ahmad Cried Wolf"

This extract shows that the drilling practice was quite similar to those of Chapter 5, except that it was done systematically from words to sentences. Unlike in Chapter 5, the drilling practice in this lesson was conducted by the CD-ROM and students were allowed to interact directly by repeating the words and sentences read by the CD-ROM. However, since there was only one computer available in the room, the phonics practice was conducted with the whole class with the teacher controlling the computer by clicking the word icon and saying, "say again" (line 112), "ok. Say it. Mother." (line 123) and "listen and say" (line 127). Here, the words were repeated a few times until she was satisfied with their pronunciation. As shown in lines 110-117, the word 'father' was repeated four times to get it correct and in another

occasion between lines 121-128, the word 'mother' was also repeated four times. The repetitive practice in this lesson was conducted to familiarise students with the pronunciation, stress and intonation of the words. The use of the CD-ROM here not only provides a good pronunciation model to imitate, but also frees up the teacher to listen to the students' responses and decide how much more drilling is needed.

Extract 50 also shows a similar drilling practice of the vocabulary and phonics in the CD-ROM found in ERCY's lesson on "Mother's Present".

Extract 50: Traditional Drilling Practices: ERCY-1

105	CD	NOW IT'S TIME TO LEARN SOME NEW WORDS
106		NEW. OLD. CLEAN. DIRTY. BUY. SELL. SHIRT. DRESS.
107	T	Ok. Now we look one by^_one. What is this? Can you say it? NEW
108		(reads from the screen)
109	SS	NEW
110	T	Again.
111	SS	NEW
112	T	Ok what's the meaning of new?
113	CD	NEW
114	T	NEW
115	T&CD	NEW
116	CD	NEW (teacher clicks on the word)
117	SS	NEW
118	CD	N.E.W. (Teacher clicks on phonics. The word is sounded out
119		/ne/eh/wu/
120	SS	N.E.W. (ss repeat the pronunciation)
121	CD	THIS IS MY NEW BOOK (Teacher clicks on the sentence)
122	T	Ok shining. Buku ba^ {ru} <new book>
123	SS	{ru} SS
124	T	Buku ba^ {ru} new is ba^ <new book. New is>
125	SS	Ru!!!!(SS)
126	T	Ha this book is new. New clothes huh? Shirt huh? No. ok.
127	CD	THIS IS MY NEW BOOK
128	T	THIS IS MY NEW BOOK. Ok read everyone.
129	SS	THIS IS MY NEW BOOK
130	T	Again
131	SS	THIS IS MY NEW BOOK
132	T	Very good. Let's look at another word. (teacher clicks on the word
133		'old')
134	CD	OLD
135	SS	OLD

ERCY-1 "Mother's present"

In this episode, more involvement between the participants was noted as the students engaged directly with the CD-ROM, with or without the teacher's instructions. During this practice, the teacher ensured that the students pronounced the words and the sentences correctly before moving on with the

following item. For example in lines 110 and 130, she monitored the session by saying, "Again." She also translated the English words into Malay to make meaning more accessible for students as can be seen in lines 122-125. And in line 128, she instructed them to read aloud, "*THIS IS MY NEW BOOK. Ok read everyone*". These examples suggest that CD-ROM made the teaching of phonics and vocabulary for both the teacher and students more systematic. It has also made the teacher's job easier as she just had to click on the icons for the CD-ROM to do much of the work.

Similarly, Extract 51 shows that the phonics practices provided by the CD-ROM made the teaching of phonics more manageable for the teachers.

Extract 51: Traditional Drilling: EUBZ-3

95		(Teacher continues with the word practice in the CD)
95	T	The words used are...Ok let's say together. (Teacher clicks on the
97		new words icon and the words crocodile, cold, thirsty, cry, drink,
98		river, hot, hungry, happy appear on the screen.)
99	T	Ok let's say again. All together again.
100		(the word and a picture of crocodile appear on the screen)
101	T	CROCODILE (teacher reads from the screen)
102	CD	CROCODILE
103	SS	CROCODILE
104	T	Again
105	SS	CROCODILE
106	T	(teacher then corrects students' pronunciation) Ok. You look at
107		the word and how to say it properly. (teacher clicks on the phonics
108		icon)
109	CD	CRO-C-O-D-ILE
110	T	Ok. All together
111	T	{ CRO-C-O-D-ILE }
112	SS	{ CRO-C-O-D-ILE }
113	T	CROCODILE
114	SS	CROCODILE
115	T	(Teacher clicks on the sentence icon) Ok now you look at the
116		sentence.
117	CD	THIS IS THE CROCODILE
118	SS	THIS IS THE CROCODILE
119	T	Louder. Again.
120	SS	THIS IS THE CROCODILE
121	T	Again.
122	SS	THIS IS THE CROCODILE
123	T	Again
124	SS	THIS IS THE CROCODILE
125	T	Next word we go to thirsty. (teacher clicks on the word thirsty)
126	CD	THIRSTY
127	SS	THIRSTY
128	T	Ok. Say all together
129	CD	THIRSTY

130	SS	THIRSTY
131	T	Ok how to say thirsty (teacher clicks on the phonics icon)
132	CD	TH-IR-S-TY
133	CD	TH-IR-S-TY
134	SS	Thirsty
135	CD	HE IS THIRSTY
136	SS	HE IS THIRSTY
137	T	Again.
138	SS	HE IS THIRSTY

EUBZ-3 "The Mousedeer and the Crocodile"

What can be seen in this extract is that the phonics practice provided by the CD-ROM made it more manageable for both the teacher and students to learn the difficult English phonemes. Both the teacher and students benefited from the phonics experience of segmenting the words "cro-c-o-d-ile" (lines 109-112) and "TH-IR-S-TY" (lines 132-133). Not only that, the word 'crocodile' was pronounced repeatedly until the teacher was satisfied with the students' pronunciation as shown by the frequency of the instruction "*again*" (lines 99, 104, 119, 121, 123, 137) been used in this extract.

The data from the four lessons observed has shown that phonics practices provided by the CD-ROM benefited both the teachers and students. They helped these teachers to improve their pronunciation, to segment words and to improve their confidence. Many teachers were found to practise segmenting and pronouncing the words read by the CD-ROM. The building block word to sentence approach used in the CD-ROM also helped the students to learn English in a systematic manner. However, this data may not be representative to all the English lessons.

I shall now provide the teachers' perspectives on the use of CD-ROM in their teaching practices. These perspectives provided valuable insights into understanding what goes on in the classroom.

7.4 Teachers' Perspectives on the Use of CD-ROM in English Classrooms

All the teachers commented positively about the use of CD-ROM in their teaching. Below are their comments on its effectiveness.

Effective Teaching

Although Teacher EUAA was not observed using CD-ROM during my observation, her comments resonate with the lessons observed. She claimed that CD-ROM was useful during shared reading as it contained stories relevant to the theme or the topic discussed. Furthermore, it included some activities, key words and vocabulary practice that helped her with her teaching.

LCD/CD Roms mengandungi cerita cerita pendek yang berkaitan dengan topic jadi ia membantu saya dengan first step tu shared reading tu lah untuk mula dan dia ada aktiviti juga. Aktiviti aktiviti dia boleh membantu saya mengajar dalam kelas. Dia ada key words, saya saya gunalah pasal darjah satu ni dia benda baru bagi budak, jadi itu pun bila lepas shared reading, key words apa vocab yang kita nak ajar tu. Tapi oleh kerana vocab tu topic tu lebih kurang dengan kindergarten jadi tak ada masalah sangatkan sebab budak budak dah pernah jumpakan. Guna memang gunalah ikut jugaklah yang literacy hour tu
<CD ROM contains short stories which are related to the topic so it helps me with the first step that is 'shared reading' at the beginning [of the lesson] and it includes some activities too. These activities can help me to teach in class. They have key words and I use them because they're new for Year One students. But because the vocabulary and the topics are similar with the ones used in kindergarten they are not so problematic because students have seen the words before. I use it really use it and I also follow the Literacy Hour >
EUAA - Interview 1

Teacher ERDF mentioned that CD-ROM has made her teaching lighter and easier as she would talk less and spend less time explaining to the students.

dengan LCD ni dia rasa lebih ringanlah XXX kalau dari segi dia banyak membantu tu dia ringanlah sikit kalau tak kita yang nak bercakap kita yang nak bercakapkan.. tunjuk hak tu tunjuk hak ni dengan nak bercakap lagi dengan budakkan rasa letih lebihlahkan tapi dengan LCD rasa kurangnya sikit XXXX membantulah jugak pengajaran kita walaupun tak setiap pengajaran kita guna LCDkan
< It's lighter with the use of LCD xxx for example with LCD we ask students to see from the big screen xxx it's useful in a way that it's lighter if not we end up doing everything, talking and showing this and that and do more talking especially with children it's very tiring but with the LCD it's a bit lighter XXX it's helpful in teaching even though we don't use it in every lesson>
ERDF - Interview 1

Similarly, Teacher EUBZ also stated that CD-ROM was interesting, and managed to make her teaching easier because what she did was just turned the computer on and let the students interact with it, either by repeating the sentences or by doing the phonics and vocabulary activities in it.

Memanglah dia very interesting...you don't have to say you just put on and ask them to read the sentences in the CD-Rom in fact activities **pun ada dalam CD tu.**

<It's true, it's very interesting...you don't have to say you just put on and ask them to read the sentences in the CD-Rom. In fact, it has some activities too. >

EUBZ - Interview 1

The CD-ROM was found to be useful when explaining the meanings of the key words, particularly when the drawing was impossible to be produced by the teacher. Teacher EUAA mentioned that her students were more interested in watching animations in the CD-ROM such as looking at people's expressions and emotions than seeing dull pictures. She believed that the interactive nature of the CD-ROM somehow left an everlasting effect on the students' memory.

Ya, memang berkesan especially **bila cik gu tak pandai melukis, gambar gambar yang yang nak terangkan pasal key words tu memang susah nak dapat, contohnya** examples **bila ajar** adjective -sad- **kita boleh tunjuk muka kita, tapi bila dia orang tenguk gambar kartun ke sad dia lagi seronokkan! lagi budak boleh ingatkan**(excited).)

< yes really effective especially when teachers don't know how to draw and when pictures to explain the meanings of the key words are difficult to get for example when we teach adjective -sad we can show our facial expression but they'll be more excited when seeing the cartoon character feeling sad. Besides they will remember better>

EUAA - Interview 1

CD-ROM Materials

Teacher ERDF also mentioned that the print out materials from the CD-ROM were useful as revisions and assessment of the students' reading performance. She claimed that she would reuse them for individual reading.

Satu lagi bahan yang ERDF print out **ni tujuan ni jugak ERDF suka repeat balik benda tu ERDF nak tahu dia ingat balik dia boleh baca tak macam kita pelekat macam ni kan mungkin masa ni dia tak boleh baca lagi kemudian satu hari 'mai kata baca English B (materials from the CD) daripada muka surat pertama ha panggil dia sorang sorang boleh tak dia baca tapi ada jugaklah yang sangkutkan ada jugak boleh baca sampai habis seronoklah kita dengaq sampai habiskan**

< Another thing is that the print out materials were used for the purpose of repeating what I have taught because I want to know whether they can still remember or they can still read. Perhaps they might not be able to read just yet but maybe one day I would say 'Come here. Let's read English B (materials from the CD) beginning from page 1 yes call them one by one and see whether they can read but there are still a few who can't read fluently but there are some who could read till the end and it's so wonderful to hear them reading till the end>

ERDF- Interview 1

Apart from being effective for teaching, CD-ROM was also found to be problematic for some teachers. These teachers reported technical problems associated with computers, their lack of time to use it, the preparation time it involved, and the lack of students' interests.

Technical problem

Teacher EUBZ highlighted the technical problems associated with the use of the laptop computer and the LCD.

One thing my LCD sometimes **dia boleh guna** sometimes **dia** out you **bukak bukak dia** out **terus** from the beginning **kan** I got my lap top. Lap top **dari awal dia** black out...this year I cannot use mine I have to use other classes **punya lahkan**. For mine I still cannot use it
< one thing my LCD sometimes can be used but sometimes can't. It was faulty the minute I turned it on from the time I got my lap top. From the beginning it went blackout.. this year I cannot use mine I have to borrow from the other classes'.>

EUBZ-Interview 1

Time Factor

Teacher ERCY complained about the preparation time it took and her uncertainty in dealing with the computers. Besides, she did not have time to use it in her classroom.

[macam saya baru nak mula baru nak tengok LCD baru nak belajaq nak tengok. Problem sikit ambik masa. Macam saya nak kena tengok jugak hey topic apa lepas cerita ni kadang tak sempat nak tengok balik
<like me I have just started only learning how to use the LCD [CD-ROM]. It's a bit problematic it takes time. Like me I have to see what topic to teach and what comes after the story sometimes I didn't have time to review [the lesson]>

ERCY- Interview 1

Responsibility

She added that with the overwhelming responsibility at school, she could not find the time to cover the CD-ROM contents.

Dengan sekolah luar Bandar dengan keadaan tanggungjawab yang terlalu banyak saya rasa tak sempat habis bagi sayalah saya tak sempat nak habis sekarang ni pun baru masuk CD ke 5. Kadang kadang baru nak mula hari tu adalah yang tu ada yang ni function. Banyak sangat cerita dia kadang kadang tak ni dengan topic kita
< With the overwhelming responsibility in the rural school I think I can't finish all of them. For me I don't have time to finish even now I'm still at the beginning of the fifth CD-ROM. Sometimes when I was about to start the CD-ROM there was this function and that function going on. There are too many stories in them which sometimes are not quite relevant with our topic>

ERCY-Interview 1

Lack of Students' Interests

Another problem mentioned by Teacher ERCY was the lack of students' interests in it. Teacher ERCY reported that some of her students were not interested in the content of the CD-ROM and lost concentration when watching it, so she had to make sure that they were kept on the task by calling their names.

ada jugak setengah budak tu dia tak minat. Kita nak tarik minat kita kena panggil nama dia berulang kali barulah dia tengok LCD tu. Kadang kadang dia tengok tapi somewhere else mind dia tu. Effective memudahkan kerja cikgu tu. Tapi untuk vocab tu cikgu kena buat extra work kena tekankan...sepatutnya lah.

*< for students who...there are certain students who are not interested and we have to attract their attention by calling their names repeatedly then only they watch the LCD. Sometimes they appeared to be watching but their minds were elsewhere. It's effective because it makes the teacher's job easier. But for the vocabulary the teacher has to do an extra work have to give more emphasis...that's what we're supposed to do >***ERCY-Interview 1**

This suggests that her strategy (Extract 44 above) of simply playing the CD-ROM without interrupting it or encouraging any interaction with her or the CD-ROM was not effective in retaining many students' interest. This is the danger with CD-ROM that students watch it passively, like the television.

Examination

In addition, Teacher ERCY explained that she had to abandon the CD-ROM for the examination so that she could use the time appropriately to drill her students.

Baru belajaq...dua bulan..(laughs) Nak dekat periksa tak guna dah sibuk nak drill sebelum sebelum tu ikut plan lah guna semua lah shared reading kalau shared reading guna LCD tu lah.

<We have just learned for two months (laughs) when it's nearly the exam we won't use it anymore we'll be busy drilling them. Before that, we followed the plan [syllabus] and used everything like shared reading and all if for shared reading I use LCD>
ERCY- Interview 1

In summary, all the teachers were positive about the use of CD-ROM in the classroom. They mentioned that it was not only fun and enjoyable, but also effective for their teaching whereby it made their teaching easier as the CD-ROM did much of the teaching for them. Despite the positive views of the computer-based learning, these teachers also reported some problems they faced such as the technical problem, the preparation time, the heavy teaching load and

responsibility, and the examination. Significantly, the teacher who simply played the CD-ROM for passive listening reported lack of student interest. This suggests that interaction between the CD-ROM, teacher and students is an area worthy of further research in future.

In the next section, I shall present the students' perspectives on the use of CD-ROM in their English classrooms, which were obtained from the group interviews.

7.5 Students' Perspectives on the Use of CD-ROM

The students made similar points as the teachers when talking about the use of interactive CD-ROM. They were interested and motivated when asked to talk about it. During the interview, one of the questions asked was how to make their English lessons more interesting. Most of them reported that they liked their teachers to show movies, to listen to music, to sing songs and to be nice to them. Below are some extracts of the conversations I had with the students during the interviews.

Students' Interview: EUA-G1

I	If you can do magic like in the fairy tales how would you make your English class more interesting?
Anna	Teacher membuka wayang <show movies>
Tina	membuka muzik <listen to music>
Has	menyanyi <singing>
I	mmm menyanyi lagi? <yes singing what else?>
Has	suka dia berbuat baik <I like her to be nice>

Another group of students from a different school also commented positively about the CD-ROM used in their English classroom. Nicky described the experience of watching the story like watching a movie in the cinema because there were songs that she could sing along and it was fun. It is significant that she explicitly mentions active participation here. Other students like Ayu and Wani were also excited when explaining their experience singing on the table in their classroom. This is illustrated in the following extract.

Students' Interview: EUB-G3

I	what do you like about your English class?
Nicky	Hmm tengok tu movie dalam cerita tu macam tengok wayang <i>watch a movie or story like watching a movie [in the cinema]></i>
All	Ha (everybody agrees)
I	Why?
Nicky	Sebab syok sangat boleh nyanyi <i><because it's so much fun can sing></i>
I	Can you tell me a bit more?
Nicky	Sebab ada boleh nyanyi lepas tu boleh tengok macam cerita <i>because there's a song can sing after that can watch the story[movie]></i>
Ayu	Lepas tu boleh naik atas meja <i>< after that can stand on the table></i>
Wani	Menyanyi <i><singing></i>
I	Oh menyanyi atas meja? <i>< singing on the table?></i>
All	Hmm seronok <i>< yes fun></i>

However, one of the students, Nicky expressed her frustration when informing that her teacher rarely used CD-ROM anymore.

Students' Interview: EUB-G3

I	Teacher banyak guna wayang ke? <i>< Does you teacher show a lot of movies [CD-ROM]?></i>
Nicky	Hmm dulu guna sekarang tak guna dah. Cuma sekali <i><hmm before this she used it now not anymore. Just once></i>

In summary, the students interviewed were positive about the use of CD-ROM in their English lessons. They enjoyed watching the stories, which they described as 'movies', and they liked singing along the songs in it. However, they also mentioned that teachers seldom used it in the classroom. Nicky's comment raised a question as to whether the teachers utilised the CD-ROM provided for them or they used it for "show". This issue reminded me of Madam L's comment about the use of CD-ROM that teachers seldom used it except for observation purposes.

To be frank I think that the government is spending too much money on it. I think the administration should do something and push them the teachers all to carry out their proper teaching (laughs) because they are not doing it and they are given the note book and it seems that it is like their own property (laughs) they are provided but they don't bring to school they are not using it. Math and Science teachers you can see hardly a few maybe one or two that is also not for teaching purposes but some other paper work so we have ample more than enough but it is not fully used only when observation is concerned ha (laughs) they feel very troublesome carrying the LCD and these things. To them in order to teach a lesson an hour lesson they need about 10-15 minutes to fix and before they are able to run the whole lesson so they say it's very troublesome fixing and bringing (laughs) normally they go back to normal using chalk and talk

Madam L-Interview

She mentioned that teachers did not use the computer often because they would spend a lot of time preparing it, that they used it for other purposes, and that some teachers found it troublesome.

7.6 Discussion

When the CD-ROMs are used by the teacher to support question and answer in the class, they have been found to increase interests and motivation for both the teachers and students in this study. All the teachers claimed that the use of CD-ROM in the classroom was not only interesting but also useful and made their teaching easier. Some teachers claimed that they just had to turn it on and let the students repeat what the CD-ROM read. They reported that it provided an excellent practice in the teaching of phonics and vocabulary due to its repetitive nature. It was also used for shared reading purposes. Students on the other hand, mentioned about their interests in watching the CD-ROM and singing along with it. The interactive CD-ROM has made the teaching and learning of English fun and enjoyable. These findings supported the earlier studies on the positive impact of use of computers in the classroom (Miller et al., 1994; Reinking, 1988).

The notable example where students listened twice passively to the CD-ROM was associated with negative comments from the teacher about students' lack of interest and wandering attention. With regard to the interaction that did take place during the CD-ROM reading session, it was very much teacher- controlled with the teachers having more and longer turns. The observation data has shown that the teachers made the students repeat the sentences and words read by the CD-ROM. In fact, in most cases students were not given the opportunity to engage in any discussion of the content of the story whereby they could speak freely about the story. Neither did they talk about their own interests with regard to the story. The discussion was short and this limits the students' responses. Moreover, the discussion was not extended to include other related skills such as speaking and writing. More focus was given to provide the reading practice instead.

In relation to the vocabulary and phonics practice provided by the CD-ROM, all the teachers agreed that the programme has helped them in teaching phonics and pronunciation. Earlier studies have also demonstrated that computers are an excellent medium for drilling and practice which are useful for mediation (Adam and Wild, 1997) and can be used effectively in teaching vocabulary, phonics and spelling patterns whereby the students were engaged in building sounds and spelling patterns in words (Honig, 1996). However, the teachers in this study were found to allow the CD-ROM to take the centre stage during this session. In many instances, the teacher's role became passive and limited to only monitoring the reading process by telling students when and what to repeat. It is argued that even though drilling practices were found to be effectively used for teaching phonics and vocabulary, and at the same time benefited the teachers and students, they were still considered a passive view of reading whereby the students were involved in decoding but not producing the language in a meaningful way. In fact it resembled the traditional drilling and repetition practices discussed in Chapter 5. Studies on the use of computers in the classroom have indicated that technology alone did not promise the best practices, but the teacher's role in creating students' involvement will make a difference in the learning process (Paterson et al., 2003; Mohd Syariff, 1999). Furthermore, Miller et al. (1994) cautioned of the danger of 'set it and leave it syndrome' when using the computer in the classroom.

7.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, it was found that the CD-ROM was seldom used. When it was used it did introduce students to e-learning, in accordance with the Ministry's expectations: It was used effectively to provide comprehensible input with teacher scaffolding. It led to minimal use of code-switching, teaching vocabulary, phonics and spelling patterns whereby the students were engaged in building sounds and spelling patterns of words. This meets the Ministry's aim of increasing opportunities to use English in a limited sense only. It did not seem to lead to

richer production in speaking or writing. Nor did it seem to make them more independent or creative in their thinking (7.1).

Although the number of CD-ROM lessons observed was small, there is strong evidence that the CD-ROM has created an increase in the students' and the teachers' motivation and the ministry's hope to make learning fun and enjoyable are achieved. However, the desire to make students independent learners was far from possible as the teachers were in control over the computer. Different interaction patterns were observed and all were focused on the language aspects like phonics, spelling and vocabulary through drilling and repetition is consistent with previous research on the benefits of such pedagogy (7.1). This tended to be at the expense of responding to the children's interaction and neglect other important elements of a story such as the content, the values and the pleasure of reading that they bring to children.

Chapter 8:

Discussion, Implications and Conclusions of Study

8.1 Introduction

This research is based on the premise that classroom interaction is the key ingredient in understanding the teaching and learning situation of a classroom. Classroom interaction enables us to explore the literacy practices, the kind of talk that goes on in the classroom, the way texts are used and interpreted, the opportunity to express meaning, and the questions asked which are all vital for learning. The naturalistic study will enable us to understand the explored situation better.

This research set out to investigate the nature of literacy practices in Year 1 English classrooms and to examine the impact of innovations i.e. CD-ROM, Big Book and the English Hour on interaction and practices in the context of the Ministry's expectations and hopes for a paradigm shift towards a socio-cultural approach. My interest in exploring the classroom literacy practices and students' learning has led me to examine the extent to which recent innovations have influenced teachers' practices. So far, studies looking at the impact of innovation and practices using naturalistic approach were hard to find and little of such research is conducted in the Malaysian context. There has also been little research on interaction in language classrooms (Nunan, 2005) particularly interaction surrounding texts (Martin, 1999a). I believe that this research does more than explore the classroom literacy practices and the impact of innovations on interaction and practices, it also offers a diagnosis of Malaysian primary education in general.

This chapter is divided into three sections: 8.2 provides an overview of the findings; 8.3 discusses the contributions of the study to the field, and implications of the

research for teachers, teacher educators, and curriculum planners or policy makers; 8.4 offers some concluding remarks.

8.2 Overview of the Research Findings

The 2003 study established the context for the innovations through observations of 5 classrooms: 2 Year 1 and 3 pre-school classrooms, and a questionnaire completed by 50 teachers, and interviews with 9 teachers of English, BM and Arabic/Jawi.

From this study it emerged that changes were being introduced and so the 2004 study focuses specifically on the introduction of the English Hour, of Big Books and of the CD-ROM. The findings summarized here first outline the traditional literacy practices which were evident in both the 2003 and the 2004 study, then examine the impact of the three innovations in turn.

8.2.1 The Traditional Literacy Practices

The outcomes of this study do illustrate that the traditional or transmission model of teaching is still a common practice in the Malaysian primary schools despite the change in the curriculum and approaches in teaching which have called for more interaction and active engagement. This traditional pedagogy is often associated with a behaviouristic approach to learning whereby reading is thought of as a process of acquiring a set of hierarchical skills that has to be acquired sequentially. This pedagogy persists and there is little evidence of any paradigm shift towards practices that encourage socio-cultural learning through meaningful interaction.

- **The Nature of Literacy Events and Practices**

The observation data revealed that the class spent most time reading and writing. Reading practices include choral reading aloud with drilling and repetition as the main focus towards developing language skills and reading accuracy. The majority of teachers in the interview seemed to value the effectiveness of choral reading

aloud, drilling and repetition practices for long term memory. There was the belief that memorization leads to over-learning and understanding and this has been supported by earlier studies (Piller and Skillings, 2005; Marton et al. 1996).

Studies on rote learning and memorization among Asian learners are not new (Chan, 1999; Kember and Gow, 1991; Tang, 2002). In Western countries, rote-learning and memorization are not generally considered as contributing to learning and understanding, but to surface level of knowledge. However, in the Asian context, they are viewed as a form of cultural practice. Literature suggests that there is a new way of seeing the relationship between memorization and understanding (Marton et al., 1996; Chan, 1999). Marton et al. (1996) argue that a distinction was found 'within' memorization rather than between memorization and understanding. This means that on the one hand, repetition can be associated with rote-learning and on the other hand, it can be used to develop understanding.

...repeated readings of a passage of text were described by some of the participants as bringing about improved understanding. Furthermore, some participants indicated that each time they read the passage, they did so in a different way, focusing on different aspects or reading from a different perspective." (Marton et al., 1996: p.81)

In this study, these techniques were also employed for the purpose of helping students to practice English pronunciation, and to make them speak. The teachers believed that while repeating, students were able to imitate the correct pronunciation produced by their teacher and other good readers. Eventually their confidence will be enhanced through practice. Furthermore, considering the large class size, the lack of exposure to English and the '*washback effect*' of the examination, repetition, drilling and memorization seemed inevitable in their contexts. Smith (1994) maintains that rote-learning, which is used with large numbers of children not only saves time and effort for the teacher but also gives a feeling of whole-group involvement for the children. Much research on reading assumes a socio-cultural view of learning (Heath, 1983; Gregory, 1996; Rosowsky, 2001; Gregory, 1993; Baynham, 1988). Baynham (1988) for example,

argues that memorisation and recitation by heart were significant in their own contexts.

