

# A Study of English Literacy Implementation Challenges among Primary School Teachers in Kelantan, Malaysia

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## Abstract

The implementation of LINUS program has been creating the challenges among schoolteachers, especially primary school. The challenges faced by these English Literacy teachers receive less attention from the Ministry of Education Malaysia. In achieving the Key Performance Indicators, the Ministry's program has created its challenges for these teachers. They must pay attention to the programs carried out and achieve the KPIs that have assigned. The Literacy and Numeracy Program (LINUS) in primary schools require students to master 12 constructs during screening. For English subjects, particularly the teachers who conduct this screening are optional teachers and non-optional teachers. It causes problems for these teachers to face students who have multiple abilities in the same classroom. The present study seeks to identify teachers' challenges in implementing English Literacy in primary schools. For achieving the objectives of the study, literature analysis has been selected and applied. This study found that two main factors challenge teachers in implementing English Literacy based on the analysis results. The first factor is teachers' challenge in the best management and planning to improve LINUS programs' achievement. The second factor is teacher effectiveness. It is because the effectiveness of teachers will improve the teaching performance and academic achievement of students. The MOE should give both factors attention to enhance the achievement of English Literacy in the future.

## Keywords

Teacher effectiveness, English literacy, challenges, implementation

## 1. Introduction

The LINUS program is the first implemented in 2010. In 2014, it expanded by incorporating English subjects and was named the LINUS 2.0 program. The first screening for the LINUS 2.0 program started with year one students. The aims are to identify students who should receive guidance as LINUS students or mainstream students. Teachers who teach LINUS 2.0 subjects should be teachers who are proficient in English. However, there are still teachers who teach in certain schools who are non-option teachers in English subjects. LINUS screening requires a teacher to be proficient in English literacy to be more sensitive to the problems faced by LINUS students under their guidance. Students who are identified as LINUS students or have learning difficulties need special guidance from a skilled teacher in literacy and management of students with learning difficulties. However, each school's placement is based on vacancies and fulfilling the quota of posts in a school. Some teachers get placement in schools that are not based on their study

options. For example, teachers who did not study English but are placed in schools to teach English. This situation poses a significant challenge for the teacher to continue their duties in school.

In common, literacy is an individual's ability to master reading and writing skills (Stapa, Bakar, & Latif, 2007). Normal students as young as seven years old can master reading and writing skills at the primary school level. Those who receive early childhood education at the age of four to six can read and write perfectly in the first year of primary school. Students with special needs such as learning difficulties find it difficult to acquire these reading and writing skills early. They likely have less intellectual level than mainstream students. However, in the first and second years of primary school, they must go through LINUS screening with mainstream students in the same classroom. They will only be identified as Special Needs Students (MBK) in the third year of school. This situation is a big challenge for English teachers who conduct LINUS screening. These teachers will face students with multiple abilities in the same classroom. It did not happen during the screening Literacy Bahasa Melayu because students will be filtered by the teachers who have special expertise in dealing with students with learning disabilities.

The English literacy has implemented since 2014 has given a lot of positive impact on primary school students' English proficiency. However, its implementation needs to provide more careful attention because there are still complaints from various parties, especially the educators themselves. English language teachers in primary schools consist of teachers of various options who are not only born out of English education. They must meet the service requirements that force them to carry out their duties according to the school's needs where they serve. Although these teachers do not have an English education background, they must carry out the assigned tasks. The issue to be discussed is English Literacy teachers' challenges in primary schools in implementing the LINUS program.

The current situation is that level one English teacher in primary schools must conduct LINUS screening twice a year for three years from year one to year three. All students must be screened, including students with learning disabilities who are in mainstream classes. However, the Ministry of Education Malaysia has set Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) or Key Performance Indicators that schools must achieve every year. The set KPIs are changed from screening 1 to screening 2 LINUS 2.0. KPI set by the National Key Results Area (NKRA) shows that in three of all students master all three subjects LINUS namely Bahasa Malaysia, English and Mathematics which is 100% of pupils in a primary school master reading and writing well (Government Transformation Program, 2010).

## **1.1 Objectives**

In conjunction with the previous elaboration, the present paper aims to identify teachers' challenges in implementing English Literacy in primary schools.

