The Mastery of the 3m among Dyslexia Children based on the Revised Dyslexia List Instrument Screening Test

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Abstract - Dyslexic children are having abnormal difficulties in reading, spelling and writing. The awareness on these problems leads researcher to conduct a case study in the psycholinguistic field about the multi-senses explication activities in the words mastery among the dyslexic children in Sekolah Kebangsaan Padang Temu Melaka. Starting from the Information Processing Theory by Robert M. Gagne (1975) as the theoretical framework, this research aims to describe the mastery of the 3m among the dyslexia children based on the Revised Dyslexia List Instrument Screening Test. The subjects are five dyslexic children from Sekolah Kebangsaan Padang Temu Melaka. They are in the middle of following through the Dyslexia Specific Learning Problem Integration Programme in that particular school. Data were gathered from the ISD screening test, interview sessions and observations conducted. The findings showed that all the five subjects have problems in mastering the skills; spelling, reading and writing even though they have gone through the process of teaching and learning for two to three years in the school. 

Keywords: multi-senses, explication activities, dyslexia, 3m revised dyslexia list instrument screening test.

I. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

a) Characteristics of Dyslexia Children in Malaysia

Dyslexia children have talent and specialty in arts because they are identified as having the inclination towards using their right side of the brain compared to the left. The usage of the right brain has the association with emotion, face recognition and determining the object structure. Therefore, the way these children think is always different from the normal ones. As a result, the dyslexia children will have difficulties in reading, spelling and writing (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2003).

Basically, the education system in Malaysia is aiming to produce a more balanced generation from the aspects of physical, spiritual, intellectual and emotional. The quality of education directly or indirectly will contribute to the development of excellent generation (Muhammad Idham et al 2010). Sheila Devaraj & Samsilah Roslan (2006), once stated that many dyslexia sufferers are talented in singing and music. Not forgetting, some of them even have talent in building and technical. According to the writers, they are many international companies out there looking for dyslexia candidates to fulfill the respective positions in the field of creation and building because to them these dyslexics have pure and unique way of thinking. Their talents are creative and they can even think literally and imaginatively. This can be proven by taking the historic personalities like Leonardo Da Vinci, Thomas Alva Edison, Albert Einstein, John F. Kennedy and Auguste Rodin as examples (Ryden, 1998; Sheila Devaraj dan Samsilah Roslan 2006).

Ronald Salie et. Al. (2011) reported that the Malaysian Government is hoping that the people to master the competency of literacy 100 percent by 2020. Nevertheless, the basic skills like reading, writing and calculating are difficult to obtain. This opinion is being supported by Julina Johan (2005) by saying that one of the contributing factors for these students to have problems in mastering basic skills like reading, writing and calculating at the primary school level is possessing a heavy cognitive memory development.

According to the International Dyslexia Association (2010), 10%-15% of the world population is suffering from dyslexia. In Malaysia, the Department of Special Education Statistics, Ministry of Education Malaysia (Nor Afzan Mohammad Nor, 2006) estimated that 314,000 children in Malaysia are suffering from dyslexia. Komala Devi (2004), as the parliamentary secretary, Ministry of Education Malaysia reported that there were 5% of dyslexia cases detected in any community or one in every 20 students. This high population was also reported by the President of the Malaysia Harmonic Social Association (PSHM), Nordin Ahmad (2005) through the association research found that 10%-15% of the primary school children all over the country (majority are Malays) suffer from dyslexia. From the survey conducted by the Federal District Association of Dyslexia (Sin Chew Daily, 2003), it was estimated that almost 10% of the secondary and primary students are suffering from dyslexia.

