

UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

EVALUATION OF THE LINUS (LBI) 2.0 PROGRAMME IN DEVELOPING BASIC READING SKILLS AMONG ESL LOWER PRIMARY PUPILS

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FBMK 2016 11



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By

ROSSELIIAH BINTI BOKHARI

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DEDICATION

This piece of work is dedicated to...

Memory of my parents, Rosmi Joss and Bokhari Lauda

My beloved supportive husband, Mohd Ismail Angu.

My children, Wahdaniyah, Arsyad, Amir and Arif

All my siblings especially, Semsolbahri, Iskender and Noorsiah

And all my understanding friends



Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts

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By

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August 2016

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In line with the launching of the Malaysia Education Development Plan (PPPM), the first English Language Literacy intervention (LBI) 2.0 programme was implemented in the Malaysian primary education curriculum in 2013. programme which was introduced for lower primary pupils without learning disabilities, but who are unable to acquire basic literacy in English Language from the mainstream classes, emphasizes phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. It aims to improve the literacy outcomes for the identified learners. This study focuses on the evaluation of the LINUS (LBI) 2.0 Specifically, it sought to evaluate the effectiveness of the programme in developing the lower primary school's pupils' reading skills and to examine teacher's views towards the programme in terms of its content, resources and facilities, training and support as well as its implementation. Both qualitative and quantitative data were utilized in the study. The quantitative data were collected via a questionnaire and the qualitative data via semi-structured interviews and observation of the teaching and learning in the LINUS (LBI) 2.0 classroom. In total, 200 teachers from six districts in Sarawak participated in the study. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive analysis whilst the qualitative data from the interviews and class observations were analysed based on the domains focused in the questionnaire. The findings of the study revealed that overall there was a positive feedback of the LINUS (LBI) 2.0 programme on the reading ability of the pupils involved in the programme. The results also showed that there are strengths and weaknesses in the implementation of the In light of the results, this study concludes by making programme. recommendations for the improvement of the programme, in particular with the aim of developing reading literacy of the identified pupils.

PENILAIAN PROGRAM LINUS (LBI) 2.0 DALAM MEMBENTUK KEMAHIRAN ASAS MEMBACA DALAM KALANGAN MURID ESL TAHAP RENDAH

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Selari dengan pelancaran Pelan Pembanguan Pendidikan Malaysia (PPPM), untuk julung kalinya program intervensi Literasi Bahasa Inggeris telah dilaksanakan dalam kurikulun pendidikan rendah Malaysia pada tahun 2013. Program yang diperkenalkan untuk murid sekolah rendah tanpa masalah pembelajaran, tetapi belum menguasai kemahiran asas literasi dalam Bahasa Inggeris dari kelas arus perdana, menekankan kesedaran fonologi, fonik, perbendaharaan kata, dan kefahaman membaca. Ia bertujuan untuk meningkatkan hasil kecelikan untuk pelajar yang dikenal pasti. Kajian ini memberi tumpuan kepada penilaian program LINUS (LBI) 2.0. Secara khusus, ia berusaha untuk menilai keberkesanan program ini dalam membentuk kemahiran membaca murid sekolah rendah dan untuk menyiasat pandangan guru terhadap program dari segi kandungannya, sumber dan kemudahan, latihan dan sokongan serta pelaksanaannya. Kedua-dua data kualitatif dan kuantitatif digunakan dalam kajian ini. Data kuantitatif dikumpul melalui soal selidik dan data kualitatif melalui temu bual separa berstruktur serta pemerhatian pengajaran dan pembelajaran dalah kelas LINUS (LBI) 2.0. Keseluruhannya, seramai 200 orang guru dari enam daerah di Sarawak telah terlibat dalam kajian ini. Data kuantitatif dianalisis menggunakan analisis deskriptif manakala data kualitatif daripada temu bual dan pemerhatian kelas dianalisis berdasarkan domain yang difokuskan dalam soal selidik. keseluruhan dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa wujudnya maklum balas yang positif daripada program LINUS (LBI) 2.0 terhadap keupayaan membaca dalam kalangan murid-murid yang terlibat dalam program berkenaan. Keputusan juga menunjukkan bahawa terdapat kekuatan dan kelemahan dalam pelaksanaan program. Hasil kajian menyimpulkan dengan menyenaraikan usul bagi mempertingkatkan program, khususnya untuk membentuk literasi membaca bagi murid yang dikenalpasti.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and utmost gratitude to Allah. Then my deepest appreciation is extended to my supervisor, Dr Sabariah MdRashid, and my co-supervisor Prof Chan Swee Heng and Dr Vahid Nimehchisalem who had been providing me with all the vital efforts, encouragements, direction and support throughout my ongoing studying period at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), especially in the commitment of accomplishing my thesis for exquisite scientific guidance and unfailing support to the successful completion of my thesis.

