



KOLITA 18

Konferensi Linguistik Tahunan Atma Jaya Kedelapan Belas
Tingkat Internasional

Diselenggarakan secara Daring

Pusat Kajian Bahasa dan Budaya
Universitas Katolik Indonesia Atma Jaya
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2020

**PROSIDING KONFERENSI LINGUISTIK TAHUNAN ATMA JAYA
(KOLITA) 18**

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Salah satu misi Pusat Kajian Bahasa dan Budaya (PKBB) Universitas Katolik Indonesia Atma Jaya adalah menggalang kegiatan akademik lintas bidang linguistik, pengajaran bahasa, budaya, serta ilmu-ilmu sosial dan humaniora lainnya. Dalam rangka mewujudkan misi tersebut, PKBB menyelenggarakan Konferensi Linguistik Tahunan Atma Jaya (KOLITA) sejak tahun 2003. Penyelenggaraan KOLITA yang ke-18 pada tahun ini digelar pada 16-18 September 2020. Karena adanya pandemi Covid-19, KOLITA 18 digelar secara *online/daring*.

Prosiding KOLITA 18 ini memuat abstrak dan/atau makalah-makalah yang telah lolos seleksi oleh dua orang penilai, dipresentasikan dalam KOLITA 18, dan direvisi berdasarkan saran dan masukan yang diterima selama konferensi.

Makalah-makalah yang dibentangkan dalam KOLITA 18 dan dimuat dalam prosiding ini mencakup sejumlah bidang penelitian, antara lain penerjemahan, pengajaran bahasa, analisis wacana, analisis linguistik mikro, serta bahasa dan budaya. Makalah-makalah tersebut merupakan hasil penelitian para dosen dan mahasiswa dari berbagai institusi di seluruh Indonesia dan mancanegara.

Kami mengucapkan terima kasih kepada para pemakalah yang telah berpartisipasi aktif dalam KOLITA 18 dan mengirimkan revisi makalahnya untuk diterbitkan dalam prosiding ini. Semoga prosiding ini dapat menambah wawasan peneliti lainnya dan menginspirasi munculnya ide-ide penelitian baru.

Kami juga mengucapkan terima kasih kepada Ketua Lembaga Penelitian dan Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat Unika Atma Jaya yang telah mendukung penyelenggaraan konferensi ini, *the American Institute for Indonesian Studies* (AIFIS) yang telah mensponsori kegiatan ini, para reviewer dan moderator serta segenap panitia yang telah bekerja keras dengan penuh dedikasi mulai dari tahap persiapan hingga pelaksanaan KOLITA 18 dan penerbitan prosiding ini.

Jakarta, November 2020
Ketua panitia,

Yanti, Ph.D.

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THE LEVEL OF PROFICIENCY OF MALAY LANGUAGE READING SKILLS OF NON NATIVE STUDENTS IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

The process of accepting Malay as a second language does not come naturally but needs to be learned especially in reading skills. The previous study found that non-native speakers in Malaysia were less fluent in reading using the national language of Malaysia. This study was conducted to identify the level of proficiency in reading skills in National Type Schools (SJK). A total of 414 students from 5 SJKs were selected as study samples. The analysis was done using the Reading Test set of UPBM_SR and the Level of Score. Data is processed using IBMSPSS Version 23 with a cross sectional survey design. The findings show that the majority of year 6 students only mastered the reading skills at a moderate level of proficiency. Although they have been in SJK for six years, the students only demonstrated limited Malay language skills. They are also found to be less proficient in reading of Malay language. It is apparent that students need high level of second language learning motivation and effective learning strategies to improve the level of reading skills.

