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RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE PRACTICE OF TEACHING MALAY LANGUAGE LITERACY IN SARAWAK INLAND SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

Teaching Malay Language Literacy Program is part of the Literacy and Numeracy Screening (LINUS) Program to be carried out to the pupils of level 1 in primary school. These skills are very important and needs to be mastered by all pupils of level 1 pupils before they can proceed to level 2. The failure of pupils to master these skills will certainly affect their proficiency in other subjects. This study aims to determine strategies implemented in teaching of Malay language literacy of level 2 in schools situated in Sarawak. The key point that has been focused in this study is the implementation of teacher's teaching in terms of strategy that is in line with the expectations to improve the academic performance of Sarawak's inland schools. This study is a case study using a qualitative approach with purposive sampling techniques. A total of three teachers who taught Malay language level 2 were selected as interviewed respondents and supported by observation and documented data analysis. Data were analyzed using ATLAS.ti version 7.5.18 software. The findings of the study found that structured teaching was very effective in teaching Malay language literacy for Penan school. The implications of this study indicates that Malay language level 2 teachers need to plan their teaching in accordance with school climate. The Ministry of Malaysian Education should be concerned about infrastructure facilities in Sarawak's interior schools to keep up with the schools in the city. With the complete facilities in the interior schools can certainly provide the comfort of teachers and help to improve the academic performance of the students as a whole.

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INTRODUCTION

The success and the effectiveness of teacher teaching in the classroom is much related to accountability as well as having a well-established scientific equipment to apply teaching strategies effectively. Teacher teaching in the classroom is closely related to the strategies used. Teaching strategies refer to teaching approaches and methods (Adenan and Khairuddin 2012; Esah 2004; Ragbir Kaur, 2012). The teaching strategies that match age and achievement of the students will not only improve the quality of the delivery of a teacher, but will make learning more meaningful and fun (Ministry of Malaysian Education 2010a). In regard to this, the teaching and learning process that occurs in the classroom is the best indicator for the future development of a country (Ministry of Malaysian Education 2013). This is in the Mission of Malaysian Education Teacher that is, to develop quality teachers in education system and to produce teachers who are always brilliant and willing to meet the aspirations of the nation (Ministry of Malaysian Education 2001a). In order to ensure the quality of teachers in terms of competency and teaching

effectiveness, the three key areas that need to be addressed, namely the value and practice of teaching professionalism, knowledge and understanding and teaching and learning skills in the classroom (Ministry of Malaysian Education 2009). Strictly speaking, all teachers need to plan and implement high-quality teaching and learning processes that will enable them to develop the maximum potential and achievement of students in preparation for creating knowledgeable communities (Ministry of Malaysian Education 2010b). Thus, the Ministry of Education has established Malay Language Literacy Program, as part of the Literacy and Numeracy Screening Program (LINUS) which started in 2010 to all 1st year students as the first cohort (Ministry of Malaysian Education 2011). The *Literacy and Numeracy Screening (LINUS)* program is one of the National Key Result Areas (NKRA) (Ministry of Malaysian Education 2010a). The ultimate goal of the LINUS program is to ensure that all students attending the literacy program can master the Malay language except for special needs pupils. To help to increase the participation of Orang Asli and minorities such as Penan in the mastery of Malay language literacy, the Ministry of Education has introduced the Orang Asli Education Recovery Program (PKMOA) (Ministry of Malaysian Education 1998). While In 2008, the Ministry of Education has created the

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Integrated Curriculum of the Asli-Penan School and the Parents Adult and Parents of Orang Asli and Native Students (Ministry of Malaysian Education 2008 and 2012c). All of these programs emphasize on the mastery of literacy among Orang Asli and natives (Penan) in Sarawak. Subsequently, the Orang Asli-Penan Education Transformation Plan (Ministry of Malaysian Education 2012a) through the Malaysia Education Development Plan was also established with the aim of integrating the Orang Asli-Penan community in tandem with the progress of other Malaysian societies.

