

The Effectiveness of The Integrated Sound-Word Method To Improve The Skills In Reading, Writing and The Reading Interest of Bahasa Melayu Among The Pupils With Dyslexia

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This study was conducted to examine the effectiveness of Kaedah Gabungan Bunyi Kata (KGBK) – (the integrated sound-word method), to improve the skills in reading, writing of Bahasa Melayu and the reading interest of pupils with dyslexia. The samples of this study consisted of five pupils in a primary school with different levels of dyslexic problem. Two were classified as 'mild', two 'moderate' and one quite 'serious'. The KGBK teaching-and-learning intervention process was conducted for 16 weeks in a school classroom by a teacher trained in KGBK for this purpose. Six data collection methods were used: observation and recording, interviews with the teacher and students, student's works, teacher reflection notes, video recordings and four periodic KGBK tests. The data were analysed to answer the research questions stated earlier. The findings show that the KGBK approach used to teach these five dyslexic pupils was effective in increasing their proficiency in reading and writing of Bahasa Melayu. Their interest in 2R also increased: they were motivated to learn to read and write. However, the increase varies according to the level of the dyslexic problems experienced by these pupils. Subject B (mild dyslexia) was able to read and write up to Level 8 in the KGBK tests, involving the use of diphthong words. Another 'mild dyslexia' subject C was able to read and write up to level 7, which involved closed syllable words 'ng'. Subjects A and D (moderate dyslexia) was able to read and write up to level 6, which involved words with two different 'e' sounds and 'o'. Even subject E (serious dyslexia) was able to read and write up to level 6. The results also show that all five subjects enjoyed learning the 2R. They feel motivated to continue learning. The teacher also found the KGBK modules and teaching procedures for teaching 2R Bahasa Malaysia easy to use.

Keywords: The integrated sound-word method, The skills in reading, writing and the reading interest, dyslexia

1. INTRODUCTION

Dyslexia refers to normal children who suffer difficulty in reading writing and arithmetic. Dyslexia can be detected as early as 5 or 6 years. In the early stages of schooling children have been able to read simple syllables, can follow instructions and can distinguish the sound. However, dyslexic children are not capable of doing such things.

One of the initiatives done by Minister Of Education (MOE) in order to solve the problem of mastering the basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic (3M) is through implementing Remedial Programme in a special class in each of the primary school. Chow (1992) stated that these students have such significant relationship with the specific learning disability of dyslexia. According to Trevor and Elizabeth (2009), dyslexia refers to children

who suffer with difficulty in reading, writing, spelling and numbers' manipulation. They may have the ability and skills in some subjects and probably show a high level of verbal skills. However, students who suffer from dyslexia also often show behavioral difficulties with low self-confidence and emotional distractibility. They also have poor memory.

Based on the description above, there are similarities between the characteristics shown by remedial students with dyslexic children. Sofiah Ali dan Zabidi Husin (2000) stated that this circumstance will cause the students with dyslexic to often be labeled as the remedial students or students with learning disabilities where eventually they will be placed in some special remedial classes.

Spafford dan Grosser (1996) assumed that almost 5 percent from remedial students are suffering with dyslexia. This statement is supported by a study conducted by Sofia Ali (2000) who estimated that five to 10 percent of this country's population are suffering from dyslexia. This statement was supported once again by a study carried out by Pollock and Waller (1994) which stated that all public schools have children with dyslexia, but the level of problems experienced by them were different. Besides that, in a study conducted by Rajeswary Ramasamy (2008) in Pulau Pinang, from 120 samples of remedial students, 91 of them suffered with serious dyslexia, 26 more were categorized as moderate and three students were at the mild level of dyslexia.

Hence, it is very difficult to distinguish between children with dyslexia and remedial students. According to Martin Henley et al (2006), differentiating students with special learning disabilities and those who have low achievement in education is a major challenge faced by today's educators. Many children who made mistakes in spelling and reading were actually almost the same with the mistakes made by dyslexic children, especially in the first six months of schooling for students in year one.

Thus a method or approach should be developed to ensure that the dyslexic students who stay in the remedial classes can be helped starting from the early stage. Ott (1997) stated that the basic reading, writing and mathematic skills are important to be dominated by each student to ensure them achieve the benefit from each component learnt in the school's curriculum system which has been prepared for them. If the basic skills have not being fully acquired, a form of intervention program should be established in order to help those who have dropped out from education. One of the effective techniques is believed to be through in the remedial classes is Kaedah Gabungan Bunyi Kata (KGBK).

