RESEARCH ARTICLE

MALAY LANGUAGE RECIPROCAL LEARNING AT THE NATIONAL PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN SARAWAK: A CASE STUDY OF PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	The objective of this research was to explore the reciprocal learning of the Malay language at the national primary schools in Sarawak, Malaysia. This research used qualitative approach that implemented as a case study which involving the collection of data through interviewing techniques, classroom observations, field notes and documents analysis. The participants in this study were involved eight primary school students and four Malay language teachers from four national primary schools in Sarawak. The validity and reliability of qualitative data are evaluated through pilot studies, The validity and reliability of qualitative data are evaluated through pilot studies, triangulation of information among different sources of data, receiving feedback from participants and expert review. Cohen's kappa coefficient index is used to measure the inter-rater agreement for the categorical items while the ATLAS. ti Mac version 1.6.0 (484) is used to facilitate reviewer analyzes qualitative data that were collected. The results of the study showed that the process of multi-racial unity brings together multi-racial students in Sarawak, group activities, communicating in Malay language, and tolerance between students and teachers in the classroom. Furthermore, integration among students also takes place in the classroom through the close friendships among the multi-racial students who come from various family backgrounds. The reciprocal learning of the Malay language also occurs through the linkage of various learning strategies in the classroom such as student-centered learning strategies, material-centered learning, student learning through existing experiences, and learning through group discussions. Students' learning environments also affects reciprocal learning which consists of physical environment and social environment. In addition, interaction between students and teachers in the classroom also involves teamwork, respecting each other, as well as facilitator's guide from the teachers.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a medium for individuals from diverse backgrounds to interact and learning to accept differences in forming national identity. Hence, all diverse ethnic groups in Sarawak will not be left behind to enjoy quality and racial equality education access. It is noted in the Malaysian Education Development Plan 2013 to 2025 for the learning of Malay language to give the opportunity for all students and indigenous minorities in Sarawak to enjoy the same opportunities. This group of students when they grow up is expected to have the opportunity to improve the quality of life, become successful members of the community, and actively contribute to the nation's development by studying and respecting the diversity of customs and religious traditions. Hence, an increase in investment for physical and learning resources can ensure the success of international education

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access to meet the challenges of 21st century learning classroom. Education provides opportunities for students to improve their quality of life, become successful members of the community, and actively contribute to national development when they become adults. In addition, students also have the opportunity to learn the diversity of culture, language and customs. Thus, the 21st century learning classroom in Sarawak is strengthened through the implementation of the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Community implemented by the Curriculum Development Division, Ministry of Education Malaysia. The implementation of the ASEAN community in Malay language curriculum to Level 2 students involved Year 4, Year 5, and Year 6 in primary schools aimed at improving knowledge on the ASEAN community. The ASEAN community highlighted the diversity of indigenous peoples with its diverse cultural, linguistic, customary and unique lives. Indirectly, the diversity of nature is the life of the Asian people who respect each other and love the unity and harmony. Ministry of Education

Malaysia has introduced a new standard Malay curriculum to strengthen Malay language literacy in primary schools. Through the implementation of this standard curriculum, transition classes in national secondary schools will be abolished from 2017. At the same time, all primary school students are encouraged to learn additional languages such as Chinese, Tamil, Arabic and other international languages. It aims to create new experiences amongst students and further expand the language experience both inside and outside of the classroom. The process of students' education begins from birth and shaped by previous experiences gained through student interaction with the surrounding environment and society. These experiences shape existing knowledge in the learning process through social interactiaon, the application of their cultural values and beliefs. Hence, through the reciprocal learning of the Malay language, students are able to link existing knowledge to interact with their learning environment. This learning structure can help teachers in improving the quality of teaching and learning especially when dealing with groups of multi-racial students in collectivism society in Sarawak. The national school's students in Sarawak have the diversity of social practices and the diversity of the first language from different ethnic backgrounds. Therefore, conventional language teaching and learning in the classroom has less impact on the transformation of indigenous students. This is because conventional learning is less addressing basic and systemic issues of society such as social inequality and poverty. Hence, new forms of learning are expected to help students react quickly to learning, always be aware of the development of their environment and gain useful new information. When learning new information takes place, these students will use their knowledge base to access language acquisition through problem solving, meaning construction, and sharing ideas to develop their language literacy. Therefore, reciprocal learning builds interactructures between students and teachers in the classroom and gives students the opportunity to actively participate in learning activities.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This qualitative study was carried out through a case study involving data collection through interviewing techniques, classroom observations, field notes and document analysis to clarify detailed and in-depth information and to produce more accurate description of the study (Creswell, 2012; Marshall and Rossman, 2014; Yin, 2014). Case study was selected due to the nature of the study aimed at exploring, understanding, appreciating and focusing on small units involving multiple individuals through a comprehensive and in-depth study of a process, measure or activity studied (Patton, 2002; Jackson, 2006; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2014; Creswell, 2015). Thus, the deep understanding of the subject is more focused on obtaining specific evidence and analyzed in detail to reveal the issues found in the phenomena studied (Merriam, 2001; McMillan, 2004; Yin, 2015). A purposive sampling method has been used in this study, which is the method of sampling from any individual in the population that meets the criteria as a research participant. To get precise, holistic and meaningful (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007; Gay, Mills and Air, 2009; Othman Lebar, 2012).