Literature overview

The efforts to mainstream the Orang Asli-Penan community continue in the 2013-2025 Malaysia Education Blueprint (PPPM) by giving priority to inland schools in Sabah and Sarawak through the Education Transformation Plan of Sabah and Sarawak Outback Schools with a target of up to 50% year 2020 (Ministry of Malaysian Education 2012a). The plan is the continuation of the Orang Asli Education Transformation Plan (PTPOA) (Ministry of Malaysian Education 2008) which is extended to the Penan in Sarawak in the hope of increasing the literacy rate of Malay Language (Ministry of Malaysian Education 2012c). The effort to bridge this gap will make Malaysia among countries with a more equitable education system in the world (Ministry of Malaysian Education 2012a). To help realize the transformation, the government introduced the Interim Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Education 2011-2020 (Ministry of Malaysian Education 2012b) which emphasized the mastery of literacy among students, especially indigenous students.

In regard to this, teachers are required to apply the best teaching strategies by improving the quality of leadership and skills existing in the education system (Ministry of Malaysian Education 2012b). Leadership and quality skills will certainly increase the literacy rate among students, especially indigenous students (Penan) who are still lagging behind in education (PPD Baram and Belaga 2013). In order to realize Malaysia as a developed country in 2020, the indigenous people need to be involved in developing the country's agenda even though the Penan Indigenous people often hear issues as less developed and lagging. In fact, the Penan Indigenous peoples have the right and the role of developing the country. For that reason, the line of teachers in school should play the role of judiciously to implement teaching strategies based on the latest school curriculum that uses equipment information and communication technology. Therefore, students should be equipped with strong literacy skills to compete at the global level in order to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

In order to increase the level of student learning in literacy, the Ministry of Education has made revisions and improvements to the New Primary School Curriculum (KBSR) (Ministry of Malaysian Education 1982, 1987, 2003) and New Curriculum High School (KBSM) (Ministry of Malaysian Education 1987, 2003) and replaced with Primary School Standard Curriculum (KSSR) and Secondary School Standard Curriculum are modular (KSSM) in 2011. The New Curriculum for Primary (KBSR) and Secondary School Curriculum (KBSM), teaching and learning approaches such as Critical Thinking and Creative Future study, Self-Access Learning, Learning How to Learn and Theory of Multiple Intelligences absorbed into the Malay language teaching and special curriculum to pupils Aboriginal-Penan students created to help improve the academic

performance of pupils indigenous Penan. Whereas Mastery Learning, school-based assessment, ICT, Lessons contextual and Constructivism also inducted in the hope to be able to make a positive impact on student learning of the Malay language in schools. Although the approach is implemented in other subjects to help master the Malay language, but the overall level of literacy among children in the natives Penan in Sarawak was still weak and not comparable to other indigenous communities although they are both living in the remote areas. In terms of quality, there is still a wide gap between the Penan natives from other indigenous people especially in term of student achievement in the Primary School Achievement Test (UPSR) and also Reading, Writing and Counting Recovery Program (PROTIM) (PPD Baram and Belaga 2013 and 2015). Rate Penan achievement in education is still too low and almost equal to the Orang Asli in Peninsular Malaysia. According to Abdul Razaq and Zalizan (2009), this problem arises because of the Orang Asli parents are less interested in education until they assume there is one school as a place to send the kids to play and eat. Such perceptions also apply to the indigenous Penan. This situation can be evidenced by the results of UPSR schools indigenous Penan in Sarawak from 2013 to 2015 as follows:

Table 1.1 Primary School Achievement Test Result (UPSR) Penan schools in Sarawak

Num.	Name School	2013	2014	2015
1.	SK Long A	3.66	2.74	3.34
2.	SK Long B	3.79	4.03	3.00
3.	SK Long C	4.16	3.53	4.15
4.	SK Long D	3.08	3.43	2.89
5.	SK Long E	4.01	4.09	4.16
6.	SK Long F	2.58	2.60	2.60
7.	SK Long G	3.63	4.06	3.44
8.	SK Long H	-	4.48	4.48