The 21st century blast of globalization era has brought forward new challenges in language literacy and communication to a developing country like Malaysia (Koo, Yew He & Hazita Azman, 2010). It clearly shows that the syndrome is capable to stop the individual’s ability to read and write and it can even go...
far from their real ability. Realizing this fact, Ministry of Education Malaysia has outlined a new programme known as the Dyslexia Specific Learning Problem Pioneer Programme to overcome the difficulties faced by these students. This programme exists because dyslexia occurs so oftenly here in Malaysia.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Dyslexia children are children who have difficulties in mastering the 3M skills (reading, spelling and writing). Therefore, these children do not have the ability to compete with other normal children in the mainstream and these children will always obtain low marks in the exam. This shows that the dyslexia children get disturbed easily when they are compared to the normal ones. According to the report done by the Ministry of Education Malaysia (1990), reading problem leads to the students drop out case in the primary school. This problem if it is not being controlled early will destroy the dyslexia children’s future and at the end will invite more social problems to whole nation. Therefore, children need to be screened and seperated to other classes through the Revised Dyslexia List Instrument Screening Test (ISD) so that the dyslexia children are able to receive perfect, well-planned and systematic approach that suits their abilities. The 3M problems that the children are facing have open up a space for a research to study on the 3M based on the Revised Dyslexia List Instrument Screening Test (ISD) so that the dyslexia children are able to receive perfect, well-planned and systematic approach that suits their abilities.

III. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

To describe the mastery of 3M among the dyslexia children based on the Revised Dyslexia List Instrument Screening Test (ISD).

IV. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

1. All the data and input from the Screening Test ISD are hoped to provide visuals to parents about the performance of their children in learning the Malay language especially. Parents are the important individuals who hold the responsibility to take care of the students’ performance at home. Consistent guidance and supervision towards the children at home are really needed. This can reduce the burden that the children are carrying. In determining the right method to teach the children, parents need to be alert and care on the children’s performance at school. Therefore, teacher must be brilliant in taking the opportunity in making the teaching varied to have a more meaningful learning atmosphere

(Zamri Mahamod & Nur Aisyah Mohamamd Noor, 2011).

2. From this research it is hoped that the findings could help teachers in determining strengths and weaknesses among the dyslexia children especially in the skills of spelling, reading and writing. The understanding is hoped to help the teacher to improve on the methods used towards the language mastery of these dyslexia children.

V. LITERATURE REVIEW

a) Research on Characteristics of Dyslexia Children in Malaysia

This research was conducted at the Pudu District Federal Territories by Musa Abdul Wahab (2002) where he was concentrated on determining the common characteristics among the treated dyslexia children and determining the differences in the percentage of the female and male dyslexics. From the 153 children participated in the study, there were 36.3% of the children possess the characteristics of malignant dyslexia. Those who have benign and mild dyslexia were between 30.2% and 33.5%. Besides that, he also found that male children have higher percentage, 69% compared to the females 51% only.

Mansor Kasim (2003) in his ‘Study on Characteristics of Treated Dyslexia Children’ summarised that there were differences in the percentage of male and female dyslexia characteristics towards their study. He also managed to identify numbers of dyslexia children who have the symptoms on behaviour and health dyslexia. The instruments used were based on the dyslexia components checklist from the aspects of level, behaviour and health problem. The subjects used were children in the primary school in the area of Centre Malacca. There were 8 teachers from 8 primary schools used to observe 120 samples. The study found that the female students’ performance was very low (they had more problems) with the difference of 2.7% and the behaviour problem did not show any differences in terms of gender. The percentage of the children who have cleared dyslexia characteristics was 17.5% with 21 children from the total population.

Khayati Rafie@Rani (2007) in the ‘Study on Characteristics of Dyslexia Children KIA2M’, did an analysis to show the characteristics of the dyslexia children among the KIA2M, types of errors happened from the aspect of KIA2M learning, teachers’ knowledge on dyslexia and multi-senses method. This research was done in one of the primary schools and the subjects were the standard one children who were following the KIA2M programme. The findings showed that 6 from the 25 subjects possessed the dyslexia characteristics based on the checklist given by the Special Education Department, Ministry of Education Malaysia. Based on the observations and interview sessions conducted on
the KIA2M teachers, findings showed that the teachers did not apply the multi-senses method in the process of teaching and learning. Therefore, he suggested strongly for the teachers to adapt the method in helping the children to understand the lesson better.

b) Research on Language Learning Problems among Dyslexia Children

Nor Hasnizam Parman (1997) found that dyslexia children cannot pronounce the whole words and always face confusion among letters that are of the same shape. The findings of the study showed that the dyslexia children studied were retarded in their skills of making sounds of the letter, making errors in the arrangement of the letters and having confusion in identifying letters that look alike. Other than that, the children also were having visual problems when they failed to copy the words showed to them properly and auditory problems when they were making errors by writing wrong letters. These difficulties give high impact on the students’ ability to read.