Keywords: *proficiency, second language, non-native speakers, National Type Schools, reading skills*

INTRODUCTION

Reading is the process by which a person re-interprets the written symbol into a sound symbol. This skill is a dynamic but complex process because it involves the ability to interpret what is being read quickly, in order to interpret and analyze what is being read. Reading proficiency depends on reading speed and comprehension (Anderson, 2001). Emphasis on reading skills should be given attention as reading is done not only to gain skills and understanding but also to obtain new information about what is being read. Reading is also a way to gain new knowledge and information to improve language proficiency. Clearly, reading skills need to be mastered before writing skills (Mahzan Arshad, 2016).

Non-Malay students mastered their first language or their mother tongue naturally in their own environment and linguistic culture. Second language learning on the contrary has to go through critical periods and sometimes in isolated situations from a planned and structured linguistic cultural environment (Keeves and Darmawan, 2007). Previous studies have shown that many skills acquired while learning the first language can be transferred to the second language (Kasper et al., 2010). This is because, the process of building second language skills is done formally as an additional skill (Khairul, 2017). There is a difference between the new skills and the existing skills that used native language (Zulkifley Hamid, 2014).

Year 6 students in primary school should be able to read on their own to understand, remember, interpret, decipher and evaluate concepts, gather information, relate ideas, and formulate each reading material as reading and comprehension skills are one of the important skills in determining the success of an individual's learning (Aisyah et al., 2013). The importance and influence of mastery of reading skills is definite and proven in educational systems that emphasize academic achievement as a measure of individual educational success.

Malay language achievement in Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan (SJK) is declining due to the lack mastery of Malay language skills lately. Recent research shows that non-native learners in Malaysia are less fluent in reading the national language (Chew Fong Peng, 2016). This phenomenon should be given serious attention since the mastery of Malay language, especially reading and writing skills should begin from early childhood. According Fadzilah and Norazlina, (2015), research on Malay language proficiency is essential to be conducted with focusing on students in primary school to provide an initial basis among students of various ethnic groups in Malaysia. Efforts to uphold the Malay language can only be achieved if each individual master the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills well. However, this paper focuses only on one skill which is reading skills. Understanding spoken and written language input is seen as the only mechanism that causes an increase in the basic linguistic proficiency to produce a generation that is proficient in Malay language.

Clearly, it can be concluded that environmental concerns are a phenomenon that occurs as a result of school system practices and language formation among non-native students. Less exposure to reading skills in second language is a factor of students do not know how to read in Malay. Poor language use

practices also contribute to problems in mastering reading skills. The study of reading skills should be conducted in line with the shift of the Second Malaysian Education Development Plan (2013-2025) so that every student is proficient in Malay language.

METHODOLOGY

This study used quantitative data collection method using cross-sectional survey design. The instruments used are the UPBM_SR Reading Test and the UPBM_SR Reading Test score. Data were processed using IBMSPSS Version 23. Data was collected only once from a sample at a time (Creswell, 2008).

RESEARCH SAMPLING

A total of 414 students from the non-native students population of Year 6 in the SJK were selected as study samples. Samples were obtained by using stratification from the population based on systematic random sampling. Samples represent each layer by consensus of SJK (C) and SJK (T). Sample selection was based on school (urban and rural), gender (male and female), and school year (Year 6). Sample selection based on ethnic and gender distribution represents population. The rationale for Year 6 students was chosen is to determine their level of reading skills after completing 6 years of primary schooling. In addition, Year 6 students were selected to fill the time slot after completing the UPSR test while data collection was being conducted.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The instrument used in this study is UPBM_SR Reading Test (Primary School Malay Proficiency Test) and UPBM_SR Score Level that have been developed through the adaptation and adjustment.

UPBM_SR READING TEST

The component of UPBM_SR Reading Test comprises of four passages from various themes. Questions were developed using Anderson & Krathwol (2001) the revised version of Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning, and the Reading Understanding Taxonomy of Lamberg & Lamb (1980). The construction of items is based on remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating. 40 questions need to be answered by the students. Each passage contains 10 objective questions with four answer choices of A, B, C, and D. Answer time is 45 minutes and 80 marks are allocated. Items tested were: (i) knowledge and understanding of the language system, and (ii) information application skills (reading and understanding).