I would like to express my most sincere thanks to those who supported and helped during my study; all the participants (LINUS (LBI) 2.0 teachers), officers in charge of the programme, and those that killed their time to check and corrected my instruments, not forgetting all my friends who had been sharing and helping.

I also wanted to extend my love and thanks to my husband, my children and my siblings for their endless love, understanding, patience, support and encouragement.

This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ESL English as a second language

KSSR Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah

MOE Ministry of Education

LBI Literasi Bahasa Inggeris

TLSME Teaching and Learning of Science and Mathematics in

English

PPSMI Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran Sains dan Matematik dalam

Bahasa Inggeris

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Acquiring English Language literacy has become one of the most crucial components among children of Malaysia today. Though the learning of English Language as a second language in Malaysia had long been practiced, there are children (without learning disabilities) who are still unable to acquire basic literacy of the English Language. This has serious implications, as acquiring the Basic English Language Literacy is one of the main objectives in the Malaysian primary school education curriculum. A research by the Ministry of Education (MoE, 2010) Malaysia revealed that one of the factors that contributed to pupils' dropping-out of school was most likely due to the inability of acquiring the basic English Language. In this light, basic literacy of English Language is indeed crucial to prepare the pupils with the ability to communicate orally, read and write English proficiently as intended and targeted by the government (MoE, 2013).

Every pupil has the potential to study and benefit from the education system but if the school authorities were not aware of their illiteracy problems, this would jeopardized their chances of continuing their education in school. To address this problem, the government implemented an early intervention programme at early stages of schooling that is the Literacy in English Language or commonly known as LINUS (LBI) 2.0 programme.

1.1.1 The LINUS (LBI) 2.0 programme

The LINUS (literacy, numeracy and screening) programme, which was first implemented in 2010, is an education intervention programme. Initially, the focus was only on the Malay Language and Mathematics. Recently, with the launching of the Malaysia Education Development Plan (PPPM), the programme was expanded to include English Language. Thus, LINUS (LBI) 2.0 programme is one of the National Key Result Areas (NKRA) of the Ministry of Malaysia Education (MoE), whereby all children (without learning disabilities) are expected to have acquired basic literacy and numeracy skills after three years of lower primary education among pupils whose age range between seven to nine years old (MoE, 2013). With its implementation, it is hoped that the rates of literacy in English will increase and the pupils will be able to communicate orally, read and write in English proficiently (MoE, 2012).

To date, within the eleven focuses to transform the education system, this programme is part of the transformation blue print, in the government's effort stands to ensure every child is proficient in both languages, Malay and English. Its aims to achieve 100 percent basic literacy after three years of lower primary education, emphases the elevation of Malay Language and English Language and the addition of other choices of languages (MoE, 2012). This emphases that the acquisition of

basic literacy of English language among children is an essential need. It is a basic quality that children should have in order to be more productive and to participate well in their daily social life, within or out of one owns' community.

According to the procedures described by the Curriculum Development Centre, Ministry of Education Malaysia the achievement of the literacy targets, reading and writing acquisition of the pupils are measured by prescribed screening instruments, designed by Malaysian Board of Examination (LPM) namely, screening 1 and screening 2. These screenings instrument are to be administered at the beginning and after the intervention programme being implemented. The teachers are to use the teaching and learning modules designed and provided by the Curriculum Development Centre, Ministry of Education Malaysia, which stated clearly the twelve, constructs or basic reading skills outlined to be acquired by the pupils. The twelve constructs or reading skills that should be acquired as mentioned earlier are as in the table below.