Source: Baram and Belaga Education District Office 2015

Based on the results of the Primary School Achievement Test (UPSR), available only SK Long F only perform well consistently, while seven other Penan Indigenous schools designated as low-performing schools. Schools identified as underperforming schools are schools that get Primary School Achievement Test (UPSR) results with grade point averages of 3.00 and above school (Ministry of Malaysian Education, 2010b). In this case, the average indigenous Penan pupils gained grade D and E results in the Primary School Achievement Test (UPSR). The situation is worsened because the level of education of the Penan's natives Orang Asli parents who push their prices do not care about the education of children. Belaga District Office (2013) also pointed out that the problem Penan students cannot continue their studies to a higher level of literacy because literacy problems and coupled with the problem of low socioeconomic status. Nur Bahiyah (2013) also noted that the educational level of Orang Asli parent's education resulted in them having no idea of the development and understanding of the importance of children's education. Nur Bahiyah added that there is no need to send a child to school as they can continue to support their family members. In the statements of Abdul Razaq and Zalizan (2009), the teachers face difficulty in communicating effectively to Orang Asli pupils due to the weakening of their Malay language. This situation prompted the Orang Asli students to be bored when they were in the classroom and did not care about the lesson. Such a situation also applies to the Penan natives. Accordingly, various efforts have been undertaken by the government to help the Penan indigenous

communities in education but has not shown promising results. The curriculum is designed to Aboriginal-Malay Penan focuses on language skills and reading and writing skills is one of the aspects contained therein. The question is, why in such a long period of time still exists dropout Penan natives who cannot master literacy skills like reading and writing although the special curriculum for Orang Asli and Penan have been well-formed? Now, it is high time this matter should be discussed in greater depth so that the indigenous Penan are not left far behind in development.

The purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to explore the implementation of the Malay language literacy level 2 among teachers teaching at Penan native schools in Sarawak.

Objective of the study

In particular, the objectives of this study are as follows

- Exploring the practices applied by teachers in the delivery of teaching Malay language literacy level 2 in Penan native schools.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The design of this study uses qualitative case study method with purposive sampling technique. For that, three teachers who taught level 2 were TML1, TML2 and TML3 as respondents in Penan's native schools in Sarawak. In this study, the rationale for determining and selecting research participants using the case study method is the selected study participants coinciding with the required characteristics, that is, teachers who teach students who have obtained the weak results for Malay language in UPSR and also in PROTIM (PPD Baram and Belaga District 2015). This selection was aimed at addressing the weakness of mastery of Malay language literacy among Penan native students using the case study method recommended by Merriam (1998), Marshall and Rossman (1995) and Yin (1994). Burn (1995), Marohaini (2004), Merriam (1998) and Yin (1994) also argues that the use of design research case studies using qualitative data is appropriate if a study involving the observation of a researcher or unit, one class, school or community, a group of people, family, events or culture. The data in this study were collected using semi structured interview instruments, document analysis and observation (Creswell 2008; Marshall; Rossman 2006; Sabitha Marican 2005) and analyzed using the ATLAS.ti software version 7.5.18. For that, every study participant was interviewed throughout the study, as well as the process of observation and document research was also conducted. The combination of these three approaches, directly generate in-depth study and thorough in addition to any attempt to explore the question of research to produce an explanation with more accurate and detailed (Marshall and Rossman 1995, 1999 and 2006). Through interviews, observations and document analysis, the researchers were also able to find and identify more detailed and accurate information about the strategies adopted by teachers when teaching Malay language literacy level 2 in the classroom. One of the way to maintain and improve the validity and reliability of research instruments, the researchers conducted a pilot study on interview items to teachers who resembled the respondents in the actual study. Pilot research is a mechanism for identifying problems that

may arise when conducting actual studies. Merriam (2001) considers that in qualitative data collection, the pilot study is very important to be a prototype of the actual study as well as to provide the opportunity and experience to the researcher to improve the weaknesses in the instruments to be used. Pilot study is not intended to obtain data but rather to study the process of conducting research and to improve any weaknesses in the procedures and instruments of the study being drafted.