Mercer (1997) in his research explained that the dyslexia children are having difficulties in learning components of letters, words and sentences. In his study he has proven that the dyslexia children had problems in discriminating the letters ‘b’ from ‘d’ and ‘m’ from ‘w’, numbers ‘39 to 93’ and ‘15 to 51’ and words ‘was’ became ‘saw’ that look alike to sound alike. These children did not only have problems in differentiating letters that look alike but also in reading up words from sentences and sentences from paragraphs. This scenario can cause a low level of reading skills.

Shaywitz et al (1998), has conducted a study on the literacy inability of dyslexia children clinically by using the 105 image of Telsa Sigma MR onto 61 participants. They found that the dyslexia problem was closely related to the neurology since they were born. This also gave effect to the phonology arbitrarily. A set of 5-level ask was developed in the aspect of phonology like focus orientation test, letter focus, similarities of sound and letter, complex structure and semantics. This study used two experimental groups; dyslexia reader and non-dyslexia reader. Dyslexia reader failed to show systematic modulation while performing the task. The findings also found that the dyslexia reader faced mental and behaviour disorder that contribute to the reading problem. They were seriously having the neuro system problem that is related to the sense of sight and the effect was dyslexia did not able to connect letters and sounds. The dyslexia readers were not only failed to give meaning to symbol that they saw, but also to link the symbol with the utterances. These restraints caused them a failure to give meanings to any letters and words. McCray et al (2001) has done a research on 20 children who have learning problems in dyslexia specific where the children could not read. The participants were studying in their 6th to 7th grade and they were between the age of 11 to 13 years old. The findings portrayed that the dyslexia specific learning problem children were ready to learn how to read and they were aware of the importance of reading in their life. The participants were very stressful when they knew that their friends know the fact that they cannot read. The study also presented the findings on the parents who were unhappy when their children were not given any language related homework. The parents had to do their own reading exercise schedule for their Kids everyday.

Manisah (2005) has also conducted a phonology awareness test. The samples were 20 students who had problems in learning two languages with varieties of performance levels in Malaysia. In her study, the skill task was on the phonology awareness in both languages; Malay and English. The findings showed that the weak bilingual students showed lowers behaviour in the phonology awareness skills for both languages compared to other bilingual students.

Noor Hayati Che Mat (2007) in her study found that the reading problems affect the dyslexia Kids fluency in mastering the reading of the Malay language. From the 100 subjects taken from the Hulu Langat district, reading problem was the most serious and highest problem with the average percentage of 78.6. Only 21.4% students could read. The findings also showed 99% of the subjects had some kind of intonation problems in their reading. This percentage is high and it was followed by 96% of children who could not read. There were 93% of the children who could not spell while reading and 62% of them skipped sentences when they read and 83% did not comprehend when they had been reading.

Ummi Hani Mohamed Zaid (2008) in her writing ‘Spelling Problem among Dyslexia Specific Learning’ identified 6 spelling errors through Malay language readings and writings, analysis performance of spelling errors to determine the level of learning needed, strategies of teaching and learning in spelling that can be used to overcome the spelling problems faced. The findings showed spelling problems that still occurred although subjects have undergone the dyslexia learning programme for almost 2 years. The difficulties in learning among these dyslexia children are different from one and another and the spelling errors are also different. These slow kids were worrying and they hampered the planned treatment programme. This research was a case study that involved 4 standard four students who were undergoing the Dyslexia Pioneer Programme in Sekolah Kebangsaan Bukit Cerakah, Kapar, Selangor.