Table 1.1: The twelve reading skills outlined by the MoE

I	Able to identify and distinguish	7 Able to understand and use the
	shapes of the letters of the alphabet	language at phrase level in linear
		texts
2	Able to associate sounds with the	8 Able to understand and use the
	letters of the alphabet	language at phrase level in non-
		linear texts
3	Able to blend phonemes into	9 Able to read and understand
	recognizable words	sentences with guidance
4	Able to segment words into	10 Able to understand and use the
	phoneme	language at sentence level in non-
		linear texts
5	Able to understand and use the	11 Able to understand and use the
	language at word level	language at sentence level in linear
		texts
6	Able to participate in daily	12 Able to construct sentences with
	conversations using appropriate	guidance
	phrases	

In addition, teachers were provided with training to facilitate the need and requirement of the programme's implementation. The training is done in stages according to the national, state, division and district level. Later, during the programme's implementation, the officers or key personnel in charge and head of the schools will do the monitoring, supervising and evaluating. However, there are some differences between the LINUS (LBI) 2.0 programme compared to other supportive programmes proposed by the government. Firstly, this programme focused on early intervention for lower primary education (Year 1 to Year 3) pupils without learning disabilities and it is the first of such programme that had been carried out in the Malaysian school content. Secondly, an increased ratio of intervention teacher is provided, that is one teacher for fifteen selected pupils. Thirdly, the screening and

identification of pupils with or without learning disabilities are carried out with the help of nurses or doctors from the hospitals.

Thus, with this latest educational reform in Malaysia there is a need to promote a teaching innovation, in particular, in the use of instructional strategies that are appropriate for illiterate pupils in Malaysia primary schools. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the LINUS (LBI) 2.0 programme in developing reading literacy in English Language of lower primary Malaysian ESL pupils. The teachers' views of the programme with regards to the resources and facilities, training and facilities, teaching and learning of reading, and pupils' reading development will be examined. The evaluation aims to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the current programme implementation and to provide recommendations deemed suitable for it to be effectively implemented in schools and to attain its objective that is to enhance the basic reading literacy attainment amongst primary school pupils.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In relation to the literacy programme, a key personnel in-charge of the LINUS (LBI) 2.0 programme in Sarikei District, Sarawak reported that base line from the1st screening gathered in May 2013, showed that there are about 314 out of 992 lower primary pupils in Sarikei District who were categorized as "the must undergo the LINUS (LBI) 2.0 programme to acquire literacy of English Language". Thus, only 9 out of 44 schools in the Sarikei district were exempted from the LINUS (LBI) 2.0 programme, which is only about 20 percent of the number of schools in the Sarikei District. Given the low rate, the programme plays an important role in realizing the National education goals.

Connected to the implementation of a programme, it is also imperative that evaluation of the programme is carried out to trace its progress and success. Thus, evaluation plays a significant role in providing the necessary information of how satisfactory a programme or initiative is being implemented. It would reveal whether a programme is achieving desired results. With the information gathered from a well-designed evaluation, the findings can be used to improve a programme, services and benefits, and give salient feedback to staff and clients involved. The concept of evaluation is also viewed as an assessment of the worth or merit of some educational objects (Stufflebeam, 2000; Trochim, 2006). Assessment of the achievement of objectives, which is also known as the Tylerian view of evaluation (Madaus & Stufflebeam, 2000); could show the success or failure of a programme. In addition, 8bach (1963) pointed out that the evaluation process should be focused on gathering and reporting of information that could help guide decision-making in an educational programme and curriculum development.

In Malaysia, the development of basic literacy skills begins as early as before a child enters formal schooling. Similar to other countries worldwide, these literacy skills are emphasised early in preschool education. One crucial literacy skill that needs to be acquired as early as in the primary years of schooling is the English Language Literacy skills. This is stipulated in the Malaysian education policy whereby English is taught as a compulsory subject since primary one in all Malaysian public schools. Despite this emphasis, some children without learning disabilities are still unable to

acquire the basic literacy skills of English during their lower primary school level. This problem is a continuing concern to teachers and policy makers alike as every Malaysian child is expected to acquire these skills after 3 years of mainstream primary education (MoE, 2013).

As mentioned, a literacy intervention programme, the LINUS (LBI) 2.0 programme was introduced by the Ministry of Education, Malaysia in all Malaysian lower primary schools since the beginning of 2013, for selected Year I pupils. This initiative, which is an extension of the LINUS (Literacy, Numeracy and Screening) programme for the Malay language and Mathematics subjects aims at enhancing the rate of literacy in English of the lower primary learners. With the implementation of the LINUS (LBI) 2.0 programme as the first English Language Literacy intervention initiative, there is a need to find out whether this early intervention programme has attained its objectives, that is, whether it has enhanced learning and indeed has brought about any impact in developing the pupils' reading literacy.

As such, it is therefore essential to obtain information regarding its implementation effectiveness. Information from various sources such as teachers, pupils' results and real class setting observation may be collected to provide information, which would assist in improving the programme and how it should be conducted.