Findings

The findings show that there are two main themes that have been successfully developed to show the level of Malay language literacy instruction conducted by the three study participants in Penan indigenous schools. The conclusions of this study found that among the themes of the teacher's teaching practices were observed to have multiple strategies. The applied strategies include approaches, methods and teaching techniques according to the level of student achievement in a classroom.

Research question 1: How does the practice of teaching Malay language literacy level 2 among teachers in Penan native schools in Sarawak?

Literacy Teaching Approach

The choice of an effective approach based on title and level of student achievement requires the wisdom of a teacher for planned it (Zamri 2012). The findings show that three of the study participants TML1, TML2 and TML3 implement teaching Malay language literacy using the same approach that is structured to teaching a skill every day in the week of teaching. Examples illustrating the description of structured teaching of the study participants were as follows;

"I teach focuses on a skill. I mean, aa ... if I teach as comprehension, grammar, essay or article display, I taught for example, an understanding on Monday, writing Tuesday, construct sentences based on the pictures on Wednesday and grammar also Thursday and Friday I always make refresher skills that have been taught"

TML1

TML2 also agrees TML1 that teaching methods for level 2 students should focus on skills, as the teaching of teachers for level 2 students focuses on strengthening the mastery of language. TML2 said;

"We teach focus on specific topics or skills in a day" (TML2). TML3 also give the same view, namely; "I practiced teaching focuses on a particular topic. This means that every day I pile on a particular topic or skill alone that they are not confused"

TML3

Through triangulation research findings from document analysis, teaching book records and observation are found TML1, TML2 and TML3, teaching focus on skills as defined (TML1; TML2; TML3). The three study participants stated that the approach was more easily planned and beneficial to the students because the students knew the skills that the teacher would teach. Example of TML1 statement;

"For me teaching is structured is easier for me to prepare and plan my teaching and learning"

TML1

TML2 added; *"... very good for me because of the way they can help the students ready to learn"*

TML2

TML3 also stated: *"... systematic and easy to implement because the students already know what will be taught by teachers"*

TML3

Literacy Teaching Method

In terms of teaching methods, the results showed that all study participants using a variety of methods in teaching Malay language literacy in Penan natives' school. However, all study participants chose the oral-aural method and mimicking memorizing as the choice in their teaching. Based on the observations made, these two methods are often used in induction sets because teachers and students interact randomly and individually before continuing their next teaching and learning process. Proof of usage of this method can be examined through interviews of all participants of the study as follows

"... the appropriate method is oral-aural, memorizing, mentor-mentee, student-centered teaching and singing for Penan students because they are interested to sing"

TML1

"... I always use the method of oral-aural and memorize because this method provides training drills"

TML2

"... using direct method, the method of mimicking memorizing and oral-aural method was suitable for teaching languages to Penan pupils"

TML3

However, ML1 and TML3 also using mentor-mentee, edutainment and continue in their teaching methods as described below;

"... appropriate methods is ...mentor-mentee, and also singing. Penan students interested in singing"

TML1

"Another method I often use the direct method"

TML3

The results of observations conducted, it was found Penan students love to sing and perform activities in the form of fun learning.

Literacy Teaching Techniques

In the context of education, techniques can be defined as the skills of a teacher in managing and implementing teaching methods in a more specific teaching and learning activity to achieve a teaching objective. In this study, Malay language literacy teaching techniques focus on oral teaching techniques, reading and writing essays. Oral teaching is the most important aspect of language teaching and learning. A pupil can master

oral skills well as it will make it easier to master other skills such as reading and writing skills. In this regard, oral teaching techniques need to be emphasized to facilitate students to speak and understand the speech of others. The results of the study found that all study participants preferred using questioning and discussion techniques in their oral teaching. This is explained evidenced by;

"... after that I can discuss and ask questions about the story"

TML1

"I used drill and discussion techniques in class"

TML2

"We encourage them to talk and talk ..."