Copying from the board into exercise books, colouring, and filling-in-the blanks in the activity books dominated the writing practices in Year 1 English classrooms and the teachers spent more than half of the class time on it. These writing practices focus on the conventions with the purpose of producing neat handwriting and accurate copying. Typically, the writing practices were traditional and tightly controlled. Teachers reported that copying was used for self-involvement, recognition and memorization. Besides, it was claimed to be manageable for weaker students. There is no doubt that copying can produce students who have neat, clear and legible handwriting but, these writing practices were claimed to lack communicative purposes and opportunity to express ideas that students became too rigid and too dependent on the teacher (Browne, 2000; Whitehead, 1990). No process writing was observed and the teachers mentioned that they delayed composition until the students were ready or they had acquired the skills necessary to write. This readiness concept goes against the socio-cultural view of literacy learning (Gillen and Hall, 2003).

Among the characteristics of the traditional methods identified in Year 1 English classrooms in this study were: teacher-centred with more teacher talk, the use of recall-type questions, choral responses and code switching practices.

- **Teacher-Centred Classroom**

The classroom interaction was very much teacher-centred and teacher-controlled. Teachers' access to the content as well as to the language of the texts enabled them to have control over the discussion, the type of questions asked, and also the way the questions were supposed to be answered. The findings of this study supported earlier studies on teacher dominated classroom practices (Skidmore et al. 2003; Shomoosi, 2004; Martin, 2003) with students having limited opportunities to talk

(Mercer, 1997). Cummins (2000) argues that teacher-dominated practices disregard the centrality of language and literacy development that emphasize providing meaningful interaction.

- **Teacher- Questions**

Relevant literature on teacher questions, has suggested that referential or open questions may be useful in providing learners with the opportunity to use the target language (Brock, 1986) and that both input and output are vital for the second language acquisition to take place (Swain, 1985), but this was rarely the case in the Malaysian classrooms observed. The questions used during interaction were predominantly closed-type questions in which the students had to recall previously learned knowledge. Arthur (1996: 26) claimed that these questions are 'undemanding, requiring merely recall of previously introduced material'. It is undeniable that display or closed-type questions are useful for comprehension checks but they seemed to be restrictive in terms of students' responses and did not promote higher level of thinking and reduced interaction. The excessive use of closed-type questions was also reported in many earlier studies (Shomoosi, 2004; Wu, 1993; Brock, 1986; Baetens Beardsmore, 1996; McLelland, 1996). It can be argued that if more meaningful interaction is to be seen in these classrooms as desired by the Ministry, teachers' questions will have to be considered carefully.

- **Choral Response**

Apart from the recall-type questions used in the classroom, another typical feature of the traditional teaching evident in the study is the use of choral responses to teacher's prompts. This means that the teachers provided clues to the correct answers using 'prosodic cues' to complete the teacher's words or sentence. This practice was also found in earlier studies (Martin, 1996; Chick, 1996; Arthur, 1996). Chick considers choral completion as 'safe-talk' in that it enables the students "to collude in hiding unpleasant realities' such as 'to hide the poor command of English; to obscure their inadequate understanding of academic content, and to

maintain a façade of effective learning taking place” (Chick, 1996: 30-36). The findings of this study revealed that choral responses provided opportunities for students to participate as well as to prevent from losing face for not being able to provide the correct answers to the teacher’s questions. Furthermore, it is claimed that chorusing saves the teacher time. Considering that teachers are busy people who have heavy workloads and pedagogical goal to complete the syllabus, chorus responses seemed to be an alternative way to solve these problems.

- **Code Switching Practices**

In a multilingual context like in Malaysia, it is not uncommon for two or more languages to be used in a language classroom to aid understanding. Code switching serves different functions in different contexts. In Lin’s (1996) study, code switching was used to annotate text in English in order to make meaning more accessible to students, whilst in other cases code switching in language classrooms is discouraged (Canagarajah, 1995; Arthur, 1996). Canagarajah (1995) reports that learners in English classes in Jaffna switched into Tamil in secretive exchanges when the teacher was not paying attention and Arthur (1996) mentioned that learners were not permitted to switch from English to Setswana.

The data in this study suggests that code-switching was used to facilitate understanding and to encourage participation during the interaction. Teachers reported that code-switching was necessary due to the limited English exposure students received outside school. English was learned and practiced within the English lessons only so the function of code-switching was basically to make them understand; to make meaning more accessible because the content taught made a lot more sense to the students when it was explained in both languages. Furthermore, students could relate to what they already know, and respond to the teacher’s questions without fear of making grammatical mistakes or not being able to answer at all.

It was also found that code switching was used to provide the Malay gloss for the purpose of enhancing students' understanding. A similar function was also found in Brunei (Martin, 1996; Baetens-Beardsmore, 1996). These findings resonate with studies conducted by Martin (1999), Arthur (1996) and Chick (1996). However, the difference with Martin's study is that the '**dwibahasa**' (two languages) policy in Brunei enables the learners and teachers to use both languages simultaneously, whereas the Malaysian teachers and learners were not encouraged to use Malay in their English classrooms for fear that it might have an impact on the second language acquisition process or the amount of input received by the learners. The Malaysian teachers were in conflict when deciding whether to comply with the policy or satisfying their own personal and professional instincts when it comes to code switching. They were somehow ashamed to admit the use of Malay in their English classroom even though they believed that it was necessary for encouraging students' participation. I am aware that code-switching study can be approached from many different angles, but due to the time and space limitation of this thesis, the macro influence of code-switching on classroom practices was not discussed. However, I do support Martin's (1999:137) argument that "there is a need to move away from the deficit notions of code switching in the classroom and instead, to explore how two or more languages can contribute to the accomplishment of teaching and learning in the classroom".

8.2.2 The Impact of the English Hour

The four English teachers were positive about the implementation of the English Hour with the reasons given as useful, effective, and focused on reading.

Despite the change in language teaching practices proposed by the Ministry of Education, the data indicated that the teachers in this study did not seem to follow the guidelines closely in three main respects. First, the shared reading steps seldom included discussion of ideas or meaningful interaction around the story even though they were clearly required by the Ministry's guidelines. Secondly, there

was little or no group work observed. Thirdly, most of the lessons were missing the plenary session at the end of each lesson which was glossed in the Malaysian context as 'Summing Up'. Only 1 of 26 lessons had a plenary session while most lessons ended with individual writing. This finding is consistent with Smith and Whiteley's (2000) and Gardner (2006) study that the plenary session, which was an important component for summing up and reflecting and consolidating on what was learned, was missed.

In addition, teachers and trainers also raised some issues concerning the time factor, the adequacy of training, the lack of resources and support from the school managers. One teacher thought that the English Hour was effective but she had no time for it due to the syllabus constraints and her tight schedule. There were also comments that the training was inadequate and the selection method was inappropriate. These issues were also addressed in earlier studies in the UK (Fisher and Lewis, 1999; Smith and Whiteley, 2000; Smith and Hardman, 2000).

8.2.3 The Impact of Big Books on Interaction and Practices

Big Books were introduced as part of shared reading in the English Hour. My intention was to see the impact of Big Books on interaction and practices. I was particularly interested to see the extent to which classroom interaction was more meaningful in the context of the English Hour and the Ministry's hopes.

The data suggests that the Big Books have improved the students' interaction in the 5 lessons observed. The Big Books created more active learning environment with the students displaying enthusiasm throughout the reading session, taking initiative to answer questions without waiting to be asked, reading the words as the teacher flipped the pages and most importantly, making comments regarding the pictures. This type of student-initiation was rarely found with the textbook. Besides, more and varied questions were asked particularly prediction questions which are essential for developing students' thinking skills and developing a genre-

awareness of stories (Gardner, 2004). Additionally, the Big Books were useful for vocabulary and language development. The data has shown that the students have acquired some new vocabulary after the story was repeated. It is felt that with more exposure to the Big Books, students would be able to acquire not only the story structure but also be familiar with the grammar and the sentence structures of the English language. The finding of this study is supported by the earlier studies on positive effects of reading aloud of stories on children's literacy development (Teale and Sulzby, 1987; Gregory, 1994; Cameron, 2001; Ellis and Brewster, 1991; Neuman and Celano, 2001) particularly on vocabulary (Senechal et al., 1996; Penno et al., 2002; Rosenhouse et al., 1997; Hargrave and Senechal, 2000).

The observation data from the interaction surrounding Big Books have shown that the interaction has improved with the Big Books as opposed to the traditional textbook as it was based on the story content rather than on reading accuracy, which dominated the traditional textbook practices. Clearly, the Big Books created some potential for content discussion and managed to improve the teachers' mediation during the interaction which is crucial for children's literacy development (Teale and Sulzby, 1987; DeBruin and Perecki, 2004; Neuman, 1999; Williams and Gregory, 1999).

Despite the positive findings that the use of Big Books was successful in providing more interaction between teachers and learners, they were rarely used in the classrooms and were often treated as 'extra' rather than 'essential'. This is a worrying scenario in the Malaysian primary education. Some earlier studies have also reported similar findings (Rooks, 1998; Bloch, 2000; Campbell, 2002).

8.2.4 The Impact of CD-ROM on Interaction and Practices

The impact of computers on interaction and practices is discussed in Chapter 7. My intention was to examine the impact of the English CD-ROM in the context of the Ministry's hopes.

CD-ROMs were introduced to schools in 2002. Despite the government's aspiration to maximize the use of computers in the classroom and the positive comments obtained from the teachers and the students, the data revealed that the CD-ROM was seldom used in this study with only 4 CD-ROM lessons of the whole 26 lessons within the period of three months. This is quite alarming as it implies that the use of ICT in primary English classrooms was not yet widespread. The teachers attributed the lack of computer use to the time factor, the heavy workload, the technical problems, the preparation time, and the pressure to finish the syllabus. Furthermore, there was a strong sense of 'social obligation' surrounding the use of computers and a feeling of ICT acting as a barrier. One of the English language trainers, commented that it was a waste of money that the computers were rarely used except for the purpose of 'display or show' when an observer was around. Moreover, she claimed that the teachers were more comfortable with the traditional 'chalk and talk' method'.

Many studies reported that technology alone did not promise good learning is taking place, but the teachers' techniques and approaches in using technology play an important role in determining successful teaching (Paterson et al. 2003; Mohd Syariff, 1999; Miller, 1994; Bus and Jong, 2000). With only one computer used for the whole-class teaching, it was discovered that the teachers were in complete control over the computer. They selected the topic to be discussed, they decided when and what to read, and they clicked the practice icons when they felt necessary for the students to practice. Furthermore, the CD-ROM lessons lacked the students' hands-on-experience which is essential for the development of independent learning.

There was very little change in terms of writing practices using this new innovation. The practices were still considered traditional in a sense that they resembled the typical practices of colouring and tracing the alphabet. This study suggests that

there is a need to free children from the constraints of conventional literacy practices (Burnett, Dickinson, Myers and Merchant, 2006).

8.2.5 Summary of Findings

This study suggests that change is possible even if it is little. Even though there were only 5 Big Books and 4 CD-ROM lessons observed, overall the Big Books and the CD-ROMs have increased both the students and the teachers' motivation in language learning. The analysis of practices surrounding the Big Books revealed greater attention to the content of the story than in the textbooks, though this was still comprehension checking rather than exploring understanding. This does not resonate with Gregory's (1996) Model of Reading. What seems to be lacking in this finding is the semantic or the meaning component in storybook reading. Analysis of the data revealed that the CD-ROMs provided were not only interesting but also useful for teaching and the students loved watching them. The attractive features including interesting animations, sound effects, and the music accompanying them seemed to attract students' attention to the lesson. These findings are supported by many earlier studies that computers developed positive attitudes to learning (Edwards, Monaghan and Knight, 2000; Reinking, 1988) and accelerated learning particularly among lower level learners (Reinking and Schreiner, 1985).

Clearly, technology has become a successful resource for phonics teaching particularly for teachers whose English is not their first language. The data revealed that the CD-ROM provided a systematic approach to teaching phonics, vocabulary and spelling, and that it offered good drilling and practice programs (Adam and Wild, 1997; Honig, 1996). Apart from that, the CD-ROM has also been found to provide more exposure to English. Not only the CD-ROM contents were in English, the interactions during CD-ROM lessons were conducted mostly in English. The CD-ROM provided access to meaning through English and pictures where code-switching was used more regularly with textbooks. However, it is

worthwhile to note that the findings may not be representative for all English lessons.

8.3 Contributions and Implications of Study

I believe that the results of this study may prove useful not only for the teachers, but also for the teacher educators who are responsible for teacher development of the country, and the curriculum planners when developing policies, and designing programs.

Teachers may use these findings to establish better practices, teacher educators can benefit in terms of future development and/or evaluation of pre-service and in-service teacher programmes, and the policy makers and curriculum planners may reconsider some of the issues raised by the teachers and the current practices before implementing a change in the education system. The decision to adopt new teaching approaches is crucial as they are impacting the teachers and their attitudes and beliefs about such changes and most importantly the students' learning.

This research has certain implications for teachers (8.3.1), teacher educators (8.3.2) for continuing professional development, policy makers (8.3.3), and implications for future research (8.3.4).

8.3.1 Implication for Teachers

The results from the observational data provided rich evidence of what was practised in the Year 1 English classrooms. This research was a starting point to see what goes on in these classrooms. It has increased an awareness of the importance of talk, how talk was used by the teachers, and how it could be extended to increase output from learners. This research also offers new ways of seeing not only the reading and writing practices, but also the impact of innovations on interaction and practices.

Teachers can use this study to reflect on their current practices, and the interaction between them and the students surrounding texts which may or may not contribute to students' learning. One recommendation is through the use of Video Stimulated Recall Device (VSRD). English et al.'s (2004) study has demonstrated how teachers could modify their practices through VSRD. This method has encouraged teachers to demonstrate their own understanding of their interactive styles and provided opportunities for monitoring and self-evaluation.

“The process of VSRD allowed some of the teachers in our project to identify their confusions and refine their understanding and use of interactive teaching (English et al., 2002, p.24).

Through this reflection, teachers will be made aware of the importance of interaction surrounding texts and the literacy practices that could affect students' learning and eventually modify their classroom practices.

This study also revealed that the students were not producing enough second language output because the questions asked by the teachers were mostly display or recall-type. As mentioned earlier, both L2 input and L2 output are important for children's language and literacy development. McLelland (1996) recommended more group work that allows opportunities for pupil initiation and suggested teachers slow down the pace of the lesson through the use of referential questions while increasing the wait-time to improve output. Another implication is that more workshops on developing questioning techniques that could promote higher level of thinking such as referential questions could be conducted to increase the teachers' awareness of this issue as suggested by Black et al. (2002) as cited in Myhill et al. (2006).

by challenging the nature of questions asked, by making greater use of strategies such as pair work and by extending the wait time given before taking responses, the teachers involved were better able to determine what children had understood and misunderstood and were better equipped to meet learners' needs (21)

Many studies acknowledge the teacher factor determines the success and failure of any innovation (Ng, 1996; Cheah, 1996; Whitehead, 1990). Cheah (1996) argues that the heart of the problem lies in teacher's beliefs about the existing system and the implementation of the new policy.

An important objective in any such programme must be the modification of the teacher's teaching behaviour accompanied by a fundamental change in beliefs. If the teachers' beliefs are not changed, and they are not persuaded by the philosophy of any new innovation, they are bound to slip out of the practices after a while. They must therefore, be some kind of cultural fit between the new ideas and the existing cultural practices of the teachers. (Cheah, 1996: p.165)

More studies on teacher beliefs are needed. Hearing teachers' comments and sharing their concerns may be fruitful in changing their beliefs about teaching and learning. The pre-service training of teachers could become a starting point to increase teachers' awareness of the beliefs about teaching and learning. Awareness on the shift in the theory of learning from the Piagetian to the Vygotskian, from the importance of action to the importance of language (Myhill et. al, 2006) also need be fostered through both pre-service and in-service trainings for the teachers.

The information gathered in this research is of critical importance to teacher educators particularly for their continuing professional development which I shall now turn to.

8.3.2 Implication for Teacher Education

The research findings have certain implications for the in-service professional development of teachers. Studies on teacher development and teaching style suggest that teachers are slow to change their ways of teaching and new methods or innovations are not readily taken on (Mroz, et al., 2000:388). Teachers needed support not only in terms of knowledge but also in terms of technical skills and techniques in implementing new approaches. This implies that there is a continuous need for in-service training for the primary teachers to develop those skills and to voice out their concerns during the implementation process. Hardman and Mroz (1999) argue that monitoring and self-evaluation should become a

regular part of the in-service training, thereby giving teacher the degree of ownership during the process of change. Continuous training on the use of the innovations in teaching and learning using the CD-ROM, and the Big Books and constant monitoring at all levels will provide the teachers with the confidence and support they needed.

The research findings show the lack of support system from people in school setting when implementing innovations. There seemed to be perceived conflict between the teachers' beliefs and the school's expectations. The interview data has shown that teachers were not complying with the new policy for fear that they would be labelled 'non-performing' teachers. Ng (1996) argues that 'programme implementation would be difficult, if not impossible, without the support of the principals (headteacher)' (158). The headteacher's role is vital in ensuring change. This is because in the Malaysian Education system, the directives always come from higher authorities and the policy is channelled from the Ministry of Education to the school headteachers and to the fellow teachers. Since the headteacher's support will determine the success of this new policy, I would argue that they should be the first person to ensure that the implementation is taking place. Workshops with the school principals are necessary to ensure support is given to teachers at all times during the implementation process. Myhill et al.'s (2006) study involving the principals in the TALK project has shown the success in providing ownership to the principals when implementing change at the school level.

The findings also discovered that the current method of selection for in-house training of teachers provided by the Ministry of Education, whereby a representative for each area is selected and he/she is responsible to disseminate the information to the rest of the teachers has to be reconsidered if the outcome is to achieve quality education. This selection method does not guarantee that the message is delivered fully to the rest of the teacher community. All teachers deserve a chance for professional development.

8.3.3 Implications for Policy Makers and Curriculum Planners

The research findings are also beneficial for policy makers and curriculum planners. It calls for the need to rethink the current teaching and learning practices in the primary ESL/ EFL classrooms. When implementing a new policy such as importing pedagogy like the UK Literacy Hour, the curriculum planners need to consider factors such as the suitability of this new policy to our context, the adequacy and the level of proficiency of the teachers and the current practice in the system. Ng (1996) argues that when adopting models from the Western countries, the policy makers have to consider whether it is culturally fit for the Asian culture.

In the needs analysis of any sector of an educational system, one is often tempted to apply the deficit model, reviewing the existing system against ideal conditions. Such a model appeals to many visitors from First World countries and they often have the view that the approaches they are most acquainted with have much to offer the traditional approaches of Asian countries. And to a certain extent they are right. Together with their view however, they must acquire familiarity with what is already being achieved by the existing system so that the innovation does not disturb the existing balance. (Ng, 1996: 160)

This implies that even though change may be the most desirable outcome, it may not be easy to achieve because it involves so many factors and affects so many people. The Ministry has to consider the existing problems of lack of English teachers and their level of English proficiency in the country that in some rural areas, teachers who were not trained in English were requested to teach English simply because they could read and write in English. It is a widely known fact that we need well-trained English teachers to teach English for young learners. Another consideration concerns the current practice in the system. The findings suggest that the teaching and learning situations were prescribed by the examination-oriented system. If change in the practice is to be seen, the examination system has to be minimized or changed in nature to better reflect the philosophy of the innovations.

Ng (1996) suggests that besides the people involved such as the children, the teachers, the headteachers, the inspectors, teacher educators and the top-level

administrators, “changes in knowledge, skills and behaviours must occur and be sustained over time” (157). One implication is that there is a need for co-ordination between curriculum planners or policy makers, teacher trainers and school administrators. These people have to work collaboratively to find ways to bridge the gap between policy and practices and come up with ways to determine the best practices for the children’s literacy development. More workshops and professional training programs should be organised to increase awareness of the current developments in early childhood literacy. For instance, in terms of the use of Malay and code-switching, it would be helpful to explore when and how code-switching can be effective and when English immersion works better. The same applies to drilling and memorization. It is important in change not to throw out effective practices, particularly those that are culturally engrained when introducing new practices.

8.3.4 Implications for Future Research

This research offers a new way of viewing classroom literacy practices and highlights the importance of teacher-pupil interaction on children’s learning. It shows some promising practices but more research is needed in examining literacy as social and cultural practices with the aim of developing an understanding of literacy practices from a wider context. The quality of teacher-pupil interaction is vital in developing students’ literacy acquisition and in the Malaysian context, micro-interaction research is still new and scarce. Therefore, more research of this kind is essential.

As indicated in this study, participant observation brought about more in-depth understanding of the practices. Perhaps one suggestion is to encourage teachers to conduct their own action research and to reflect on their own practices to further understand and improve the teaching and learning situations as this is essential for their professional development. Hardman et al. (2003) claim that there is a need for further research into ways of effectively supporting teachers in their

professional development. Not only that, the inter-relationship between the technology, the teacher and the students deserve some attention in the future research.

One limitation of this study was that I was not able to spend several full academic years in the schools. Longitudinal studies, over several years could provide richer information with regard to the nature of literacy practices. Future research perhaps should consider looking at the impact on students' learning by the end of the year or follow through for the next few years. This method could provide enlightening insights about the factors that influenced the teaching and learning in EFL/ESL classroom contexts in Malaysia.

The present study also offers some implications for the use of CD-ROMs in the classroom. Burnett et al.'s (2006) study on the use of email partnerships provided evidence that technology could transform literacy practices in the classroom. Hence, this brings me into thinking of what more could be done to improve the teaching situation in the Malaysian primary classrooms. For one thing, there is a need to explore the ways in which this new technology could improve the literacy practices of the classroom. Perhaps, on screen writing could become one of the many alternatives of change. Besides, what the teachers need the most is a continuous support and training in the use of computer in the classroom. The findings reflect on the importance of providing ICT knowledge and skills for the teachers to ensure change is taking place. Further research into the ICT training and support provided for teachers is highly recommended to understand the extent to which innovations could make teaching more bearable for the teachers. At the same time new strategies to improve the ICT implementation process could also be identified.

8.4 Extending the Scope

At the outset of this research, I also collected some data concerning the Mathematics and Science through English by observing lessons and interviewing teachers, however, due to the time and space limitation of this PhD, I decided not to analyse the data. Similarly, data was also collected from pre-schools but it was not discussed because the practices were found to be quite different than the primary practices. Realizing how important the data is for the future development of the Malaysian Education system, I feel that it needs to be explored further in my future research.

8.5 Concluding Remarks

What has motivated me during the process is the knowledge and experience I gained as participant and observer in Year 1 English classrooms, getting hands-on experience of the context under study, sharing the teachers' concerns about their challenging job responsibilities, talking to children about their school experiences and observing them doing role plays.

This research opens up a new way of seeing and understanding the developments in the Malaysian primary English language education and the impact they have on interaction and practices. It is a new way of understanding the situation from wider perspectives: from my own observation, the teachers, the learners and the teacher trainers.

Orientation towards an examination-based system was actually the most important factor. The demand for academic excellence somehow determined the teaching and learning whereby the traditional ways of teaching and learning persist even though the MOE has introduced innovations such as CD-ROM, the Big Books and the English Hour. The headteacher insisted that the students pass the examination and therefore gave pressure to the teachers to teach according to the examination formats. The lack of support from the headteacher and the continuous pressure to

make students pass the examination has left the teachers with uncertainty in deciding what's best for children's learning. As a result, they resorted to the traditional method of teaching with drilling, repetition and memorization, which have been proven to help them achieve the goal. Shaik Abdullah (2005) mentioned that, in the Malaysian context, for as long as they feel that they are accountable for their students to do well in the exam, teachers will continue with the teaching of skills to help them achieve the goal.

Clearly, what can be seen here is that teachers received tremendous pressure not only from the Ministry of Education, the headteachers, the parents as well as their own personal and professional beliefs about teaching and learning. Myhill et al. (2006:4) argue that "our social and cultural values may influence the practices and activities we attempt to introduce in the classroom." In addition to that, I support Cummins' (1997; 2000) claim that the micro interactions in the classroom will tend to reflect the macro-interactions in the wider society. Thus, studies on classroom interaction and practices need not overlook the social and cultural factors in which they are embedded.

Using the methods which are not commonly taken in the Malaysian context also motivated me to pursue the present study. This naturalistic approach with the strength of the triangulation method provides in-depth nature of the study and ensures richness of the data. The present study may encourage future research on classroom interaction to adopt the methods applied in this study based on the richness of the data. The children's interview and role play which have never been done before in earlier research proved to be enlightening in their own ways. The present study could also lead the future research to monitor continuing changes in Malaysia as teachers integrate the benefits of more interactive teaching with the traditional cultural practices embedded in the educational system.

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Appendix 1- Questionnaire: 2003 Study

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS ON CHILDREN' LITERACY ACQUISITION

My name is Aizan Yaacob, a PhD student in English Language Teaching at the University of Warwick, England. I'm doing a research on Teacher Perception of Children Literacy Acquisition in three different languages /scripts (Bahasa Malaysia/ English/Jawi) in Nursery and primary schools in Malaysia. The findings from this questionnaire data will be used as a basis for introducing a better literacy programme at higher institutions and teacher training colleges.

I hope you can spend the time to answer all the questions in this questionnaire to help me with this research. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. Please give me your personal experiences, opinions and ideas. I would also appreciate if you could write your name in the questionnaire, for a follow-up interview. All information will be confidential and will be used anonymously in writing up this research.

There are 3 parts in this questionnaire: **1) Demographic Information; 2) Literacy Acquisition Perception Profile; 3) Teaching Approaches.** If the question asks you to tick, please tick the most appropriate boxes and in some cases, you may tick more than one box. If the question asks you to circle, please circle the most appropriate answer. If you are asked to give details, please write as fully as possible.

Thank you very much.

Aizan Yaacob

Email: A.Yaacob@warwick.ac.uk

Centre for English Language Teacher Education

University of Warwick

England

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Instructions:

Please tick (✓) where appropriate.

Sila tandakan betul (✓) pada tempat yang bersesuaian.

1. Name:

Nama

2. Gender: Male Female
Jantina Lelaki Perempuan

3. Age: Below 20
Umur: Bawah 20

21 – 30

31- 40

More than 40
Lebih dari 40

4. Name of school / nursery: _____
Nama sekolah / tadika:

5. School / Nursery Location: **Urban**
Lokasi sekolah/ tadika: Bandar

Rural
Luar bandar

6. Subjects taught: **NOW** **BEFORE**
Matapelajaran yang diajar: BM BM

You may tick (✓) more than one box. *Boleh (✓) lebih dari satu kotak.*

English English
 B. Inggeris B. Inggeris

Jawi/Arabic Jawi/Arabic
 B. Arab/Jawi B. Arab/Jawi

Others **Others**
Lain-lain **Lain-lain**

Please specify: *Sila nyatakan:*

7. Level being taught:
Tahap yang diajar:
You may tick (✓) more than one box.
Boleh (✓) lebih dari satu kotak

Nursery Tadika	<input type="checkbox"/>
Standard 1 Darjah 1	<input type="checkbox"/>
Standard 2 Darjah 2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Standard 3 <i>Darjah 3</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Others <i>Lain-lain</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please specify: *Sila nyatakan:*

8. Number of classes being taught:
Bilangan kelas yang diajar:

1	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	<input type="checkbox"/>
More than 4 <i>Lebih dari 4</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. Highest Qualification:
Kelulusan Tertinggi:

SRP	<input type="checkbox"/>
SPM	<input type="checkbox"/>
Certificate Sijil	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please specify. *Sila nyatakan.*

Degree
Ijazah

Please specify. *Sila nyatakan*

Masters
Sarjana

10.	Training(s) received. List all the trainings you have received for the past 5 years. <i>Latihan-latihan yang pernah diterima. Senaraikan semua latihan yang pernah anda terima sepanjang 5 tahun yang lepas.</i>	Year Tahun	Duration Tempoh

Please use a separate sheet if the space is not enough. *Sila gunakan lampiran sekiranya ruang tidak mencukupi.*

11. What kind of training do you require in the future? Please specify.

Apakah latihan-latihan yang anda perlukan di masa hadapan? Sila nyatakan.

