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## The Revelation of Malay Language Reading Skill in the Penan's Indigenous Curriculum and its Implementation among the Teachers

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the perception of Malay Language teachers in indigenous school about the effectiveness of reading skill in the Penan's Indigenous Curriculum and its implementation among the teachers. This qualitative research involves five pupils that were purposely chosen from three indigenous schools in Pahang. Partially formal interviews, teaching and learning observation and document analysis were used to gain data and then were analysed by using Nvivo12 as well as manually done. Data is also described in descriptive and presented in narrative form. The findings show that the Malay Language reading skill in the Penan's Indigenous Curriculum is relevant to be applied in the lesson conducted. It is relevant due to the content is based on local community background. Furthermore, the reduced of skills number is also suitable with the ability of the pupils to master the skills. Findings also shows lack of consistency in term of implementation due to teachers focusing more on skill emphasized in the *Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah* (KSSR) and Literacy and Numeracy Screening (LINUS). This research suggests that a model of teaching and learning Malay Language skills for KAP to improve the implementation as well their achievements.

**Key words:** *Reading Skills, Indigenous pupils, Malay Language, Penan's Indigenous Curriculum*

### Introduction

Education has been emphasized for so long. The goal is to ensure that every society can make firm decisions (Nor Laila 2015), and it is believed that education enhances the dignity of a nation and the developed nation is in line with the development of its people's education (Celinea 2018). Hence, every level of society including the Indigenous community should be equally educated to ensure balance societies on Malaysia. In Malay Language curriculum, reading skills

are one of the skills required to be mastered by pupils other than oral skills and writing skills. They are not only as a source of information for pupils through reading activities but it is also important to ensure that pupils pass the exam (Abdul Rasid 2011). The examination system which is still practiced in Malaysian education requires the pupils to master each skill especially reading skills so that pupils can translate the question (Mohd Kamal & Abd Rahman 2009). In addition, the mastery of reading skills can also provide opportunities for every pupil, especially Indigenous pupils, to improve their quality of life, contribute to the nation's development and become a successful man (Celinea, 2018).

### **Reading Skills**

The involvement of various skills during reading makes reading skills as an interactive process (Goodman 1976; Carell 1987). Each reading has a specific purpose whether to obtain the required information or reading itself purposely for spending the free time (Abdul Rasid 2011). Basic reading skills should be mastered first in order to understand the texts read thus giving meaning to readers (Yahya 2005). There are various define regarding reading skills. Among them, reading is the process of speaking the word correctly even though it does not understand the true meaning of the so-called word (Celiena 2018). Abdul Rasid (2011) defines reading as a process of character recognition and associates with sound through experience as well as the ability to interpret reading material. He adds that reading skills also involve the process of understanding cognitive readings, words or sentences that are related to the reading experience.

Mohd. Najib and Nor Shafrin (2008) emphasize that reading skills are the process of selecting reading material by readers based on the purpose of reading and its should eventually be made temporary determinations of the meaning of words that are read, confirmed, accepted or reviewed to form an accurate understanding of reading material. Hence, in the context of this study, reading the Malay language involves the process of interaction between the thoughts of Indigenous pupils and the language used in the Malay language. This interaction process also requires the existing knowledge of the pupils including information from the texts being read to form a new understanding. This process makes reading skills interactive because it involves not only a skill but also requires a combination with the pupils' existing knowledge to form meaningful reading.

### **Statement of Problem**

The issues related to reading skills among Indigenous pupils are often discussed whether at the lower level or internationally. Various efforts such as the implementation of the KAP, Program Kelas Intervensi Awal Membaca dan Menulis (KIA2M), Program Penguasaan Tiga M (PROTIM) and Literacy and Numeracy Screening (LINUS) program were implemented by the Ministry of Education Malaysia (KPM) to improve pupils' ability in reading, but there is still no major change in the Indigenous academic achievement. Based on the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 report (MOE 2013), 35% of the Indigenous pupils were at lowers than 1% of national-type schools. This incredible gap illustrates the educational attainment of Indigenous pupil schools.

Jumiya (2014) in his study also found that Indigenous pupils from the Kensiu tribe were very difficult to understand the mentions of teachers so that they could not interpret the meaning of the reading. This situation is influenced by various factors including the ability of

Indigenous pupils (Md. Nasir et al 2010), parents of Indigenous pupils (Jumiya 2014), teachers (Nor Laila 2015) and inadequate infrastructure in schools (Norwaliza 2014).

