



# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT



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ISSN: 2226-6348

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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v11-i3/15502>

DOI:10.6007/IJARPED/v11-i3/15502

**Received:** 14 July 2022, **Revised:** 17 August 2022, **Accepted:** 28 August 2022

**Published Online:** 19 September 2022

**In-Text Citation:** (Atan & Mahamod, 2022)

**To Cite this Article:** Atan, S. S., & Mahamod, Z. (2022). Remove Class Students' Motivation in Learning Malay Language Essay Writing – A Case Study. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, 11(3), 1297–1307.

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**Vol. 11(3) 2022, Pg. 1297 - 1307**

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## Remove Class Students' Motivation in Learning Malay Language Essay Writing – A Case Study

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### Abstract

Motivation is one of the key elements that encourage of non-native speaking students in learning the Malay language as a second language. Thus, the aim of this study is to identify motivation of remove class students who study Malay language as a second language. This study is focused on the aspect of Malay language writing essays. This research employed quantitative methodology which is a case study involving a total of 50 remove class students were chosen from a secondary school in the rural area from the district of Port Dickson, Negeri Sembilan and purposive sampling method was used for this study. They are consisting of 25 Chinese students and the other 25 of Indian students. Questionnaire was used as the main instrument which consist of 13 items to collect data. Data collection was analysed using SPSS software Version 16 to collect descriptive data. The findings of this research reveals that the remove class students have high motivation level towards learning Malay language essay writing with their teacher. This proves that positive motivation can increase the level of remove class students in learning Malay language essay writing. Thus, teachers who teach Malays language must use variety of methods and techniques to motivate these students in mastering the language and their writing skills.

**Keywords:** Motivation, Remove Class Students, Malay Language, Essay Writing

### Introduction

Malay language is a core subject in the Secondary School Standard Curriculum (KSSM). There are four language skills in the secondary school Malay language curriculum, namely listening and speaking skills, reading skills and writing skills (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2018). Language skills that are difficult for students to master are writing skills because students need to use cognitive aspects, namely the ability to think to generate ideas and translate them into writing (Jamian et al., 2016). Students must have sufficient knowledge to come up with ideas to produce interesting writing, in addition to make sure of the language used is correct (Hassan & Abd. Rahman, 2011). Writing skills are fundamental to an effective teaching and learning process in various disciplines in schools. Writing skills can be defined as a student's ability to write and translate ideas in various types of writing. Writing skills are related to the knowledge and personal experience that students have gone through (KPM, 2018).

Language is the most important element in human daily life. Language serves as an important communication medium to receive and convey information. Through language as

well, an individual is able to convey desires, feelings, opinions, experiences, thoughts and knowledge, in addition to obtaining information, adding knowledge and understanding others (Ghani & Mahamod, 2015). In the context of education in Malaysia, most students have been exposed to more than one language. This refers to the use of different mother tongues according to different races. Each race or ethnicity usually has its own spoken language (Zuki, 2017). This coincides with the concept of the formation of ethnicities or races that have different cultures, languages, customs and beliefs. For example, in Peninsular Malaysia it consists of various ethnic groups such as Malays, Chinese, Indians and others. While in Sabah and Sarawak has various tribes such as Kadazan, Dusun, Bajau, Murut, Bugis, Iban, Bidayuh, Kenyah, Melanau and so on. Each ethnicity and race has different language in terms of dialect, language structure, pronunciation and so on. There are about 50 types of languages in Sabah and 32 languages in Sarawak (Mahamod, 2016).

The ways of mastering the first and second languages are different. The mastery of the first language is through acquisition which is a natural process that involves the mental state being in an unconscious and unplanned situation such as the way a baby acquires his mother tongue. While the second language is acquired in the form of new language learning that is planned with a deliberate process in nature. Attitude is closely related to a person's achievement in learning. Attitude is something that is abstract and can only be seen or felt through the actions taken. In second language learning, attitude greatly influences the extent to which students can learn and master it quickly (Mahamod, 2004). The self factor is the factor that most influences a person to learn a language. If the student has a positive attitude such as awareness of the importance of the language he is learning, then he will try to master the language in various ways.