Lee Lay Wah (2008) studied on ‘Testing and Evaluation of Reading to Identify Reading Problem among Dyslexia’. He aimed at constructing and determining the validity and reliability of a test and to determine dyslexia students from the samples in the
form of dyslexia reading profiles in Malay language. The methodology of the case study was a quantitative. The research design was related to the conforming of the reading test conceptually and statistically. The samples were the 117 standard one students from Pulau Pinang. The findings showed that the reliability of the test was high. The sub-test of the single word reading contributed to 71.4% from the variation in the reading comprehension skills. This showed that students who have problems reading a single word also contributed highly to the overall passage. For the speed naming skills, 73.4% were contributed to the identifying words skill. Thus, the students have more problems in mastering the skills of identifying words in Malay language.

c) Research on Dyslexia Children Learning Strategies, Approaches and Methods

Thomson's research (1990) in Tonnessen (1999) has identified important components in the methods of teaching dyslexia children. They need to use the same materials over and over again in the forms of a different teaching modules. The students will be able to understand if the lesson was not repeated andstrengthen. In giving help to the dyslexia students, emphasis needs to be given to the fact that reading is a skill that requires consciousness and a relationship between cognitive and behaviour. This approach is important in the process of mastering a language especially in their reading skills.

Haraza Malek (2001) has written in his research on 'Teaching Strategies that can be Used by Special Teachers to Overcome Reading Problems among Dyslexia Children' and she has portrayed common reading errors made by the children while reading and given common learning strategies that could be adopted by the special teachers. Reseracher used survey design to come up with questionnaire and to be administered to 100 special teachers teaching in the problematic classrooms in both primary and secondary schools around Kuala Lumpur. The data was analysed using the descriptive statistics and found that the most common errors made by the students was reading sceptically. The learning strategy used by the teachers was the eelectrical method. The findings showed that in whatever strategies adopted by the teachers in the classroom, teachers must be smart in making the activities colourful especially to the teaching and learning activities needed by the children.

Tressoldi et al (2007) has conducted a research on identifying the effectiveness of the fluent reading method which is called subyllabic for the dyslexia children. The subyllabic method has 2 versions; the versions depend on abilities and automatic recognition on syllables that use the software of WinABC. This method has been compared with other method like phonology awareness, assissted reading and psycholinguistic exercises. There were 63 respondents dyslexia children were chosen in his study. 41 were males and 22 were females. The findings showed that the teaching with syllables was more effective that the other method. This study was parallel with Shaywitz et al.(1992) dan Catts’ (1996) findings as well. They said that the language development of the dyslexia students was influenced by the students’ abilities in recognising syllables and pronunciation.

Nor hasbiah Abdullah (2007) has done a research on the multimedia course software in the mathematics literacy (D-Mathematics) for the dyslexia children. This research aims to develop the D-Mathematics software to motivate the mathematics literacy among the dyslexia children. The findings showed that the use of the D-Mathematics contains modules of learning numbers, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, modules on times and some additional modules can motivate the dyslexia children in obtaining the mathematics literacy compared to the conventional method. This is also a software multimedia that uses Malay language to absorb the Scaffolding and Mnemonics V-A models.

Ronaldi Saleh et. al (2011) in his research on 'Usage of Animation in the Special Instruction for Dyslexia Children' has given the approach to create animation in the development of a learning object instruction which is based on interactive multimedia. There were 11 students taken as samples. They had varieties of background in terms of race; Malay, Chinese and Indians, and level of proficiency; good, average and poor. The schools involved were Sekolah Kebangssan Taman Tun Dr. Ismail (2) Kuala Lumpur and Sekolah Kebangsaan Bandar Tasik Puteri Rawang. Findings revealed that 82% of students agreed to the concept of Learning Object (LO) to be restructured, and 100% agreed on they like onto whatever that they see and touch. This gave a picture that these dyslexia children did show the reaction of love, desire and motivation towards the usage of the LO. In using the LO, it explained easily on the perception of the dyslexia children in following the learning and activities sent through the animation technique created by the researcher.