1. _____
—
2. _____
—
3. _____
—
4. _____
—
5. _____
—

12. How do you rate your proficiency in these languages?

Apakah tahap kemahiran anda dalam ketiga-tiga bahasa di bawah?

	V. Good Tersangat baik	Good Baik	Fair Sederhan a	Poor Lemah
BM	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
English	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Jawi/Arabic	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

SECTION B: LITERACY ACQUISITION PERCEPTION PROFILE (LAPP)

Instructions:

The purpose of this instrument is to determine teacher's perception of children's literacy acquisition. There are no right or wrong reactions to the statements.

Tujuan soal selidik ini adalah untuk mengenalpasti persepsi guru-guru bahasa terhadap penguasaan literasi awal kanak-kanak. Tidak ada sebarang jawapan salah atau betul.

Directions:

Please read each item carefully. Identify the responses from (*Strongly Disagree* to *Strongly Agree*) that best represent your feelings about children's literacy acquisition. Circle the number that corresponds to your response.

Sila baca setiap item dengan teliti. Pilih jawapan anda dari (Amat Tidak Setuju hingga Amat Setuju) berdasarkan perasaan anda terhadap penguasaan literasi awal (membaca dan menulis) kanak-kanak. Bulatkan pilihan anda.

1 (Strongly Disagree) 2. (Disagree) 3 (Undecided) 4 (Agree) 5 (Strongly Agree)
(Amat Tidak Setuju) (Tidak Setuju) (Tidak pasti) (Setuju) (Amat Setuju)

- | | | | | | | |
|----|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1. | In order to learn to read, a child needs to know the letters of the alphabet and the corresponding letter sounds. <i>Bagi membolehkan belajar membaca, setiap kanak-kanak perlu mengetahui huruf-huruf dalam abjad dan bunyi yang berkaitan dengannya.</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. | Becoming literate is a continuous, developmental process that begins very early in life (at the age of 3). <i>Celik literasi (keupayaan membaca dan menulis) merupakan satu proses perkembangan yang berterusan, yang bermula dari awal kehidupan (dari umur 3 tahun).</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. | Beginning reading and writing practices exhibited by young children result from direct instruction. <i>Peringkat latihan dan perkembangan awal membaca dan menulis yang dipamirkan oleh kanak-kanak adalah hasil daripada arahan (guru).</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. | Meaning, rather than phonic cues, should be emphasized during children's early experiences with print. <i>Maksud/makna sesuatu perkataan, patut diberikan lebih penekanan berbanding dengan sukukata bunyi semasa pengalaman awal kanak-kanak dengan bahan cetak (bacaan).</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. | Beginning reading and writing practices appear naturally in young children with exposure to environmental print. <i>Peringkat awal perkembangan membaca dan menulis bagi kanak-kanak lahir secara semulajadi melalui pendedahan mereka</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

dengan bahan-bahan cetak di persekitaran.

- | | | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | In order to become literate, young children must be provided with numerous and varied opportunities to read and write. <i>Bagi membolehkan seseorang kanak-kanak membaca dan menulis (celik literasi), dia perlu didedahkan dengan pelbagai bahan dan peluang untuk membaca dan menulis.</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7 | Oral reading (reading aloud) mistakes should be corrected immediately. <i>Kesalahan semasa membaca secara lisan perlu dibetulkan dengan segera.</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8 | Repetition of new words will guarantee their inclusion in a child's sight vocabulary. <i>Sebutan secara berulang-ulang bagi setiap perkataan baru akan memastikan pertambahan dalam nahu kanak-kanak tersebut.</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9 | It is the teacher's responsibility to control the child's development in becoming a literate individual. <i>Adalah menjadi tanggungjawab seorang guru untuk mengawal perkembangan kanak-kanak dalam proses untuk menjadi seorang yang berkeupayaan membaca dan menulis (.celik literasi).</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10 | Learning to read is a social process often influenced by children's search for meaning. <i>Belajar membaca merupakan satu proses social yang mana kebanyakannya dipengaruhi oleh proses mencari makna /maksud oleh kanak-kanak tersebut.</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11 | Learning to read and write involves taking risks. <i>Belajar membaca dan menulis melibatkan risiko.</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12 | Opportunities for children to engage in reading and writing activities should be provided throughout the day in all areas of the curriculum. <i>Peluang bagi kanak-kanak untuk melakukan aktiviti-aktiviti membaca dan menulis patut diberikan sepanjang hari dalam semua subjek dalam kurikulum.</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13 | Play is one of the best ways for young children to learn about written language. <i>Pembelajaran melalui permainan merupakan salah satu cara bagi kanak-kanak untuk belajar tentang bahasa penulisan.</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14 | Proficiency in the basic reading subskills has to be acquired before one can act in a literate way. <i>Kemahiran asas membaca perlu dikuasai sebelum kanak-kanak boleh membaca (celik literasi).</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15 | Reading is essentially the mechanical skill of decoding, or turning printed symbols into sounds that are language. <i>Membaca merupakan satu</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

kemahiran megkodan secara mekanikal, ataupun mengubah simbol bertulis kepada bunyi, iaitu bahasa.

- | | | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16 | The teaching of literacy must be systematic and sequential in operation. <i>Kemahiran membaca mestilah dilaksanakan secara sistematik dan berperingkat-peringkat..</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17 | When presented with an unknown word, children should be taught to sound it out. <i>Apabila setiap perkataan baru diperkenalkan kepada kanak-kanak, ia juga perlu diajar menghasilkan bunyi perkataan tersebut.</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18 | Root words should be taught to beginning readers, prior to inflectional endings. <i>Kata asal sesuatu perkataan perlu diajar kepada pembaca baru, sebelum diajar penambahan kata/ tatabahasa.</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19 | Children acquire valuable information regarding written language when engaged in voluntary, spontaneous play. <i>Kanak-kanak belajar sesuatu maklumat penting berkenaan penulisan semasa melibatkan diri secara sukarela dan spontan dalam pembelajaran menerusi permainan.</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20 | Children acquire literacy as a response to printed language in their social environment. <i>Kanak-kanak belajar membaca dan menulis hasil daripada tindakbalas terhadap bahan cetak di persekitaran mereka.</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

SECTION C: TEACHING APPROACHES

21. Describe briefly how you teach children to read and write in any of these languages (BM / English/ Jawi (Arabic)).
Nyatakan secara ringkas bagaimana anda mengajar kanak-kanak membaca dan menulis dalam salah satu dari bahasa-bahasa ini.

22. What are the important reading skills that you teach children in Grade 1?
Apakah asas-asas kemahiran membaca yang penting yang diajar kepada kanak-kanak Darjah 1?

23. What are the important writing skills that you teach children in Grade 1?
Apakah asas-asas kemahiran menulis yang penting yang diajar kepada kanak-kanak Darjah 1?

24. Which activities or techniques do you use to teach reading? *Apakah aktiviti-aktiviti atau teknik-teknik yang anda gunakan untuk mengajar membaca?*

25. Which activities or techniques do you use to teach writing? *Apakah aktiviti-aktiviti atau teknik-teknik yang anda gunakan untuk mengajar menulis?*

26. Which techniques do you think work well? *Apakah teknik-teknik yang anda rasakan berkesan?*

27. What materials do you use to teach reading? *Apakah bahan-bahan yang anda gunakan untuk mengajar membaca?* Please tick (✓) your answer. You may tick more than one box. *Sila tandakan (✓) pada jawapan anda. Anda boleh tanda lebih dari satu kotak.*

<i>Story books</i>		<i>computer</i>		<i>Video/cassette</i>	
<i>Text books</i>		<i>Labels</i>		<i>Poems</i>	
<i>comics</i>		<i>Maps</i>		<i>catalogues</i>	
<i>newspapers</i>		<i>Schedule/time table</i>			

Please give examples of other materials, which are not listed above. *Sila senaraikan bahan-bahan lain yang digunakan dalam pengajaran.*

28. What materials do you use to teach writing? *Apakah bahan-bahan yang anda gunakan untuk mengajar menulis?* Please tick (✓) your answer. You may tick more than one box. *Sila tandakan (✓) pada jawapan anda. Anda boleh tanda lebih dari satu kotak.*

<i>Writing on the blackboard</i>		<i>computer</i>		<i>Video/cassette</i>	
<i>Text books</i>		<i>Labels</i>		<i>games</i>	
<i>Comics/ pictures</i>		<i>Maps</i>		<i>catalogues</i>	
<i>newspapers</i>		<i>Shopping lists</i>		<i>letters</i>	

Please give examples of other materials, which are not listed above. *Sila senaraikan bahan-bahan lain yang digunakan dalam pengajaran.*

29. Which materials do you find most effective? *Why? Bahan-bahan manakah anda rasakan amat efektif? Kenapa?*

THANK YOU
TERIMA KASIH

Appendix 2: Observation Schedule: 2003 Study

OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

Name: _____ **Time:** _____ **Date:** _____

Subject: _____ **Class:** _____

School: _____ **No. of students:** _____

TIME	TEXTS / MATERIALS	LITERACY PRACTICES	
		Teachers do	Students do

Appendix 3: Teacher's Interview: 2003 Study

No.	Question	Comment
1	Background information	To start the interview
2	What are your goals in teaching? Apakah matlamat puan sebagai guru?	
3	What is your role as a teacher? Apakah peranan puan sebagai guru?	
4	What are the students' roles? Apakah peranan murid-murid?	
Curriculum/ Syllabus		
5	What do you think of the curriculum and syllabus? Apa pendapat puan tentang kurikulum dan sukatan matapelajaran (syllabus)?	
6	How do you work? Do you work together to plan lessons etc? What is your work pattern? Adakah puan mengajar megikut sukatan pelajaran harian? Bagaimanakah puan bekerja? Adakah puan bekerja secara kumpulan untuk meyediakan sukatan pelajaran harian? Atau menyediakan bahan-bahan pengajaran atau aktiviti?	
7	Do you have any difficulty in teaching BM/English/Jawi? Which particular area? Why? Adakah puan menghadapi sebarang masalah/kesulitan dalam pengajaran BM/English/Jawi? Khususnya? Kenapa?	
Attitudes		
8	What do you think of English? BM? Arabic? Apa pandangan puan tentang pengajaran BM/English/Jawi?	
9	Do you think teaching/learning BM/English/Arabic/Jawi are important? Why? Pada pendapat puan sejauh mana pengajaran BM/English/Jawi penting?	
Theoretical Back ground		
10	Have you had any in-service training? When? For how long? Did it help in any way? Pernahkah puan mengikuti sebarang latihan @ kursus-kursus? Bila and tempohnya? Adakah ianya membantu puan?	
11	Do you discuss children literacy with anybody? Colleagues? Adakah pernah puan berbincang dengan rakan sejawat tentang cara-cara kanak-kanak membaca?	
12	Did you take any child development / child psychology in teacher training college? Pernahkah puan mengikuti sebarang kursus atau latihan berkenaan perkembangan	

<p>13</p> <p>14</p>	<p>kanak-kanak / psikologi kanak-kanak semasa di kolej atau yang dianjurkan oleh Kementerian atau badan swasta?</p> <p>How do you think children learn? Pada pendapat puan, bagaimana kanak-kanak belajar?</p> <p>How do you think children learn languages (BM/English/Jawi/ Arabic)? Pada pendapat puan, bagaimana kanak-kanak belajar BM/English/ Jawi/ Bahasa Arab?</p>	
<p>15</p> <p>16</p> <p>17</p> <p>18</p> <p>19</p> <p>20</p> <p>21</p> <p>22</p> <p>23</p> <p>24</p> <p>25</p> <p>26</p> <p>27</p>	<p>Teaching Techniques / Methods / Approaches</p> <p>Describe a typical lesson. Berikan gambaran tentang kelas seharian puan.</p> <p>Describe what children do. Jelaskan apa yang murid-murid buat dalam kelas seharian puan.</p> <p>Describe what you do in a typical lesson. Jelaskan apa yang puan buat dalam kelas seharian puan.</p> <p>What activities do you use in your class? Apakah aktiviti-aktiviti yang puan buat dalam kelas seharian puan?</p> <p>What helps a child most to learn to read? List some factors. Apakah faktor-faktor yang dapat membantu kanak-kanak untuk belajar membaca?</p> <p>What methods do you use? Apakah kaedah yang digunakan?</p> <p>Which method(s) works best for you and your students? Why? Pada pandangan puan kaedah manakan yang baik untuk puan dan murid-murid puan?</p> <p>What do you think are effective practices? Setakat ini metod pengajaran mana yang paling efektif?</p> <p>How do you teach children to read? Do you use any teaching approaches? Bagaimana puan mengajar kanak-kanak membaca? Adakah puan menggunakan kaedah pengajaran ynag khusus?</p> <p>What are the important reading skills that you teach children in Primary 1? Apakah kemahiran penting (membaca) yang perlu di ajar kepada kanak-kanak Darjah 1?</p> <p>How do you teach children to write? Do you use any teaching approaches? Bagaimana puan mengajar kanak-kanak menulis? Adakah puan menggunakan kaedah pengajaran ynag khusus?</p> <p>What are the important writing skills that you teach children in Primary 1? Apakah kemahiran penting (menulis) yang perlu di ajar kepada kanak-kanak Darjah 1?</p>	

	Describe an example of a child who is not progressing. What did you do? Pernahkah puan berhadapan dengan pelajar yang tidak mampu membaca, menulis @ tidak menunjukkan sebarang kemajuan dalam tahun 1? Apakah tindakan yang puan ambil? Kelas tambahan/ kelas lembam/ guru khas(pakar) dari JPN/ guru pembantu?	
	Teaching Materials	
28	Which textbook do you use? Why? Adakah puan menggunakan buku teks yang khusus? Kenapa?	
29	Do you use any other materials? What are they? Adakah puan menggunakan bahan pengajaran yang lain? Senaraikan.	
	Assessment	
30	How do you assess their performance? Bagaimana puan mengukur tahap pencapaian pelajar puan dalam membaca, menulis, oral/lisan dan mendengar?	
31	What do you think of your students' achievement? Apakah pandangan puan tentang tahap pencapaian pelajar puan?	

Appendix 4: Teachers' Interview: Pilot Study

No	Question	Comment
1	Personal Background	To start the interview
2	What is your goal as a language teacher? Apa matlamat puan sebagai seorang guru bahasa?	
	<u>Curriculum / Syllabus</u>	
3	What do you think of the revised English curriculum/ syllabus? Apa pendapat puan tentang Kurikulum semakan Bahasa Inggeris?	
4	Do you follow the syllabus? Why? How do you work? Do you work together to plan lessons etc? Why? Adakah puan mengajar mengikut sukatan pelajaran harian? Kenapa? Bagaimanakah puan bekerja? Adakah puan bekerja secara kumpulan untuk menyediakan rancangan harian atau bahan-bahan pengajaran atau aktiviti? Kenapa?	
	Innovations	
5	What do you think of the Literacy Hour/the English Hour? How do you implement it in your class? Apa pendapat puan berkenaan Literacy Hour/the English Hour? Bagaimanakah ianya di dilaksanakan dalam kelas puan?	
6	What do you think of the teaching of Malay, English and Arabic simultaneously in Standard 1? Why? Apa pandangan puan tentang pengajaran BM/English/Arab serentak di Tahun 1? Kenapa?	
7	What do you think of the teaching of Math and Science through English? How do you think this helps in the learning of English? Apa pendapat puan tentang pengajaran Matematik dan Sains dalam Bahasa Inggeris? Bagaimana puan rasa ini membantu dalam pembelajaran B. Inggeris?	
8	Do you have any difficulty teaching BM/English in urban/rural areas? Why? Adakah puan menghadapi sebarang masalah/kesulitan dalam mengajar BM/English di kawasan Bandar/luar bandar? Kenapa?	
	<u>Aspects of Literacy Events</u>	
9	How do you teach children to read in English? Bagaimana cikgu mengajar murid-murid membaca dalam BI?	
10	Which technique(s) works best for you? Why? Teknik apakah yang paling berkesan bagi cikgu? Kenapa?	
11	What do you think of phonics? Apa pandangan cikgu tentang phonics? Do you read stories in class? Why? When do you use stories? For	

12	what purpose? Adakah puan bercerita dalam kelas? Kenapa? Bilakah ianya digunakan? Untuk tujuan apa?	
13	What do you think of the use of LCD in the classroom? Apa pendapat cikgu tentang penggunaan LCD dalam pengajaran?	

Appendix 5: Children's Interview: Pilot Study

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

1	Personal Profile Name Age Male/female Class School Contact Details	Notes To start the conversation
2	Do you have story books at home? In Malay or English? Adakah awak memiliki buku cerita di rumah? Buku cerita BM atau BI?	
3	What's your favourite story? Why? Apa cerita kegemaran kamu? Kenapa?	
4	Who read stories to you? When? In BM/English? Siapa bacakan buku cerita pada kamu? Bila? Dalam BM atau BI?	
5	Can you read in BM? Is it difficult or easy to learn to read in BM? Why? Bolehkah kamu membaca dalam BM? Adakah belajar membaca dalam BM susah atau senang? Kenapa?	
6	Can you read in English? Is it difficult or easy to learn to read in English? Why? Bolehkah kamu membaca dalam BI? Adakah susah atau senang untuk belajar membaca dalam BI? Kenapa?	
7	What sort of things do you read in BM? Apa yang kamu baca dalam BM?	
8	What sort of things do you read in English? Apa yang kamu baca dalam BI?	
9	Why do you think you have to learn to read in BM? English? Kenapa awak perlu belajar membaca dalam BM?BI?	
10	Do you learn to read in other languages i.e Arabic/Quran too? Where? With whom? How often? Adakah awak belajar membaca dalam bahasa lain, contohnya Arabic/Quran? Di mana? Dengan siapa? Berapa kali seminggu?	
11	Why do you have to learn to read Arabic/Quran? Kenapa awak perlu belajar membaca Arabic/Quran?	
12	Do you like to learn BM? What do you like about your BM class?	

<p>13</p> <p>14</p> <p>15</p> <p>16</p>	<p>Why? Adakah kamu suka belajar BM? Apa yang kamu suka tentang kelas BM? Kenapa?</p> <p>Do you like to learn English? Why? What do you like about your English class? Adakah kamu suka belajar Bahasa Inggeris? Apa yang kamu suka tentang kelas BI?</p> <p>Which one do you like best? Why? Yang mana satu kamu paling suka? Kenapa?</p> <p>If you have 'magic' what would you like to change about your English class? Why? Apa yang awak nak ubah berkenaan dengan kelas BM? Kenapa?</p> <p>If you have 'magic' what would you like to change about your English class? Why? Apa yang awak nak ubah berkenaan dengan kelas BI? Kenapa"</p>	
Home Literacy Practices		
<p>17</p> <p>18</p> <p>19</p>	<p>What language(s) do you use at home? Malay/ Kedah dialect, English, mixed or others? Apakah bahasa yang digunakan di rumah? BM/ dialect/English/campuran BM & BI/ lain-lain?</p> <p>What reading materials in Malay do you keep in your home? Selain dari buku cerita, bahan bacaan apa yang kamu ada di rumah (BM)? Contoh: majalah, surat khabar, buku teks, buku agama, encyclopedia, lain-lain)</p> <p>What reading materials in English do you keep in your home? Selain dari buku cerita, bahan bacaan apa yang kamu ada di rumah(BI)?</p>	

Playing School Activity

Situation

Let's pretend that some Nursery children are coming to your class to see what it is like to be in the Year 1 classroom. They don't know how to read so you have to read them a story. One of you will pretend to be the teacher. Role play what happens in your classroom.

Appendix 7: Observation Schedule: 2004 Study

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

Date: _____	Class: _____
Time: _____	No. of pupils: _____
School: _____	Topic: _____
Subject: _____	Textbook & Page No.: _____
Teacher: _____	Observation No.: _____
Classroom Lay-out	

Observation Protocol

Time	Literacy Events		Patterns of Interactions	Teacher's language	Materials used	Focus of Literacy Events	Notes
	Teachers Do	Students do					

Appendix 8: Teacher's Interview: 2004 Study

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS

Interview 1

No	Interview Questions	Notes
1	<p>Personal profile</p> <p>Name Age Male/female Subject taught Qualification Teaching Experience Class/School Language use at home Contact Details</p>	To start the conversation
2	<p>What is your goal as a language teacher? Apa matlamat puan sebagai seorang guru bahasa?</p> <p><u>Curriculum / Syllabus</u></p>	
3	<p>What do you think of the revised English curriculum/ syllabus? Apa pendapat puan tentang Kurikulum semakan Bahasa Inggeris?</p>	
4	<p>Do you follow the syllabus? Why? How do you work? Do you work together to plan lessons etc? Why? Adakah puan mengajar mengikut sukatan pelajaran harian? Kenapa? Bagaimanakah puan bekerja? Adakah puan bekerja secara kumpulan untuk menyediakan rancangan harian atau bahan-bahan pengajaran atau aktiviti? Kenapa?</p>	
5	<p>What do you think of the Literacy Hour/the English Hour? How do you implement it in your class? Apa pendapat puan berkenaan Literacy Hour/the English Hour? Bagaimanakah ianya di dilaksanakan dalam kelas puan?</p>	
6	<p>What do you think of the teaching of Malay, English and Arabic simultaneously in Standard 1? Why? Apa pandangan puan tentang pengajaran BM/English/Arab serentak di Tahun 1? Kenapa?</p>	
7	<p>What do you think of the teaching of Math and Science through English? How do you think this helps in the learning of English? Apa pendapat puan tentang pengajaran Matematik dan Sains dalam Bahasa Inggeris? Bagaimana puan rasa ini membantu dalam pembelajaran B. Inggeris?</p>	
8	<p>Do you have any difficulty teaching BM/English in urban/rural areas? Why? Adakah puan menghadapi sebarang masalah/kesulitan dalam mengajar BM/English di kawasan Bandar/luar bandar? Kenapa?</p>	

9	<p><u>Aspects of Literacy Events</u></p>	
10	<p>How do you teach children to read in Malay or English? Bagaimana cikgu mengajar murid-murid membaca dalam BM/BI?</p>	
11	<p>What are the important reading skills that you teach them? Apakah asas kemahiran membaca yang puan ajar di Tahun 1?</p>	
12	<p>Which technique(s) works best for you? Why? Teknik apakah yang paling berkesan bagi cikgu? Kenapa?</p>	
	<p>What do you think of phonics? Apa pandangan cikgu tentang phonics?</p>	
13	<p><u>Teaching Materials</u></p>	
14	<p>What teaching materials do you use? Apakah bahan-bahan pengajaran yang puan gunakan?</p>	
15	<p>Do you read stories in class? Why? When do you use stories? For what purpose? Adakah puan bercerita dalam kelas? Kenapa? Bilakah ianya digunakan? Untuk tujuan apa?</p>	
16	<p>What do you think of the use of LCD in the classroom? Apa pendapat cikgu tentang penggunaan LCD dalam pengajaran?</p>	
17	<p>How does it help you in your teaching? Bagaimana ianya membantu dalam pengajaran puan?</p>	
	<p>Do you have any other comments regarding the teaching of BM/English in urban and rural areas? Adakah cikgu mempunyai komen tentang pengajaran dan pembelajaran BM/BI di Bandar di luar Bandar?</p>	
	<p style="text-align: center;">Thank you</p>	
	<p style="text-align: center;">*****</p>	

Interview 2: Post-Observation Interviews: 2004 Study

<u>General Teaching Aspects</u>		
1	I've watched your classes for the past week or so, taking the lessons as a whole, what areas were you satisfied with? Why? Secara keseluruhannya, apakah yang cikgu puas hati terhadap pengajaran cikgu? Kenapa?	<i>Look at the transcript and ask for clarification</i>
2	What areas were you less satisfied with? Apakah yang cikgu kurang puas hati dalam pengajaran cikgu?	
3	How satisfied were you with the pupils' performance in the lesson? Sejauh manakah cikgu berpuas hati terhadap pencapaian/penglibatan murid-murid dalam kelas? Kenapa?	
4	How typical were these lessons of your normal lessons? If yes, why? If no, describe your typical lesson. Adakah kelas-kelas yang saya lihat ini mencerminkan gambaran sebenar kelas-kelas harian puan? Kalau ya, kenapa? Kalau tidak, jelaskan.	
5	What effect did my presence have on the lessons? Adakah kehadiran saya dalam kelas memberi kesan kepada pengajaran puan?	
6	Were the students any different to normal? Adakah cikgu rasa murid-murid berkelakuan agak berbeza daripada biasa? Kenapa?	
7	Do you think you teach differently when I am not there? In what ways? Adakah puan rasa pengajaran puan agak berbeza semasa saya tiada? Apakah perbezaannya?	
<u>Aspects of literacy practices</u>		
8	Why do you use flashcards? Saya perhatikan yang cikgu menggunakan flashcard. Kenapa cikgu menggunakan flashcard?	
9	Why do you use syllable cards? (BM) Kenapa cikgu menggunakan kad sukukata? (BM)	
10	Do you think they do better when using syllable cards? (BM) Adakah cikgu rasa ianya lebih efektif bila menggunakan kad sukukata?	
11	Why did you ask the students to read chorally (as a group)? Kenapa cikgu menyuruh murid membaca secara beamai-ramai?	
12	Why did you ask the students to repeat after you? Kenapa cikgu menyuruh murid-murid mengulang semula apa yang cikgu sebut?	