Bahasa Melayu (Malay) is designated as the national language and the official language in government administration as contained in the Federal Constitution Article 152. In line with the national policy of the Malaysian government and the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE) (Parliamentary-Constitutional Law Federal 1957, Article 152 (1)), all students of Tamil National Type Schools (SJKT) and Chinese National Type Schools (SJKC) must learn Malay (BM) as the official second language (B2) formally, starting from year 1 until year 6. Since the National Language Act 1963/67, Section 2, came into force, the Government of Malaysia has made BM education compulsory as B2 in all SJKT and SJKC. BM has become a compulsory subject in the school curriculum, either Curriculum New Primary School (KBSR) or Curriculum Integrated Secondary School (KBSM).

Many assume that students from vernacular schools either from SJKT or SJKC in rural areas have low motivation while learning Malay is seen as an important element that contributes to this problem. The internal and external motivations of vernacular type school students support the acceptance of Malay as a second language. This is clearly evident that low motivation has big impact on student achievement in examinations (Peter & Mahamod, 2011). For example, students' motivation towards learning will be low if students are not interested in learning a second language. Low motivation results in the existence of second language learning problems. Students' motivation can be explored if they show high and deep desire to learn a second language.

According to Chew (2016) in his study stated that the linguistic environment, i.e. the family atmosphere influences the motivation of students to learn a second language. He found that Chinese students were brought up with their own ethnic background which made them less confident in using Malay when speaking. He found that Chinese students at SJKC had difficulty in pronunciation because there was no opportunity to speak in Malay. It results

in the achievement of second language subjects also declining in the future. A study carried out by Dhamodarem (2011) found that, an Indian student in SJKT cannot communicate using a second language because they rarely have Malay or Chinese friends at school. The influence of the mother tongue encourages non-Malay students often make mistakes while speaking due to limited vocabulary in Malay. As a result, Indian students are less motivated to use Malay in speech and only learn a second language to pass the examination.

### **Problem Statement**

Various studies have been conducted to look at the motivation of non-native speaking students when learning Malay as a second language. Motivation means an individual's inner passion for perform something in order to achieve success (Gadner, 1985). The first language known as the mother tongue is first spoken since the baby is born as early as six months old naturally. A second language known as a foreign language needs to be learned by a person in order to adapt to the local community. (Mahamod, 2016). Studies on teaching and learning of Bahasa Melayu (Malay) as a second language for non-native speaking students have been conducted by many researchers throughout Malaysia. Malay is the second language of students who have their own mother tongue (Hamid, 2006). The process of learning Malay is not an easy process, especially for students who rarely speak Malay as a daily spoken language (Singi & Mahamod, 2019).

According to Mahamod (2016) his study was implemented to find out the communication aspects of Malay language of foreign students and the problems they face. Analysis of the study findings from the interviews found that among the factors that prevent foreign students from mastering language skills are attitude, lack of motivation, shyness, age, pronunciation problems, cultural differences and the influence of mother tongue. It can be concluded that foreign students are not motivated to learn a second language, namely Malay.

A study carried out by Chee & Subramaniam (2016) found out that Chinese students got low results in the UPSR Malay language comprehension paper. They investigate the motivation of Chinese students when learning Malay formally in the classroom. The results of the study showed that Chinese students have low motivation towards learning Malay as a second language. The study emphasizes that training, attitude, environment and motivation are the factors that lead to the decline in academic achievement of Chinese students in Malay language subjects. Due to the influence of their mother tongue, they are more comfortable communicating in Chinese with family members at home. Lack of Malay language usage and practice causes the occurrence of a decline in the achievement of Chinese students in second language subjects. It can be concluded that primary school Chinese students do not pay much attention to the Malay language so that they show low motivation while learning Malay as a second language.

