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A Report on the Language Immersion Program 2.0 for Perguruan Diniyyah Putri, Sumatera

Laporan Program Imersif Bahasa 2.0 bagi Perguruan Diniyyah Putri, Sumatera

Dr. Raihan Rosman*, Dr. Zahariah Pilus and Dr. Ainul Azmin Md. Zamin

Introduction

A total of 44 students from Perguruan Diniyyah Putri, Padang Panjang, Sumatera came to AbdulHamid AbuSulayman Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences (AHAS KIRKHS), International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) for a language immersion program. IIUM was selected for the research location because it has the international atmosphere where students from all over the world are studying and staying on campus while using the English language as a medium of instruction. The team of language instructors is a combination of both local and international lecturers from the Department of English Language and Literature AHAS KIRKHS and Centre for Languages and Pre-University Academic Development (CELPAD), IIUM, simply to expose students to real-life experiences as students studying at IIUM. The intervention involves 20 classroom sessions, and this report covers two sessions as samples.

The program is vital to help explore the effectiveness of a language immersion program for the improvement of language learning. Students need to be equipped with the right language competency to stay competitive in this era of globalisation. This program aims to provide recommendations as to the various steps that can be taken in order to improve pedagogical aspects of language learning as well as exposure to second language acquisition, specifically in terms of writing, speaking, reading and comprehension skills. Below is the detailed commentary of each of the selected sessions.

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First session: Comprehension skills through Film Viewing

This section reports on a comprehension lesson where students were asked to watch a film adaption of a well-known children's literature, Roald Dahl's *Matilda*. The title of the session was "Comprehension skills through Film Viewing of Roald Dahl's *Matilda*." The objectives of the lesson were able to:

1. Comprehend the gist of the film adaptation.
2. Distinguish the different styles of communication.
3. Consider film viewing as a form of language learning.

At the beginning of the session, students were asked to answer a pre-test questionnaire to understand their level of comprehension of the English language, and to find out whether they would consider film viewing as a form of education in language learning. The instructor read the questions one by one and translated them to Malay and Indonesian languages as well since majority of the students could not understand the words used in the questionnaire. After that, the film adaptation of Roald Dahl's *Matilda* was played on screen for 1 hour and 30 minutes.

The session proceeded with a focus-group discussion, where the instructor prompted questions on the different styles of communication that are present in the film. Some examples are communication between parents to children, children to parents, children to teachers, teachers to children, as well as children's communication among themselves. The instructor asked students to explain and differentiate the good and bad forms of communication. All students successfully understood the practice and managed to differentiate the good and bad methods of communication. Students were able to accurately recognise and differentiate between politeness and abusiveness in speech. The instructor then redirected the discussion towards the themes and moral values that are portrayed in the film. This activity was also done in groups, and one or two representatives from each group will come in front and share with the classroom.

By the end of the session, all three objectives of the session were achieved. Students were able to grasp the gist of the film adaptation, distinguished different styles of communication, and considered film viewing as a tool for language learning. The instructor concluded the

session with a number of excellent films that can be useful for language learning.

Second session: A Quick Peek at a Pair of Long and Short Vowels in English: [i:] and [ɪ]

This section reports on a pronunciation lesson entitled "A Quick Peek at a Pair of Long and Short Vowels in English: [i:] and [ɪ]". The objectives of the lesson were for the students to:

1. Accurately recognise and produce the [i:] vowel most of the time in words that contain this vowel.
2. Accurately recognise and produce the [ɪ] vowel most of the time in words that contain this vowel.
3. Distinguish between the [i:] and [ɪ] vowels in terms of articulation and recognise how these differences can sometimes be reflected in spelling.

At the beginning of the session, the students were asked to complete a questionnaire to find out their perceptions of pronunciation learning. The class then started by asking the students to provide examples of letters that represent vowel sounds in English. The instructor followed this by explaining the relationship between letters and sounds and introduced the topic of the day. To raise awareness, the students were also introduced to natural non-speech sounds that resemble the [i:] and [ɪ] vowels.

The presentation of the topic was conducted in two parts. The first part involved watching a video on articulating the vowels and minimal pair words containing these vowels, with students repeating both the vowels and the words. The second part focused on analysing the spelling of words with these vowels and drawing conclusions about the spelling patterns. For practice, the students worked in pairs to identify the spelling of the vowels in the words shown to them. Then, they were divided into four groups to determine whether another set of words contained any of the target vowels and, if so, which one. For the consolidation exercise, students identified words and vowels based on the pictures displayed. To encourage participation in the group work, marks and occasionally tokens were awarded to the group or individual

student who answered a question correctly. The marks for each group were tallied and then announced to the class.

Towards the end of the session, the class answered questions on the similarities and differences in the spellings of the [i:] and [ɪ] vowels, as well as the distinction between these vowels by saying them out loud and providing examples of words that contain each vowel. Additional marks were awarded to the group that could answer the questions. The marks for each group were tallied, and the winner was announced. It is hoped that the lesson at least raised the students' awareness of the difference between spelling and sounds and the distinction between the two vowels.

Conclusion

Both sessions, “Comprehension Skills through Film Viewing” and “A Quick Peek at a Pair of Long and Short Vowels in English: [i:] and [ɪ]” were conducted successfully, and all listed objectives for each session were achieved. However, as mentioned earlier, these two sessions reported are only two selected samples from the total of 20 sessions that have been organised for this program. The instructors are hopeful that the students from Perguruan Diniyyah Putri, Sumatera have enjoyed and benefitted immensely from this language immersion program. The organisers look forward to collaborating on future language learning programs either in Malaysia, Indonesia or any parts of Southeast Asia.