Participants

The study involved 12 participants consisting of eight primary school students (S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, S6, S7, and S8) between age 11 to 12 which were good and medium achievement in Malay Language subject and four teachers (TI, T2, T3, and T4) who teach Malay Language Level 2 subjects in primary schools. The participants of this study represent four different national schools (NS1, NS2, NS3, and NS4). All the real names of the research participants are kept secret to protect their identity in accordance with the principle of non-defilement and to be fair in respecting and protecting their rights.

The location selection in this study was carried out based on the convenience factor to conduct case study, which is convenient location, rich with quality data, facilitating interaction with research participants, and facilitating good relationship between researcher and the participants (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006; Marshall and Rossman, 2014). Previous qualitative researcher such as Taylor and Bogden (2015) also select factors that involve locations that are close to the original area to facilitate the study. Therefore, the selected study sites involve national primary schools with a high population of Sarawak native students, four of which are located in Kota Samarahan District Education Office, Bau, Padawan, and Lundu. The background of the participants is shown in Table 1 and Table 2.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection procedures are conducted through interviews with the participants, classroom observations, notes field records and document analysis. The interview techniques was conducted in semi-structured form of questioning process with open-ended questionnaire participants to get close to the real world and to understand the real problems experienced by the research participants (Merriam, 2001; Patton, 2002; Marshall and Rossman, 2014; Creswell, 2015). In the context of this study, the researcher positioned himself as a good and thorough listener, giving questions that were easily understood by the participants as primary school students in Level 2. Each interview session is recorded using the Olympus VN-732PC digital voice recorder.

The interview was conducted in 36 sessions, which is three sessions per participant with an average of 40 minutes per interview session. Meanwhile, the classroom observations for learning Malay language subject was conducted in four sessions, which is 60 minutes per observation session using the Samsung-N920CDUXSG HD Video Recording video recording device. Each video recording session of learning observation is transcribed to obtain support data by observing and systematically recording the life and context of the student's actual social background (Patton, 2002; Lankshear and Knobel, 2004). The validity and reliability of qualitative data are evaluated through pilot studies, triangulation of information among different sources of data, receiving feedback from participants (member checking), and expert review. The expert's consent value is calculated using the Cohen Kappa index analysis formula for the purpose of theme validation as well as producing quality research (Cohen *et al.,* 2000). Pilot research has also been conducted to provide researcher with the opportunity to learn about the research process, to identify problems that may arise in the actual study, to obtain early information on the study participants and to test the instruments and instruments as a formative process (Maxwell, 2005; Yin, 2014). The ATLAS.ti Mac version 1.6.0 (484) is used to facilitate the process of analyzing qualitative data collected.