Among the main issues that are a challenge to teachers who teach essay writing in the remove class is that students are not able to process the content of essays well. Pupils are unable to write ideas with grammatical sentences, limited use of vocabulary, incorrect sentence structure, and various other problems related to aspects of language not mastered by students. The failure of students to master good vocabulary makes the written sentences difficult to understand the meaning clearly (KPM, 2018). In addition, students unable to process the content of the essay well due to failure to master aspects of vocabulary. Vocabulary used by students is limited in essay writing causing sentence processing to be too easy and concise. For that reason, lack in mastering the vocabulary causes students to keep repeating the same words from the beginning of the writing to the end.

Furthermore, the weakness of students in writing discussed by Yusop & Mahamod (2015) in their study that students are not able to produce thoughtful ideas which in turn makes the processing of ideas in essays less interesting. The same issue was also discussed by Said et al (2017); Jamian et al (2016); Mohamed (2016) in their study which focused on essay writing especially in primary schools. The conclusion from the findings of their study is that students' mastery in essay writing is still weak and still unable to produce essays well despite learning aspects of essay writing over a long period of time.

At the same time, there are students who still fail to master the basic skills of writing and cause them to not be able to complete an essay writing exercise well (Kong et al., 2017). This situation results in students not understanding the requirements of the next question and not being able to produce an essay well. Based on the findings of studies by Ismail & Zakaria (2018); Mohammad et al (2018), as well as Ariffin & Janan (2017), non-native speaker students often committing grammatical errors particularly in the aspect of the use of adjectives while writing essays. In addition, students also do not master the aspects of cohesion (link) and coherence (sequence) in essay writing. Akup & Othman (2017), in their study say that, many weak students write introductions in their writing. But unfortunately, the written introduction has no continuity with the idea or content of the essay. They argue that the same thing happens that students unable to write a good essay introduction and fail to explain the title of the essay to be written. Pupils are unable to connect the introduction with the content of the essay and finally the content of the essay does not meet the requirements of the question.

The process of accepting Malay as a second language is influenced by several important elements in students. It is involving the attitude and motivation of students themselves towards the Malay language. According to Abdullah (2004), there is a significant relationship between achievement and students' attitudes and motivation towards a subject. It relates student's acceptance of what is being learned. If a student is not interested in learning Malay, then his motivation for the learning process will be low. In addition, attitude and motivation factors can also have an impact on the level of student achievement, either at the school level or at the tertiary level, (Peter & Mahamod, 2011). Acceptance of something new is necessary preceded by a deep desire for a student to know. The desire and passion to learn and understand something is called interest. To ensure that interest can be sown among students, then motivational factors must first be embedded in students. Therefore, interest and motivation factors play a role in the process of learning the Malay language.

Thus, taking into account the issues faced by non-native speaking students in learning Malay as a second language and its relationship with weaknesses in essay writing. It is a necessity to ensure the level of competence of non-native speaking students in essay writing can be improved. This study is important to ensure that the problems faced by non-native speaking students in essay writing can be minimized. Based on the above studies, motivational factors are able to improve students' proficiency in Malay language subjects. Many studies that have been done in the aspect of motivation focused on indigenous students of Sabah and Sarawak as well as Chinese and Indian students. However, studies on the motivation of remove class students are not widely conducted yet. Therefore, this study was conducted to identify the motivation in learning Malay language essay writing among remove class students.

### Research Objective

The objective to be achieved in this study is as follows:

1. To identify the motivations profile of remove class students towards learning Malay language essay writing.

### Research Question

This study was conducted to answer the following question:

1. What is the profile of motivation of remove class students towards learning Malay language essay writing?

### Research Methodology

#### Research Design

A quantitative study based on this case study method was conducted in a secondary school in Port Dickson district. This school is one of the schools classified as a rural school. This study focuses on one school located in the district of Port Dickson, Negeri Sembilan. The samples of this study selected are local residents and they are living close to the school. Case studies also help researchers to understand the processes involved in an event, project and program as well as to explore the features of the context that will shed light on an issue or object. Therefore, the selection of this case study method is felt to be very appropriate and coincide with the implementation of the research made to achieve the objectives of the study. A total of 25 Indian students and 25 Chinese students studied Malay language in the remove class was selected as the study sample. Respondents were selected using purposive sampling method and a questionnaire containing of 13 items was used as the main instrument to collect data in this study. A pilot study was conducted to obtain the validity of the items of the questionnaire constructed with the supervisor and three experts in the field of Malay language. SPSS software Version 16 was used to analyse the data collected descriptively, mainly to obtain frequency and percentage.