Testing Procedure: Students are gathered in a special room. The arrangement of desk and chairs is based on the Written Exam Management Center Guide document. The teacher distributes the question paper and the student is allowed to read the questionnaire silently within 5 minutes. Students should read all the excerpts and black out the answer choices on the answer sheet provided. The teacher evaluates the students' answers and scores their overall scores based on the UPBM_SR Reading Test Score Level to determine the level of students' reading comprehension. The highest level is the Level 8 (Most Proficient) score between 71 and 80. The criterion for this is that students are able to read, understand a variety of reading materials fluently and able to understand difficult and complex words. Students are also able to comprehend rationally and transfer information at a very detailed and consistent level.

UPBM_SR SCORE LEVEL

UPBM_SR Reading Score Level provided has been adapted from various reliable resources such as the Examination Board, Ministry of Education (2015), Document Standard Curriculum and Assessment (DSKP) Malay for SJK (2013), IELTS and TOEFL Junior®, textbooks Malay Level 2, relevant reference books and websites tailored to the sample level of the study.

Clearly, in the context of this study, to measure Malay reading proficiency of non-native students at SJK, a systematic and comprehensive instrument was used to obtain comprehensive data.

ANALYSIS

The UPBM_SR Reading Test scores obtained were divided into different levels using the UPBM_SR Score Level. Determination of the level was based on the scores obtained by the respondents. Level 1 is the lowest level and Level 8 is the highest.

The results showed that 39.6% of Year 6 students who still have not mastered reading skills in Malay, the majority of them achieved Level 3 with a 23.9% percentage (99 people). Students showed limited reading skills. Students are able to read, understand particular verses in the material they are reading and they are able to transfer information at a very limited level. 15.2% (63 people) achieved Level 2. Students showed very limited reading skills. They were able to read and understand just a few words, and as many as 0.5% (2 people) achieved Level 1 (Minimal). Students do not demonstrate basic knowledge of reading skills. Students can only understand two or three words from the material they are reading.

21.0% students achieved Level 4 (Intermediate). Students demonstrate simple reading skills. They have the ability to read, understand simple words and transfer information to a limited extent. Students who achieved Level 5 (Nearly Proficient) were 22.2% (92 people). Students show excellent reading skills. They have the ability to read, understand a variety of reading materials, have the ability to understand difficult words and to transfer information at appropriate levels. Students who achieved Level 6 (Proficient), 15.5% (64). Students show good reading skills, have a good grasp of various reading materials and are able to understand difficult words. Students are fluent and able to transfer information at a solid level. Students with Level 7 (More Proficient) demonstrate high level of reading skills, ability to read and understand well-read material, ability to understand difficult words, fluency and ability to transfer detailed information at a very small rate of only 1.7% (7 people). In this study, none of the respondents achieved Level 8 (Most Proficient).

Based on the findings above, it is concluded that the level of Malay reading for non-native students of SJK (C) and SJK (T) is Limited.

Reading Skills Proficiency Level

The incompetency of non-native students in reading is the main problem in this study. The findings show that the majority of non-native students in the SJK (23.9%) were only at Level 3 (Very Limited). The real situation is that more than 39.6% of Chinese and Indian students at SJK do not know how to read in Malay. Based on the findings of this study, it is clear that Chinese and Tamil students are confused by their mother tongue. They have mastered reading skills in their native language since kindergarten. Chinese students also appear confused by the use of letters of characters in Malay language and this is because in Mandarin they are using the letter 'Kai Ti'. A parallel study (Chew, 2016) focused on the pronunciation of Chinese students in SK and in SJK (C).