Table 1 Participants of the National Primary SchoolStudents

Participant	National School	Gender	Level	Age	Academic Percentage
S1	NS1 Kota Samarahan	Girl	2	11	95%
S2	NS1 Kota Samarahan	Boy	2	11	65%
S3	NS2 Bau	Girl	2	11	68%
S4	NS2 Bau	Boy	2	11	90%
S5	NS3 Padawan	Girl	2	12	92%
S6	NS3 Padawan	Boy	2	11	75%
S7	NS4 Lundu	Girl	2	11	70%
S8	NS4 Lundu	Boy	2	12	97%

Table 2. Participants of the National Primary School Teachers

Participant	National School	Jantina	Age	Teaching Experience	Akademik tertinggi
T1	NS1 Kota Samarahan	Female	39	11 years	Bachelor of Malay Language
T2	NS2 Bau	Male	48	24 years	Bachelor of Malay Language
T3	NS3 Padawan	Female	44	22 years	Bachelor of Malay Language
T4	NS4 Lundu	Male	41	17 years	Bachelor of Malay Language

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the reciprocal learning of the Malay Language at the national primary schools in Sarawak demonstrate the integration of multiracial students in the classroom, the integration of students who come from various backgrounds, learning strategies in the classroom, learning influenced by learning environments, and interactions in the classroom. The findings of this study describe the reciprocal learning of Malay language in detail and have a positive impact on the learning of students in primary schools. The summary of the findings is shown in Table 3 and is further clarified through theme and subtitle permissions in Figure 1.

Mutli-racial Unity

The findings showed that unity of races by students of various races is eager to learn in a class that has a large number of pupils and can learn the language of other races. The source of understanding what is learned is the enthusiasm and commitment of the students to generate their learning becomes more interesting and fun (Mohd. Johdi Salleh and Abdul Razaq Ahmad, 2007; Tan and Maridah Alias, 2009).The findings also similar to the findings in Norwaliza Abdul Wahab (2014), who proved that learning is fun and holistically encourage students to improve their academic potential. In addition, Malay language reciprocal learning emphasizes the features of the 21st century learning which focuses on the learning of reading skills in bringing a new transformation of learning towards the formation of positive attitude. According to Alizah Lambri (2016), the development of Malay language learning can be seen through individual or group assignments to attract students to learn Malay language. Classroom learning cannot be limited by the way teachers teach as long as they are not harmful to students and teachers (Lim and Lee, 2016). Teachers are free to share their knowledge when tailored to the interests and beliefs of students to encourage students to think outside the box. This study also found that reciprocal learning can be practiced in a large number of students to encourage them to be more proactive in the classroom. The large number of students in the classroom led reciprocal learning to be active in integrating multi-racial students. The findings of this study differ from the findings in Ros Azura Jantan (2007) where she found that the large number of students is increasingly students less active in classroom learning. According Rosinah Edinin (2005) and Zakaria Abdullah (2011), classroom learning is

difficult when there is a large number of students. The large number of students in the classroom causes inadequate learning materials such as reading materials and reference books. However, Alizah Lambri (2016) found that the large number of students in the classroom was not a determinant of the successful implementation of teaching and learning. The constraints can be addressed with student-centered and material-centered learning activities to encourage students to share reading books, group discussions to make their learning more interesting. Multicultural students and different ethnic groups are united to learn in a harmonious environment classroom showing the effectiveness of the education system. Malay language is the main medium of instruction in all national schools as in Malaysia where students speak Malay language in their daily communication by instilling understanding and mutual understanding during classroom learning. According to Idris Aman and Rosniah Mustaffa (2006) which states that the learning process that occurs in the classroom rarely emphasizes the thinking of students. Malay language failed to be well-mastered by schoolchildren despite many years of being the primary language of instruction and being used as compulsory subjects at school (Nor Hashimah Jalaluddin, Junaini Kasdan, and Zaharani Ahmad, 2010).However, the earlier Malay language researchers explained that the concept of multi-racial unity by using the Malay language as the national language and the language of knowledge to know and explore the outside world. (Collins 2005; Awang Sariyan 2009).

Hence, a strong Malay language dominance scenario among pupils is attributed to the mastery of broad reading skills in primary schools. The findings also showed that Malay language as the main medium of instruction in the classroom facilitates the learning process. Learning Malay language skills helps multi-racial students to think outside the box while exploring the information through reading. The findings also found that students who used the Malay language fluently helped other pupils to master Malay language well. There are some students using Malay language influenced by the first language causing the designation and processing of grammatical sentences. However, the integration between the first and second languages is not a barrier to reciprocal learning but also a communication link between students. The reciprocal learning can further enhance the relationship between first and second language learning and increase students' awareness in language learning (Ballinger, 2013).