### Findings

#### Motivation of Remove Class Students in learning Malay Language Essay Writing:

In this study we classify motivation into two types namely intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. It was found that the selected respondents exhibited high motivation while studying Malay language essays writing. According to the intrinsic motivation construct, it is found that the level of intrinsic motivation shown by students is very high. The data obtained showed that for the first question item C1 and the second question item C2, namely '*I completed essay writing assignments in class*' and '*I am active in activities while learning essay writing*' recorded 94.0% percent of respondents agreed. This shows that the question item shows the number of who answered 'Yes', as many as 47 respondents out of 50 respondents is the highest.

In addition, a total of 92.0% or 46 respondents answered 'Yes' for item C3, namely '*I enjoy learning essay writing*' compared to answering 'No' only 4 respondents or 8 percent. For item C5, on the other hand, namely '*I am trying to learn essay writing better*' has recorded a percentage and number of agreements of 76.0% or only 38 respondents. Meanwhile, a total of 70.0% of respondents agreed for item C6, namely '*I cooperate in completing group assignments in essay writing with the group members*'.

However, in this construct, item C4, namely '*I allocate time in essay writing by myself at home*' obtained a low percentage with only 68.0 respondents agreeing. However, overall, the

remove class students exhibited high intrinsic motivation when studying Malay language essay writing. The matter proves that the remove class student showed a desire in themselves to learn Malay language essay writing without any external encouragement or reward.

Based on the second construct, namely, extrinsic motivation, it was found that students in the remove class have high level of extrinsic motivation in learning to write Malay essays. It was found that the item *'I am eager to learn Malay language essay writing if the teacher gives praise, encouragement and gifts in class'*, namely C10 recorded the highest percentage (100%) where all respondents answered 'Yes' to the item. In addition, a total of 47 respondents or 94.0% expressed their agreement for the second item of C12, namely *'I read story books or magazines and other sources in order to gain more ideas in improving my writing skills'*. The third item of C9, which is *'I focus on the form of Malay essay writing questions that came out in the test'* shows a high level of motivation and getting agreement of 92.0% or 46 respondents. A total of 45 respondents or 90.5 percent agreed in item C11, which is *'A good command of the Malay language allows me to obtain excellent results in essay writing'*.

Next, item C13, namely *'I listen to Malay songs to improve the level of Malay language proficiency'* also recorded the agreement of 36 respondents or 72.0%. Meanwhile, for the item of C8, namely *'Teacher always provide training in writing Malay essays and assignments in the classroom'* reached 68.0% where a total of 34 respondents answered 'Yes' to the question item. Finally, the extrinsic motivation of the remove class students was also at a low level for item C7 when it showed that 23 respondents or 46.0% only agreed for the item *'I learn Malay language essay writing according to the time specified in the schedule'*. This is because the students in the remove class learn to write Malay language essays for their own benefit, such as passing tests, getting rewards and so on. In conclusion, based on the analysis of the two constructs, it was found that the students of the remove class of school in rural areas exhibited high motivation while learning Malay language essay writing and learning Malay as a second language. Obviously, intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation can be mobilizing students to achieve language learning goals.