13	<p>Why do you allow them to answer as the whole group (chorally)? Kenapa cikgu menyuruh murid-murid menjawab beramai-ramai?</p>	
14	<p><u>Aspects of the use of Malay in an English classroom</u></p> <p>Do you use English fully in your class? Why? Why not? Adakah cikgu menggunakan Bahasa Inggeris sepenuhnya dalam kelas? Kenapa? Kenapa tidak?</p>	
15	<p>When do you use Malay? For what purposes? Bila cikgu guna BM? Untuk tujuan apa?</p>	
16	<p>I noticed that you asked questions in English, and then repeated them in Malay. Why is that so? Saya perhatikan cikgu menyoal dalam BI dan kemudian mengulang soalan tersebut dalam BM, kenapa?</p>	
17	<p>Why did you give instructions in Malay? Apakah tujuan cikgu memberikan arahan dalam BM?</p>	
18	<p>Do students use English fully in the classroom? Why? Why not? Adakah murid-murid menggunakan BI sepenuhnya dalam kelas? Kenapa? Kenapa tidak?</p>	
19	<p>Do you allow the students to respond in Malay or in English? Why? When do you allow them to use Malay? Adakah cikgu membenarkan murid-murid memberikan jawapan dalam BM? Kenapa? Bilakah puan membenarkan mereka menggunakan BM?</p>	
20	<p>To what extent do you think Malay facilitates the teaching of English? Pada pendapat cikgu, sejauh manakah penggunaan BM dapat membantu dalam pengajaran BI?</p>	

Appendix 9: Students' Interview: 2004 Study

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

1	Personal Profile Name Age Male/female Class School Contact Details	Notes
2	Do you have story books at home? In Malay or English? Adakah awak memiliki buku cerita di rumah? Buku cerita BM atau BI?	
3	What's your favourite story? Why? Apa cerita kegemaran kamu? Kenapa?	
4	Who read stories to you? When? In BM/English? Siapa bacakan buku cerita pada kamu? Bila? Dalam BM atau BI?	
5	Can you read in BM? Is it difficult or easy to learn to read in BM? Why? Bolehkah kamu membaca dalam BM? Adakah belajar membaca dalam BM susah atau senang? Kenapa?	
6	Can you read in English? Is it difficult or easy to learn to read in English? Why? Bolehkah kamu membaca dalam BI? Adakah susah atau senang untuk belajar membaca dalam BI? Kenapa?	
7	What sort of things do you read in BM? Apa yang kamu baca dalam BM?	
8	What sort of things do you read in English? Apa yang kamu baca dalam BI?	
9	Why do you think you have to learn to read in BM? English? Kenapa awak perlu belajar membaca dalam BM?BI?	
10	Do you learn to read in other languages i.e Arabic/Quran too? Where? With whom? How often? Adakah awak belajar membaca dalam bahasa lain, contohnya Arabic/Quran? Di mana? Dengan siapa? Berapa kali seminggu?	
11	Why do you have to learn to read Arabic/Quran? Kenapa awak perlu belajar membaca Arabic/Quran?	
12	Do you like to learn BM? What do you like about your BM class? Why? Adakah kamu suka belajar BM? Apa yang kamu suka tentang kelas BM? Kenapa?	
13	Do you like to learn English? Why? What do you like about your	

<p>14</p> <p>15</p> <p>16</p>	<p>English class? Adakah kamu suka belajar Bahasa Inggeris? Apa yang kamu suka tentang kelas BI?</p> <p>Which one do you like best? Why? Yang mana satu kamu paling suka? Kenapa?</p> <p>What would you like to change about your BM class? Why? Apa yang awak nak ubah berkenaan dengan kelas BM? Kenapa"</p> <p>What would you like to change about your English class? Why? Apa yang awak nak ubah berkenaan dengan kelas BI? Kenapa"</p>	
<p>17</p> <p>18</p> <p>19</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Home Literacy Practices</p> <p>What language(s) do you use at home? Malay/ Kedah dialect, English, mixed or others? Apakah bahasa yang digunakan di rumah? BM/ dialect/English/campuran BM & BI/ lain-lain?</p> <p>What reading materials in Malay do you keep in your home? Selain dari buku cerita, bahan bacaan apa yang kamu ada di rumah (BM)? Contoh: majalah, surat khabar, buku teks, buku agama, encyclopedia, lain-lain)</p> <p>What reading materials in English do you keep in your home? Selain dari buku cerita, bahan bacaan apa yang kamu ada di rumah(BI)?</p>	

Students' Role Play

Situation

Let's pretend that some Nursery children are coming to your class to see what it is like to be in the Year 1 classroom. They don't know how to read so you have to teach them to read. One of you will pretend to be the teacher. Role play what happens in your English classroom.

Appendix 11: Policy Maker's Interview: 2004 Study

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE STAKEHOLDERS (PPD OFFICERS, HEAD SUBJECT TEACHERS)

No.	Question	Comment
1	Personal Background	To start the conversation
2	Could you explain a little bit about the educational policies which concern with the primary education? Boleh Encik/puan terangkan berkenaan dasar-dasar pendidikan yang melibatkan sekolah rendah di Kedah?	
3	How are these policies been implemented in the primary schools in Kedah? Urban and rural areas? Bagaimanakah dasar-dasar tersebut dilaksanakan di Kedah? Bandar dan luar Bandar?	
4	How is the teaching and learning of BM and BI been implemented in the primary schools in Kedah? Bagaimana pula berhubung dengan pembelajaran dan pengajaran BM dan BI di sekolah rendah di Kedah? Bagaimanakah ianya dilaksanakan?	
5	What's your comment about the revised English KBSR curriculum? Why has it been revised? Apakah komen Encik/puan berkenaan dengan kurikulum semakan KBSR bagi BM dan BI? Kenapa semakan dibuat?	
6	What's your comment about the Literacy Hour/English Hour? When and how is it been implemented in primary schools in Kedah? What's the purpose of its implementation? Boleh berikan sedikit komen berkenaan literacy Hour/ English Hour? Bila dan bagaimanakah ianya dilaksanakan di sekolah-sekolah di Kedah? Apakah tujuan pelaksanaan Literacy Hour / English Hour?	
7	Do we have anything similar in the teaching of BM? What? Why?Why not? Adakah kita menggunakan konsep yang sama bagi pembelajaran BM? Kenapa?	
8	What do you think of the bilingual education in Malaysia? Do we have any specific policy concerning bilingual education i.e. maintaining the Mother tongue? Why? Apa pendapat Encik/puan berkenaan "bilingual education" di Malaysia. Adakah kita mempunyai polisi berkenaan bilingual education contohnya, dengan cara mengekalkan Bahasa Ibunda di sekolah-sekolah? Kenapa?	
9	What do you think about the use of BM in the teaching of English? Why? Apa pandangan Encik/puan tentang penggunaan Bahasa Malaysia dalam pengajaran BI? Why?	
10		

What's your opinion about the use of LCD in the teaching of English in Standard 1? When was it been implemented and for what purposes? How has it been useful in the teaching of English?
Apakah pendapat Encik/puan berkenaan dengan penggunaan ICT/LCD dalam pengajaran dan pembelajaran BI di sekolah rendah? Bila dan untuk tujuan apa? Sejauh manakah ianya berkesan dalam pengajaran dan pembelajaran?

Thank you

Appendix 12: Transcription Conventions

Transcription Conventions

Bold - Bahasa Malaysia

<*italic*> - English translation

() - non-verbal behaviour

(pause) - pause for a few seconds

CAPITAL LETTERS - reading from the text

XXX - unclear conversation

[overlapping speech

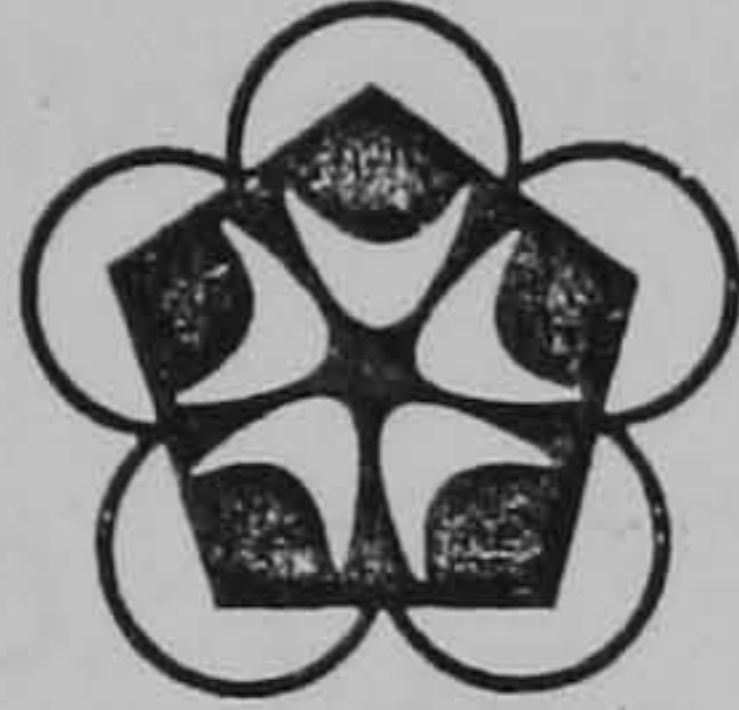
B.A.L.L - spelling letter by letter

Note: Unless otherwise stated all translations are by the author of this thesis

SULIT

English Year 1

Nama: _____ Kelas: _____



Bahasa
Inggeris
Mei
2004
1 Jam

MAJLIS GURU BESAR NEGERI KEDAH

**PEPERIKSAAN PERTENGAHAN TAHUN
NEGERI KEDAH 2004**

BAHASA INGGERIS

TAHUN 1

Satu jam

Read carefully.

Answer all the questions.

SECTION	QUESTIONS	FULL MARKS	MARKS
A	1 - 5	10	
B	6 - 10	10	
C	11 - 15	10	
D	16 - 20	10	
E	21 - 25	10	
F	26 - 30	10	
G	31 - 35	10	
H	36 - 40	10	
I	41 - 45	10	
J	46 - 50	10	
TOTAL		100	

Kertas soalan ini mengandungi 11 halaman bercetak

SECTION A

Match the correct greetings with the given pictures.



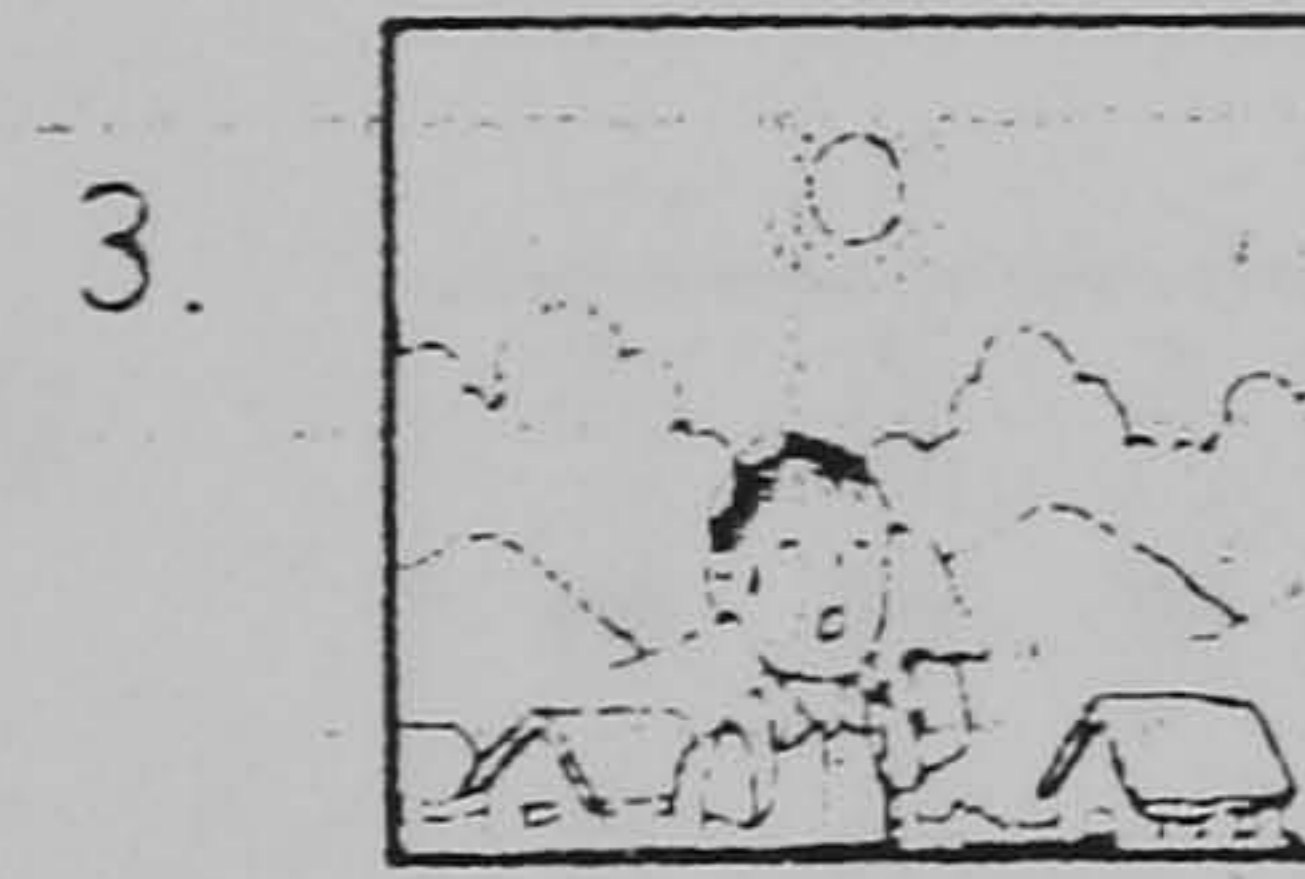
Good evening



Hello



Good morning



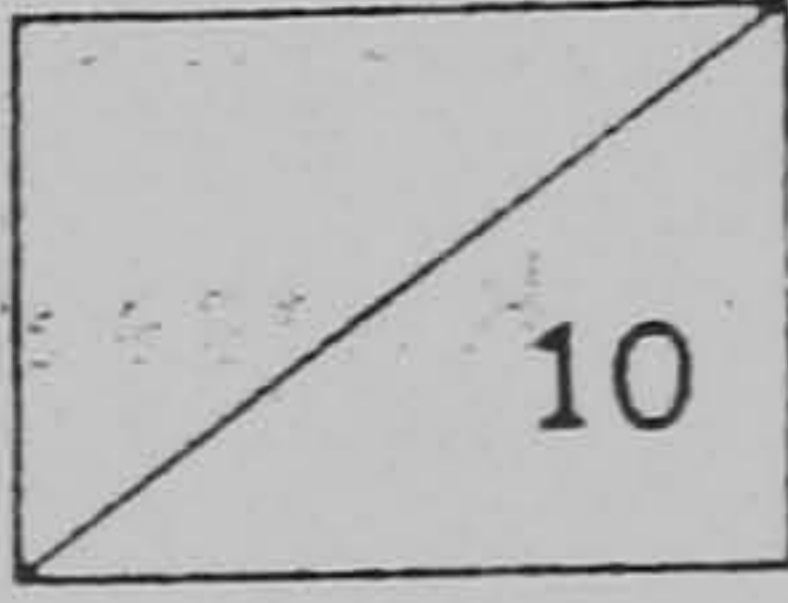
Good night



Goodbye



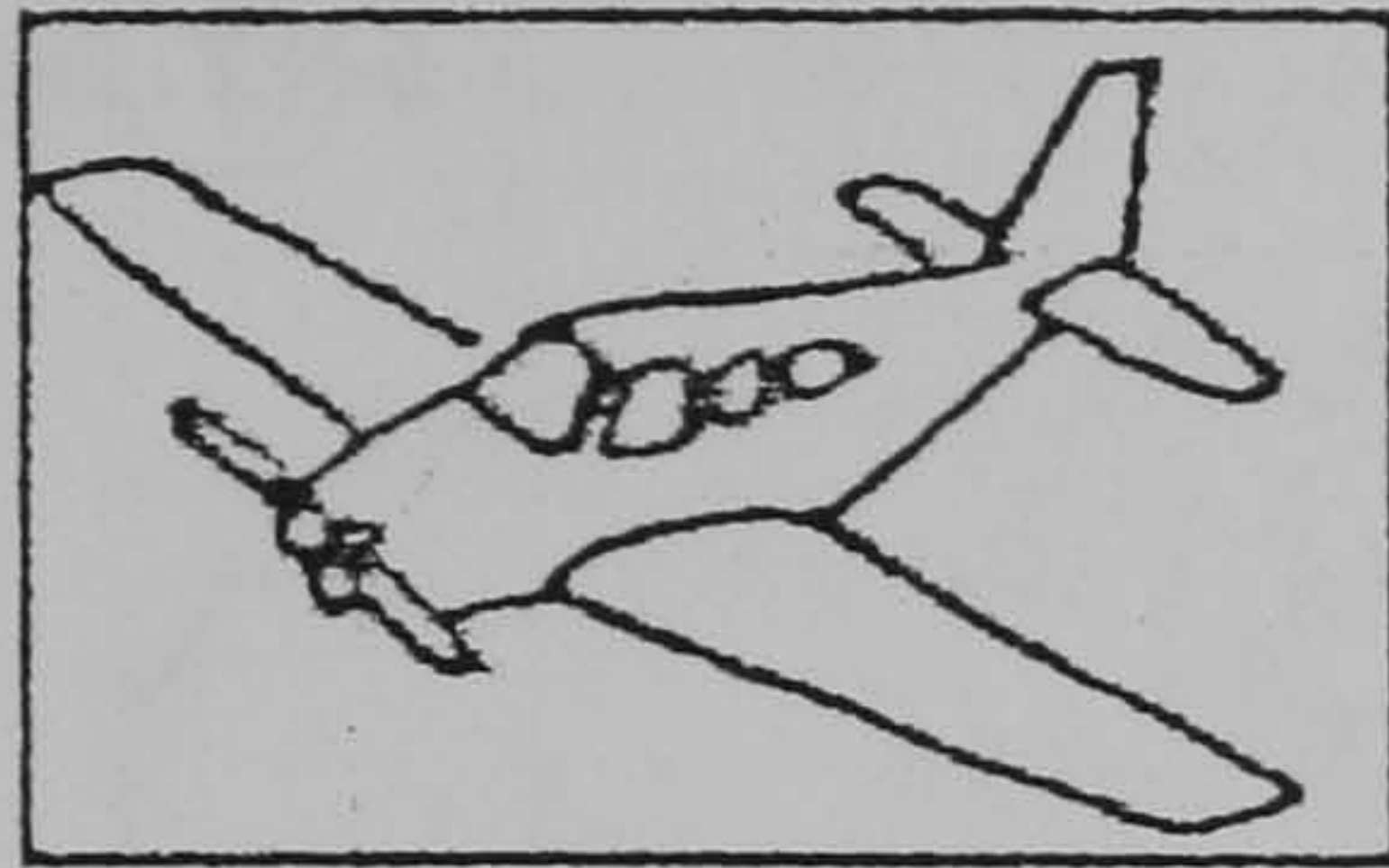
Good afternoon



SECTION B

Tick (✓) the correct answer

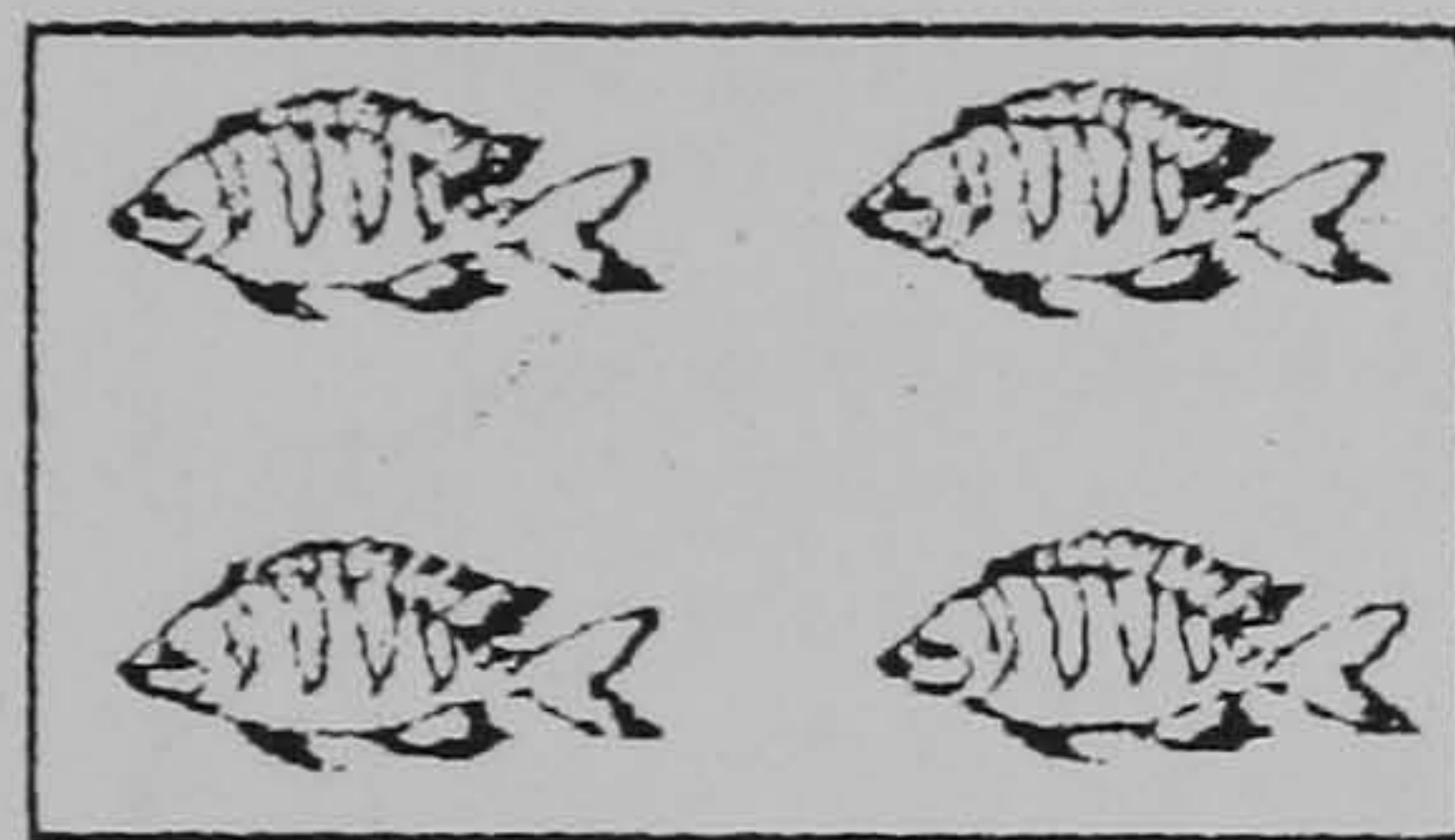
6.



one aeroplane

two aeroplanes

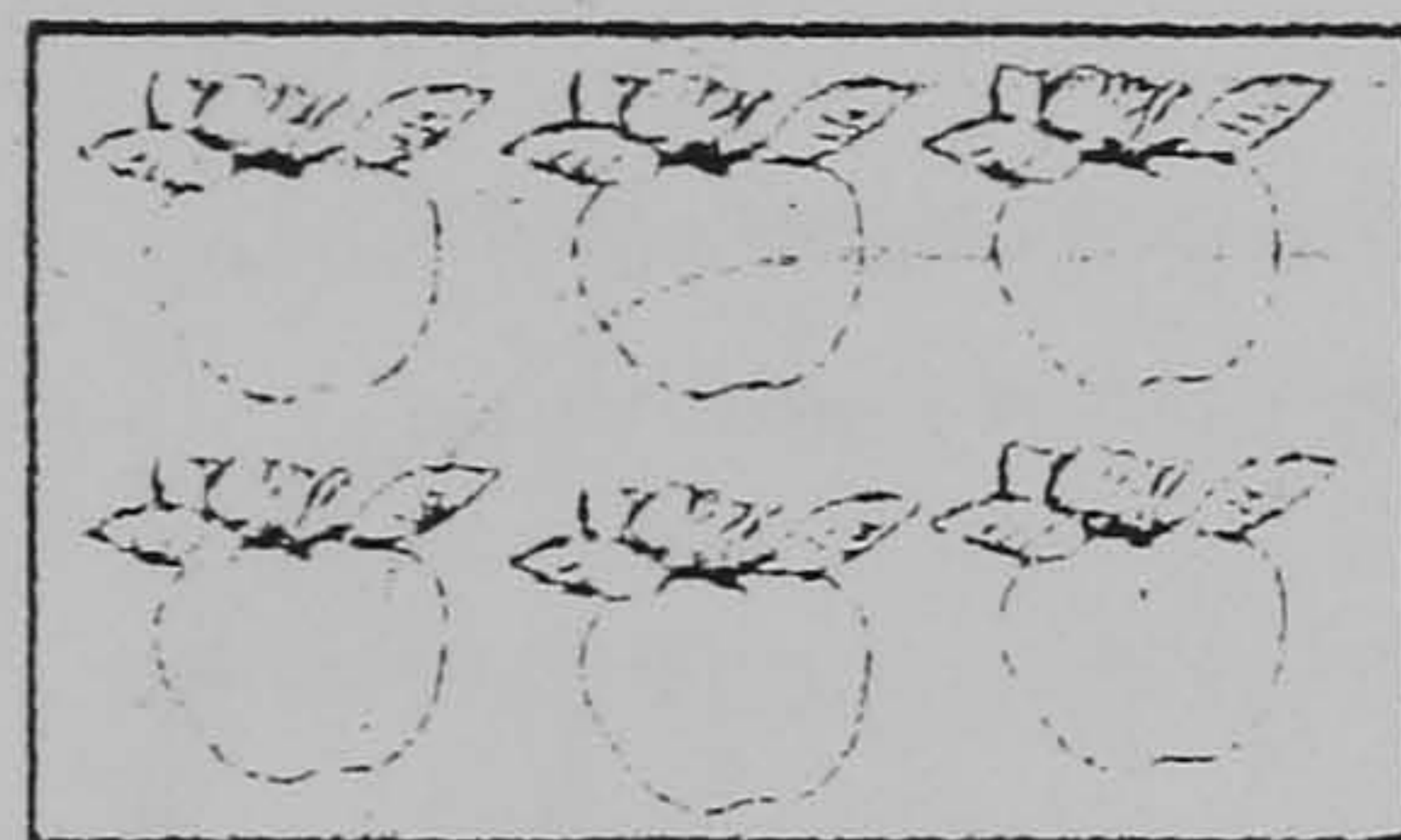
7.



four fish

three fish

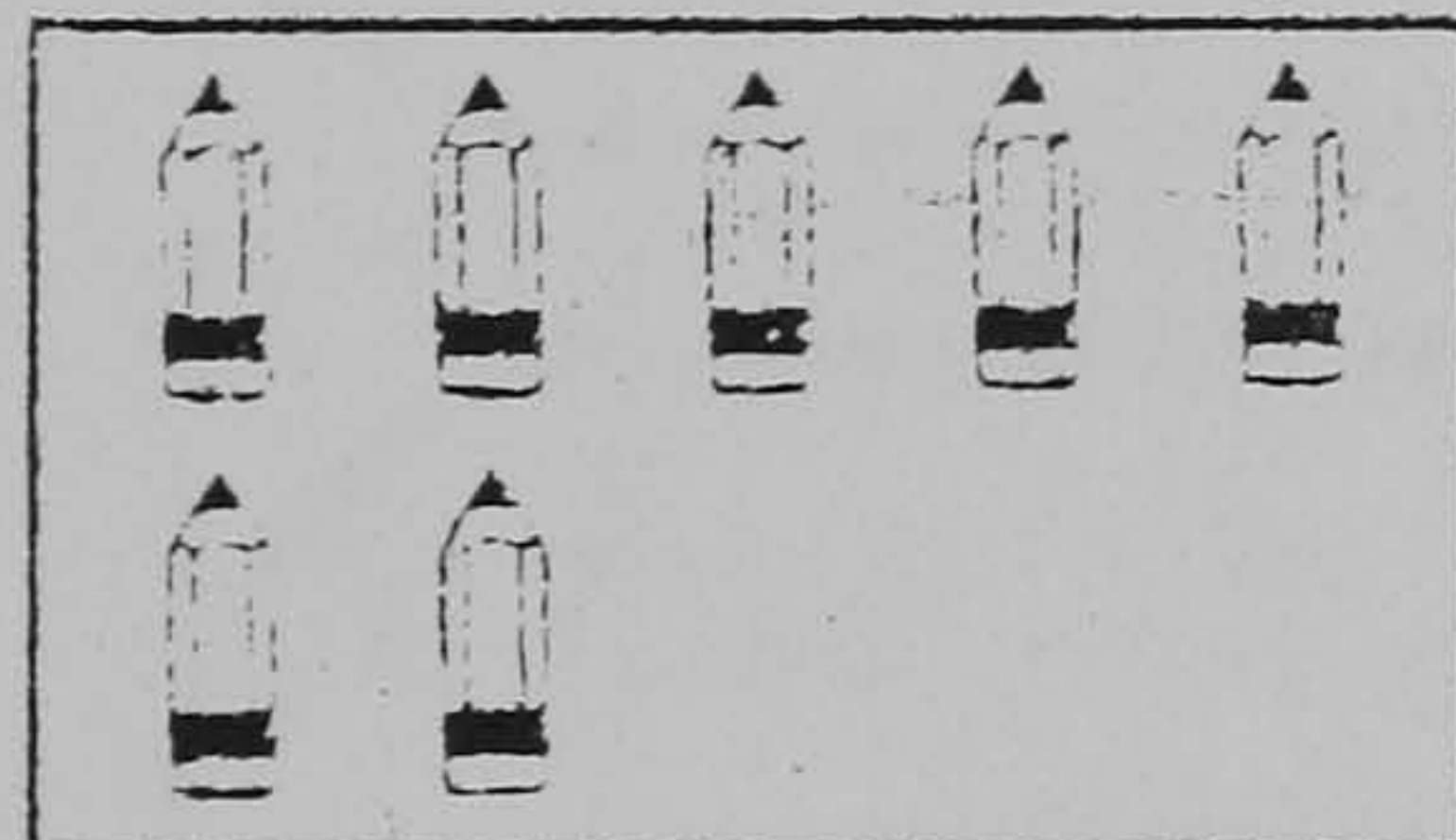
8.