The KGBK initiative was pioneered by Professor Emeritus Dato' Dr. Isahak Haron since 1979. This approach is the assimilation from two perspectives of world early learning techniques which are the Linguistics and Psychology Cognitive Development Perspectives. Linguistics is the approach which focusing on phonic while Psychology Cognitive Development is focusing more on words with meaning. According to Isahak Haron (2013), KGBK is a systematic approach which incorporates the developing elements and in accordance with Malay characteristics. Thus, this method is believed to be much easier and effective compared to phonic method or whole word method, which is carried out separately as it is now. There were many studies conducted which aimed in showing that KGBK is easy to be implemented and effective to teach especially for the early stage of learning Bahasa Melayu for remedial kids at primary school. This is applicable for kids from all

racas such as Malay, Chinese, Indian or Aborigine.

According to Isahak Haron (2013), through this method, it is no longer necessary for students to know and remember all the alphabets before they start to read. Students only need to know the three most important vowels (a, i and u) together with one consonant. Through the use of both consonant and vowels, open syllables (CV) will be constructed and it will be combined to form a word that has meaning. With that, students will be able to read only with one or two sessions of Teaching and Learning. Indirectly, this will increase student's motivation level and gain much pleasure which can help them to continue learning. Apart from developing on student's cognitive development, it will also give a greater impact to their emotional level.

As stated by Salovey and Mayer (2005), emotional intelligence (EQ) plays an important role in ensuring the success of one's life. The power of emotional intelligence is also expected to influence the learning styles and academic achievement among students. Goleman (2009) said that, 80 percent of one's success depends on their emotional intelligence as compared to the remaining 20 percent which depends on intellectual intelligence (IQ).

Thus, this study was conducted to identify the effectiveness of KGBK in improving reading skill among students with dyslexia in remedial classes. KGBK is believed to be most suitable approach as this technique is easy and fast to be used in order to improve students' difficulties in reading. This approach is also seen as a whole method used in teaching as it would not only influence students' cognitive development but their emotional aspect too. With that, this approach is expected to be able to achieve the learning transformation target among dyslexic students in remedial classes.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Reading problem among students has become an enigma among educators, researchers or even the languages activist. Ironically, students with dyslexia in year three have followed a four-year education at the primary level, including pre-school, but still they are not able to master the basic literacy of reading skills. In fact, according to Isahak Haron (2013), there are students who have undergone six-year education during primary school but still not able to acquire the basic reading skill. This might be because of the methods used by teachers at school which were not suitable for them who suffer with various learning disorder. However, Jamila K.A Mohamed (2005) said that, students with dyslexia actually need the adaptation of education because they actually have the potential to be independent with appropriate education and training.

Besides that, the Malay module for remedial teaching is

not really helping and less motivating for students to read. According to that module, students need to be able to differentiate between small letters and alphabets before being exposed to the reading skill. This indicates that the MOE still practice the alphabets technique in teaching and learning process. According to Ishak Haron (2011), one of the main weaknesses of the alphabets technique is that children who just learnt 2M were trained to recognize, memorize and write each of the letter according to alphabetical sequence. This can just be tedious for them.

It is more complicating when the dyslexic students always confused with the letters taught to them. Sheila Devaraj and Shamsilah Roslan (2008) said that, one of the characteristics where they always confused is the letter that has a shape matching. For example b and d, p and q, m and w. However, Ott (1997) stated that to recovery process to this problem is through special way of teaching. The statement was supported by Janet W. Lerner (2008) in her book Learning Disabilities, 9th edition where she highly stated that reading is actually a complex process.

3. SAMPLE

Sample for this study consisted of 5 remedial students at one of the primary school in Petaling Utama. The samples have been recognized by specialists that all of them are suffering with dyslexia. This study was using the purposive sampling technique since all of them suit the study's purpose. All the samples were from year three which have undergone education for four years including pre-school. The researcher did not involved students from special education class of learning disorder because of the fear that they were suffering with dyslexia together with some other internal problems too.