Table 3. Reciprocal Learning of the Malay Language at the National Primary Schoolin Sarawak

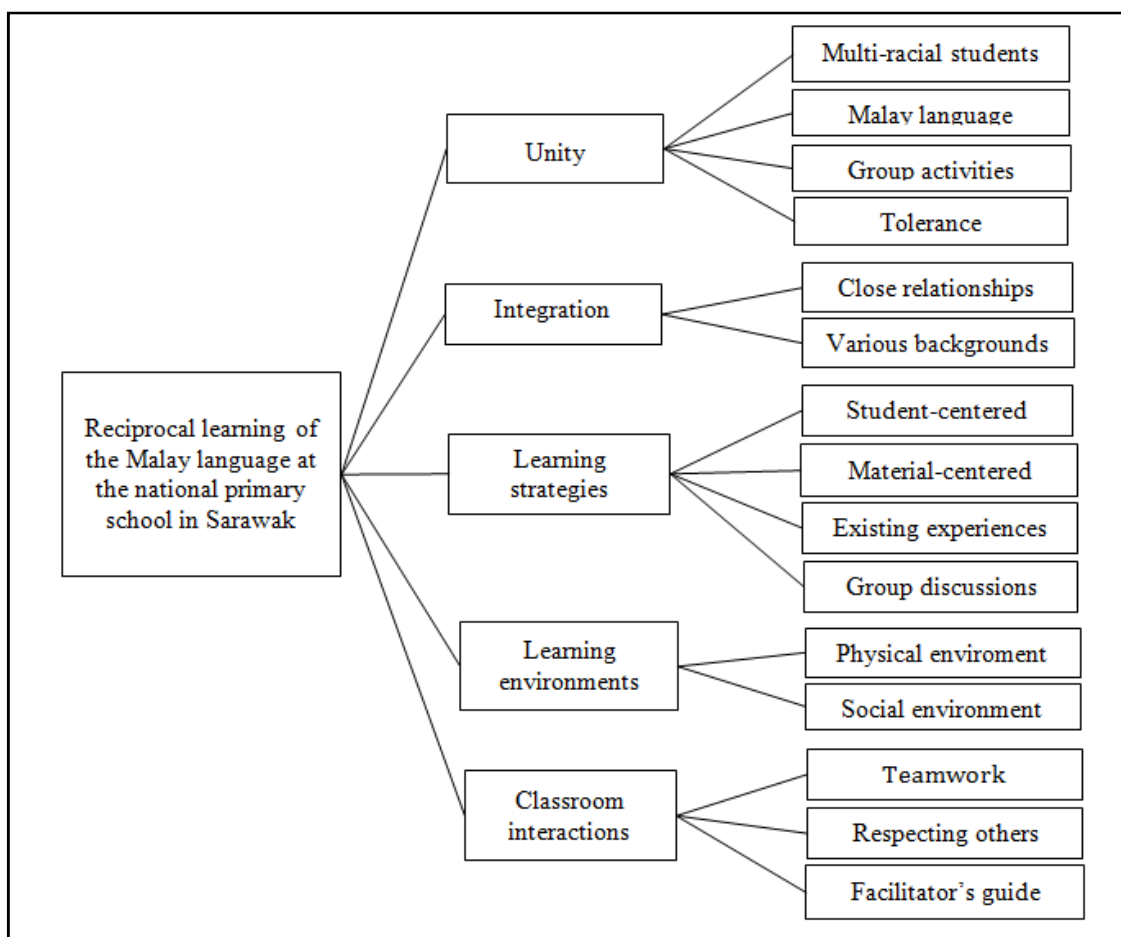| Item	M1 SK1	M2 SK1	G1 SK1	M3 SK2	M4 SK2	G2 SK2	M5 SK3	M6 SK3	G3 SK3	M7 SK4	M8 SK4	G4 SK4	Total
1. Unity	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	12
a. Multi-racial students	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	12
b. Malay language	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	12
c. Group activities	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	12
d. Tolerance	/	-	/	/	-	/	/	/	-	-	/	/	08
2. Integration	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	12
a. Close relationships	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	-	/	/	11
b. Various backgrounds	/	/	/	-	/	/	/	/	-	/	-	-	07
3. Learning strategies	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	12
a. Student-centered	-	-	/	-	/	/	/	/	/	/	-	/	08
b. Material-centered	-	/	/	/	/	-	-	-	-	-	/	/	06
c. Existing experiences	/	-	-	/	/	-	-	/	-	-	/	/	06
d. Group discussions	/	-	/	/	-	/	/	/	/	/	-	/	09
4. Learning environments	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	12
a. Physical environment	/	/	/	/	/	/	-	/	/	/	-	/	10
b. Social environment	/	-	-	-	/	/	/	/	-	/	-	-	06
5. Classroom interactions	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	12
b. Teamwork	/	/	/	/	/	-	/	/	-	/	/	-	09
c. Respecting others	-	-	-	/	-	-	/	/	/	/	-	/	06
d. Facilitator's guide	/	/	/	-	/	/	-	/	-	-	/	/	08
Total: 20 items													190