eight apples

six apples

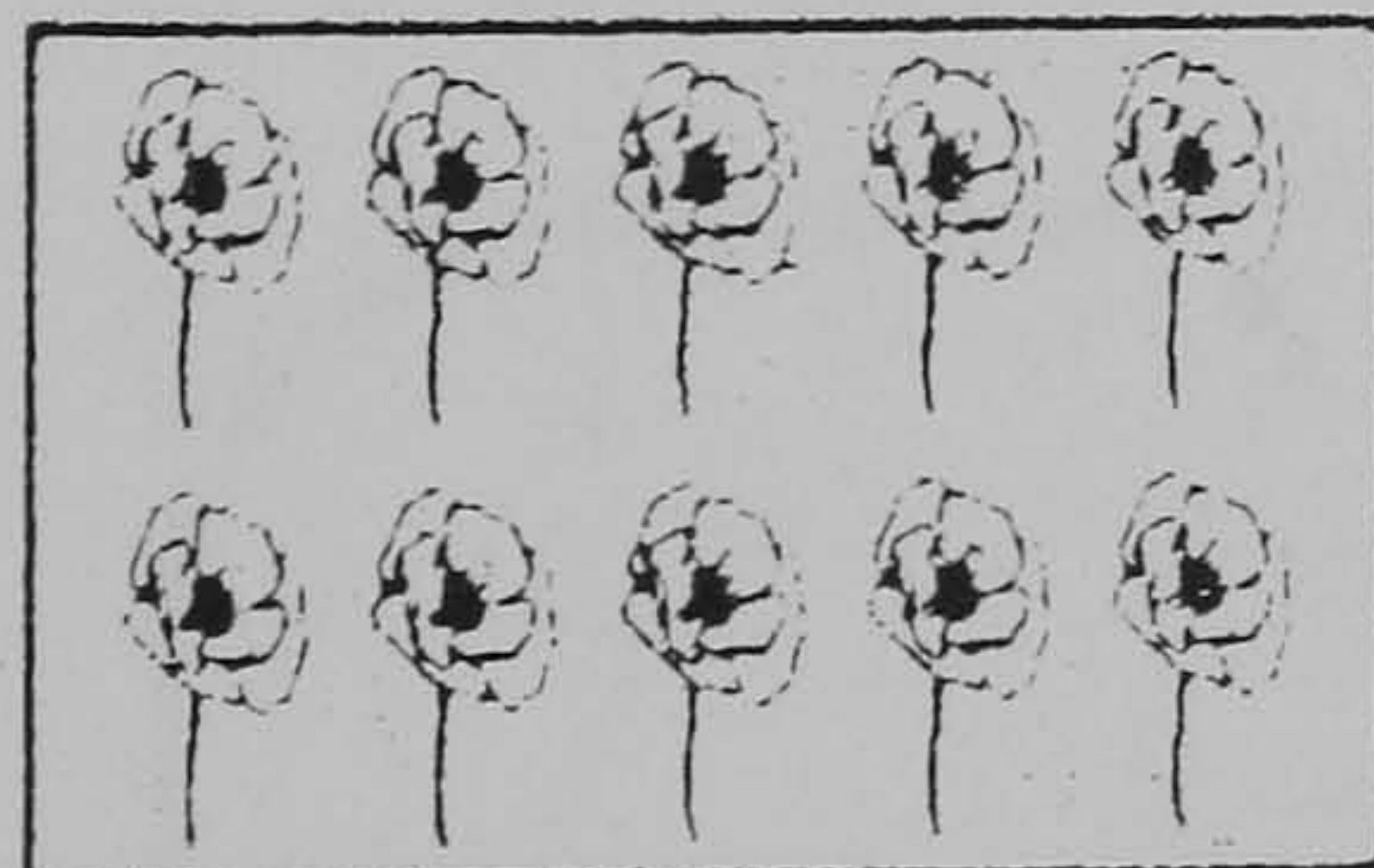
9.



five pencils

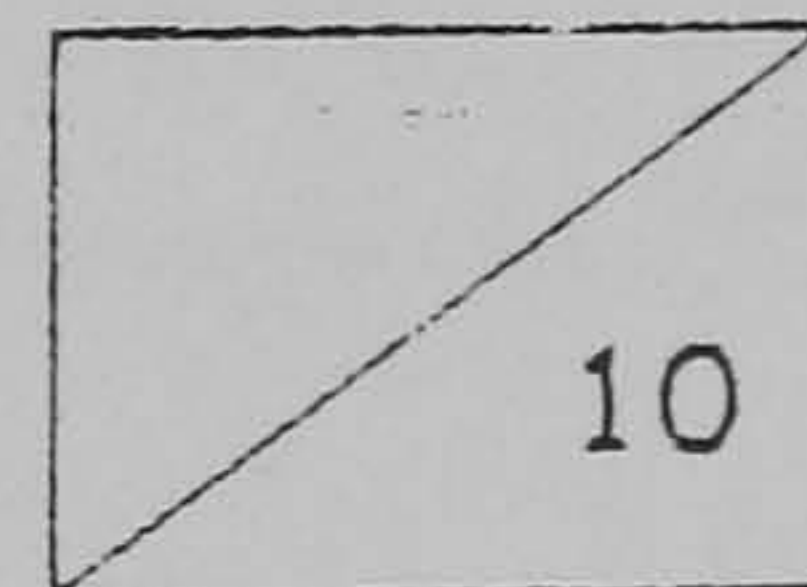
seven pencils

10.



ten flowers

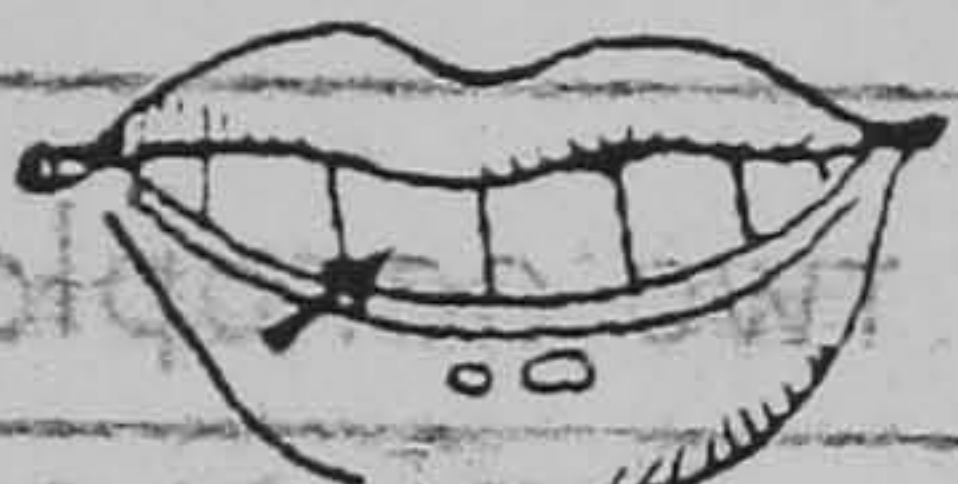
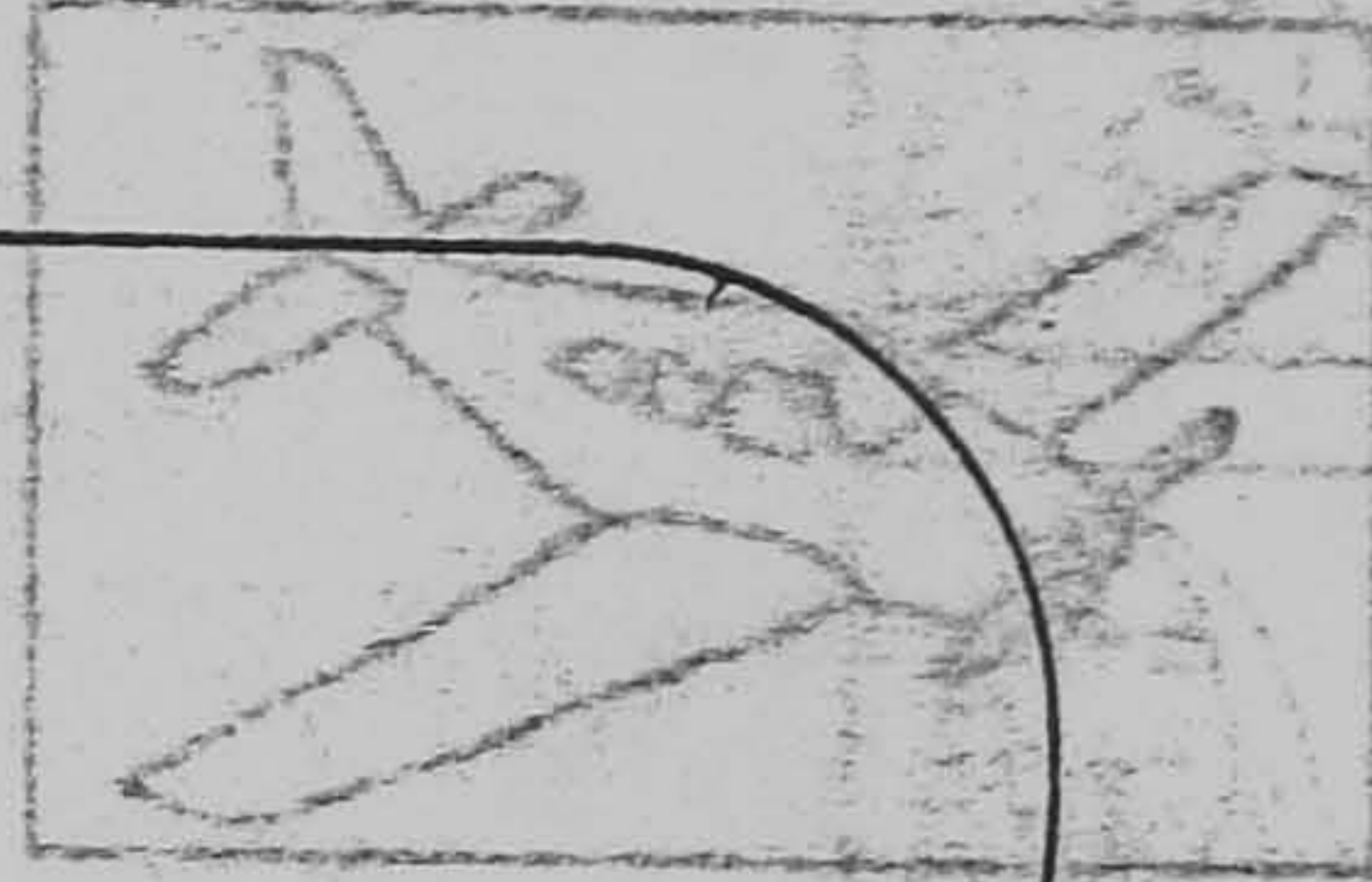
nine flowers



SECTION B
SECTION C




Read and choose the words to form the correct answer. Tick (✓) the correct answer.
Circle the correct answer.

11.



hair face teeth

12.

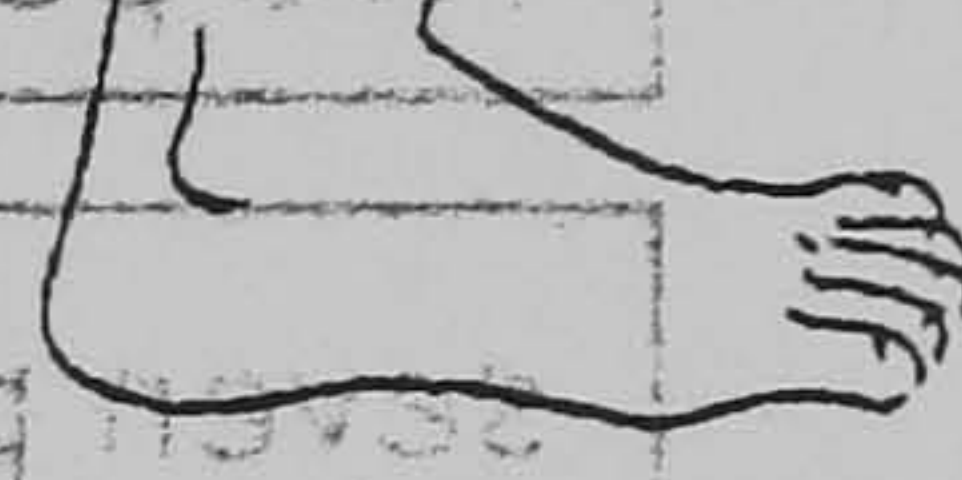
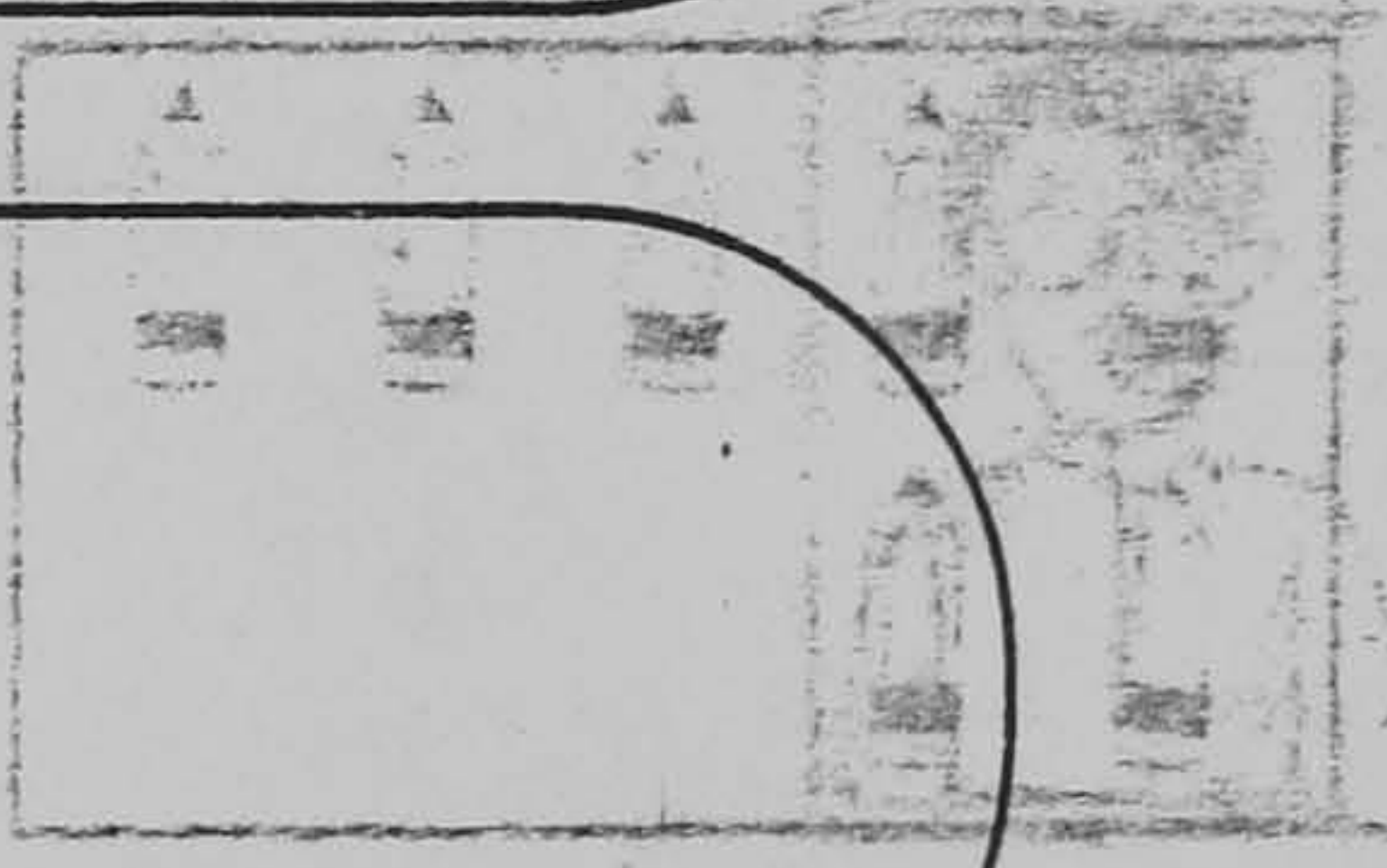
ear eye nose

13.

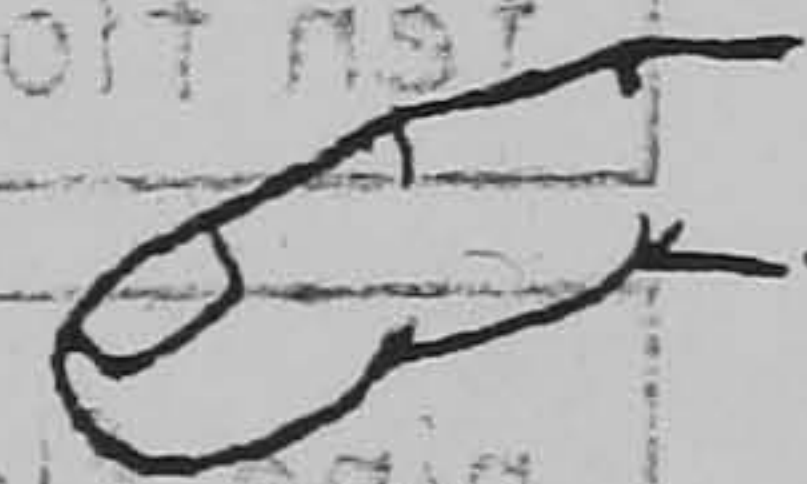
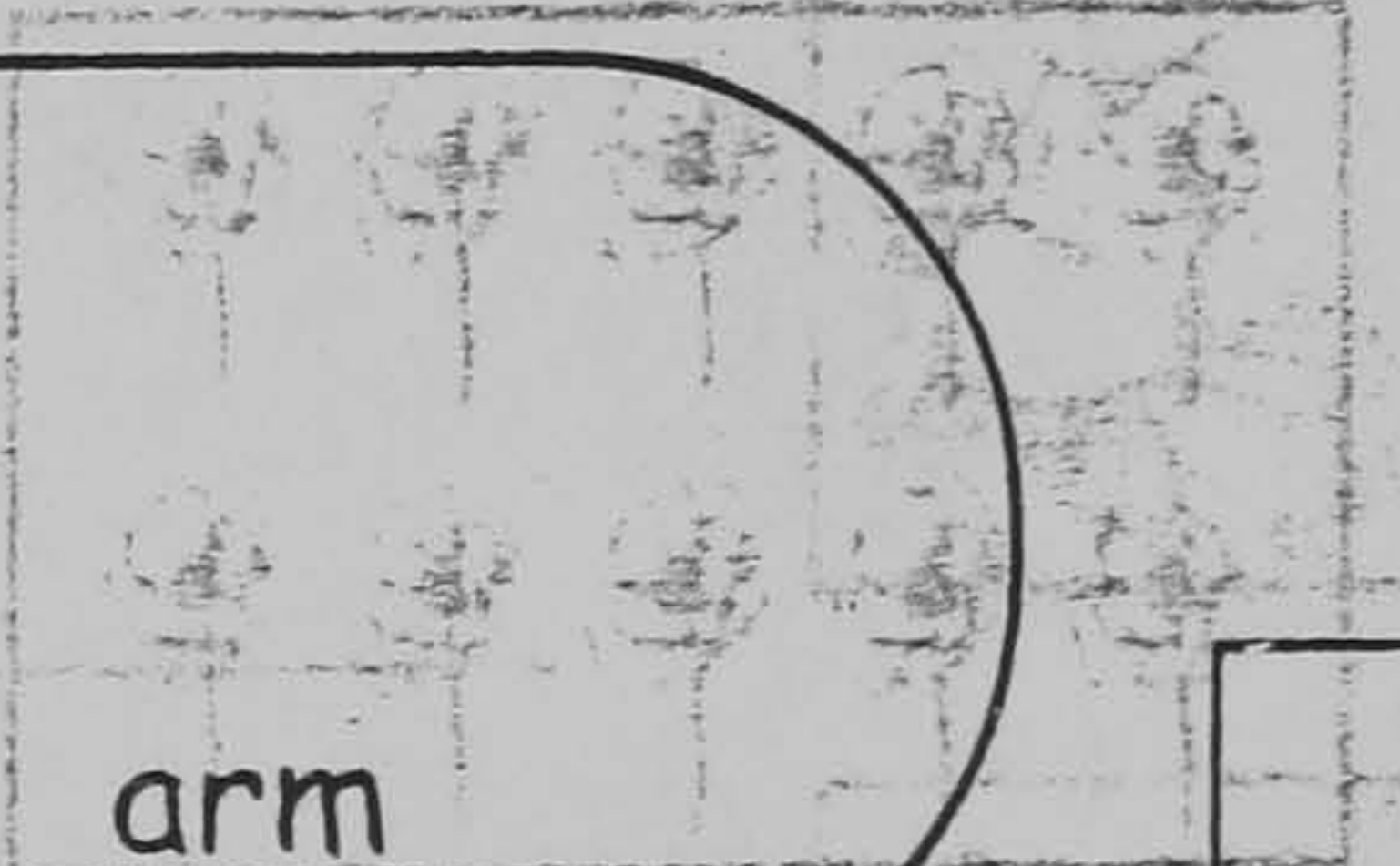
mouth teeth hand

14.

leg foot face

15.

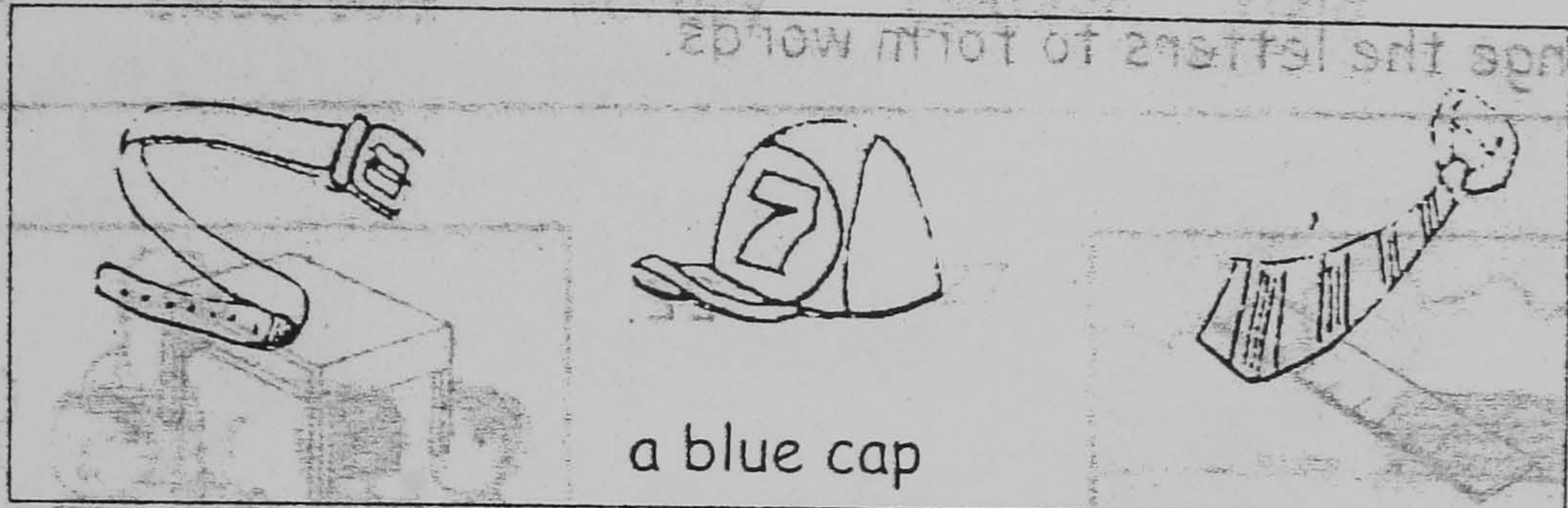
hand finger arm

10

SECTION D

Choose and colour

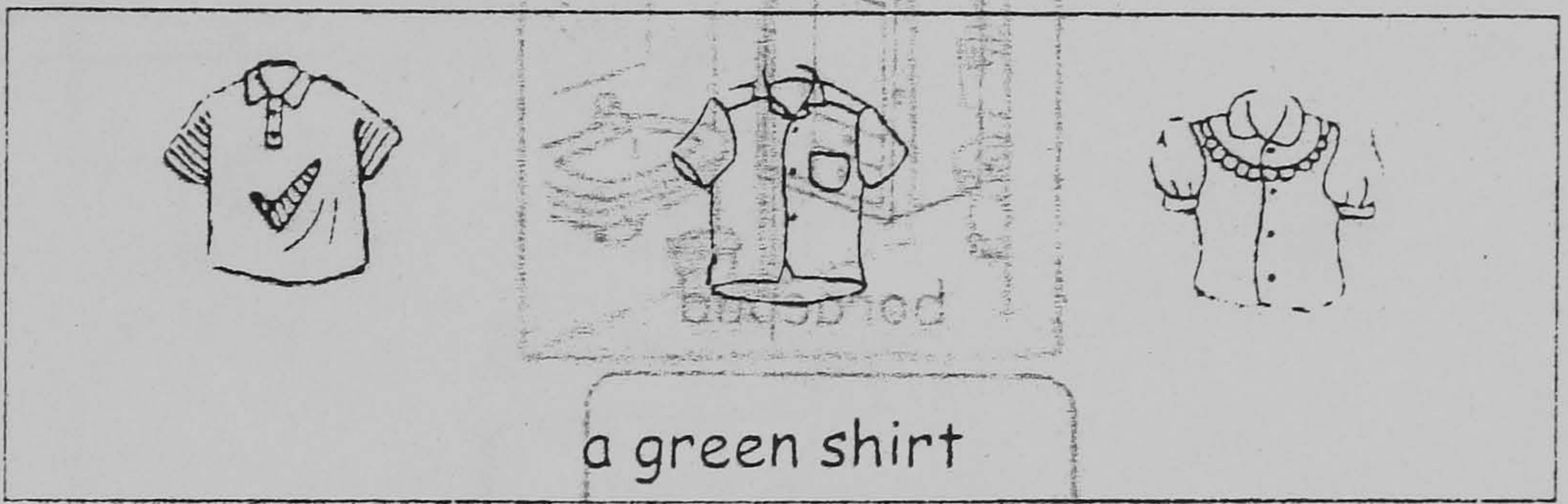
16.