TML3

In addition, study participants also using storytelling techniques, edutainment, quizzes, exercises and acting as noted below;

"... appropriate techniques for aa....teaching and learning is ... storytelling.."

TML1

"...discussions in class and edutainment. When to sing that part, they really enjoyed it. That avoid them so as not to get bored and sleepy"

TML2

"One more thing that they love, that quiz activities. We guide them to pronounce the Malay words properly"

TML3

Teaching Reading Techniques for Weak Students

Reading skills is one of the four language skills that are important in the process of teaching and learning languages. The ability to read is a measure of the success of students in school as this is considered fundamental for success in all areas. To enhance the reading proficiency of a student, the selection of techniques that are appropriate to the level of student achievement is very important. The findings show a variety of teaching reading techniques applied by study participants. Participants in the study TML1 and TML2 using the drills technique and read syllables as their choice. The application of drills and read syllables techniques by all three study participants is used to help especially the weak students to read. This is explained by the participants in the interviews as follows:

"... I normally use drills with a teacher or peer guidance. For weak students to read, the appropriate technique is to create an open syllable based on the word card"

TML1

"Reading exercises are often performed. ... Students who are involved in rehabilitation programs in reading, writing and arithmetic (PROTIM) we guide them to read a short text containing the colorful word to help the students become stiff or sounding syllables."

TML2

"I often use intensive reading techniques and textual reading. For PROTIM students, I helped them read a short textual"

sequence of colorful syllables so they could recognize how to pronounce the words"

TML3

This triangulation can be found on the notes note reading field observation TML2 and TML3 guide PROTIM students in reading drills syllable syllables in small groups and individuals in front of the class. This is explained in the notes field observation of researchers on the teaching of TML2 and TML3;

"...teachers guide the weak students to read the text on the chart while the prime disciples make their own exercises"

TML2 and TML3

While TML1 and TML3 also carry on reading lessons for weak individual students using the "Read Dear" book that is lent to the students. Observation notes show that TML1 and TML3 carry out reading guidance to PROTIM students. This is explained by a note of field observation notes on the teaching of TML1 and TML3;

"Teachers guide students to read the words based on the texts in the book "Read Dear"

TML1 and TML3

Techniques For Teaching Essay

In language teaching, various teaching writing techniques can be applied by teachers. Teachers should be wise to adapt those techniques to topics that will be taught to suit the level of student achievement. The findings show that various teaching writing techniques are applied by teachers. This teaching technique is explained through an interview. TML1 explains;

"... I will ask the students to complete the same article provided the answer or not. ... dictation technique also nice to be able to train pupils to spell and recognize the sound of the words"

TML1

"... I use the techniques of control as well as cloze technique because the students are not able to produce the article themselves. Sometimes I used the dictation technique to test their knowledge in spelling. ... and I also used SALAK technique because it is easily for them to understand"

TML2

The same technique is also applied by TML3. He explained;

"... I always instruct the students to copy the article so that they understand how to get the contents of an article. ... I teach them to compose using dictation techniques and compiling the paragraph to be the full story. In this case, the SALAK technique is appropriate so that the students can construct the sentences grammatically"

TML3

The direct observation triangulation of the study participants confirmed that all participants of the study were using SALAK techniques when teaching constructing grammatical verses instead of TML1. This is described in the following field note:

"... teachers describe SALAK schedule on the blackboard while explaining the meaning of SALAK, S describes the Who, A Meaning Activity, L stands for Location, A meaningful tool and K is the Evidence"

TML2 and TML3

Explanation of the study participants was reinforced by the analysis of documents, namely the training given to students (TML2; TML3)