Figure 1. Themes and Sub-themes Mapping of the Malay Language Reciprocal Learning at the National Primary School in Sarawak

The findings are contrary to the findings in Nor Hasbiah Ubaidullah, Norhayati Mahadi, and Lee (2013) found that non-Malay students became lazy and also less prepared to speak in Malay language due to the influence of first language learning. Multi-racial students can work together and help each other as promoting tolerance in the classroom, students learn in a fun and eager setting to complete their assignment. Thus, when tolerance is nurtured in the classroom, students and teachers work together to create cooperative learning situations and to motivate and enhance students' interest in learning.

Teachers give students the freedom to suggest learning materials they like to attract their interest in learning Malay language as well as to motivate and enhance students' interest in learning. The findings of this study support the findings in Demmert (2001) and Demmert and Towner (2003) states that the cooperative learning of native American students increases the involvement of students in the classroom learning process. According to Rohani Arbaa, Hazri Jamil and Nordin Abdul Razak (2010), teachers should work to improve relationships with students in the classroom by showing their attitudes

towards student learning. Thus, this study also found that effective communication and tolerance among teachers and students in the classroom such as working together in decorating and cheering the classroom to transform a more cheerful and conducive learning atmosphere.Classroom tolerance that shows a good relationship between students and teachers can increase the student's commitment to learning (Rodiah Ahmad, 2008; Rohani Arbaa, Hazri Jamil and Nordin Abdul Razak, 2010).

Students Integration

The findings showed that the integration process of multi-racial students occurs during classroom learning. This integration creates close relationship amongst students inside and outside the classroom. These multiracial students differ in language, culture, customs, and beliefs. They build close relationships and mingle in a harmonious atmosphere as they have been integrated through a common learning practice. According to Lim and Lee (2016), Malaysia is a multi-racial country with a unique diversity of religions, cultures, languages and ideas. Hence, teaching and learning in the classroom is oriented towards self-alignment with others and the diversity of human behavior. Learning in the classroom encourages students to practice tolerance and appreciate cultural diversity (Tazera, 2017). A close relationship amongst students makes it easy for teachers to perform teaching and learning in the classroom. The various styles and practices of multi-racial students are closely related to their cultural learning, easy-to-understand language use, asking questions, and playing and learning activities that are closely related to their environment (Abdul Razaq Ahmad and Zalizan Mohd Jelas, 2009; Norwaliza Abdul Wahab, 2014). These multi-racial students come from different family backgrounds but create a harmonious and cheerful learning atmosphere in the classroom. This diversity is also a driving force for diligent students to come to school because they have a lot of friends. These multiracial students come from different family backgrounds but create a harmonious, cheerful learning atmosphere in the classroom, and encourages students to come to school because of their friends. In addition, students are more eager to learn and even willing to share tables and chairs as well as learning materials to overcome the lack of learning facilities. According to Abdul Rahman Embong (2001), Islar Mine (2007), Ibrahim Ali (2009), and Aizat Khairi (2011), the function of education is to unite the various races to pursuit of positive atmosphere and live together in a peaceful without any negative perception.

