AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF SARAWAK MALAY ESL TEACHER TRAINEES

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AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF SARAWAK MALAY ESL TEACHER TRAINEES

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FACULTY OF PSYCHOLOGY AND EDUCATION
UNIVERITI MALAYSIA SABAH
2016

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the material in this thesis is my own except for quotations, excerpts, equations, summaries and references, which have been duly acknowledged.

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"In the name of Allah, most Gracious, most Compassionate".

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ABSTRACT

This is a qualitative, ethnographic case study which explored the training endeavours of 4 Sarawak Malay teacher trainees in the TESL degree programme in an Institute of Teacher Education (ITE) in Sarawak. The purpose of ethnographic case study was to uncover the emic and etic perspectives of the Sarawak Malay ESL teacher trainees. Purposeful sampling was carried out as the participants were able to provide rich information. The data were collected through classroom observations, unstructured interviews and field notes in order to present authentic data as possible. The various data collection of the teacher trainees were meant for data triangulation through member checking, constant engagement with the setting and the audit trail techniques were used to ensure validity and reliability of the data. A three-step coding approach, which includes the open, axial and selective coding stages were used to organize the collection of data. The within-case-analysis was used to compare the data for overlap and redundancy while the cross-case analysis was carried out after the within-case analysis. The findings of this study revealed that the socializing agents in social relationship, cultural misfit, linguistic confusion, learning to teach and self-tunnelling develop the awareness of self-concept and cultural identity which presents foundation for the teacher trainees to define their beliefs in terms of other people's perspectives. Thus, teacher trainers need to view these teacher trainees as cultural being by embracing the diversity and validate the cultural identity of the teacher trainees. Therefore, understanding the learners' characteristics and integrating Culturally Responsive Teaching Approach focusing on the inculcation of positive teachers' attitudes and behaviours of future teachers in ITE need to be established to model tolerance and appreciation of teacher trainees' differences in the teacher training programme. Based on the findings, a proposed typology of Sarawak Malay ESL teacher trainees' traits was posited in the hope that future trainers can better understand and ameliorate the challenges faced by the Sarawak Malay ESL teacher trainees in their endeavour as future ESL teachers in Sarawak.

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ABSTRAK

SATU KAJIAN ETNOGRAFIK GURU PELATIH ESL MELAYU SARAWAK

Kajian ini adalah berbentuk kualitatif, menggunakan kes etnografi untuk meneroka pembelajaran 4 guru pelatih Melayu Sarawak didalam latihan perguruan dalam bidang TESL di sebuah Institut Pendidikan Guru (IPG) di Sarawak. Tujuan kajian kes etnografi ini adalah untuk merungkai perspektif guru pelatih Melayu Sarawak dalam bentuk perspektif emik dan epic. Sampel bertujuan digunakan untuk mendapatkan maklumat yang terperinci daripada peserta kajian. Data kajian ini diperolehi melalui pemerhatian didalam kelas, temubual tidak berstruktur dan nota lapangan bagi memberi maklumat yang sahih dan asli. Kepelbagaian sumber didalam pengumpulan data oleh guru pelatih adalah bagi tujuan trangulasi data melalui penelitian rakan, keberadaan di lokasi kajian dan teknik 'audit trail' bagi tujuan kesahan dan kebolehpercayaan data. Pendekatan kod tiga langkah merangkumi kod secara terbuka, secara rentasan dan secara pilihan digunakan untuk menyusun data. Analisis dalaman kes digunakan untuk membandingkan data dari bertindih dan berulang manakala analisis antara kes pula digunakan untuk membuat perbandingan dan perbezaan semua subkategori yang ditemui didalam kes. Dapatan kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa agen sosialisasi didalam hubungan sosial, ketidaksesuaian budaya, kekeliruan bahasa, belajar untuk mengajar dan keupayaan diri telah mengembangkan pengetahuan dalam konsep kendiri dan identity budaya sebagai satu asas pengetahuan kepada guru pelatih untuk mengembangkan kepercayaan mereka dari segi perspektif pihak luar. Oleh itu, kesan identiti budaya ini telah membuatkan mereka berada didalam keadaan dilema semasa didalam program Latihan Perguruan TESL. Justeru, pemahaman mengenai perwatakan guru pelatih dan program pendekatan pengajaran responsif budaya yang memberi penekanan kepada perkembangan positif sikap dan tingkahlaku diri bakal guru terutamanya semasa mereka yang sedang mengikuti persediaan latihan perguruan mereka di IPG perlu mengembangkan model toleransi and apresiasi dari segi perbezaan guru pelatih didalam program latihan perhuruan ini. Berdasarkan dapatan ini, tipologi guru pelatih ESL Melayu Sarawak dicadangkan dengan harapan dapat memberi pemahaman yang lebih dan membantu memahami cabaran yang dihadapi oleh guru pelatih ESL 'non-native' didalam usaha mereka bergelar bakal guru ESL di Sarawak.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