DISCUSSION

Having reviewed all of the findings related to the practice of literacy teaching Malay language in schools in Sarawak natives, the teacher's role is very important for effective learning climate change. In the teaching and learning of languages, teacher delivery process will involve three-pronged strategy of approaches, methods and techniques. To determine the teaching effective implementation, all these three forms will be integrated harmoniously. Language teachers often face problems in teaching Malay language because of the weakness of teachers choose teaching strategies in accordance with the level of student achievement (Chellamal 2005). Ishak (2005) noted the appropriateness of the approach and method depends on the students, the teaching and learning environment. At primary school level, teaching strategies and learning the Malay language has placed emphasis on the principles of integration, absorption, assessment, recovery and enrichment (Ikhsan and Norila 2005; Ministry of Malaysian Education 2003). Indirectly, this approach helps produce teaching more effectively and systematically. Effective teaching is the teaching and learning that can create an environment that stimulates and encourages students to learn and respond to the physical, emotional, spiritual and intellectual (Esah 2004). This opinion is in line with Bryan (2010) and Rosie (2010) which states that the function of teaching is to make learning effective. In this case, the teacher should diversify teaching methods and techniques appropriate to the level of student achievement in addition to the systematic teaching of intelligent design.

In teaching language, oral teaching is the most basic skill that must be mastered by students before learning reading and writing skills. For that reason, oral-aural methods and mimicking memorizing are very important for primary school pupils, especially those who are still weak in learning as the teaching method focuses on the basic skills in oral reading and writing (Adenan and Khairuddin 2012). The practice of speaking in the language teaching is very important to recall the lessons learned especially for the weak and abandoned students. In regard to this, the Malay language literacy and learning strategies are appropriate to the level of ability and the Penan's culture is a matter of necessity to assist these minorities in order for the desired to bridge the gap between indigenous peoples and other societies can be implemented as planned PPPM. Therefore, the second shift in PPPM that wants every pupil fluent in Malay literacy (Ministry of Malaysian Education 2013) can be overcome and thereby enhanced the Malay language. If this objective can be achieved and become a reality to the Penan Indigenous people, then of course this will certainly can help to improve the academic level of the Malaysian society as a whole and thereby produce more public intellectuals to develop the country. Furthermore, the findings of this study provide new inputs to policy makers especially the Ministry of Education to improve the existing curriculum

such as the Integrated Curriculum of the Primary School-Penan School (KAP) to be reviewed in terms of the content of the syllabus, structure and alignment strategies and Malay literacy learning in the present context. Learning in the form of entertaining learners needs to be expanded because the findings of the study show that Penan native students are interested in entertaining activities such as singing and dancing. In this regard, stakeholders should refer back to the policies and plans that have been implemented according to the interests of the Penan natives in learning by providing potential teachers in the field of singing or playing musical instruments so that Penan pupils' talent can be polished and thus activities. These activities attracted the attention of the Penan students to come to school. Therefore, the teacher should plan the lesson carefully based on the knowledge and experience of the students (Ministry of Malaysian Education 2001b). In the process, pupils will adapt the knowledge received with existing knowledge to build new knowledge. As a result of the findings, truancy was a major problem in the schools studied. Absence of Penan pupils to schools conflicts with government policies that require pupils to attend school not less than 90% each day.

Conclusion

The effectiveness of a teaching process relies on the wisdom of a teacher to determine the objectives and contents of the lesson related to its environmental components. This is because in order to be a good teacher, they don't only require academic qualification, but other elements such as the strategies of teaching experience and methodology of a teacher are very important. In this case, teachers need to apply appropriate teaching methods and techniques to implement the teaching process through the interaction between teachers and students with the objectives and contents of the lessons in the environment. In this regard, in order to determine the language teaching process effectively implemented, the teaching strategy to be planned should take into account the concept of approach, method and technique early before the teacher goes to the classroom to teach. This is because the teaching strategy is a plan to achieve a learning goal through a controlled process. Teachers need to diversify teaching and learning methods to suit the purpose and objectives of teaching, teaching materials, student backgrounds and desired learning environment. Thus, the practice in the delivery of language teaching requires effective and engaging combination of several related components such as strategies, approaches, methods and techniques that range. This means that teachers must be prepared to make all plans with systematic, organized and neat before the teaching is done in addition to mastering the knowledge in the field to be taught.

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