In this light, any evaluation of a programme does not only show its strength, but also provides information on its weaknesses. This is why programme evaluation constitutes an important aspect of any programme implementation such as the LINUS (LBI) 2.0 programme in particular its implementation. A few studies have been carried out on the LINUS programme, (Abdul Jalil Othman et.al, 2011; Hasnalee Tubah, 2011; Wan Fatimah Wan Ahmad, 2013); Nazariyah Sani, 2013). These few limited studies have looked on teacher readiness in the programme and challenges that teachers confronted in carrying out the programme. However, most of the studies have focused on either the Malay Language or Mathematics and none has focused on English Language in the Malaysian context.

The importance of programme evaluation is emphaised by some related studies such as those by (Baylis and Snowling, 2012: Ya –yu Lo, Chuang Wang and Haskell, 2008; Scull and Bianco, 2008). These studies found that programme evaluation on literacy acquisition, specifically the reading literacy among at risk learners have important implications on their development of reading in later schooling.

Thus, more studies need to be done on the LINUS (LBI) 2.0 programme to give the necessary insights as there are long term implications. Essentially, this study is an attempt to investigate the effectiveness of the programme in developing the reading literacy of lower primary pupils with the aim to contribute to the larger body of research in reading literacy. Thus, this study, with such focus too, the study would contribute to the literature.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this evaluation study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the LINUS (LBI) 2.0 programme in developing reading literacy in English Language of

Malaysian lower primary ESL pupils. This programme evaluation is a two-fold study. Specifically, it aims:

- a) To examine teachers' views on the LINUS (LBI) 2.0 programme in developing reading literacy among lower primary ESL pupils.
- b) To determine to what extent the LINUS (LBI) 2.0 programme has succeeded in developing the lower primary ESL pupils' basic reading skills.

1.4 Research Questions

The study was designed to address three evaluation questions. The two identified goals of the evaluation give rise to three research questions that will help to lay the foundation and shape the direction of the program evaluation. The specific research questions of this study are:

- i. What are the teachers' views towards the implementation of the LINUS (LBI) 2.0 programme in terms of:
 - a. Resources and facilities,
 - b. Training and support and
 - c. Teaching and learning activities related to the basic reading skills?
- ii. How did the teachers help the pupils develop their basic reading skills in the (LBI) 2.0 programme?
- iii. To what extent has the LINUS (LBI) 2.0 programme (a focus on pupils' basic reading literacy) achieved its intended learning outcome?

1.5 Theoretical Perspectives

The theoretical perspective of this study is culled from a few theories, which include theory of programme evaluation, the connectionist theory and the bottom-up theories of reading process. These theories are used to investigate how the LINUS (LBI) 2.0 programme helped in the development of the lower ESL learners reading literacy. To understand the theories that support or help to direct this evaluation study is pertinent.

1.5.1 Theory of programme evaluation

Based on previous studies, it is quite clear that an evaluation is a purposeful, systematic and careful collection and analysis of data used for the purpose of documenting the effectiveness and impact of a programme, course, procedure, management, education or even policy. It helps in forming accountability areas needing for change and improvement. A programme evaluation theory deals with a coherent set of conceptual, hypothetical, pragmatic, and ethical principles forming a general framework to guide the study and practice of programme evaluation (Stufflebeam and Shinkfield, 2007). The various meanings and definitions of the evaluation concept includes viewing evaluation as an assessment of the worth or merit of some educational objects (Stufflebeam, 2000a, 2000b; Trochim, 2006): assessment of the achievement of objectives which is also known as the Tylerian view of evaluation (Madaus & Stufflebeam, 2000): and proving information on the

success or failure of a programme. According to Madaus and Stufflebeam (2000) these are the conventional views of evaluation. As the field of evaluation continued to develop, Cronbach (1983) pointed out that the evaluation process should be focused on gathering and reporting information that could help guide decision-making in an educational programme and curriculum development.

Nonetheless, while the models differ in many of their details, the decision to choose an evaluation model depends on a few important factors such as the evaluation questions, the issues that must be addressed, and the available resources (Madaus & Kellaghan, 2000). In this evaluation study, the logic model which also known as a logical framework, theory of change or programme matrix is a tool used by evaluators to evaluate the effectiveness of a programme (Weiss, 1972). There are four main components in the stated model; inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes. The model depicts a logical relationship between the inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes of a programme. This model is applicable for this study as it describes the relationships between the resources and facilities (inputs), training and support, teaching and learning reading activities (activities), strengths and weaknesses (outputs) and pupils' improvement in reading literacy (outcomes) while a program is being implemented. It aims to detect the strengths and weaknesses and constructive suggestions on the evaluated programme.