Learning Strategies

The students' learning strategies in the classroom play an important role in the Malay language reciprocal learning in Sarawak. The learning pattern of students in primary schools affects the improvement of Malay language learning skills. The findings showed that student-centered learning strategies in reciprocal learning provide students the opportunity to actively engage in learningactivities through grouping tasks and sharing ideas with friends and teachers.Student-centered learning gives students the opportunity to actively participate in learning activities (Gunderman and Wood 2004; Foster and Carboni, 2009; Fun and Maskat, 2010). According to Kamarul Azmi and Norhafizah Salleh (2013), student-centered learning facilitates both the students and teachers where the students are easy to understand the lessons presented by the teachers and

teachers easily disseminate information or resources to students. Meanwhile, according to Zulkiflie Md. Aros (2005) and Zamri Mahamod (2012), student-centered learning strategies can enhance Malay language learning skillsStudent-centered learning involves two-way communication in a classroom where teachers act as facilitators to motivate students and monitor learning activities while students are actively involved in learning activities in the classroom.Guthrie et al. (2004), Ouellette (2006) and Gardner (2007) found that guidance and motivation in the form of teacher instruction enhances students' learning ability in the classroom. Meanwhile, according to Hashey and Conners (2003), Seyyed Ali Ostovar-Namaghi and Mohammad-Reza Shahhosseini (2011), reciprocal learning gives students the opportunity to read self-study without relying entirely on teachers. Furthermore, the findings also support the findings in Bishop et al. (2010) and Braten and Anmarkrud (2013), found that interesting strategies and learning methods are important elements that drive active student engagement as well as determine the success of students in learning. Therefore, according to Alizah Lambri and Zamri Mahamod (2015), pupil-centered learning has transformed students' perceptions on the Malay language that is said to be boring to the fun learning in the classroom. Students are fully involved in various reading skills activities such as reading articles, news, poetry and poem declamation to enhance self confidence through practical training. The participation of students in each exercise or assignment is maximum through their respective expertise. During reading skill learning, students are given the opportunity to plan activities, to divide tasks, and to engage in reading material dialogue to strengthen their understanding. According to Alizah Lambri (2016), students feel that they are appreciated and respected when given the opportunity to express their views and ideas in student-centered learning in a two-way classroom's learning. Meanwhile, according to Ahawo and Simatra (2017), motivation between teacher and student in teaching and learning improves academic performance is the result of two-way learning in the classroom.

Material-centered learning is also emphasized in the practice of reciprocal learning practice. These reading materials are available at libraries, school resource centers, computer booths, and bookstores. The findings show that material-centered learning focuses on reading materials in the classroom and at home. The reciprocal learning of reading skills involving electronic readings such as e-books through online and non-electronic reading applications such as printed books increases the potential of students to master reading skills. The findings alsoy support the findings in Lan, Sung, and Chang (2009), explain that the learning of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) with the help of computer-assisted reciprocal early computer reading (CAREER) to support learning and improve reading skills of primary school children in Taiwan. According to Chen and Chen (2014), the focus on readable materials is to mobilize the students' minds to understand the information and to complete the exercises related to reading comprehension. Phakiti (2006), Ellis and Hudson (2010) and Nazeri Mohammad (2014), explain that the active minded student mind to think and understand the information contained in the learning materials is an active metacognitive learning process of students. According to Desautel (2009) and Anderson (2002), metacognitive strategies help students' thinking ability to interact with learning materials to enhance understanding processes. During reading skills learning, students are drawn to reading materials that have interesting illustrations, diagrams,