### **The Framework Concept Studies**

There are two main theories used in this research that are Behaviourism theory and the Bottom-Up reading theory. Behaviourism Theory was introduced by Ivan Pavlov which argues that children need training to acquire language. Children cannot acquire language naturally (Yong 2010). Therefore, children need drills and stimuli to increase their ability to acquire language. Bottom-Up reading theory emphasizes the principle of reading in stages. The principle emphasized in the theory begins with the basic steps of reading, which is mastering the skills of recognizing and sounding the letters up to the skill of understanding the meaning of verses or quotations that are read to obtain new information (Nor Laila 2015). This theory is relevant to the ability of the Indigenous pupils to remain limited and must learn to read in stages to strengthen their skills (Md. Nasir et al., 2010).

### **Objective**

In general, this study aims to examine Malay Language reading skills ability among Indigenous pupils. Hence, the main purpose of this study can be explained as follows:

- i. Exploring teachers' perceptions regarding the reading skills ability of Indigenous pupils
- ii. Exploring teacher perceptions regarding factors affecting Indigenous pupils to mastering reading skills in Malay Language.

### **Methodology**

The qualitative study based on this case study requires researchers to interview the participants, observe and analyze documents to strengthen the findings of data related to the reading skills ability among Indigenous pupils and explore the factors influencing them to fail to master Malay Language reading skills. Five participants consisted of five teachers from three Indigenous schools were selected. The number of participants between one to seven can provide a broad and profound finding to researchers (Ghazali & Sufean 2016). They were selected based on purpose sampling method at ensuring that the data obtained were accurate and relevant as the selected research participants were representative of the study population (Celinea 2018). Data obtained were analysed using Nvivo 12 software and manually. The triangulation process was also made to strengthen the findings of this study (Meriamm 2009).

### **Result and Discussion**

Based on interviews, observations and analysis of the documents that have been conducted throughout the study, the findings can be summarized as follows:

#### **Question 1: Ability to Read Aboriginal Pupils**

Based on interviews with the participants, researchers found that the Malay Language reading skills ability of Indigenous pupils were still weak, mainly involving basic skills. If they cannot master the basic skills of reading the Malay language properly, it is uncertain that they are difficult to master the higher reading skills. Data findings can be interpreted as follows:

**i. Weak in knowing the shape of the letter and the sound of the letter**

The participants stated that Indigenous pupils were still weak in recognizing forms and letters. This situation makes them difficult to spell and read even words or short phrases. Based on the observation, the researcher found that many pupils mistakenly shaped some letters such as letters b and d, e and c, p and q as well as m and w. There are a handful of pupils who know the letters but still confused with the sound of certain letters such as letter m with n. This confusion causes them unable to spell and call the sound of the letters and to disrupt the process of mastery of Malay Language reading skills. The findings of this study were further reinforced with the results of the analysis of pupil works' documents. Researchers found that they were difficult to write certain letters that resulted in mistyped words. This situation occurs because they are still weak in recognizing the shape of the letter and the sound of the letters.

**ii. Inarticulacy reading**

Researchers found that Indigenous pupils still did not read well even phrases or sentences. Based on the interview, this condition occurs as the pupils are still weak in recognizing the form of the letters thus disturbing the reading process. Although there are some of them are familiar with letters and sounds, the become confused in engaging it into sentences until they are hesitant to re-read each spelled word. The findings of this study were further reinforced with the results of observation during the teaching and learning conducted by the participants. Researcher found that pupils who know and able to sound the letter face difficulty reading the verse. They cannot read a complete sentence smoothly because their lacking ability to combine each word. This situation thus impacts their ability to read fluently.

**iii. Difficulty to interpret the meaning of the verse**

Researcher also found that Indigenous pupils are still weak in interpreting the meaning of the verse. According to the participants, the pupils are hard-pressed to repeat each verse read but according to them there are still a small number of pupils who still cannot explain the meaning of even a word. This situation makes it difficult for them to recite the verses read while in the Bottom-Up Theory; the understanding of the texts read is highly emphasized. According to Celinea (2018) reading without understanding the meaning is not categorized as mastering the reading skills because the reading process is to obtain information in addition to fluent reading.

**Question 2: Factors Affecting Ability to Read Malay Language in KAP among Indigenous Pupils**

Based on the interviews, researchers found that there are several factors that are very relevant to the problem of mastery reading skills in Malay Language in KAP among Indigenous pupils. The findings of this data can be described as follows:

**i. Ability factor for Indigenous pupils**

Based on interviews with the participants, the researcher found that the pupil's ability factor was a major contributor to the problem of not mastering the reading skills of Malay Language in KAP among Indigenous pupils. Data obtained through observations also shows that Indigenous pupils could not keep their learning for a long time. This problem causes them not to have the knowledge available when the teacher performs relevant teaching. In addition, pupils



are also difficult to read the letters and words taught by the teacher. This situation is also influenced by their mother tongue factors. The first language disorder, i.e. the native language of the Indigenous community, affects Indigenous pupils to learn other languages such as Malay Language (Md. Nasir et al., 2010). The culture of Indigenous pupils who are fonder of playing compared to learning also becomes one of the main reasons for them to hardly master the Malay Language reading skills. Based on the observation, researchers found that Indigenous pupils are more fond of and eager to follow the teaching and learning of Physical Education as compared to the Malay Language subject. Perceptions of pupils in relation to the lesson also led to the difficulty (Mohd Kamal & Abd Rahman 2009).