4. MEASUREMENTS

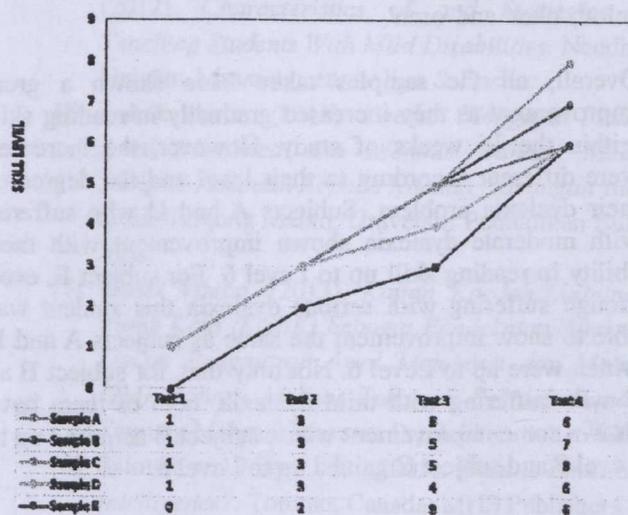
The study was conducted for 16 weeks through KGBK approach. Six data collection methods were used to answer the research question which is: Ujian Diagnostik Awal Membaca Kaedah Gabungan Bunyi Kata (KGBK) has been done for four times to identify the improvement in reading and writing among samples. Next, interview method was also used to collect information from five students who act as subjects for this study and teachers who used KGBK to teach them to read and write in Malay. In addition, teacher reflection notes for each lesson were also analyzed to improve the teaching process that has been carried out and also to get information about the development of each subject. Video recording is also done in every lesson as evidence for any findings obtained and also to facilitate the analysis of the survey that has been conducted. Finally, examples of students' work were analyzed to see changes in their reading and writing skills through these 16-weeks of study. Data from all sources complementing each other and form as the basis for answering the questions indicated.

5. RESULT

During these 16 weeks of intervention, four series of Reading and Writing Diagnostic Test KGBK have been successfully implemented on five samples who suffered with dyslexia. The first test was conducted before intervention with the aim to identify more specific regarding their knowledge and literacy skill in reading and writing in Malay. The results from the test was used by teachers and researcher in order to plan for materials and methods to be used in teaching and learning process under the KGBK approach.

Tests were carried out in stages over 16 weeks during the teaching and learning process of intervention with the approach from KGBK. The second test was carried out in the fifth week, the third test conducted at week 11 and the fourth test was done in the last which was in the week 16. The results of all four tests were analyzed to see the progress of each student reading ability levels throughout 16 weeks. The findings are shown in the graph below:

DIAGNOSTIC TEST RESULT FOR ALL SUBJECT



The first diagnostic test results indicated that all four subjects A, B, C and D were on the same level, which is level 1, where they were capable of recognizing and sounding just a few letters. However, subjects E still has not mastered Level 1, which meant still not able to recognize letters and pronounced each of the letters, tested. Subject E has been confirmed to suffer with serious dyslexia compared to other four subjects. Subject A and D were considered to be suffered with moderate dyslexia while subjects B and C were mild dyslexia.

In a second test, all subjects showed an increase in the level of mastery of reading skills. Subject A, B, C and D showed increased proficiency up to Level 3, which was capable of reading the word with open syllables like ibu, api, susu and baju. Subject E was only capable of reading words with open syllables at Level 2 such as 'ba', 'of', 'cu' and 'su'.

In the third KGBK test, all subjects continued to show improvement in reading proficiency level. Subject A, B and C shown the best performance in this test when they attempted to master up to level 5 where they can read words with closed syllables such as 'sabun', 'pint' and 'ikan'. Subject D showed the achievement up to level 4, which was able to read word in closed syllables such as 'sut', 'kin', 'tuk' and 'rum'. Subject E was able to master up to level 3, with the ability to read the open syllable word such as 'susu', 'baju', 'api' and 'ibu'.

In the last test, all five subjects have shown improvements in reading level. Subject C has shown the best performance by mastering up to Level 8 which was capable of reading words composed of vowels and diphthongs such as 'laut', 'kuih', 'kaloi' and 'limau'. Subject B showed the level of domination at the level 7, which has been able to read the word closed syllables such as 'tong', 'udang', 'burung' and 'bangku'. Subjects A, D and E showed the same achievement at Level 6, which can read words that contain e taling, e pepet and o such as 'ibu', 'telor', 'ekor' and 'oren'.

Overall, all the samples taken have shown a great improvement as they increased gradually in reading skill within the 16 weeks of study. However, the increased were different according to their level and the degree of their dyslexia problem. Subjects A and D who suffered with moderate dyslexia shown improvement with their ability in reading skill up to Level 6. For subject E, even though suffering with serious dyslexia this student was able to show improvement the same as subjects A and D which were up to Level 6. Not only that, for subject B and C who suffering with mild dyslexia, both of them have shown some improvement where subject B acquired up to Level 7 and subject C gained up to Level 8.