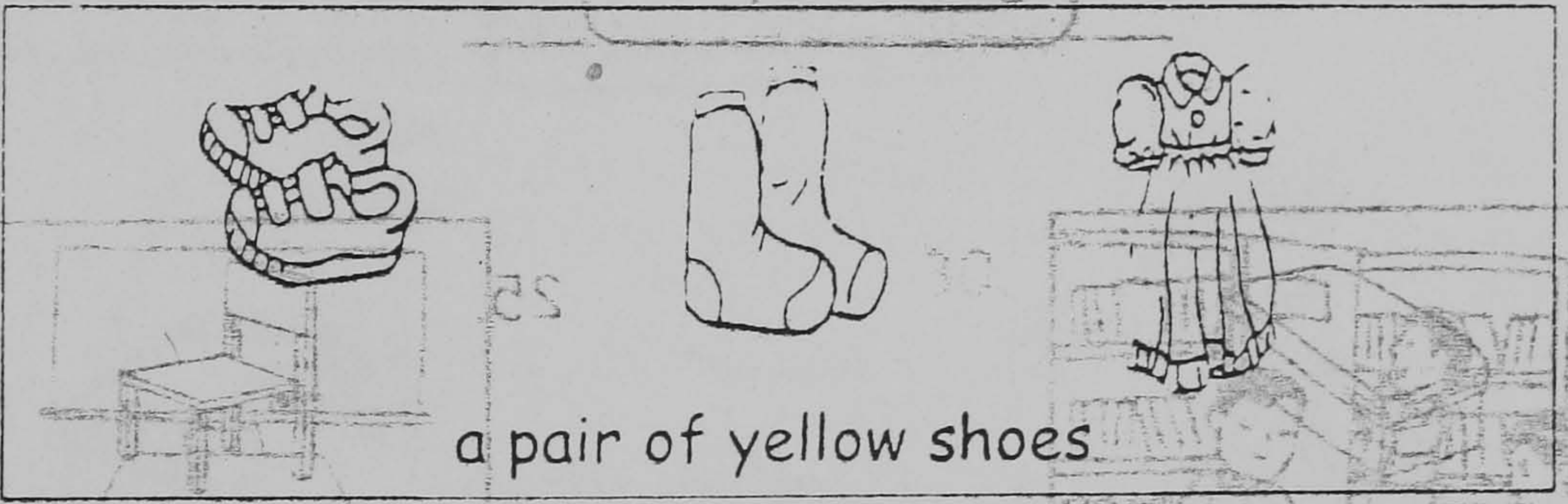
17.



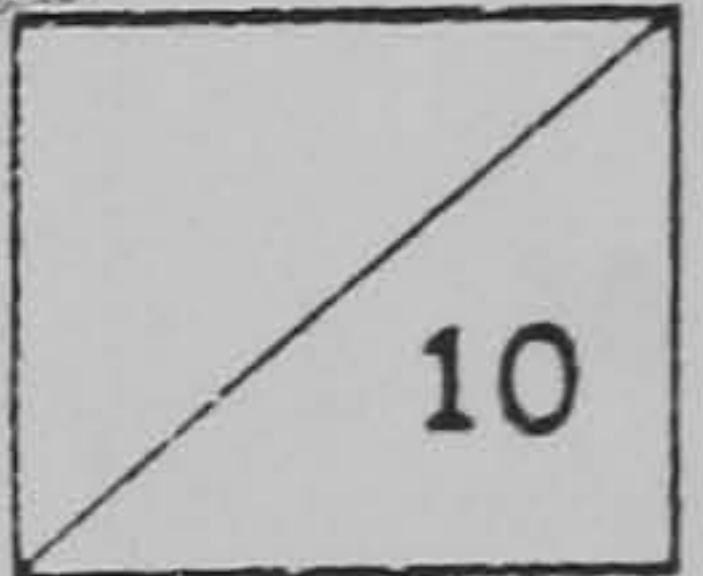
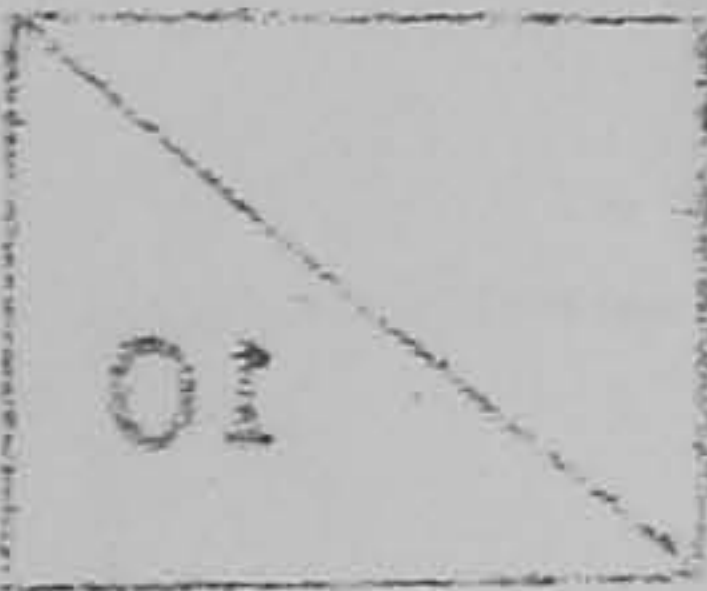
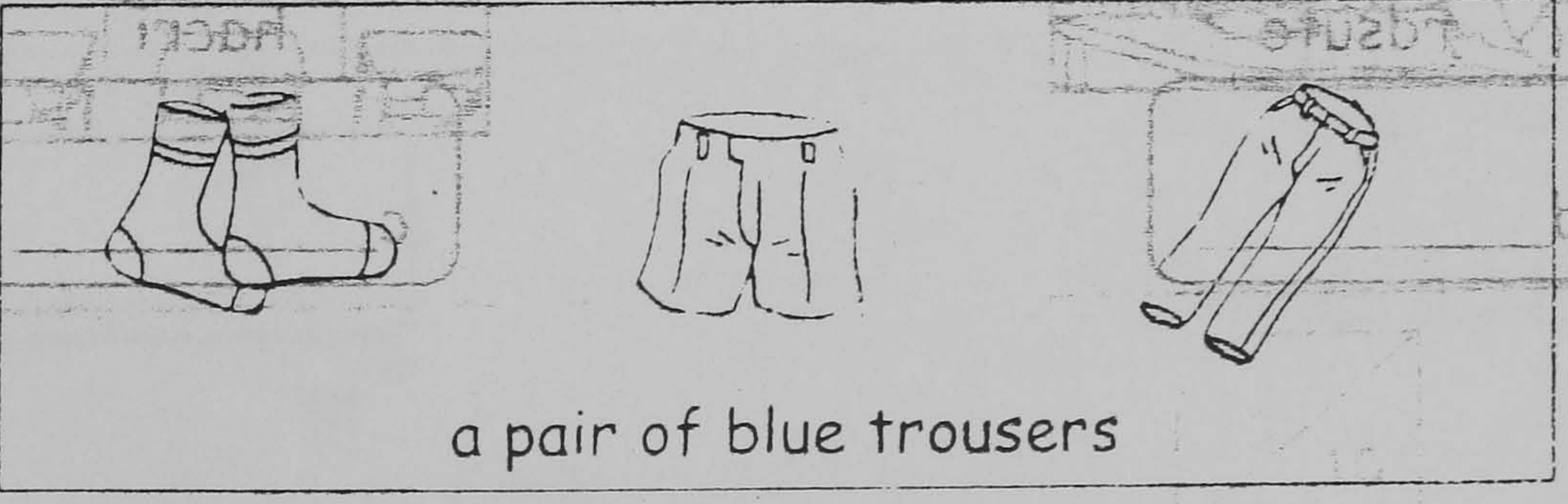
18.



19.



20.



SECTION E

Choose and colour

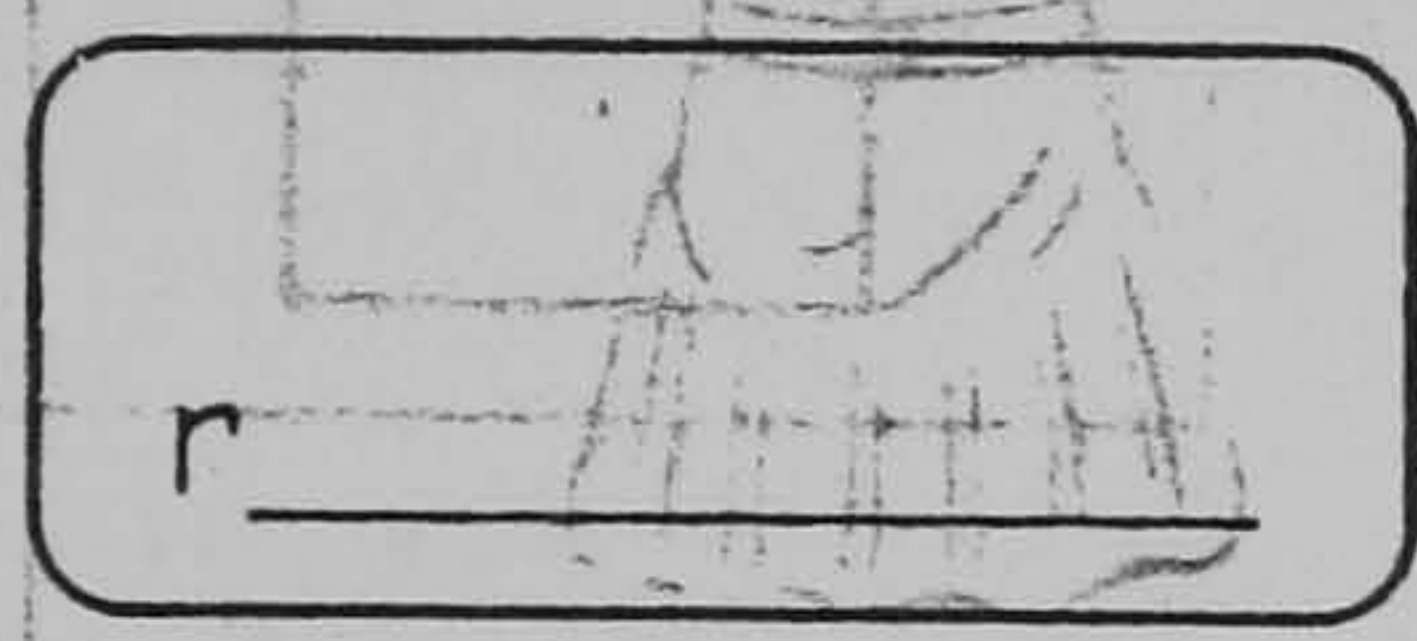
Rearrange the letters to form words.

21.

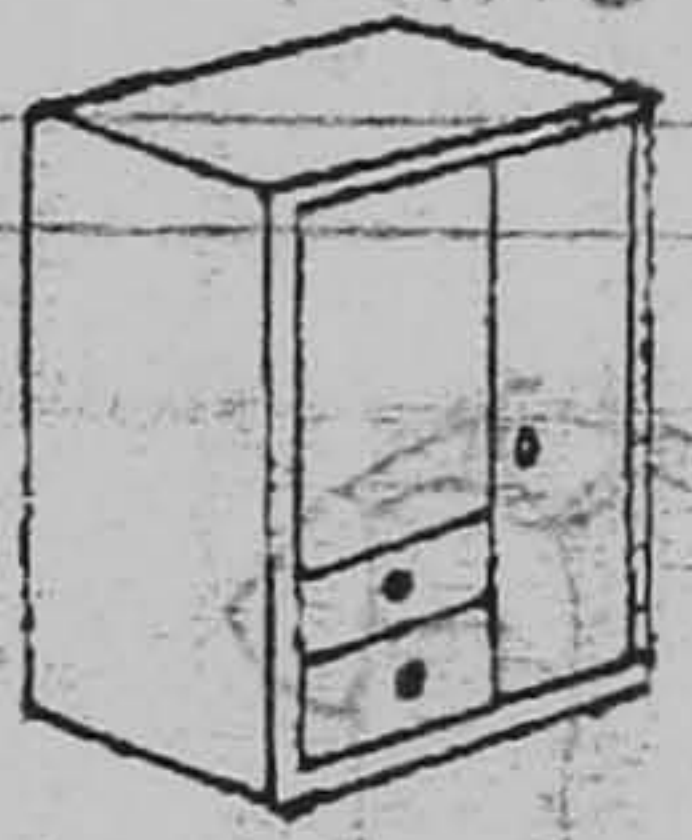
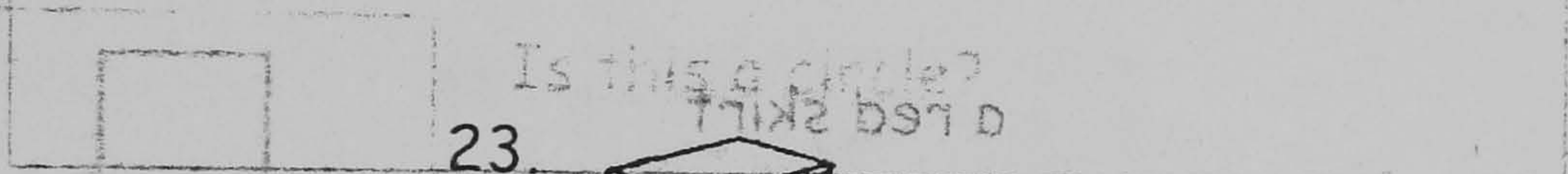


ulrer

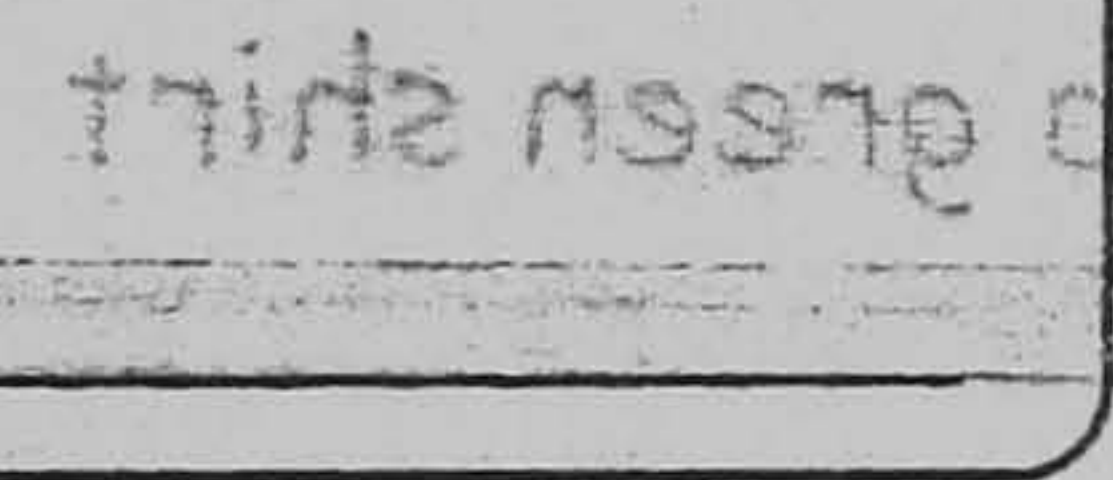
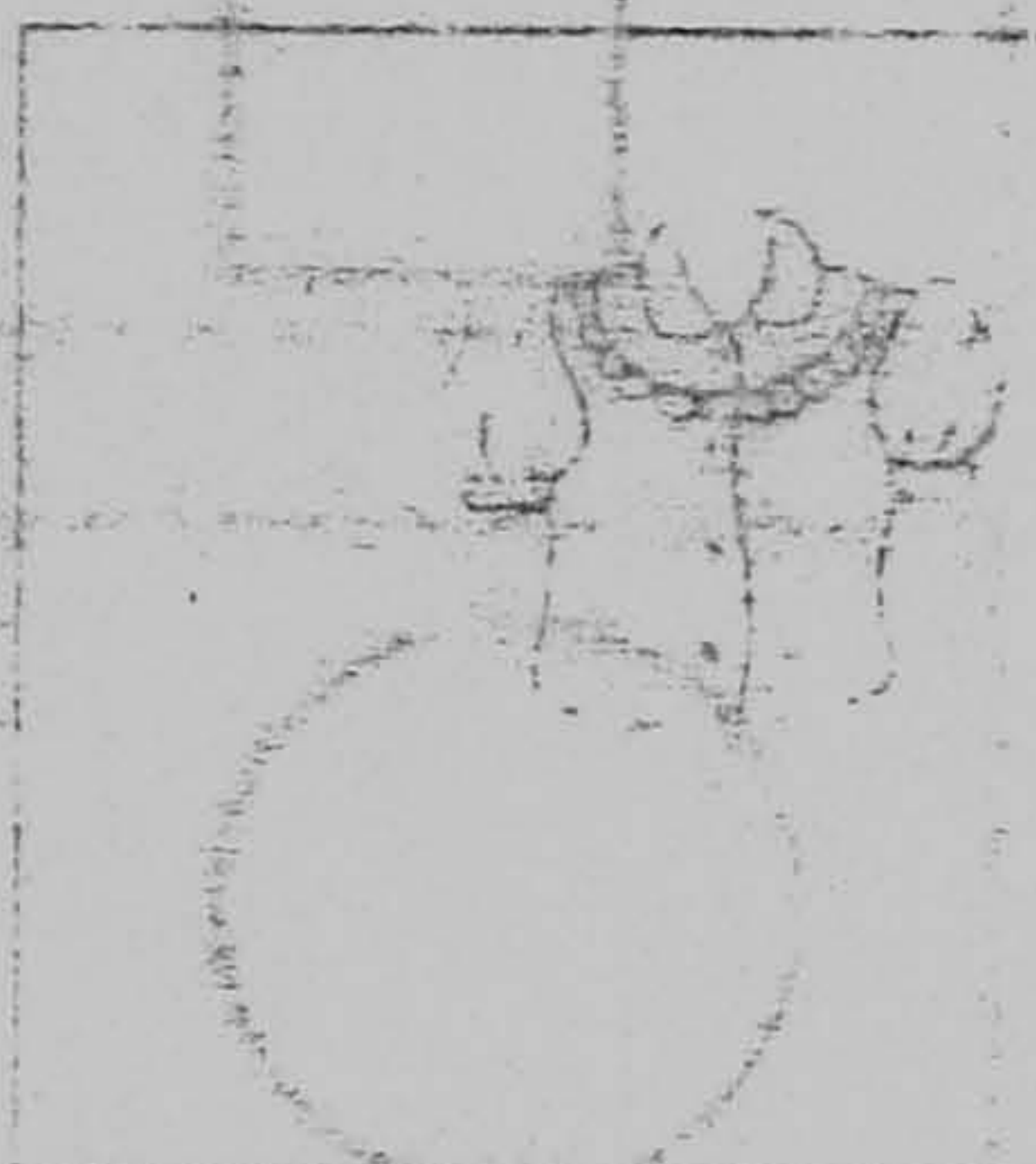
skde



32

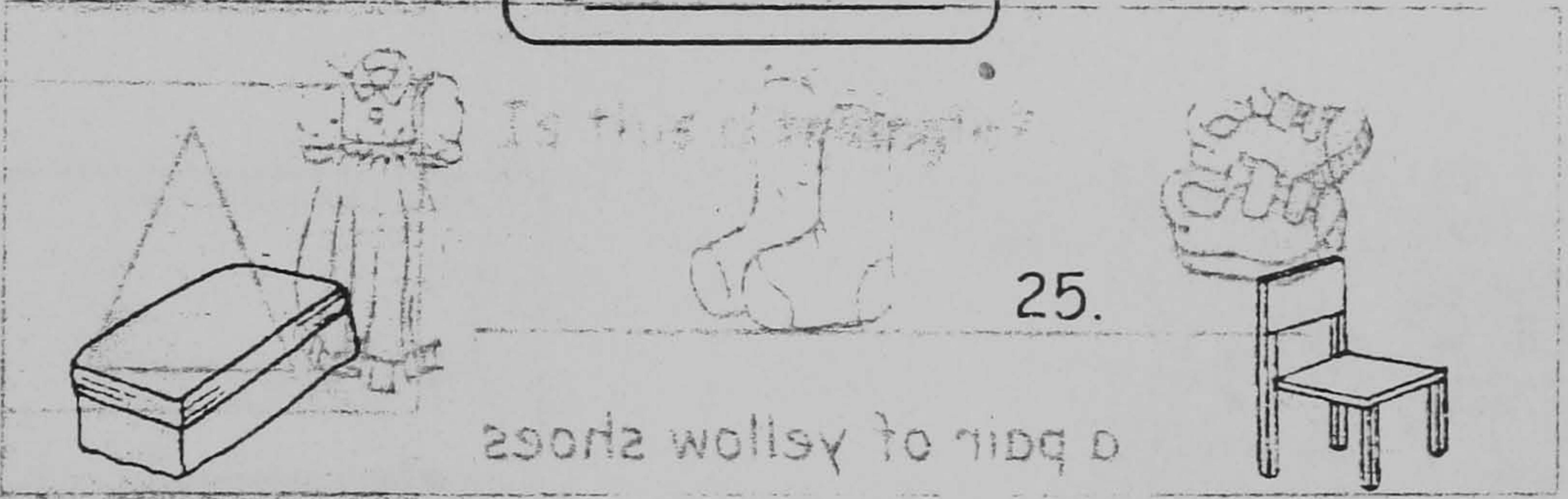


boracpud



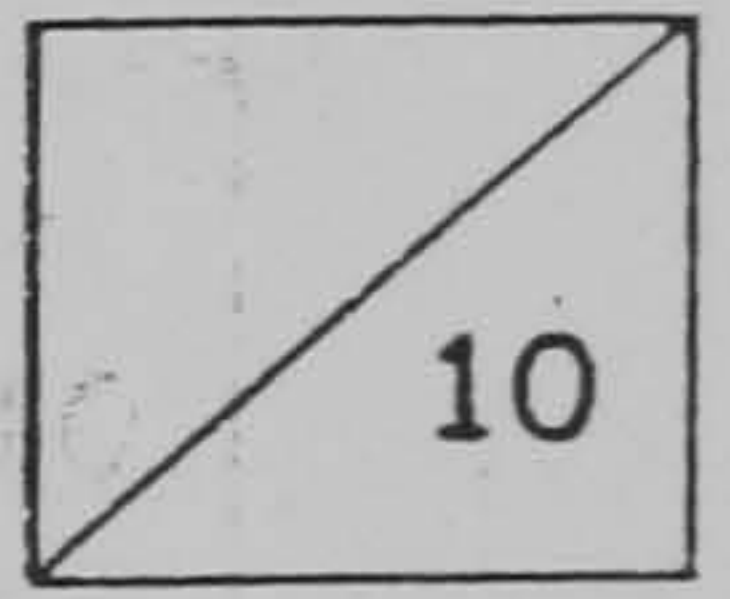
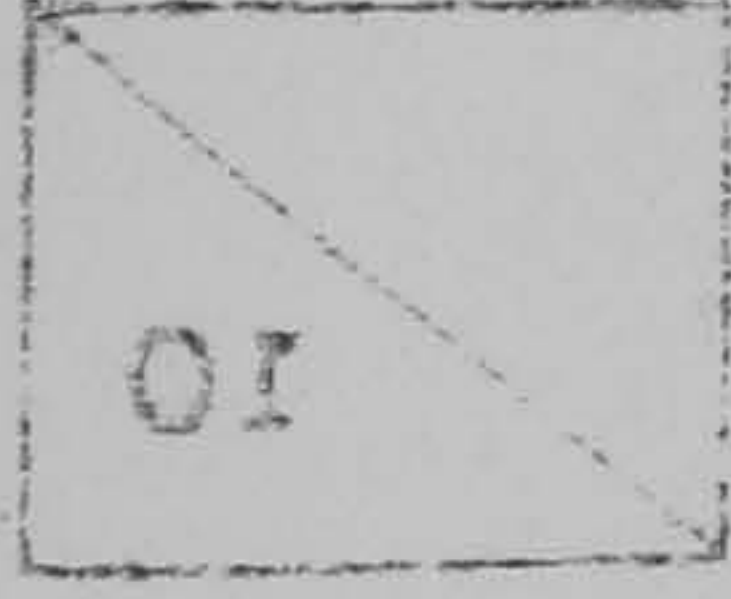
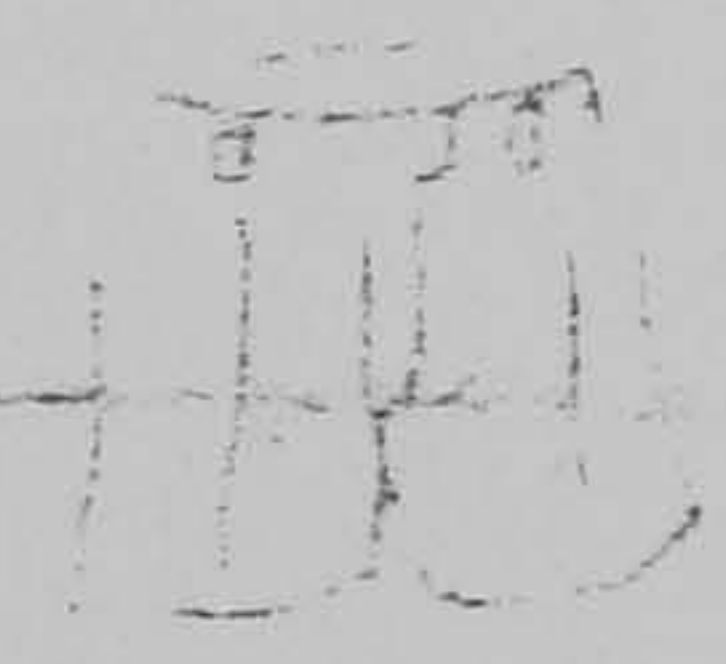
34

24.