diagrams, and schedules to aid their understanding. Meanwhile, Zamri Mahamod and Nur Aisyah Mohamad Noor (2011) explain that the diversity of learning materials is an effort and technique to attract students' motivation and motivation towards literary learning. According to Abdul Rasid Jamian and Hasmah Ismail (2013) the usability of learning materials applied in the classroom can create fun Malay language learning in improving student performance. This material-centered learning focuses on the ultimate goal of understanding the learning content in the topic or the subjects learned. However, Lachs (2006), states that activities involving mere understanding do not give students the opportunity to actively participate in learning. In addition, the students did not learn the other competencies that the students were able to master. Previous studies explain that students are weak in mastering Malay language learning skills at primary level because teachers have less emphasis on effective teaching and learning skills (Hasnalee Tubah 2012; Abdull Sukor Shaari and Kalaidevi 2012).The study showed that learning through existing experiences takes place when students relate the knowledge they have ever experienced in reinforcing understanding. According to Abd. Rasid Jamian (2011), learningMalay language requires students to interpret meaning through experiences. Students recall their past experiences to be associated with the subjects learned to facilitate understanding and building new meaning in their learning. This finding is similar to Bouchamma, Poulin and Ruel (2014), found that boys and girls students in Canada aged 13 relate reading with past experience to enhance their reading comprehension. The study also found that pupils are more interested in learning topics related to their experiences and daily lives. Thus, this study coincides with the constructivism learning theory by Pieget (1963) and Vygotsky (1978) which explains that students acquire knowledge through the construction of learning constructs received by the students' senses to relate to old experiences and build new inputs as learning outcomes.

In addition, the study also showed that students are learning through group discussion which involves questioning in groups, influencing and sharing ideas during the process of collecting information and solving problems in learning. According to Chen and Chen (2014), group discussion strategies are different from conventional learning strategies as group discussions can train students to complete tasks more structured and smooth. Group discussions also help students in problem solving where savvy students can guide weaker students to understand the information they read. Meanwhile, according to Yang (2010), a structured recovery learning program through reciprocal group discussions encourages students to interact with friends and can help strengthen students' understanding.

Learning Environment

The findings showedthat a complete, adequate, and comfortable learning facilities in the classroom affects the improvement of academic achievement. Studentss choose to be in a classy or comfortable, quiet, noisy classrooms, complete with table chairs, fans, and good ventilation like in libraries, resource centers and computer labs. Physical environment as learning facilities equipment affects the learning of Malay language and students' academic improvement (Zamri Mahamod and Mohamed Amin Embi, 2008; Zulkifli Osman, 2015). In addition, the vast space that neat, clean, and airy

layouts stimulates student learning. According to Rodiah Ahmad (2008), Braten and Anmarkrud (2013), the learning environment enhances students' interest in learning affects students' academic achievement. In addition, the study also found that positive social environments involving the relationship between students, teachers, schools, and parents are contributing to the active reciprocal learning in the classroom. Positive social environments create a calm and harmonious learning atmosphere in promoting cognitive development of students. Tan and Maridah Alias (2009), Bishop et al. (2010) and Abdul Razaq et al. (2011), explains that a harmonious learning environment such as a fun social environment stimulates the minds of students to concentrate on their learning.

Classroom Interactions

The findings showed that constructive interactions between students and teachers in the classroom can achieve targeted learning objectives. Students in the classroom work together in groups so that tasks can be completed on time. At the same time, students and teachers work together to help other students who are weak in learning and solving the daily problems they face. According to Kamarudin Ilias and Mubin Md. Nor (2012), frequency of students and teachers interactions in the classroom increases students' motivation in learning and altering student behavior in a more positive direction. Meanwhile, according to Ghazali Lateh and Shamsudin Othman (2014), verbal interactions and language skills influence cognitive aspects as well as improving students' learning skills. The findings also showed that cooperative learning process occurs between students and teachers with active involvement among them (Demmert 2001). Teachers and students should strive to improve relationships in the classroom by expressing concern through positive interactions that enhance student learning and continue to improve student achievement (Rohani Arbaa, Hazri Jamil and Nordin Abdul Razak, 2010). Thus, effective learning of Malay language in the classroom involves the interaction of students and teachers that creates understanding and excitement in learning (Zamri Mahamod and Nor Razah Lim, 2011; Batik Bidin, 2011; Syofia Ulfah *et al.,* 2012; Rozaiman Makmun, 2015 , Celinea Lasan and Zamri Mahamod 2016). In fact, according to Ghazali Lateh and Shamsudin Othman (2014), speaking ability, communicative considerations, and cognitive aspects greatly influence the interactions in the classroom to be implemented perfectly.