## **2. Literature Review**

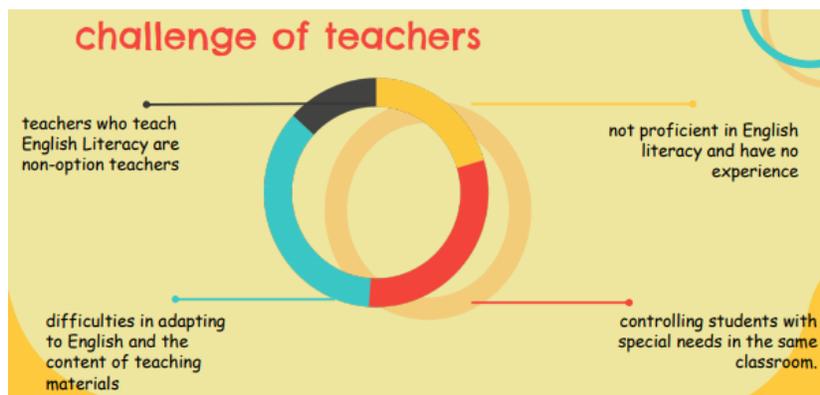
### **2.1 Teacher Challenges**

The LINUS 2.0 program brings great challenges to schoolteachers, especially non-option teachers. They are expected to be able to teach English subjects well. However, some many constraints and problems arise during this LINUS program. A study related to the implementation of this program was conducted by Nazariyah Binti Sani, (2014), who found that the effectiveness of the implementation of the LINUS Program not only depends on the learning and teaching (T&L) factors of teachers but also depends on how learning problems experienced by students definite and overcome. Curriculum problems and curriculum materials such as modules and training provided for students. Thus, the teacher must be identifying the background of students and their families, and student education should also be given innovation. It shows that many parties' cooperation is needed to make this LINUS program successful in achieving its mission.

The LINUS program's success requires many parties' cooperation, whether in school or out of school. Teachers need enough time to plan and organise strategies for the success of the LINUS program in schools. They also need the cooperation of other fellow teachers in making plans for LINUS students. It is in line with a study conducted by Othman, Norzan, Darusalam & Siraj (2011), who found that existing problems related to literacy skills can be improved with strategies and planning of quality teaching and learning by teachers. It will help the teaching process to be more effective and meaningful to students.

Besides, primary school students also come from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds. It causes less fluent Malay students like aboriginal students and students on the border of Thailand. They need expert and capable teachers to help them master the constructs filtered in the LINUS screening. The issue attracted Nazariyah Sani (2014) 's attention, who submitted a proposal to the Ministry of Education to provide expert teachers to address LINUS students' problems in schools such as Indigenous students. She suggested providing modules that are more suitable for Orang

Asli students, organising workshops for Orang Asli students' parents to help their children at home and provide specific financial allocations for the LINUS Program. Thus, the teacher challenges can be seen in Figure 1.



**Figure 1. Teacher Challenges**

Also, LINUS teachers need more time to prepare a Daily Lesson Plan. Most teachers have trouble organising their lesson, which has to plan two different activities in one lesson plan, namely LINUS and the Integrated Primary School Curriculum (KSSR). Similarly, during the teaching and learning, they had to focus on both activities. This situation is different from level 2 teachers who only plan and teach one part only (Nordin, Shaari & Kamarodzan, 2017). Teachers who teach English literacy should have expertise in English subjects. It needs to be done so that the MOE re-examines the problems that arise due to LINUS rehabilitation teachers' absence for English subjects. English Teacher recovery should also be the same as the willingness of teacher recovery LINUS English and Maths to become a standard measure in achieving the goals and beneficial effects on society and Malaysia's education system. Furthermore, the LINUS program, especially for English subjects, the MOE does not examine in detail the modules provided for teachers (Zahanim Ahmad, 2103).

Fong Peng (2015) found that LINUS teachers lack psycholinguistics expertise (mental and linguistic ability). The selected teachers do not have the skill and are not sent to undergo appropriate training to acquire psycholinguistic knowledge. LINUS teachers need to have the expertise to determine student readiness and be clear about the guidance that needs to be provided to LINUS students. Also, LINUS teachers need to acquire teaching psycholinguistic methods that emphasise mental ability and language proficiency. The teaching method has a profound effect on the reading skills and comprehension of LINUS students. Based on this, KPM needs to make a policy for teachers appointed as LINUS teachers should be given adequate training and courses, especially in psycholinguistics, to provide skills to students mastering literacy and numeracy skills (LINUS).

In dealing with multiple abilities students in the classroom, teachers must be good at controlling emotions and giving full attention to students who have problems not cause problems to other students. Among them, some students have various learning problems, such as emotional and attitude problems. Until then, they need to be given special attention so that the class situation becomes more controlled. Moreover, children with emotional and behavioural problems are more likely to cause greater anxiety and stress than those with other special needs (Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden, 2000).

## 2.2 Teacher Effectiveness

Self-efficacy refers to a person's belief in his or her ability to perform the duties, and responsibilities (behaviours) needed to produce a particular performance (Corkett, Hatt, & Benevides, 2011). Also, the definition of self-efficacy will become clearer if self-efficacy can shape an individual's determination to design, strategise and carry out tasks effectively (Bandura, 1993). An individual with a high level of self-efficacy will be able to plan and achieve task goals and make success as a goal to be achieved. This belief will make the individual more diligent - earnestly working towards the success of the task. At the same time, individuals with low levels of effectiveness are encouraged to be passive. They tend to make teaching problems and self-anxiety based on consideration rather than doing careful planning in their assignments (Bandura, 1993).

