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**English Loan Words in the Malay Print Media  
and Their Implications for English Vocabulary Acquisition**

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
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## ABSTRACT

English is considered an important language in Malaysia and taught beginning at the pre-school level. However, the Malaysian examination system does not require students to pass English for them to move up in grades or to enter public tertiary institutions. This has led to student apathy towards English as they could easily enter and graduate from public universities without needing to be proficient in English. Limited proficiency in English has been cited as one of the main reasons for the rising number of unemployed public university graduates – a great many of whom are *bumiputeras*.

The main objective of the study was to explore whether the ESL learners' knowledge of English loan words in Malay could be a useful resource in their acquisition of English vocabulary. The focus is primarily on academic vocabulary from the Academic Word List (AWL) and ESL learners in Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Malaysia.

The study, implemented in two phases, employed the mixed methods methodology combining a lexical analysis of a specifically designed corpus (500,000 running words), language assessment, and survey research methods (questionnaire and semi-structured interview). Phase 1 covered the linguistic dimension of the research with a preliminary analysis of the Academic Word List and the construction of the corpus taken from semi-academic articles from a Malay print media. Phase 2, on the other hand, covered the cognitive-affective dimension of the research which involved a language attitude questionnaire, two vocabulary tasks, and a focus group interview. The test instruments were earlier piloted with 34 students and in the main study there were 101 participants (70 *bumiputeras*, 31 non-*bumiputeras*).

The preliminary analysis revealed that English loan words in Malay comprised 40% of the most frequent word in the AWL. Results from the vocabulary tasks show that learners are familiar with the core meaning of the English word based on their knowledge of the word's loan form in Malay. This indicates that if teachers were to successfully use the loan words as a teaching aid, care should be taken to instruct learners in the meaning(s) and usage(s) of the English and its loan in Malay. The study also showed that students have a positive attitude towards English and the loan words in general.

*Dedication*

*To my parents,  
Stephen Madius & Etah Kando,  
for your unwavering faith, love, and support,  
and for instilling the love of learning in me;*

*and to Vince and Abrielle Rose,  
for always being there as my rock of strength.*

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