1.5.2 Connectionist Theory of literacy

The connectionist theory, which was introduced by Adams in 1990, is a theory of literacy acquisition, which proposes that literacy knowledge is built on a sequence of skills and experiences. Direct, explicit skill instruction following a well planned scope and sequence are taught to the learners. Mastering the alphabetic code, reading words, automaticity of reading, over-learning, and reading for fluency and comprehension are emphasized. (Adams,1990; Morris, 1999). These emphasized components are also highlighted in the implementation of the LINUS (LBI) 2.0 programme with regards to the learners' reading literacy skills. This theory also stated that young learners who are unable to get the reading and writing targets for their grade level within a reasonable time receive a one to one session of remediation. As such, the study implies the same idea in the implementation of the programme, when pupils are unable to acquire the twelve reading constructs (skills) outlined in the programme, a small group session or one to one session of teaching and learning reading would be done.

1.5.3 Bottom-up Theory of reading process

The focal of Bottom-up theory is basic language decoding skills. This includes print awareness, letters and phonics, decoding and practice and reading fluency. Carrell (1988, p.101) also defines this process as decoding the linguistic units such as phonemes, graphemes, and words in order to make textual meaning from the smallest to the largest units and adapting the prior background knowledge with the present prediction made on the information faced in the text. Accordingly, the theory teaches phonics earlier with letters of the alphabet and the sounds these letters represent before beginning to read books independently. In this study, the twelve constructs

or skills mentioned earlier are basically aligned with the focal aspect of the bottomup theory. This informed that the programme had been designed based on certain theories too. Besides, the programme also being carried out with teaching of phonics earlier with letters of the alphabet and the sounds these letters representing before progressing to the next step. The pupils that participated in the programme would be assessed based on that basic language decoding specifically the twelve stated reading constructs or skills mentioned in the programme's content.

1.6 Conceptual framework

The programme evaluation study will be used as a guide to evaluate the teacher's perception of the LINUS (LBI) 2.0 programme. The study adapts the logic model framework as mentioned by Weiss (1972), which comprises the four components (inputs, activities, output and outcomes) to underlie this evaluation study. To relate in this study, inputs are the resources and facilities. Training and support, teaching and learning reading activities are equivalent to activities in the programme evaluation's framework, strengths and weaknesses are considered as the output while the pupils' screening result as the outcome of the programme.

With that, an evaluation is actually providing information about how well the ongoing program has been implemented, determine whether what is planned has been carried out accordingly to the schedule, meet the needs of the participants and resources are used efficiently. Besides that, it is also measure, interpret and assess the actual outcomes and comparing to the anticipated outcomes. Evaluation provides the decision-makers with information on whether to continue, modify or drop the programme. Intended and unintended effects and positive and negative outcomes should be taken into considerations at this level of evaluation. Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of this evaluation study.

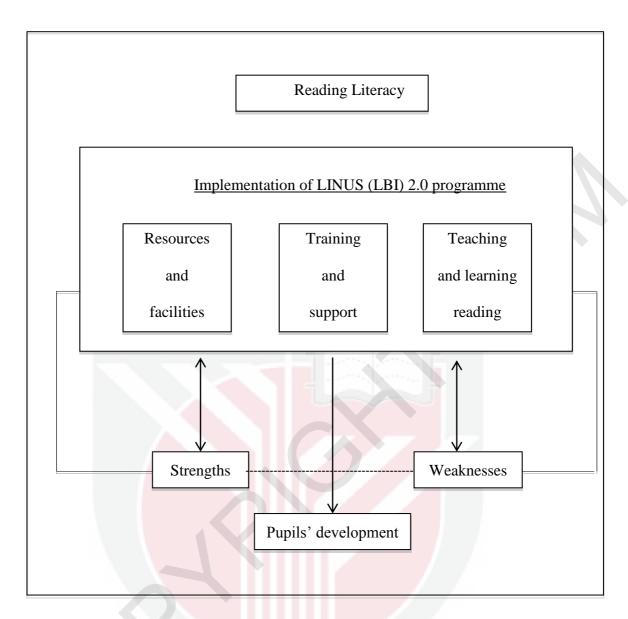


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

1.7 Significance of the study

The main concern of this study is about how and what the teachers are doing in implementing the programme to meet its goal of having all the pupils are able to acquire the 12 reading skills which mentioned earlier as the twelve constructs of reading within 3 years of their lower primary schooling. The results of the study would provide insights into the teachers' views towards the provided programme's resources and facilities, training and support, teaching and learning activities related to the focused reading skills and the attainment of the LINUS (LBI 2.0) outcomes in the schools involved in the study.