Teachers assigned to teach English literacy need ongoing training and courses to improve their knowledge of this subject. It is because these teachers come from various academic backgrounds (Ibrahim et al., 2020). They also need additional training to master them and improve LINUS achievement in their respective schools. A study

conducted by Lokman & Kalsom (2011) suggests that school administrators always identify teachers' needs from time to time to improve teaching and learning quality. When these teachers are given ongoing training to strengthen their LINUS management professionalism in schools, trained teachers will have a high motivation to teach students special attention, such as LINUS students. Hamdan, Sihes, Ramli, Ismail & Skudai (2006) stated that specially trained and experienced rehabilitation teachers will manage their classes more conducive and identify students' writing problems, reading and calculate (3M).

The teaching effectiveness of teachers will affect their teaching performance (Ghazali et al., 2019 and Talib et al., 2019) and, at the same time, affect students' academic achievement. As suggested by the MOE through the State Education Department (JPN) and the District Education Office (PPD), the training program needs to be enhanced to increase their teaching effectiveness. Among the training programs that can be held are motivational camps, spirit building courses, team building training and so on (Mohd Yusri Bin Ibrahim, 2012). When teachers get enough training, they will be more motivated to teach and improve school achievement.

Teacher effectiveness can be enhanced by providing rewards and recognition to teachers with high academic qualifications in schools. Many educators have continued their studies to master's and doctoral levels while in service, but they are still considered the same as teachers with bachelor and diploma degrees. The government has proposed appropriate recognition to educate citizens with a master's or doctoral degree. As Excellent Teachers (GCs) are given attractive salary schemes as incentives, the government is also proposing to extend this method to teachers who have masters and doctoral degrees. Such incentive schemes will further stimulate teachers to further their studies and further increase their teachers' level of professionalism, especially to increase their level of effectiveness (see Figure 2).

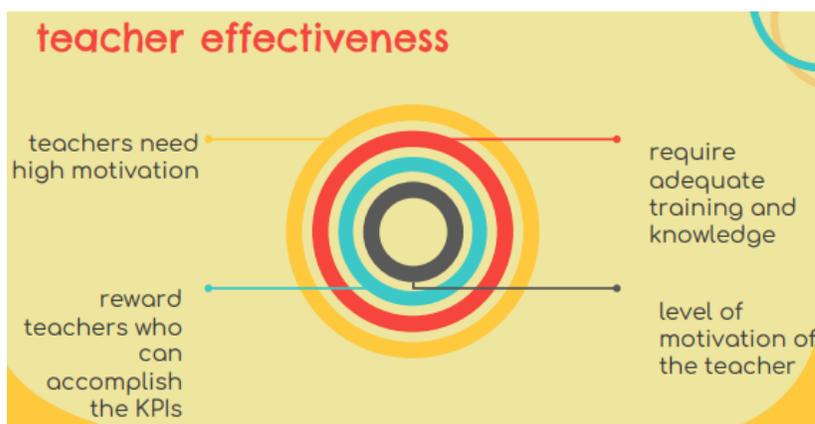


Figure 2. Teacher Effectiveness

This incentive and recognition scheme will also prevent teachers with masters and doctoral degrees from leaving the teaching profession to other institutions, especially the Institute of Higher Education (IPTA) and Private Higher Education Institutions (IPTS). Every time a teacher has a master's degree and a Doctor of Philosophy, they will prefer to move to a new profession because they are not satisfied with the incentive scheme to suffer huge losses. A teacher who successfully graduates at the master's or doctoral level must be a better person. They have a high commitment and culture and work discipline in developing the school (Mohd Yusri Bin Ibrahim, 2012).

### 3. Methods

This study is designed using a qualitative approach by conducting a review literature analysis of past studies. The qualitative approach has its distinct form of data that is different from quantitative research. In comparison, the qualitative data is in the form of interviews, observations, and document analysis. Literature analysis provides more explicit information about the ongoing study. The resources needed for this study are also authentic and easily accessible. Every source analysed such as journals, books, and scientific writing contains complete evidence to strengthen the issues further to be conveyed (Jasmi & Mangione, 2001).