rdsute

hacri



SECTION F

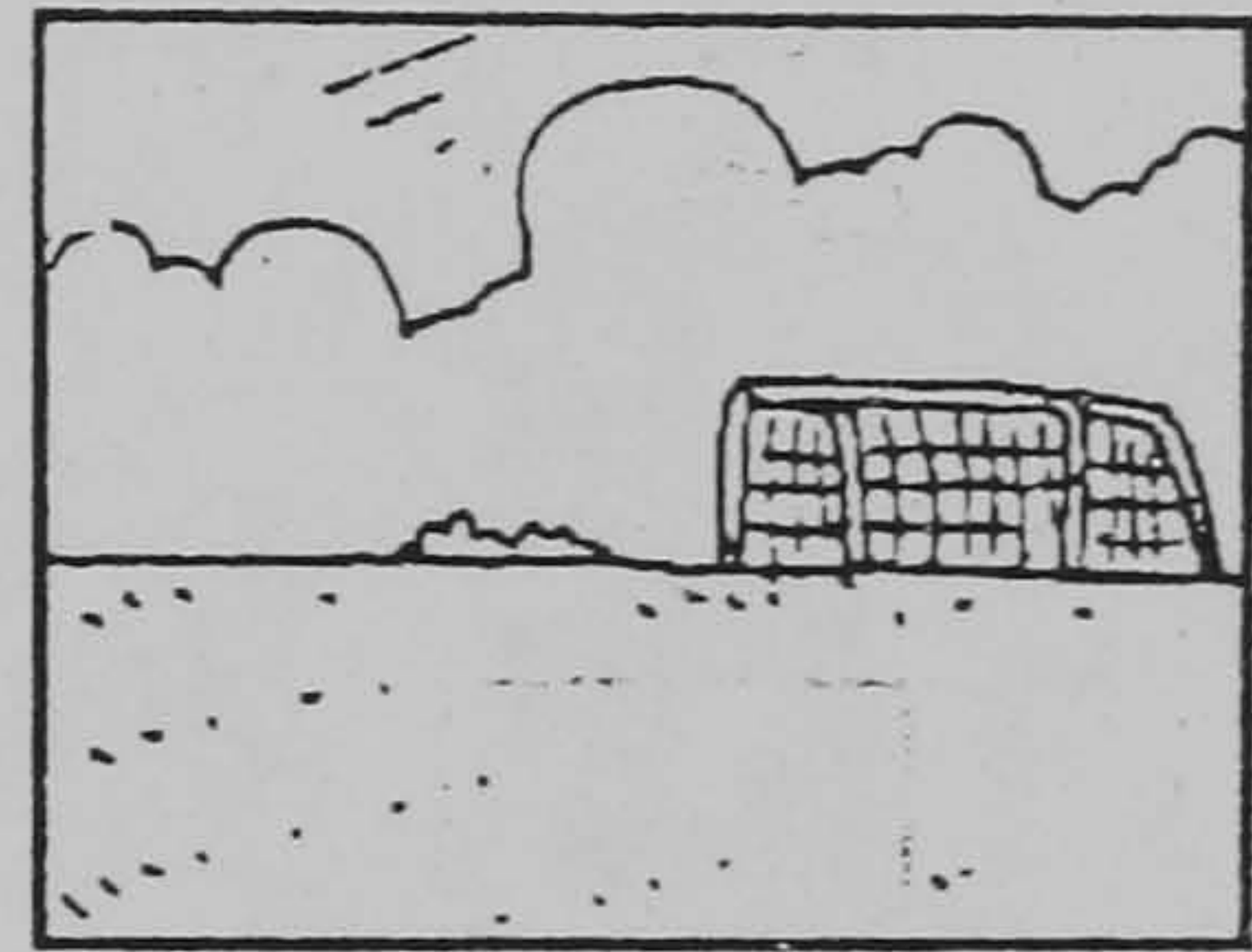
Label these places with the words given below

toilet classroom library canteen field

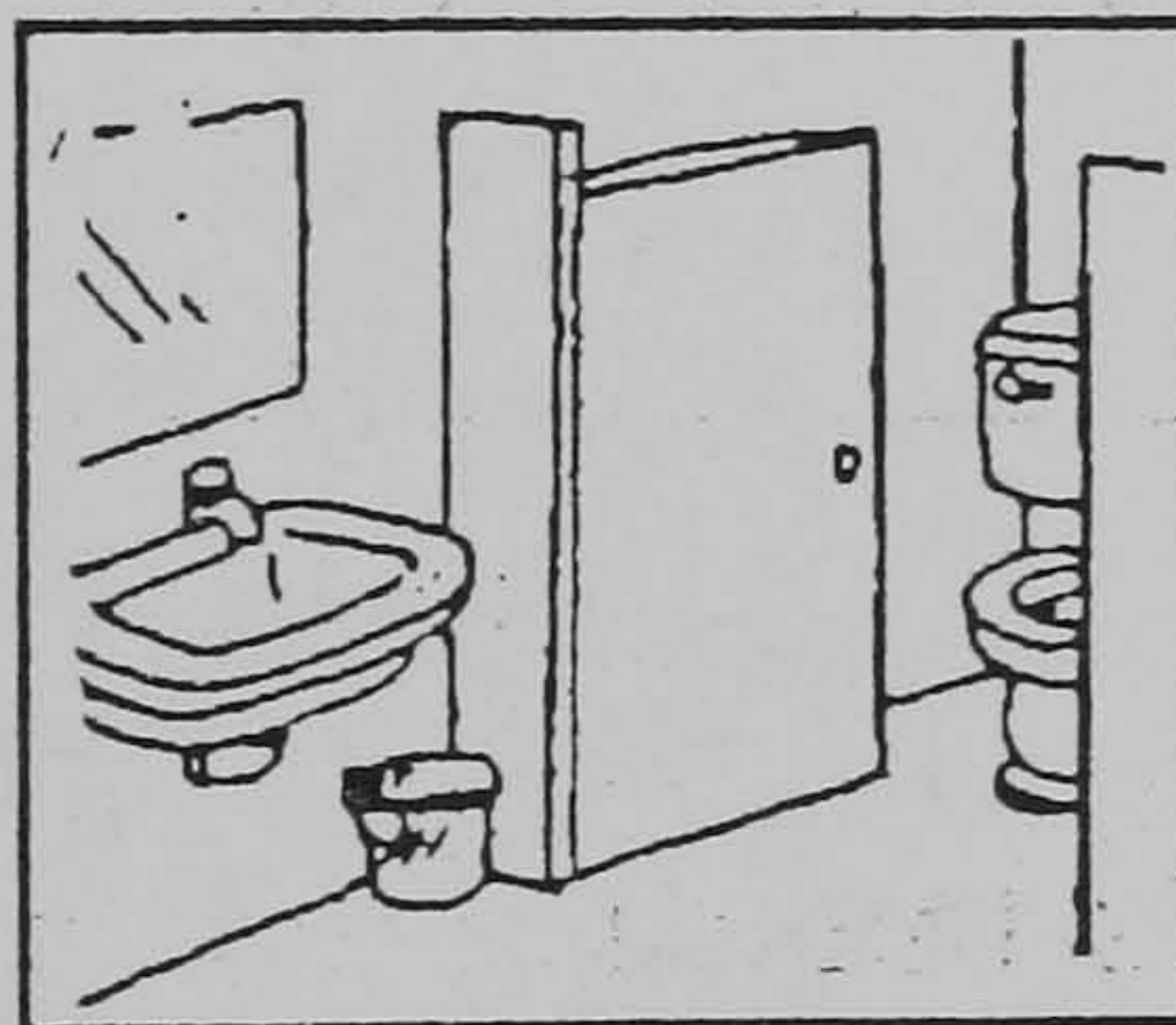
26.



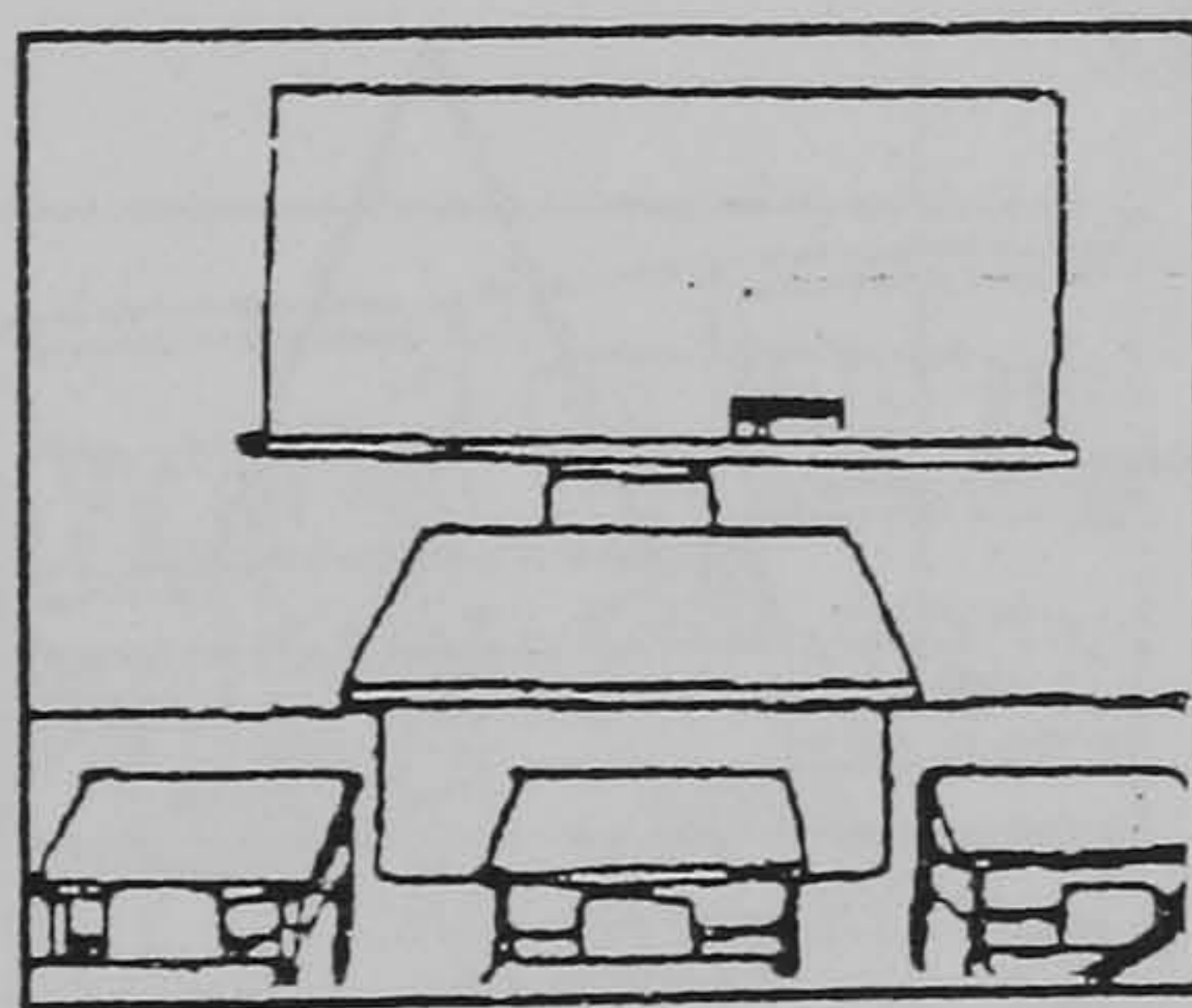
27.



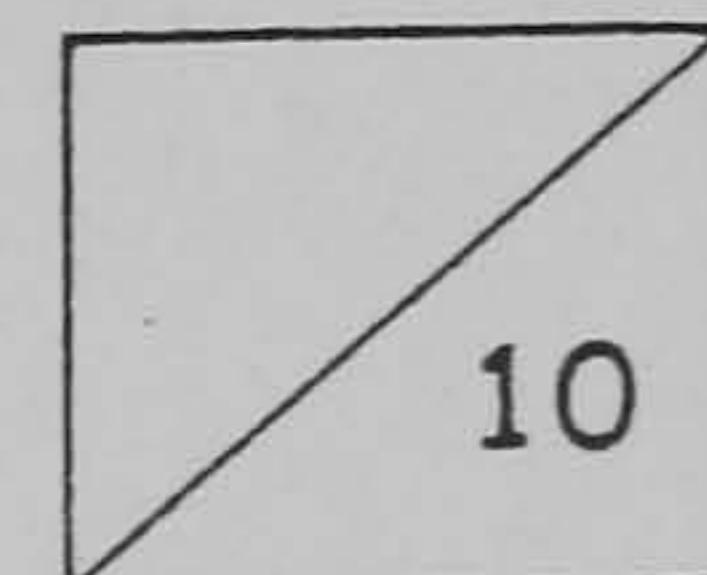
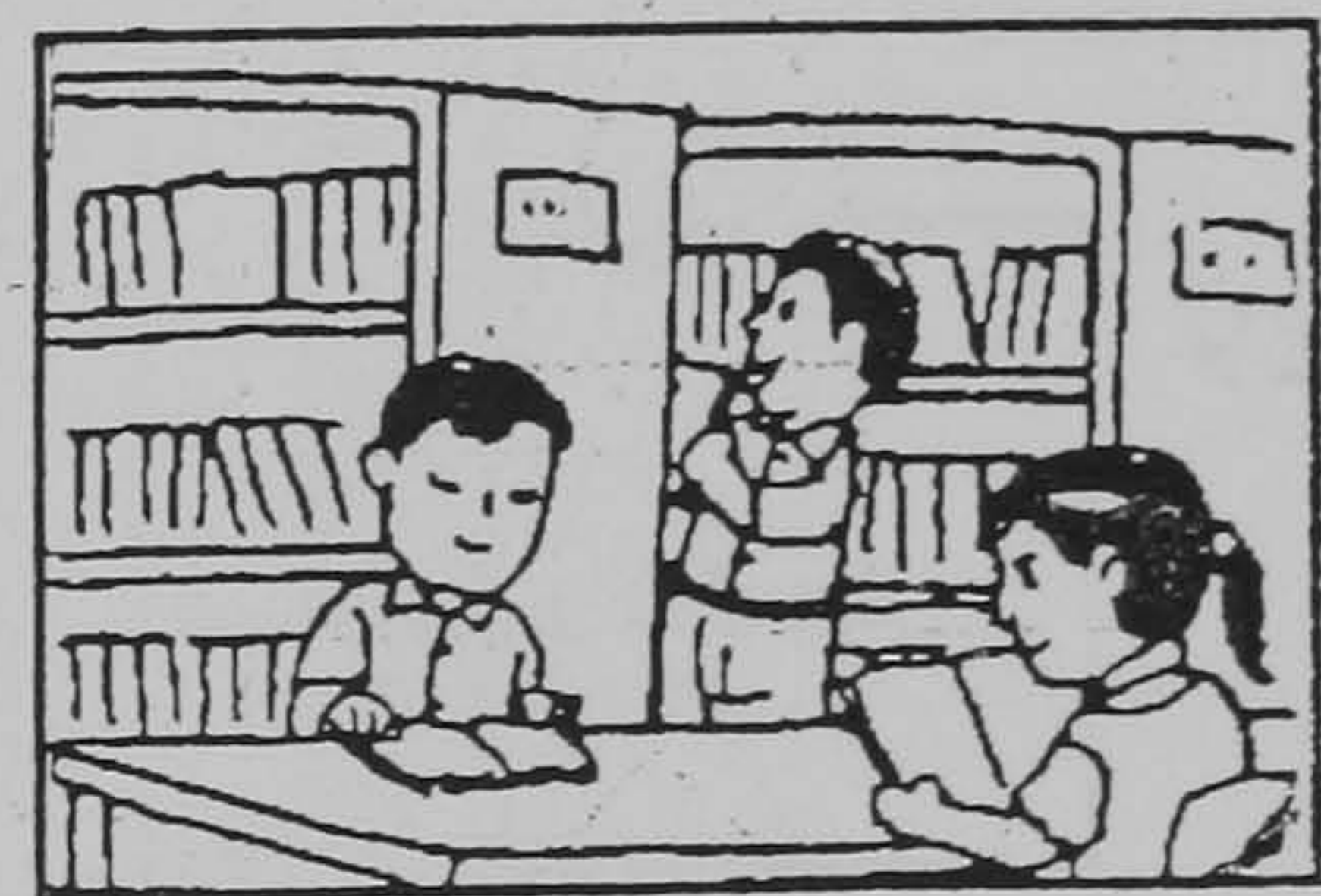
28.



29.



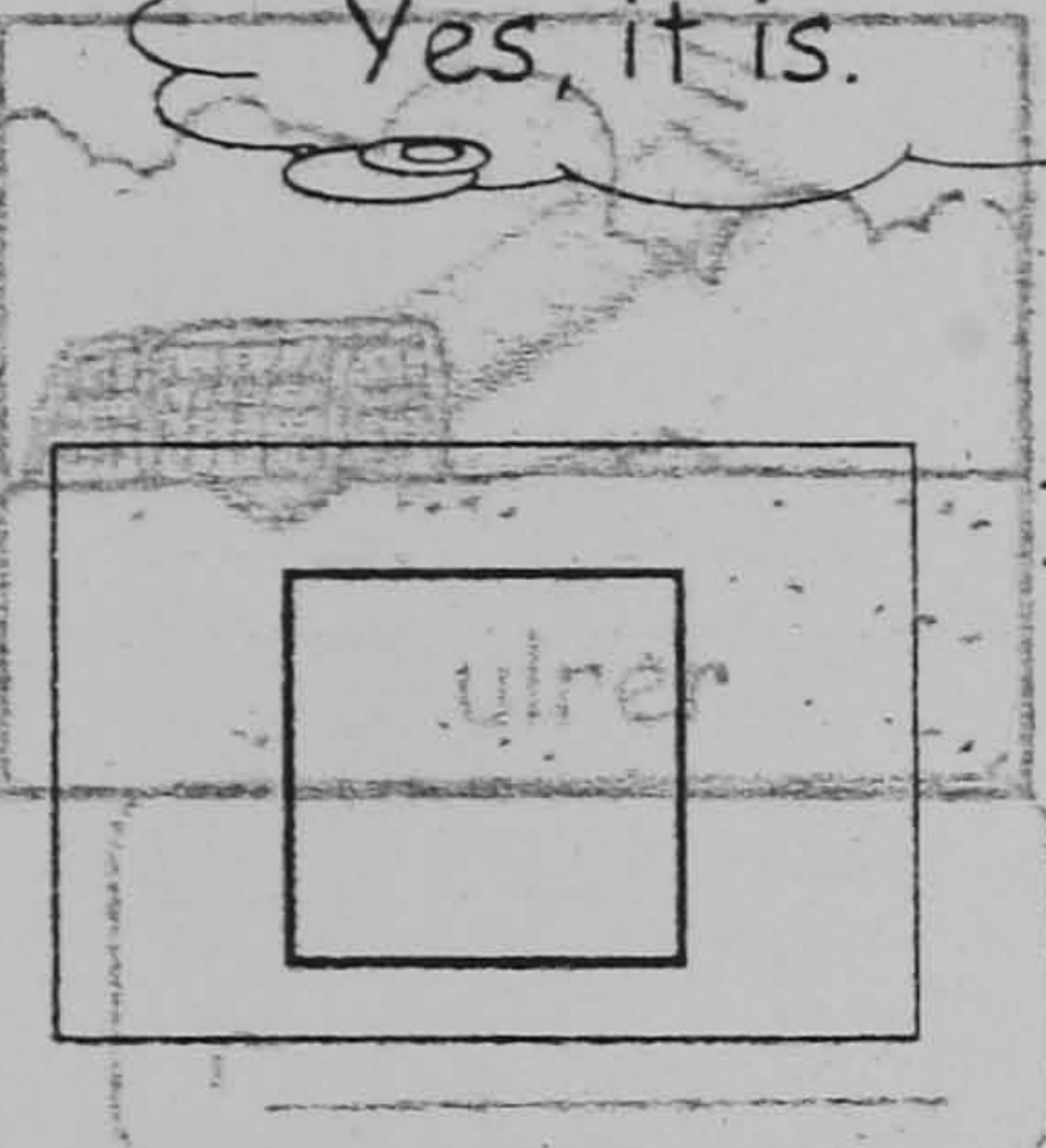

30.



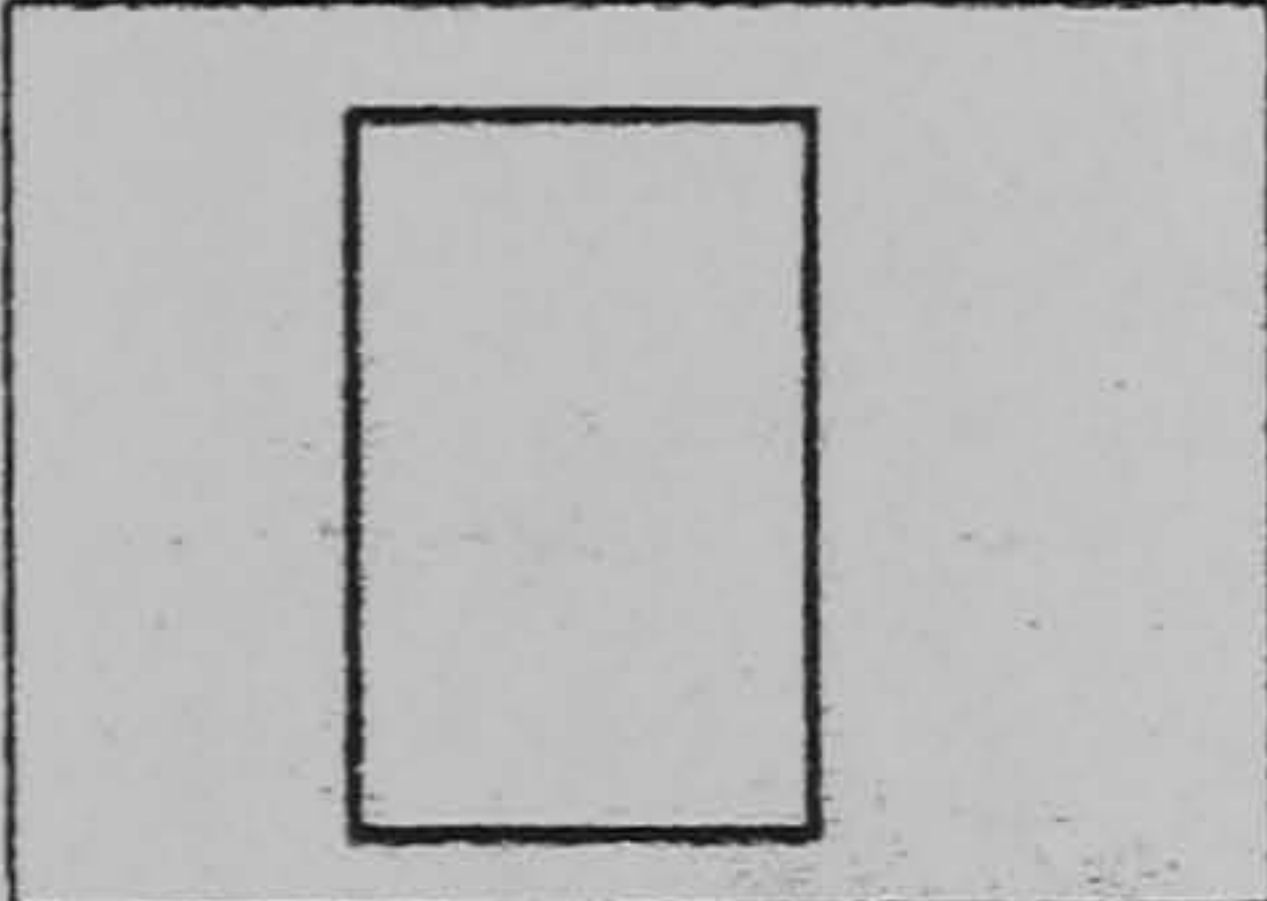
SECTION 6

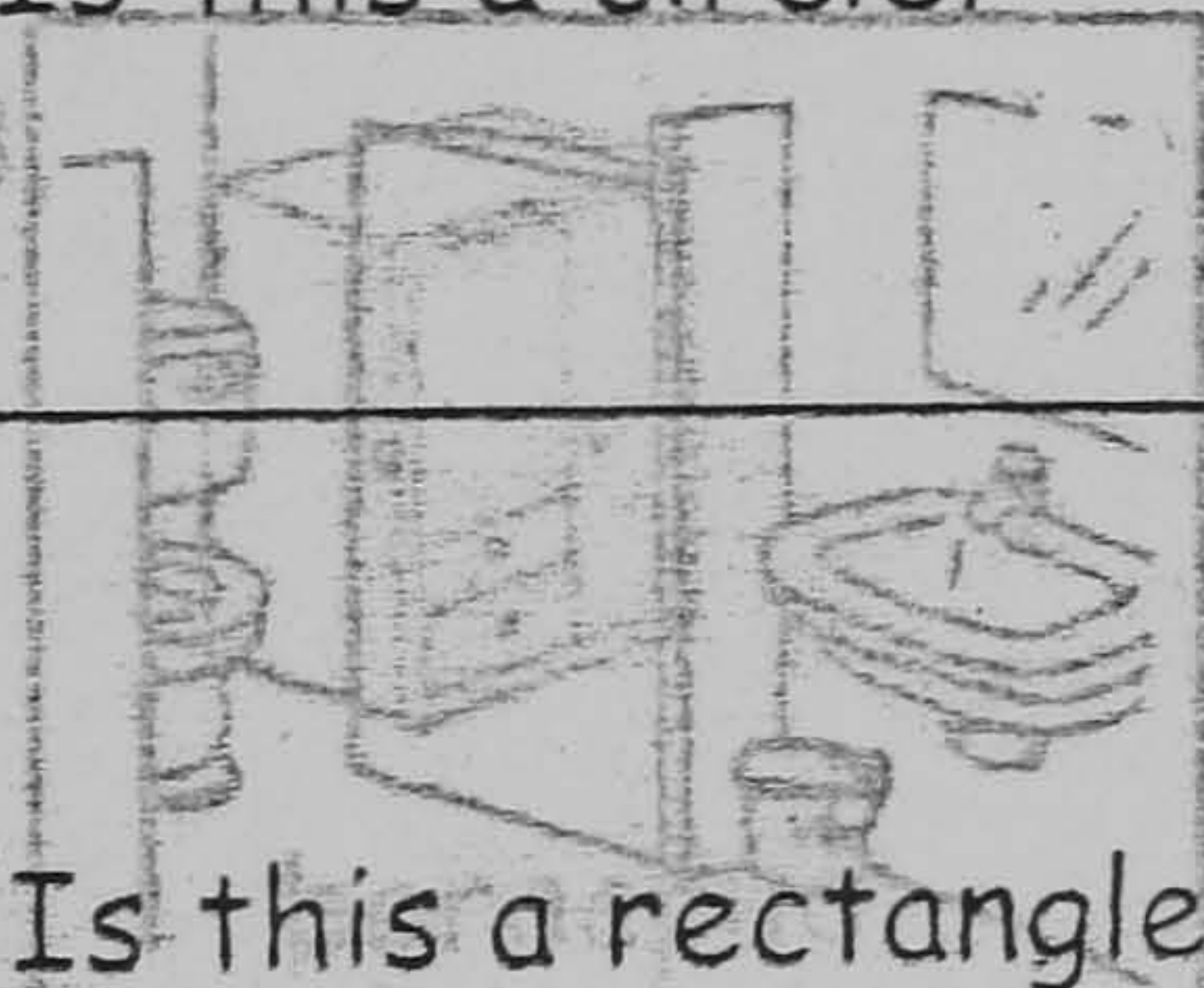
Label these places with the words given below