## **ii. The implementation factor of teaching and learning of Malay teachers**

Researcher found that Malay Language teachers at Indigenous schools did not diversify their teaching techniques and methods, but they preferred using conventional methods that were boring when the students were fond of active learning. In addition, they also did not use the teaching aids that were appropriate during the teaching and learning process. This situation caused pupils to hardly understand the lessons they had given and thus gave their interest in English reading skills. Jumiya (2014) states that the appropriate teaching of Indigenous pupils is a material-based lesson, as well as games that can attract them to pay attention throughout the course of the lesson.

## **iii. Infrastructure factors at school**

Based on interviews, researcher found the infrastructure in the Indigenous schools was incomplete. This situation makes the teacher difficult to choose and use the material that is suitable to the pupil's ability level. Basic amenities such as desks, chairs and non-conductive classroom does not prepare them to learn comfortably. Researcher found that there are some classrooms that do not have facilities such as fans including pupils having to share desk and chair facilities. Other facilities such as technological facilities are also not available in Indigenous schools compared to other schools in urban or suburban areas. Technology-based learning not only attracts pupils but also has a more meaningful impact on their learning (Eloise 2015). Hence, this incomplete infrastructure caused them to not master the taught skills including reading skills in Malay Language.

## **Conclusion**

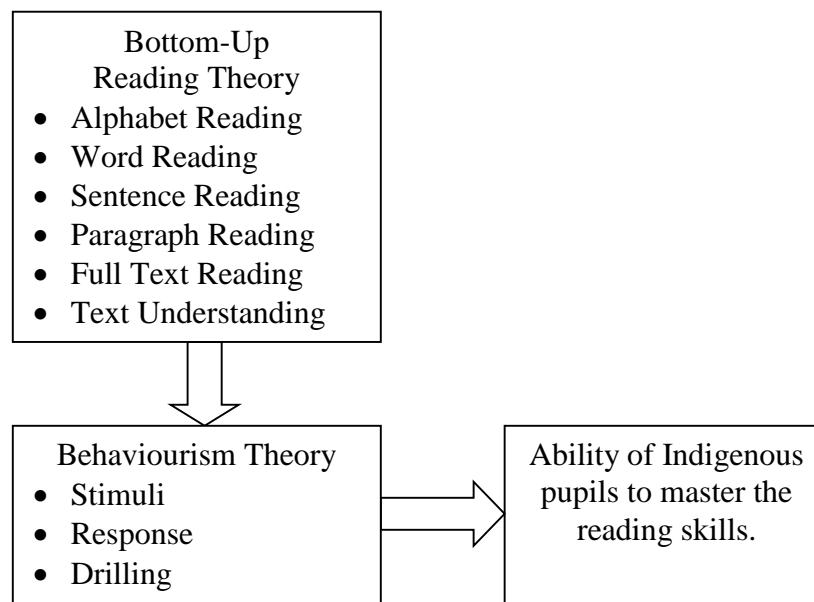
Hence, it can be concluded that the reading Malay Language skill ability among Indigenous pupils is still weak. They are still weak in mastering basic reading skills including weakness in recognizing forms and sounding letters, Inarticulacy in reading and weakness in interpreting the meaning of the readings. This is because the ability of Indigenous pupils to be limited in remembering and mentioning the words or sentences in Malay Language and their mother tongue disruption also makes them difficult to read in Malay language. In addition, the cultures of Indigenous pupils that are fonder of playing than learning also caused the problem. In addition, the teaching and learning of Malay Language teachers also caused the them to be still weak in reading.

The Malay language teachers in Indigenous pupils prefer to use conventional methods in teaching reading skills while Zamri (2014) encourages teachers to introduce language teaching

techniques and methods including using technology facilities. The purpose is to attract pupils, as well as to increase their proficiency towards the skills taught by teachers. Hence, Malay language teachers in Indigenous pupils need to diversify their teaching techniques and methods to produce more successful Indigenous pupils. Incomplete infrastructure also causes Indigenous pupils to learn in inconducive atmosphere, thus causing them to lose interest in education. In addition to the basic facilitation, technological facilities should also be provided at Indigenous schools because technology-based learning makes learning more meaningful in pupils, as well as to maintain their focus on teacher teaching as emphasized by Nor Laila (2015) regarding the use of technology resources in helping to improve reading skills among pupils with disabilities in reading in Malay Language.

### Learning Skills Model for Reading Malay Language among Indigenous Pupils

Chart 1: Learning Skills Model for Reading Malay Language Aboriginal Pupils



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