MOE	-	Ministry of Education
L1	-	First Language
L2	-	Second Language
MT	-	Mother Tongue
ITE	-	Institute of Teacher Education
PISMP	-	Program Ijazah Sarjana Muda Pengajaran
ESL	-	English As A Second Language
TESL	-	Teaching of English As A Second Language

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

There are almost 1350 million non-native speakers of English language in the world (Jenkins, 2007) which showed that English is widely spoken language in the world. Thus, the big percentage of non-native speakers of English revealed that English teachers in the world outnumbered the native English teachers themselves (Crystal, 2003). Even though Amin (1997) rejected the myths of native speakers and non-native speakers; the reality in real life situation is otherwise. Despite the claim by Arva and Medgyes (2000) that both native and non-native ESL teachers could be equally competent in teaching the language, the complex sociolinguistics context in relation to language and culture of the Sarawak Malay ESL teacher trainees in Sarawak ignites my interest in investigating and exploring the issue further.

As stated earlier, they are still being viewed as inadequate English language teachers even when these non-native ESL teacher trainees received proper training prior to teaching because they often produce non-standard forms of English which are inferior to their native tongue (Jenkins, 2007). The non-native ESL teachers feel insecure and uncertain towards the linguistics ability and intolerant attitude towards teaching (Medgyes, 1994). Medgyes further pointed out that these teachers would in times being pressured by their own flaws and decided to regret being in the ESL teaching profession.

In addition, Cook (1999) posited that the non-native English teachers are continually being portrayed as perpetual second language 'learners' and never as second language 'users' (p. 196). By making comparisons between the non-native teachers and native teachers as a benchmark for English attainment it creates many problems for the non-native teachers. Thus, many non-native teachers are unable to see themselves as legitimate speakers of English because of comparisons

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of their speech to that of native English teachers (Widdowson, 1994; Canagarajah, 1999; Golombek & Jordan, 2005).

Apart from that, non-native ESL teachers also experienced conflict where the non-native ESL teachers have to choose between suitable language that matches the social situation in terms of interaction which involves the use of their native language or English language. It is common that they have to use structures that native speakers would not use in the same situations (Medgyes, 2001). This is a cultural aspect that the non-native speakers cannot separate from their native language.

Another notion that placed non-native English speakers at a disadvantage is the notion that they are not able to acquire the native command in teaching English (Jenkins, 2007). However, there is no single standard of native speaker language and this notion has to be dismantled to avoid building a caste system in English language teaching profession (Amin, 1997).

The notion of native English teachers who are competent in the target language is not all true. The non-native English teachers have their own advantage in English language teaching. The native English teachers are unable to understand the cultural contexts which exist in the non-native settings. The language that matches the social situation of interaction depends on the context (Medgyes, 2001). The non-native English teachers have the advantage in this situation as they are able to understand the context and able to further explain the concept to their students.

The use of English language is becoming more of a foreign language than a second language although the prestige of English language still exists (Crystal, 1997). English language in Malaysia has always been a popular discussion among the stakeholders. In addition, the Ministry of Education (MOE) continuously stresses the importance of English language subjects and the teaching of the subjects in both primary and secondary schools. In Malaysia, majority of ESL teachers in both Primary and Secondary schools are non-native speakers of English.

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