Development of Writing Skill and Interest In Reading

SUBJEK	WRITING	READING INTEREST
A	Level 6	Increase interest in reading, motivated and fun in learning
D	Level 6	Increase interest in reading, motivated and fun in learning
B	Level 7	Increase interest in reading, motivated and fun in learning
C	Level 8	Increase interest in reading, motivated and fun in learning
E	Level 6	Increase interest in reading, motivated and fun in learning

The above table shows the development of writing skill and interest in reading during the 16-week study. In terms of writing, subject C showed the best performance when attempting to capture up to level 8, which is able to write words and vowel diphthongs

such as 'laut', 'kuih', 'kaloi' and 'limau'. Subject B showed the level of domination at the level 7, which was able to write closed syllable words such as 'tong', 'udang', 'burung' and 'bangku'. Next, subjects A, D and E shown the same achievement at Level 6, where they can write words that contain e taling, e pepet and o such as 'emak', 'telur', 'ekor' and 'oren'. In terms of reading, it is found that all subjects have increased their level of interest in reading in Malay, motivated and fun to follow the learning process by using this approach. In addition, educators have also stated that the approach from KGBK is easy to be used by teachers.

As a whole, all subjects have increased their proficiency in writing, reading and able to increase their interest level to follow the learning process by using the KGBK approach.

6. DISCUSSION

The results of the various data collected found that:

- i. KGBK approach can improve the skills in reading sentences among all sample. However, the increase is slightly different according to the problems faced by them.
- ii. KGBK approach can improve the writing skill among all sample. However this increase is gradual and its progress will vary according to subjects' ability level.
- iii. KGBK approach can increase the interest of students with dyslexia to read and write in Malay Language. From observation it was found that all subjects increased interest, motivated and fun to follow the teaching through this method.

There are various techniques used to teach the reading skill to students such as through 'prompt', questioning, drilling and reading aloud. These techniques have proven effectively in helping pupils of learning disorder who suffer with dyslexia. The problem that often done by students during reading is to be adding or removing the letters and words in sentences and do not understand the words or verses. However, with the approach from KGBK and assisted by appropriate techniques and strategies, all students who experienced various problems of dyslexia has been able to master reading.

Besides that, from the observation made, it is found that all the subjects are suffering with problems such as not able to write the specific shape for each letter, not being able to differentiate between small and capital letters, the distance between each letter and

word, non-parallel writing and messy writing due to the reason of always erase on the same place. However, after using the approach from KGBK for 16 weeks, all subjects were able to write properly. Not only that, the problem in writing have been reduced. The technique of reproducing a sentence or a short story can help students to improve their writing and can address issues such as the formation of the letters are not clear and the problem of identifying between small and capital letters. In addition, to help students to maintain a distance in writing, teachers use the technique to put a finger after writing each word. This method was found to be very effective in helping students to maintain their distance in writing.

Furthermore, in terms of level of interest in reading, it has been founded that all subjects have increased their level of interest to read in Malay, feel more motivated and fun during the lesson. All the subjects also have shown desire to learn more. This proves that EQ and IQ provide significant role on dyslexia students. In addition, the KGBK approach can help students to cope with their communication problems and increase self-confidence among themselves through thematic activities that is conducted. Through these activities, students were asked to talk about a word that has been learnt on that day. Teacher helped by providing incentives, encouragement and praise through certain techniques such as questioning.

in this study, gender did not show any significant results. All sample involved in this study showed a significant increase in proficiency in reading, writing and reading interest, regardless of gender. male sample involved in the study showed an increase of up to level 8 while the female sample showed an increased up to level 7. Therefore no significant differences between male and female samples in this study.

7. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it has been proven that KGBK approach is able to increase reading and writing skill in Malay among the five samples taken who suffered with dyslexia from different level of function. Besides the observation showed that all subjects increased interest, motivated and fun too. This method proves that KGBK approach also can improves the capability of speaking among all subject. If the intervention process is continued for long term, the researcher believed that students will be able to read and write up to Level 12. Personally, I believe that this approach is very suitable to be used to teach kids who

suffer with dyslexia either in special classes or remedial classes. This approach also can be recognized as the alternative in teaching students at special schools with students of learning disorder.

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