### 4. Results and Discussion

This study found that through the literature analysis, two main factors contribute to English Literacy implementation in primary schools. The first factor is the challenge of teachers in the management of the LINUS program. It happens because the teachers who teach English Literacy are non-option teachers. Most of them face difficulties in adapting to

English and the content of teaching materials taught to students (Nazariyah Binti Sani, 2014). The next challenge is in making the best plans to improve LINUS achievement in schools (Othman, Norzan, Darusalam & Siraj, 2011). Teachers who are not proficient in English literacy and have no experience handling students with special needs will have problems making their lesson plans (see Table 1). A study by Lucas, Villegas & Freedson-Gonzalez, (2008), they found that teacher assigned to teach English Literacy need ongoing training and courses to improve their knowledge of this subject. In addition, Ghazali, Omar, Saputra, (2019) added that teaching effectiveness of teachers will affect their teaching performance and teacher who teach English literacy should have expertise in English Subject (Nordin, Shaari & Kamarodzan, (2017). Besides that, Nazariah Sani (2015) stated that the effectiveness of the LINUS PROGRAM not only depends on the learning and teaching factors of teachers but also depends on how learning problems experienced by students definite and overcome. Also, Trained teachers will have a high motivation to teach student special attention, such as LINUS Students (Hamdan, Sihes, Ramli, Ismail & Skudai, 2006)

Mohd Yusri Ibrahim (2012) added that training program that can be held are motivational camp, spirit building courses, team building and so on. Further, Bandura (1993) stated that an individual with a high level of self-efficacy will be able to plan and achieved task goal and make success as goal to be achieved. Also, self -efficacy is needed to produce and increase the teacher performance (Corkett, Hatt & Benevides, 2011).

**Table 1. Summary of previous studies (Teacher Challenges and Teacher Effectiveness)**

No	Name of Author(s)	Journal	Publisher	Result/ Findings
1.	Lucas, T., Villegas, A. M., & Freedson-Gonzalez, M. (2008)	Journal of Teacher Education	SAGE Publications Inc.	Teacher assigned to teach English Literacy need ongoing training and courses to improve their knowledge of this subject.
2.	Ghazali, N., Omar, M.C., Saputra, J. (2019)	Opcion	Universidad del Zulia	The teaching effectiveness of teachers will affect their teaching performance.
3.	Nazariyah Sani (2015)	Malaysian Journal on Student Advancement	Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Publisher	The effectiveness of the LINUS PROGRAM not only depends on the learning and teaching factors of teachers but also depends on how learning problems experienced by students definite and overcome.
4.	Nordin, Shaari & Kamarodzan, (2017)	Jurnal Penyelidikan Dedikasi	Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia Publisher	Teacher who teach English literacy should have expertise in English Subject.
5.	Mohd Yusri Ibrahim (2012)	Doctoral Dissertation	University Malaysia Terengganu Publisher	Training program that can be held are motivational camp, spirit building courses, team building and so on.
6.	Corkett, J., Hatt, B., & Benevides, T. (2011)	Canadian Journal of Education	Canadian Society for the Study of Education	Self -efficacy is needed to produce and increase the teacher performance.

7.	Hamdan, A. R., Siheh, A. J., Ramli, J., Ismail, M., & Skudai, J. (2006)	Annual Conference on Teacher Education	Universiti Teknologi Malaysia Publisher	Trained teachers will have a high motivation to teach student special attention, such as LINUS Students.
8.	Avramidis, E., Bayliss, P., & Burden, R. (2000)	Teaching and Teacher Education	Elsevier Ltd.	Children with emotional and behavioral problems are more likely to cause greater anxiety and stress than those with other special needs.
9.	Bandura, A. (1993)	Educational Psychologist	Routledge	An individual with a high level of self-efficacy will be able to plan and achieved task goal and make success as goal to be achieved.

Besides, English Literacy teachers also face a difficult challenge in controlling students with special needs in the same classroom. This situation does not occur during the process of teaching English and Mathematics. For both these subjects, special remedial teachers are responsible for taking over teaching and focus on this group of students. It will lead to disruption in the classroom, which disrupts the learning process of other students. Next, the second factor contributing to the implementation of English Literacy is teacher effectiveness. As an educator, teachers need high motivation to implement an effective and meaningful teaching process. Therefore, they require adequate training and knowledge appropriate to students' needs so that the teaching and learning process becomes more significant, Lokman & Kalsom (2011). Also, teacher effectiveness is closely related to the level of motivation of the teacher himself. Teachers also need due recognition when they achieve success in the management of LINUS and their achievements. The Ministry should reward teachers who can accomplish the KPIs assigned because it will further increase teachers' motivation to continue to achieve excellence in their profession (Mohd Yusri Bin Ibrahim, 2012).

## 5. Conclusion

This study has successfully identified the challenges teachers face in implementing English Literacy in primary schools and is a factor in the LINUS 2.0 program's failure. Two main factors challenge teachers in the implementation of English Literacy. The first factor is teachers' challenge in the best management and planning to improve LINUS programs' achievement. The second factor is teacher effectiveness. It is because the effectiveness of teachers will improve the teaching performance and academic achievement of students. The MOE should give both factors attention to enhance the achievement of English Literacy in the future.

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