Another factor that may be known for sure is that non-native student speakers are reading less Malay books. When students are less exposed to the system of the Malay language, they will not know how to read proficiently and certainly will not understand the meaning of information and reading material they read. They often leave words that they don't know the meaning of or fail to pronounce. The students' inability in reading skills will cause them to be unable to spell words correctly. Poor reading competency has led them to lose interest in finding the information in the UPBM_SR Reading Test passage. Student's inability to master reading skills is making it difficult for students to understand the passage of the UPBM_SR Reading Test. In addition, students are weak in identifying the main idea of the passages, hence they are taking an easy way which is to answer without reading the questions provided. This causes students to get low scores in the Reading Exam. The findings are in line with Abdul Rasid's (2011) findings on rural primary school students.

Incompetency in reading Malay language is also often associated with low academic achievement. Based on the findings of this study, the mastery of reading skills of non-native students are still found to be inaccurate in the form of letters and most study subjects do not understand the meaning of the word and have difficulty saying the words that have many syllables. This is due to the lack of association with native speakers and the use of regional languages and informal languages in everyday life. Non-native students are also found to not have mastered the language system, cannot combine syllables, clauses, and phrases to form words in Malay language. There are also students who are confused about the letter shapes like (m-n), (g-p) and (c-e), upside down letters (m-w), (n-u) and inverted letters (b-d), (q-p), and (b-d). When reading, a student is unable to pronounce correctly and hence the meaning of the word is inaccurate.

Another problem that students face when answering UPBM_SR questions is in terms of time. Since they are not fluent in reading they are unable to complete the test on time. Students also cannot recognize the alphabet and do not understand the information given. This situation is further compounded by the weakness of the students in their reading skills. Respondents were also not able to give proper meaning of the word to the questions given because of the lack of Malay vocabulary. The inability of students to master reading skills, will definitely result in difficulties to master the skills of listening, speaking, and writing because students are less exposed to Malay language in their living environment. In order to increase students understanding in reading, Malay language proficiency test should be done at least twice a year. The importance and influence of reading skills is proven in the education system that values academic achievement as a measure of individual educational success.

Generally, most students with difficulty in reading skills are due to the influence of their mother tongue because they are accustomed to using native language in everyday life. In essence, second language can be developed through training and reinforcement learned after mastering their mother tongue. Students need a high level of second language learning motivation. In line with Krashen's (2013) opinion in the Affective Filter Hypothesis. When learners of a second language develop affective filters, low levels of anxiety have a high chance of mastering a second language. Students should also use effective learning strategies to improve the proficiency level of Malay reading skills.

In the Input Hypothesis (1981), Krashen argues that non-native learners can master the input gained through listening and reading especially for children under the age of 13 to learn the second language faster. This is because according to Krashen (1985) the process of acquisition and mastery of the second language takes place from birth without people realizing it. The process requires as much exposure as possible to non-native learners in their living environment. They will have difficulty learning languages after they turn 13. After that age students no longer master the language by acquisition but through learning which is a difficult task. Researchers apply Krashen's Hypothesis Input theory to prove the truth that Krashen (1985) has argued that children's second language success reflects different levels of acquisition. The more language acquisition a learner learns in a second language, the higher his or her level of competency even though in terms of their syntax development and early childhood morphology are relatively slower.

CONCLUSION

From the discussion and analysis, it can be concluded that the mastery of second language reading skills depends on students' own willingness to accept and learn it. According to the findings, the majority of Year 6 non-native students only master the basic reading skills. Therefore, further research should be carried out so that every student is proficient in Malay as stated in the Second Shift Malaysian Education Development Plan (2013-2025). The country's official language proficiency testing policy can also be extended to a more comprehensive population for more comprehensive data. Non-native student speakers have to strive to achieve the level of most proficient in their Malay reading skills in order to understand a variety of materials better, able to understand difficult words and reasoning as well as the transfer of information at the detailed level. Syllabus in SJK also need to be aligned with the secondary school because the students will continue their studies in secondary schools using Malay language entirely. The transition program approach before entering Form one in high school needs to be strengthened to effectively address the problem of reading skills.

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