The above research emphasized on the characteristics of dyslexia, learning difficulties and use of strategies, approaches and methods in terms of learning to overcome the reading, spelling and writing problems among the dyslexia children. Nevertheless, researcher found that there are still shortages and gap in applying the suitable methods. This shows that there are still many things to be researched on to understand all these problems faced by the children. Hence, researcher found that in order for him to understand more, a research on the multi-senses explication activities and language game in the words mastery test by the dyslexia children needs to be done.
VI. Methodology

The theory used by the researcher in this research was the Information Processing Theory by Robert M. Gagne (1975). The scope of the research was limited to the mastery of the spelling, reading and writing elements. The subjects were 5 dyslexia children selected among the 8 to 9 years of age. The location was in Malacca, the state that runs the Dyslexia Specific Learning Problem Integration Programme. Method adopted was a case study by using interview sessions, survey and observations. The instruments were questionnaire, and Screening Test ISD. The data analysis was through frequency and percentages.

VII. Findings of the Study

Objective: To describe the mastery of 3M among the dyslexia children based on the Revised Dyslexia List Instrument Screening Test (ISD).

According to Puan Ruziah Bin Sapar, coordinator of the Dyslexia Specific Learning Problem Integration Programme, Sekolah Kebangsaan Padang Temu Melaka, in order for them to identify the dyslexic children with the normal ones, the school needs to undergo a nomination process for all the form one students who have received a six-month teaching and learning level in the mainstream. The nomination must come from the standard one teacher who teaches Malay language. The teacher then needs to fill up the Revised Dyslexia List Instrument Screening Test (ISD) form (see Appendix A). The confirmation of the dyslexia children is made by coordinator of Dyslexia Programme. After that the Malay language teacher must fill up the same form again for the candidates who have the probability of having dyslexia. The school must have a discussion together with the parents or guidance of the children who have the probability of having dyslexia. If they agreed, the candidates will be taken to see the Government Medical Officer to confirm on their dyslexia syndrome. After the confirmation, candidates will be placed at the Dyslexia Specific Learning Problem Integration Programme. Candidates will have to undergo a diagnostic test handled by the class teacher herself. The diagnostic test is to detect the weaknesses and strengths of the children in mastering the spelling, reading and writing skills.

There were many procedures before the ISD assessment could be done by the Ministry of Education Malaysia in 2004. Among the information needed in performing the screening test are assessed students’ criteria, assessor’s criteria and assessment procedure. Based on the students’ criteria, the students must have undergone schooling and receiving suitable learning for six months in the normal mainstream class. Besides that, students that are assessed face difficulties in mastering spelling, reading and writing or they are those who are left behind generally among their peers or students who possess low marks, academic achievements in test and exam and students who are given removed lesson under the removed or special class.

The assessor must also possess certain criteria. They must be Malay language teachers to teach the children, have experience of teaching the children not lesser than 6 months, and have given correction steps to the children through removed classes. The procedure is done based on the personal knowledge of the teachers towards the students that they are going to assess. If they are unsure about the items in the questionnaire, assessor could refer to the instrument manual and/or can also perform own special test based on the suitability of the items.

Researchers will be using the 3M among the dyslexia children based on the Revised Dyslexia List Instrument Screening Test (ISD) for all the five subjects in a form of explanation and percentage as follows.

a) Results on ISD Screening Test subject 1

ISD Screening Test: The results for the ISD Screening Test for subject 1 (S1) showed that the children cannot master the spelling skill with 60%, reading skill with 62.5% and writing skill with 42.85%. The overall results showed that S1 did not master the spelling, reading and writing skills with a percentage of 56.12%.

Mastery in Spelling: S1 had difficulties in spelling easy words. Frequently spelled words that are not related to the original meaning of the words and confused in differentiating the sound of the letter where they made similar sounds to all letters.

Mastery in Reading: S1 was left behind in the ability of reading compared to the friends, but most of the time made errors in reading by ignoring the punctuation marks, adding up words in the reading, difficulties in reading long sentences and having difficulties in reading long words that have vowels together with diphthongs.

Mastery in Writing: S1 was having difficulties in copying information from the whiteboard and writing certain letters in reverse.

b) Results on ISD Screening Test subject 2

ISD Screening Test: Results on ISD Screening Test subject 2 (S2) showed that the children could not master the spelling skill with 100%, reading skill with 87.50% an writing skill with 95.83%. The results also showed that S2 had not Master the skills in a percentage of 95.83%.