It will also provide baseline data on the development of the pupils' reading literacy at lower primary school level. Findings from the programme evaluation can highlight its strengths and weaknesses that can be used as feedback to improve the programme and the policy related to its implementation. Although the LINUS (LBI) 2.0

programme is currently in its early phase, the results of the study would give an indication of how far the programme has succeeded in its implementation with an aim to enhance literacy among lower primary pupils, in particular, the basic reading skills, which is the focus of this study.

1.8 Scope of the study

The scope of the study is restricted to the evaluation of the LINUS (LBI) 2.0 programme in developing the lower primary pupils' basic reading literacy. The evaluation was based on the LINUS (LBI 2.0) teacher's views on the provided resources and facilities, teaching and learning activities related to the skills covered, and pupil's development of their basic reading skills based on the screening results gathered from various schools involved in the LINUS (LBI 2.0) In addition, the evaluation of the programme aimed at discovering the strengths and weaknesses of the focused aspects during its implementation.

The study was carried out in its real setting with no experimental study carried out on the LINUS (LBI 2.0) intervention programme. Thus, the evaluation of the attainment of the programme outcomes was based on the pupils' results of two reading screenings conducted at different points in time. In addition, the results of the reading screenings were only gathered from eight schools before and after the implementation of the programme, and the current study was limited to only the then Year 1 (2014) teachers who were involved in the LINUS (LBI 2.0) programme as well as the teachers who had experience carrying out the programme for the previous Year 1 (2013) pupils in the six districts of Sarawak.

1.9 Definition of terms

1.9.1 LINUS (LBI) 2.0 programme

The LINUS (LBI) 2.0 programme is the effort of the Ministry of Education, Malaysia to tackle the issue of illiteracy in English among lower primary ESL pupils. All the children (without learning disabilities) should have acquired basic literacy and numeracy skills after three years of lower primary education (MoE, 2013). (MoE, 2013), added that LINUS is an acronym for literacy, numeracy and screening. This study focuses only on English Language Literacy or *Literasi Bahasa Inggeris* (*LBI*) and the target of the remedial initiative is to help the illiterate group of pupils without learning disabilities to acquire the basic skills of English Language within their three years lower primary schooling duration. In addition, the study confines itself only to reading.

1.9.2 Literacy

According to Senechal (2007), literacy involves two components: conceptual knowledge, that is knowing about the forms and functions of print, and procedural knowledge, that is the mechanics of reading and writing, such as knowing the letter names and mapping letters to sounds. In this study, English Language Literacy is

defined by the Ministry of Education as the ability to communicate with peers and adults appropriately, to read and comprehend simple texts and stories and to write a range of texts through a variety of media. (MoE, 2013).

1.9.3 Core LINUS (LBI) 2.0 pupils

Core LINUS (LBI) pupils refer to the illiterate pupils in the LINUS (LBI) 2.0 programme. They are classified as such based on the first reading screening result, when they were found not to have acquired most of the basic reading skills as outlined by the MoE, which is referred to as constructs in the LINUS (LBI) 2.0 programme.

1.10 Structure of the thesis

This thesis comprises five chapters. Chapter one consists of various essential topics pertaining to the study. It discusses introductory but fundamental components of the introduction chapter, such as the background to the study, description of the LINUS (LBI 2.0) programme, statement of the problem, objectives of the study and research questions, scope and significance of the study, theoretical perspectives, and so on. Chapter two presents the literature review related to the study, which includes discussing essential subject matters related to the study. Chapter three discusses the methodology of the study. This includes describing the design of the study, sampling, data collection methods and data analysis. Chapter four presents and discusses the results of the study.

1.11 Summary

This chapter has discussed fundamental aspects related to the study, such as the background of the study, problem of statement, objectives of the study, research questions, theoretical perspectives, conceptual framework, definition of terms, scope of the study, and the significance of the study. It has provided insights into the LINUS (LBI) 2.0 programme with the view of creating an overall understanding of why an evaluation study of it is required.

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