In addition, the study also found that teachers play an important role as facilitators or mentors in the classroom to facilitate learning activities. Teachers as mentors are indispensable to guide weak students in order to prevent them from learning. Teachers guidance affects students' interest and achievement in learning and reduces school truancy symptoms (Haniza Abdul Khalid, 2003; How , 2007;Rodiah Ahmad, 2008).According to Shaffe Mohd Daud et al. (2011), students and teachers interactions in the classroom can happen informally to provide comfort to students to interact smoothly while asking questions and discussing their learning. This is because, according to Batik Bidin (2011), classroom interactions are more likely to be teaching and learning based on psychological, reflective and analytical elements. Thus, teachers have their own way to improve students' motivation in learning and to meet the evolving learning needs(Rohani Arbaa, Hazri Jamil and Nordin Abdul Razak 2010). In

addition, the 21ˢᵗ century learning system requires teachers to act as facilitators or mentors to guide and monitor the learning activities of students in the classroom. The role of teachers as facilitators or moderators is essential for the learning of Malay language to be more progressive by stimulating students to interact and to create a more spontaneous and less restrictive learning environment (Mahzan Arshad 2008). Thus, the learning of Malay involves effective interaction in the classroom that has the characteristics of understanding, excitement, affecting the attitude and the relationship between teachers and students (Syofia Ulfah *et al.,* 2012; Celinea Lasan and Zamri Mahamod 2016). This is to create learning in the classroom more systematic, conducive and cheerful. The attitude of mutual respect is nurtured among pupils when students are not shy about sharing problems with their friends and can exchange ideas in learning. Students always respect the instructions and advices from their teachers as well as respect each other during the reciprocal learning process in the classroom.

Conclusion

The Malay language learning in Sarawak has emphasized reading skills, especially through the determination of reading skills to be achieved as enshrined in the Malay language syllabus in primary and secondary schools. The findings of this study have implications on learning the Malay language at primary school level as in the Curriculum Standards and Assessment of Malay Language, Primary School Standard Curriculum 2015.Hence, the reciprocal learning of the Malay language meets the requirements of the new Primary School Standard Curriculum 2016 implemented by the Ministry of Education. The implementation of the new Primary School Standard Curriculum is revised based on international benchmarks to ensure students have the skills required to compete globally. The reciprocal learning of the Malay language is the transformation of language learning in primary schools in accordance with the standardization of content standards, learning standards, and new Primary School Standard Curriculum assessment. The special features of Malay language reciprocal learning meet the clear standard and the needs of primary school students. It has become one of the new strategies in learning to overcome the problem of dropout in primary schools. Malay language is the main medium of instruction at national primary schools in Sarawak. The reciprocal learning in the classroom implies the integration of multiracial students coming from different family backgrounds, speaking and mastering different first languages. Hence, the first language dominated by students affects Malay language proficiency especially in terms of pronunciation, intonation, understanding the meaning of the word and the meaning of the verse. Hence, the reciprocal learning provides the opportunity for low achieving students to learn together with other students to enhance their Malay language skills.Student-centered and material-centered learning helps the primary schools students in the process of adapting information more strategically. However, the challenges faced by students in reciprocal learning are from the lack of learning materials using the appropriate Information and Communication Technology apps that are suitable for primary school students. These materials are important for realizing Malay languageMalay language proficiency in order to improve students achievement in School-Based Assessments. Support and cooperation from various parties such as the Ministry of Education, schools, parents, and external agencies are essential to provide adequate Malay language learning materials at national primary schools in Sarawak. The Primary School Standard Curriculum review 2016 is provided to improve Malay language proficiency among primary school students. Hence, Malay language reciprocal learning has implications for effective learning in the classroom where teachers act as mentors to be referred by students. The Malay Language Unit at the State Education Department and the District Education Office also should worktogether with senior teachers and Malay language committee in national primary schools to enhance Malay language learning.In addition, this study also has implications for Malay language education at the Teacher Education Institute involving the trainee teachers who take the field of Malay Language Studies. Trainee teachers who will become Malay novice teachers in primary schools should be exposed to the reciprocal learning of the Malay language. Teachers' knowledge in reciprocal learning facilitates novice teachers approaching multi-racial students to appreciate and understand their learning needs.

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