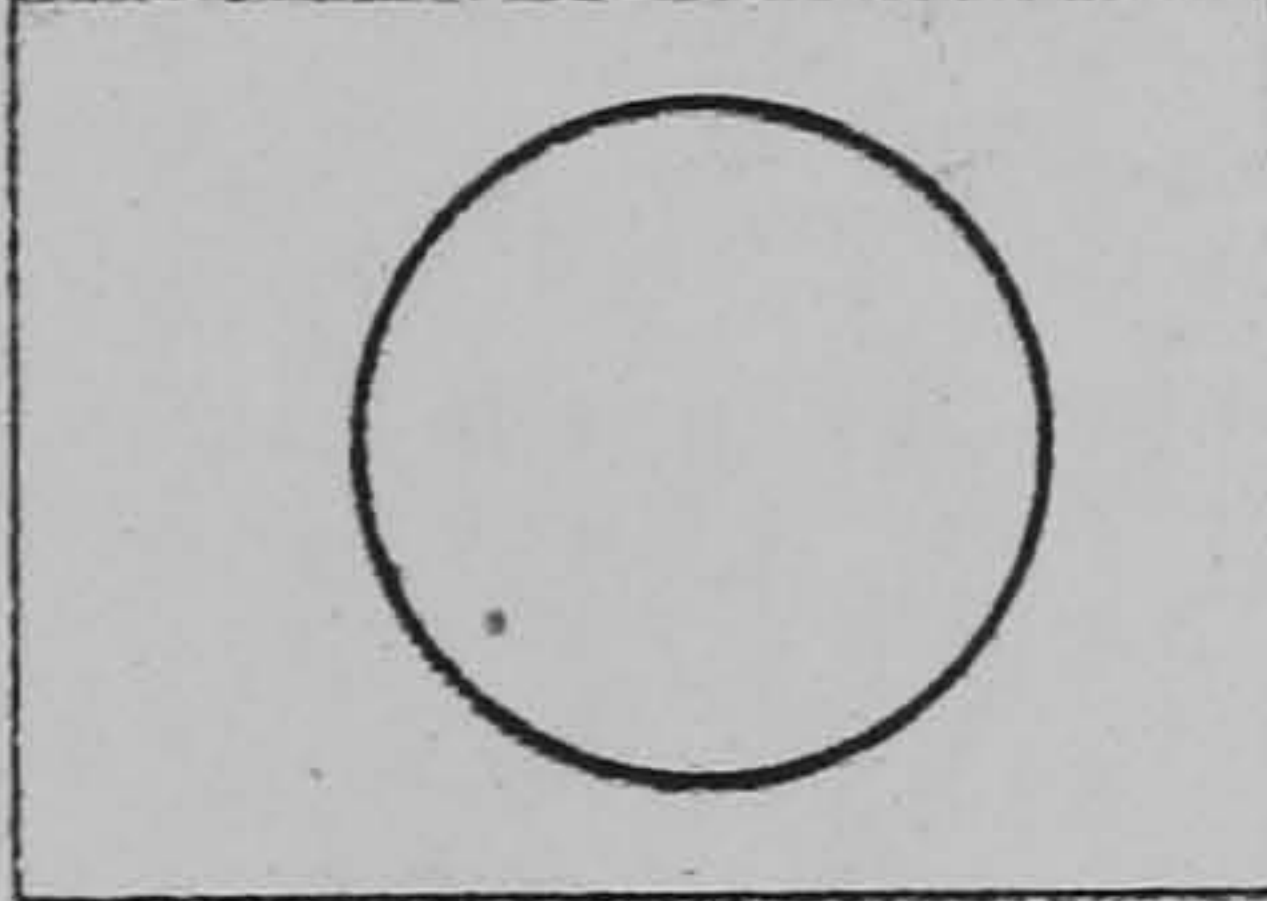
Answer the questions. field, concert, library, classroom, toilet

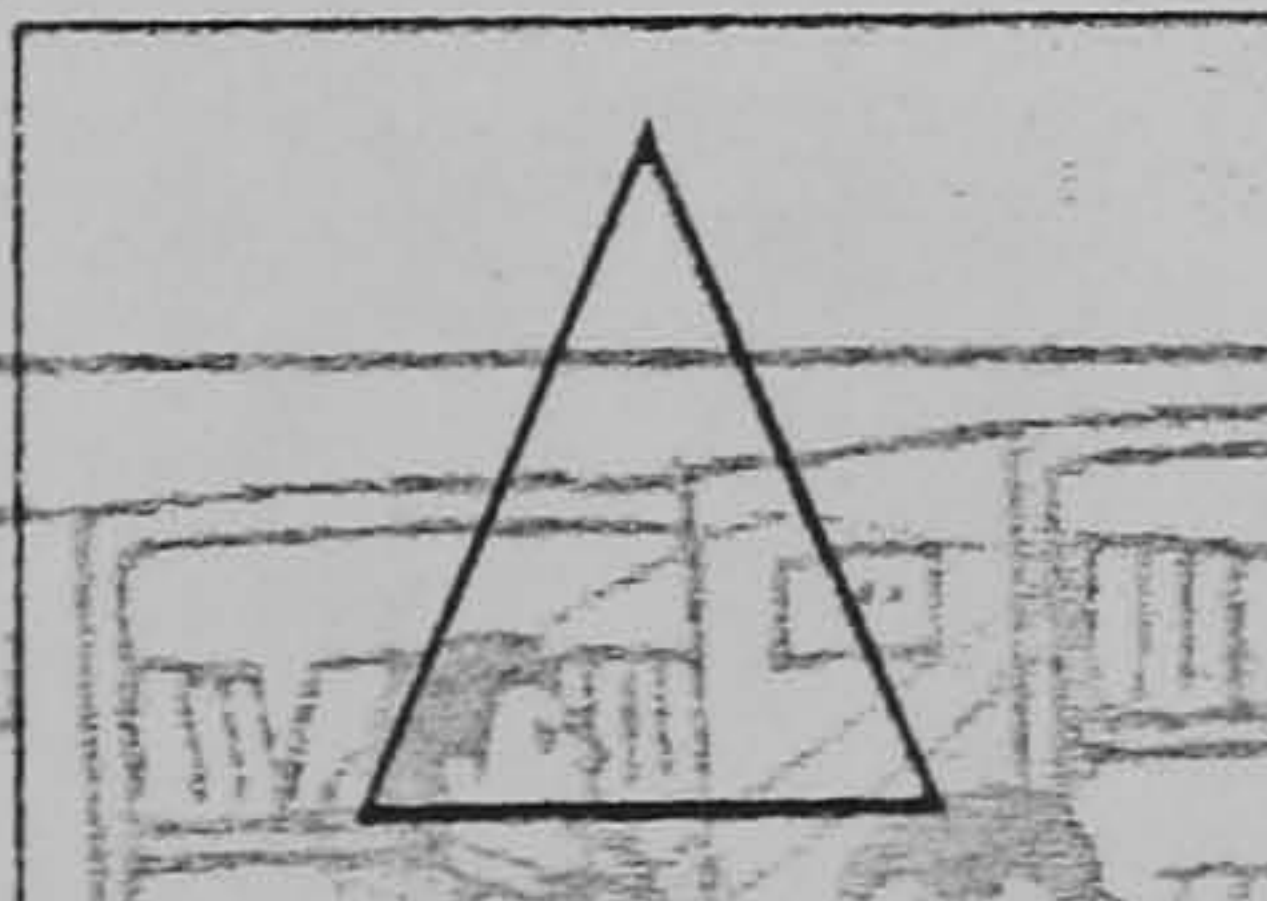
21.  Yes, it is.  No, it isn't.

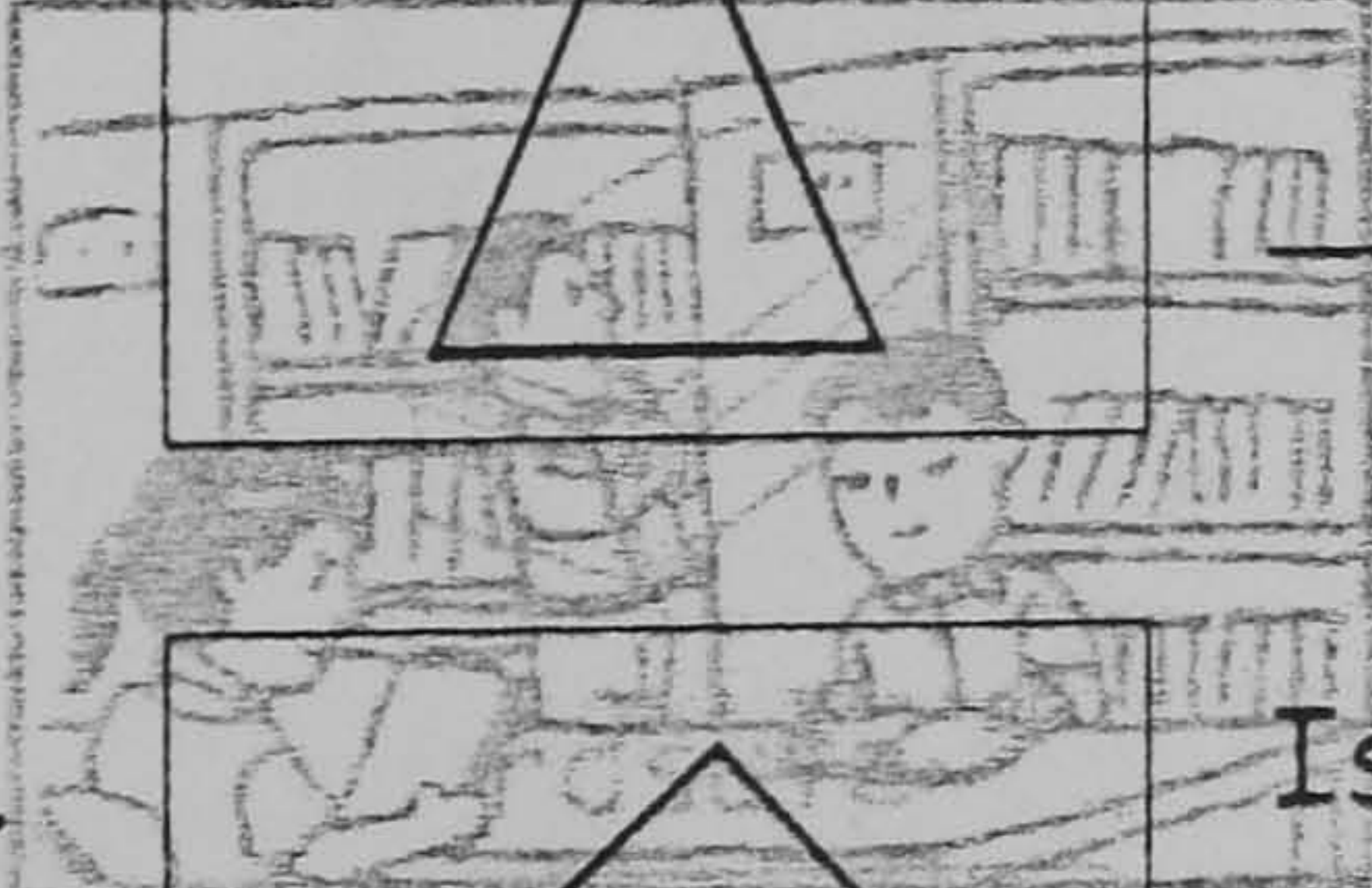
31. Is this a square? _____

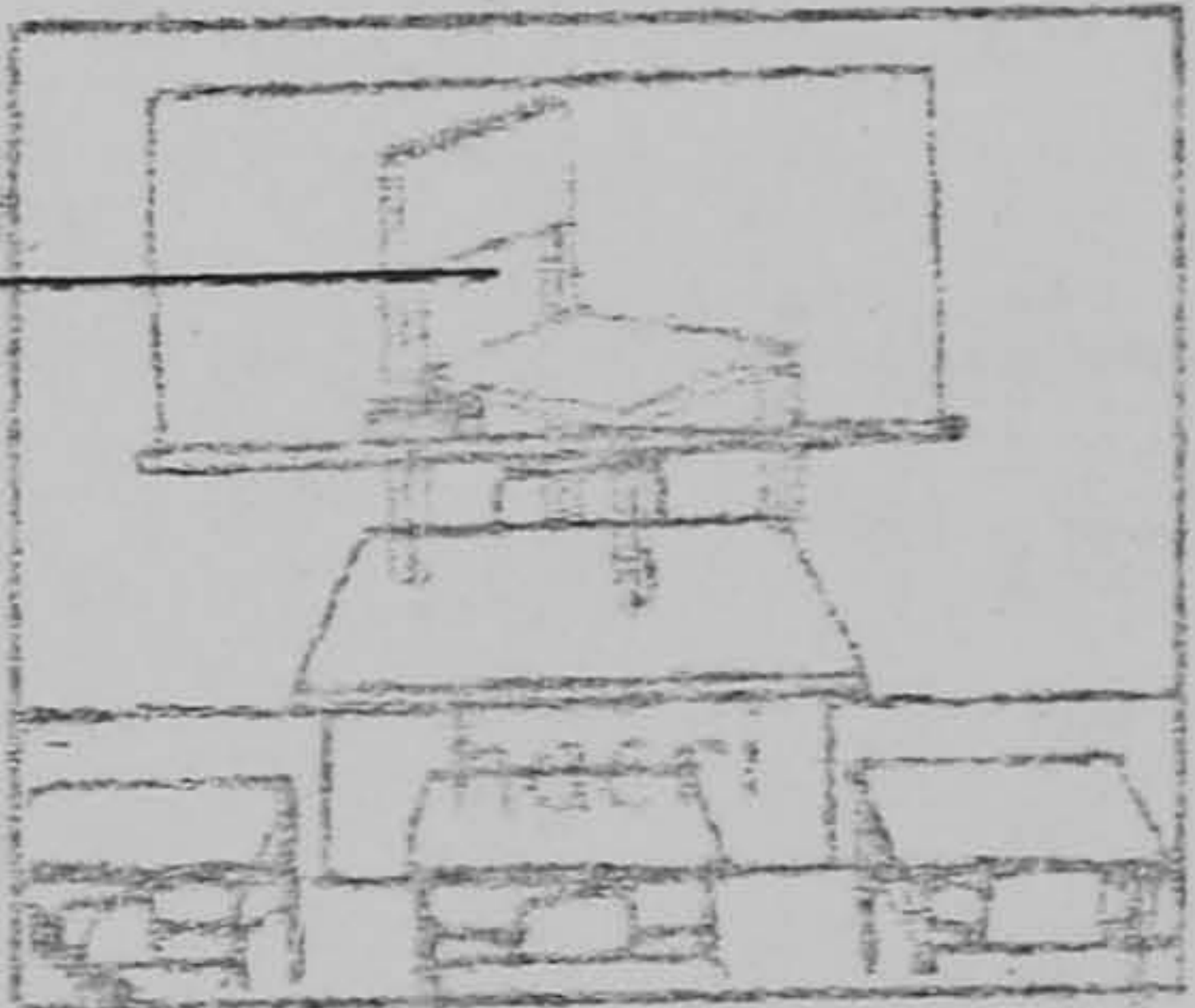
32.  Is this a circle? _____

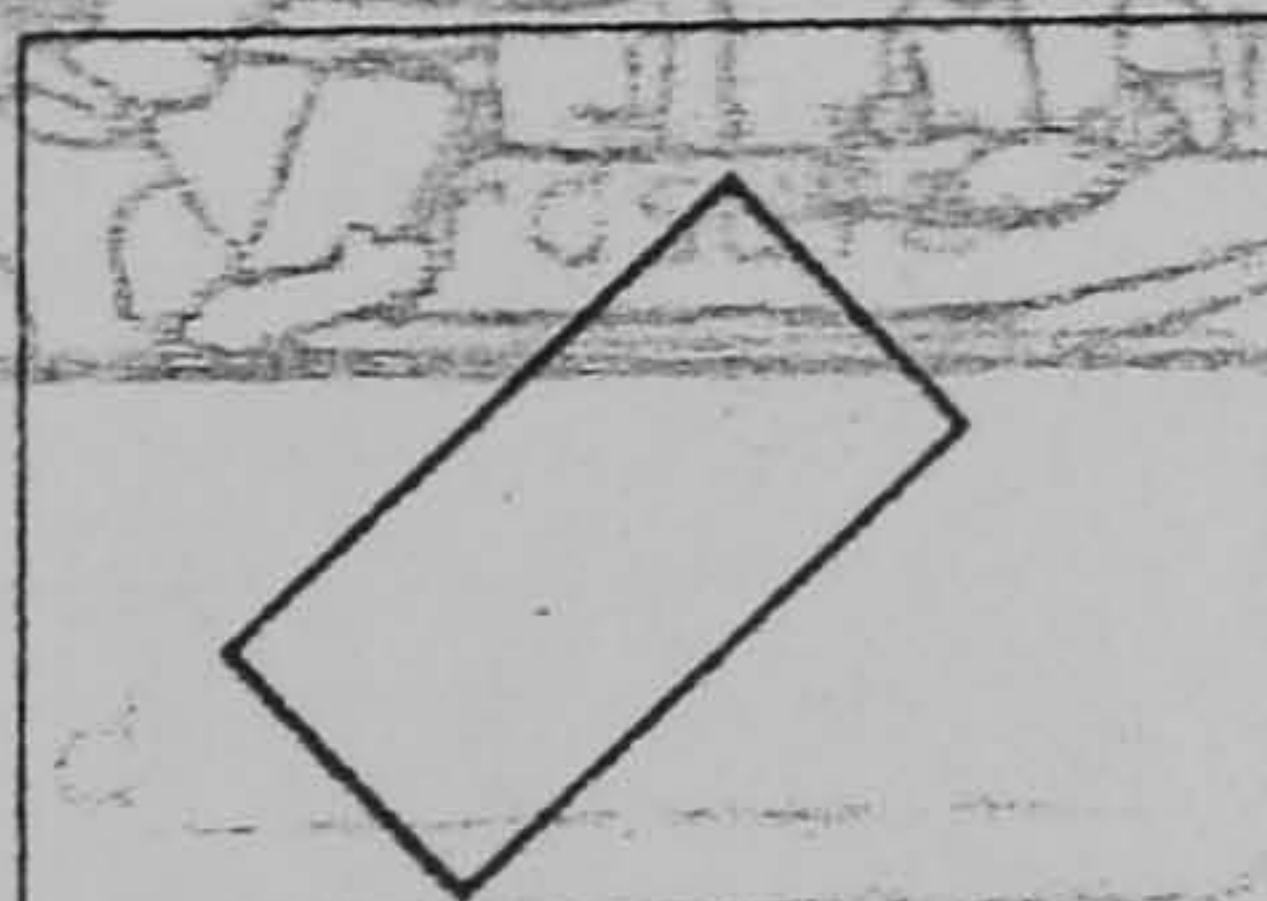
23.  _____

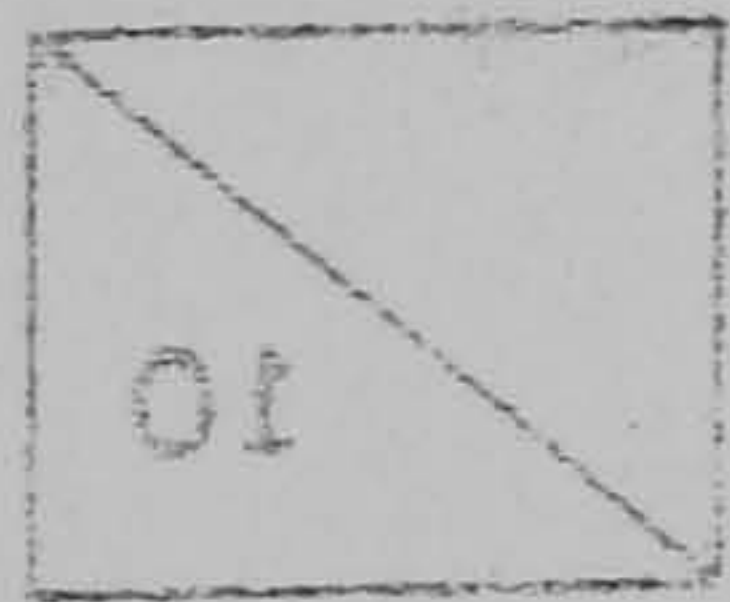
33.  Is this a rectangle? _____

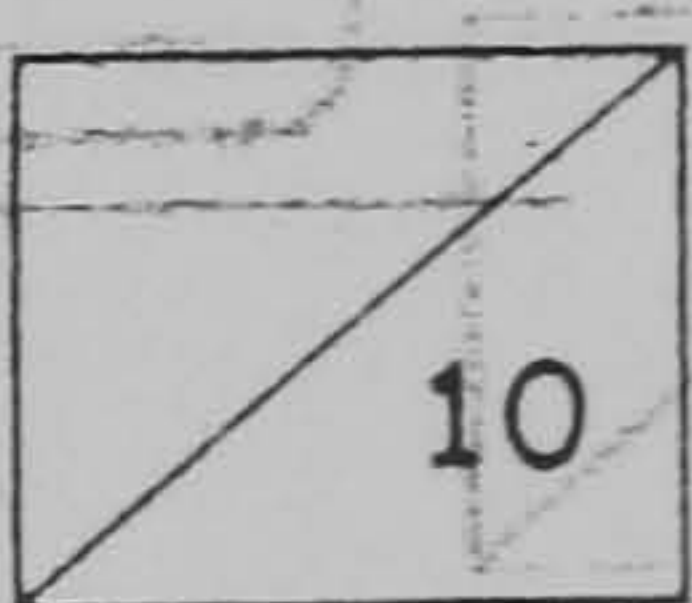
34.  Is this a triangle? _____

24.  _____

25.  _____

35.  Is this a rectangle? _____

 10

 10

I SECTION H

Choose and write

She is Atiqah.

He is Kamal.

They are Aini and Siti.

She is Suzie.

He is Nava.

36.



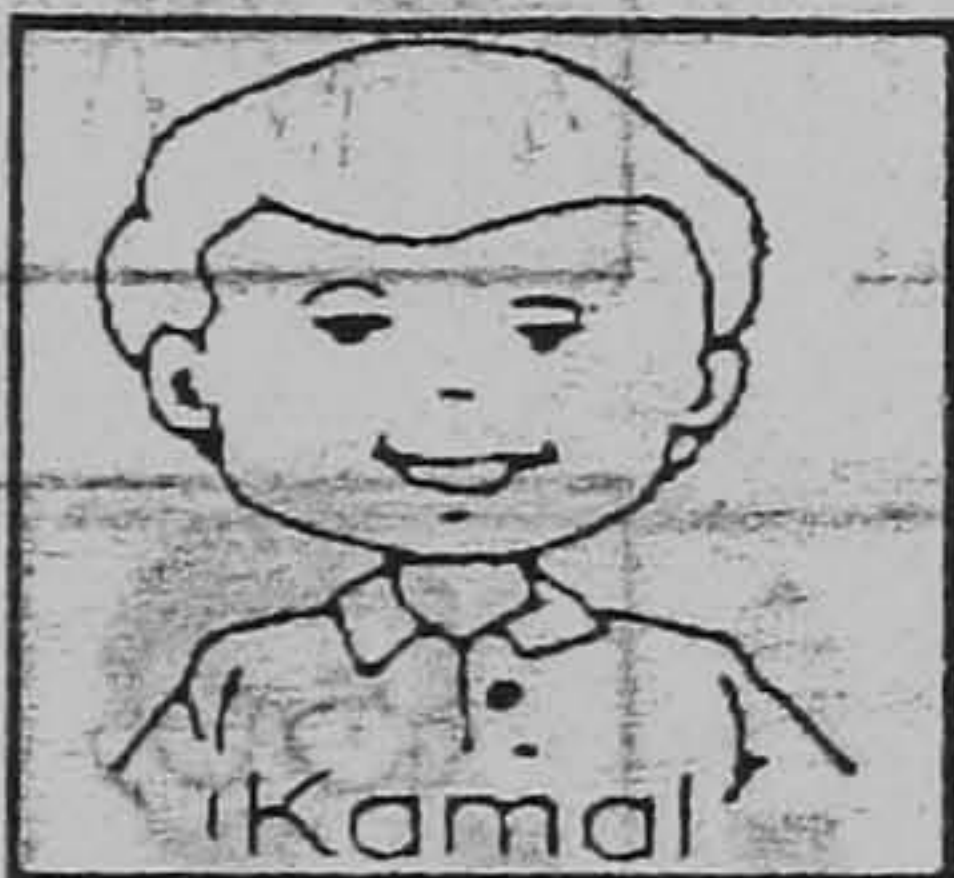
four fish

37.



six apples

38.



five pencils

39.



seven pencils

40.



10

SECTION I
SECTION C

Rearrange the words to form sentences.

Example: O. This my is teacher.

This is my teacher.



41. my grandmother is This.



42. That your is mother.



43. are They my brothers.



44. He is father my.



45. my sister is She.



SECTION J

Fill in the blanks with the words given.

boy shirt trousers seven school

This is Aiman. He is a good _____
(46)

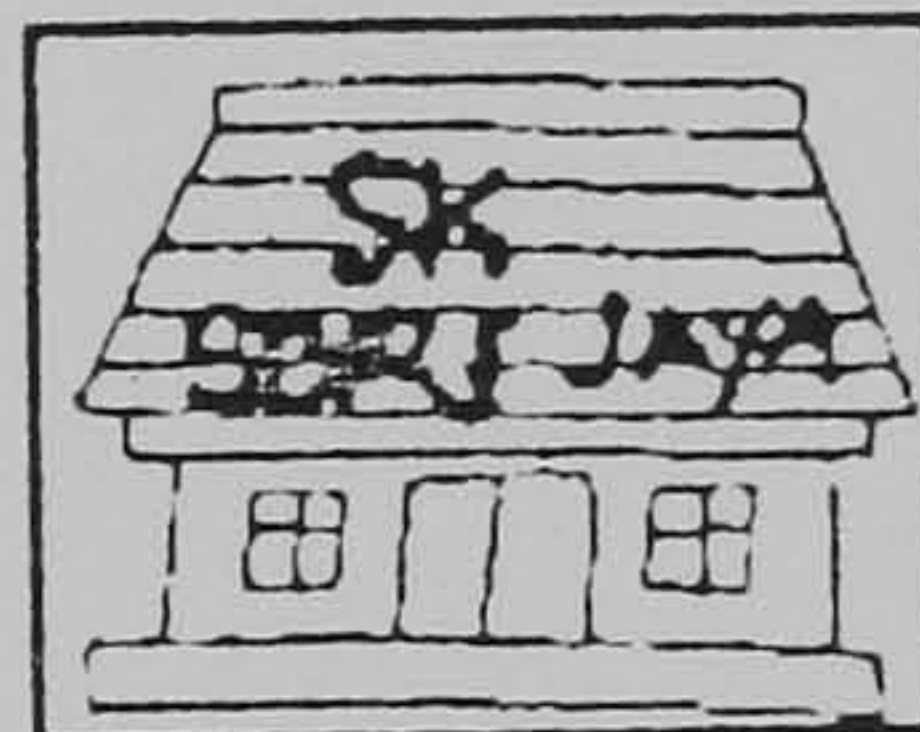


Aiman is _____
(47)



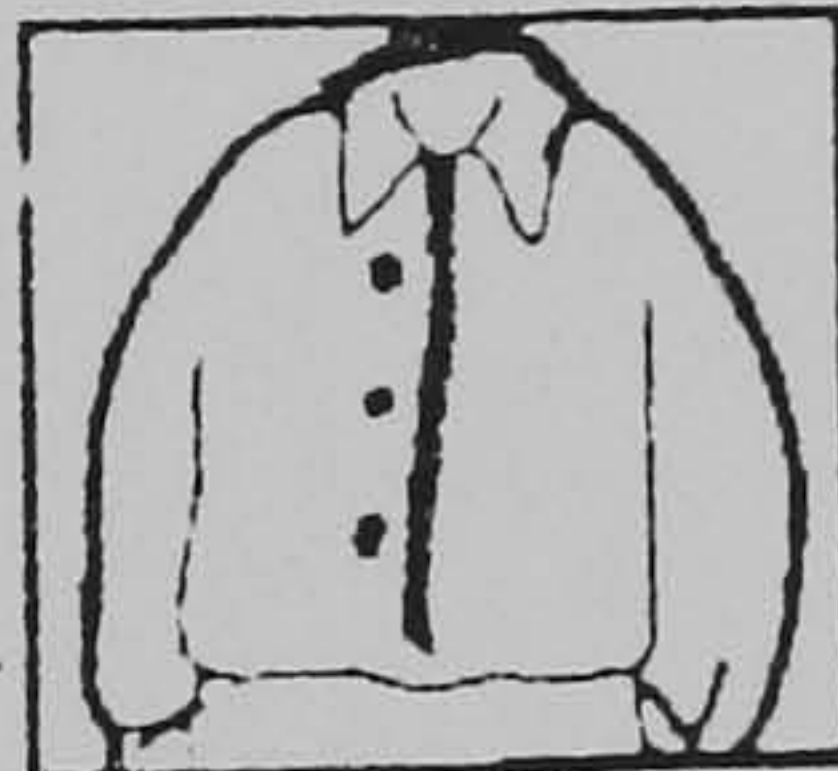
years old.

He goes to _____
(48)



He wears

_____ and
(49)



a pair of _____
(50)

