Evaluation of the Literacy and Numeracy Screening Program in Three Types of National Primary Schools in Malaysia

Fong Peng Chew
University of Malaya, Malaysia

Abstract: Literacy and numeracy screening (LINUS) is a program implemented by the Malaysia Ministry of Education in primary schools nationwide to increase literacy skills of students in year 1–3. This study aimed at assessing the LINUS program implemented since 2010. Model of Critical Literacy by Freebody and Luke (1990) was applied in this study. Reading and writing tests for Malay language subject were developed from the module of LINUS program and conducted on 120 students from three different types of schools, namely national schools, national-type Chinese schools, and national-type Tamil schools. The results showed that the level of reading and writing of students was average. One-way analysis of variance tests showed significant differences between ethnic and type of schools with the reading and writing proficiency of the students; students of national schools scored the highest in reading test whereas the students of national-type Chinese school performed the best in writing test. In contrast, family socioeconomic status of the students did not influence their reading and writing proficiency. Therefore, teachers should take into account ethnic and type of schools in implementing the LINUS program as the main factors determining the level of literacy, achievement, and success of the LINUS program.

Keywords: literacy and numeracy screening; Malay language; model of critical literacy; national schools; national-type schools

0 Introduction
The education system in Malaysia strides rapidly over the development of the country in the present millennium. The government, through the Ministry of Education, has designed and implemented various sustainable changes toward realizing the aspirations of being a developed country by the year 2020. Changes in the educational arena in the country are beginning to show the results in policies, acts, or reports such as the National Education Policy, Razak Report 1956, Rahman Talib Report 1960, the National language Act 1967, the Cabinet Committee Report 1979, and the New Education Act 1996.

1. Statement of the problem
The existing system of education in Malaysia such as primary education system, secondary education system, and the higher education system has expanded rapidly in line with the National Education Philosophy, namely to produce balanced students physically, emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually. Nowadays, the national education expanded through system of pre-school education or system of early childhood education. Through this system, children will be introduced to the school system since the age of 4 years old with an emphasis on literacy proficiency in reading, writing, and arithmetic. Rationalization of teaching early literacy is to ensure that children have mastered the basic skills before the start of schooling in year 1. This is to ensure the continuity of the learning session as weakness in mastering the basic literacy skills of the students will have an impact on their learning process[1].

According to the master plan of education development 2006–2010 (2006), lower primary students who suffer