Table 1

*Motivation level of remove class students in learning Malay essay writing*

CONSTRUCTS		PERCENTAGE (%)	
<b>A – INTRINSIC MOTIVATION</b>		YES	NO
1.	<i>I completed essay writing assignments in class</i>	94.0	6.0
2.	<i>I am active in activities while learning essay writing</i>	94.0	6.0
3.	<i>I enjoy learning essay writing</i>	92.0	8.0
4.	<i>I allocate time in essay writing by myself at home</i>	68.0	32.0
5.	<i>I am trying to learn essay writing better</i>	76.0	24.0
6.	<i>I cooperate in completing group assignments in essay writing with the group members</i>	70.0	30.0
<b>B – EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION</b>			
7.	<i>I learn Malay language essay writing according to the time specified in the schedule</i>	46.0	54.0
8.	<i>Teacher always provide training in writing Malay essays and assignments in the classroom</i>	68.0	32.0
9.	<i>I focus on the form of Malay essay writing questions that came out in the test</i>	92.0	8.0
10.	<i>I am eager to learn Malay language essay writing if the teacher gives praise, encouragement and gifts in class</i>	100	0.0
11.	<i>A good command of the Malay language allows me to obtain excellent results in essay writing</i>	90.5	9.5
12.	<i>I read story books or magazines and other sources in order to gain more ideas in improving my writing skills</i>	94.0	6.0
13.	<i>I listen to Malay songs to improve the level of Malay language proficiency</i>	72.0	28.0

**Discussion**

Based on the results analysed in this study, the findings of this study gives the impression that students in the remove class relatively have high motivation when learning Malay language essay writing with their teacher. This is proved through two components, those intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Students of the remove class quickly finish their Malay language essay writing assignments given by the teacher and are very active in the classroom. According to Atan & Badusah (2013) in their study also proved that the attitude and motivation of remove class students consisting of Chinese and Indians to learn Malay as a second language is positive and highly motivated. This study is in line with the findings of the study by Ganesan & Mohammad (2021) that Indian students have high motivation when learning Malay as a second language. This is proved through two components, namely intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation.

In addition, students in the remove class are eager to learn essay writing when they receive praise, encouragement and gifts from the teacher. These findings support the study of Atan & Badusah (2013) giving the impression that Chinese and Indian remove students exhibit high motivation when receiving rewards from teachers for each activity implemented in second language learning. In addition, remove class students believe that language proficiency can encourage them to read story books or Malay language magazines in addition to being able to get as many ideas as they can in terms of essay writing. Mahamod (2016) in his study emphasizes that motivational factors have a great impact on mastering an individual's language skills. Therefore, the aspect of motivation greatly influences the interest of students to accept a language well. Therefore, learning Malay is not just about passing exams, but Malay as the national language must be preserved.

It can be concluded that motivation is an important element in second language learning. Pupils will take various initiatives to achieve the goal of the desired thing. Based on



the study that has been done, it is found that remove class students exhibit high intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation in learning Malay language essay writing. Remove class students learn essay writing because they are interested in the subject. Intrinsic motivation can motivate students in mastering their essay writing in an interesting way. This is because intrinsic motivation, which is the desire and satisfaction in a person without external elements in mastering a language is very clearly seen.

Remove class students are eager to learn Malay when they receive rewards, prizes and praises in the classroom. This is because extrinsic motivation is shaped by external factors such as rewards and so on. Therefore, Malay language teachers should take various actions to ensure that students' motivation in learning Malay language essay writing continues to remain and be positive. Teachers need to plan and provide interesting in teaching and learning activities so that students can be motivated while learning Malay as a second language. Parents should also support their children to speak in Malay in order to stimulate students' motivation to be more confident in interacting in Malay. This study can illustrate that remove class students in rural areas are also highly motivated when learning Malay as a second language.

### **Conclusion**

The success of a student in learning a language is influenced by various aspects. The motivational aspect is one of them. The motivation that students have greatly affects their learning of a language. In this context, the aspect of motivation greatly affects a student's language proficiency. This study shows that remove class students have a positive attitude and high motivation towards learning Malay as a second language especially in essay writing. In conclusion, the motivation of remove class students in learning Malay as a second language is positive. This study shows that the acceptance of Malay as the language of knowledge and the language of unity in this country is fully accepted.

### **Acknowledgement**

Thank you to my supervisor, Prof. Dr. Zamri Mahamod, family members, parents, friends and to all who have supported my journey over these years. Thank you very much to the school, the Principles, teachers involved in this study and students for allowing this study to be done perfectly. Thank you to Jabatan Pendidikan Negeri Sembilan for such opportunity in my journey of completing my study over these years.

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