Mastery in Spelling: S2, had difficulties in spelling easy words. Frequently spelled words that are not related to the original meaning of the words and confused in differentiating the sound of the letter where they made similar sounds to all letters or even spelled certain letters in reverse.
Mastery in Reading: S2, was left behind in the ability of reading compared to the friends, most of the time made errors in reading by ignoring the punctuation marks, adding up words in the reading, dropping some words, skipping sentences and having difficulties in reading long words that have vowels together with diphthongs.

Mastery in Writing: S2, had a messy work, having difficulties in copying information from the whiteboard and from what they heard, handwritings were hard to be read, slow in writing and writing certain letters in reverse.

c) Results on ISD Screening Test subject 3
ISD Screening Test: Results on ISD Screening Test subject 3 (S3) showed that the children did not able to master the spelling skill with 60%, reading skill for 75% and writing skill for 42.86%. The overall results also showed that S3 did not master the skills in a percentage of 59.29%.

Mastery in Spelling: S3, made the same mistake in arranging words, combining syllables in a reverse and confused in differentiating sounds of similar looking letters in a syllable.

Mastery in Reading: S3, gradually made mistakes in reading, ignoring punctuation marks, dropping words, skipping sentences and adding up words in their reading. They also had problems in reading long words that have a combination of vowels and diphthongs.

Mastery in Writing: S3 writing was slowly compared to the others and wrote certain letters in reverse.

d) Results on ISD Screening Test subject 4
ISD Screening Test: Results on ISD Screening Test subject 4 (S4) showed that the children did not able to master the spelling skill with 60%, reading skill for 62.80% and writing skill for 28.57%. The overall results also showed that S3 did not master the skills in a percentage of 50.33%.

Mastery in Spelling: S4, made the same mistake in arranging words, combining syllables in a reverse and confused in differentiating sounds of similar looking letters in a syllable.

Mastery in Reading: S4, gradually made mistakes in reading, ignoring punctuation marks, dropping words, skipping sentences and adding up words in their reading. They also had problems in reading long words that have a combination of vowels and diphthongs.

Mastery in Writing: S4, having difficulties in copying information from the whiteboard and from what they heard, slow in writing and writing certain letters in reverse.

e) Results on ISD Screening Test subject 5
ISD Screening Test: Results on ISD Screening Test subject 5 (S5) showed that the children did not able to master the spelling skill with 60%, reading skill for 62.80% and writing skill for 28.57%. The overall results also showed that S3 did not master the skills in a percentage of 50.33%.

Mastery in Reading: S5, made the same mistake in arranging words, combining syllables in a reverse and confused in differentiating sounds of similar looking letters in a syllable.

Mastery in Writing: S5, writing was slowly compared to the others and wrote certain letters in reverse.

VIII. Conclusion

Based on the five subjects from the ISD Screening Test held by the school, researcher found that there are still subjects who have not mastered the 3M skills in full. S1 subject did not master the spelling for 60%, reading for 62.50% and writing for 42.86%. S2 subject did not master the spelling for 100%, reading for 87.50% and writing for 95.83%. S3 subject did not master the spelling for 60%, reading for 75% and writing for 42.86%. The same thing happened to S4. S4 subject did not master the spelling for 60%, reading for 62.80% and writing for 28.50%. And last but not least, S5 subject did not master the spelling for 40%, reading for 50% and writing for 42.80%.

Overall, S1 did not master the spelling, reading and writing skills for 56.12%. S2 did not master the spelling, reading and writing skills for 95.83%. Whereas, S3 did not master the spelling, reading and writing skills for 59.29%. S4 did not master the spelling, reading and writing skills for 50.33%. Finally, S5 did not master the spelling, reading and writing skills for 44.29%.

Based on the findings, researcher could identify main problems encountered by the subjects. From the analysis, researcher felt that each subject needs to have a specific method to trigger their cognitive in mastering letters, syllables and words if they want to read fluently without having difficulties.

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