

The Role of Audio Media and Materials in the Teaching of Bahasa Malaysia and Bahasa Inggeris in Malaysia

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Kerana kesedaran yang kian bertambah tentang masalah-masalah mengenai pengajaran Bahasa Malaysia dan Bahasa Inggeris di Malaysia, para guru dan pentadbir telah mulai memberi perhatian yang lebih untuk meninggikan mutu pengajaran bahasa, terutamanya Bahasa Inggeris. Tujuan kertas ini adalah untuk menimbangakan bagaimana aspek-aspek biasa pelbagai jenis bahan media audio boleh digunakan untuk mencapai matlamat ini. Program-program yang disentuh dalam kertas ini, antara lain ialah: rancangan-rancangan radio pendidikan yang diterbitkan oleh Radio Pendidikan, Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia, berita radio dan forum yang diterbitkan oleh Radio Televisyen Malaysia, pita-pita kaset audio dan radio sekolah. Sifat dan kekuatan yang ada pada media audio bila digunakan dengan betul, akan dapat memberi munafaat dalam pengajaran bahasa. Oleh itu guru-guru bahasa perlulah diberi galakan untuk menggunakannya di sekolah-sekolah di Malaysia.

Introduction

One of the main concerns of the present educational system in Malaysia is the teaching and learning of both Bahasa Malaysia (national language) and Bahasa Inggeris (English). As with all languages, there are problems involved in the teaching of these two languages, particularly English. For example, recently we see an increasing awareness among teachers and administrators of the declining standard of English in our schools. Seminars have been organized at district and state level to discuss this problem. Such an action is a good sign because it is an indication of the real concern of the educators involved and their desire to do something about raising the standard of English which inevitably means raising the standard of teaching of the language. In our attempt to raise the standard of language teaching, we need to look into the methodology, the teaching strategies, and the types of media resources that can be used, and how best they can be employed in the teaching learning processes of both Bahasa Malaysia and Bahasa Inggeris.

The primary focus of this paper is to consider how educational media and particularly the audio media can contribute towards helping to raise the standard of teaching of both Bahasa Malaysia and Bahasa Inggeris in Malaysia. The focus of the paper is not on ideals, theories and principles but rather on the practical aspects of media utilization in language teaching in schools. In the paragraphs that follow, five types of audio materials and how they can be incorporated into the language lessons are discussed.

Educational Radio Programmes

Educational Radio Programmes for the teaching of Bahasa Malaysia and Bahasa Inggeris are being produced by the Division of Educational Media Services of the Ministry of Education of Malaysia. For instance, an average of about 34 English language broadcasts are made annually for primary schools and 34 for secondary schools. For Bahasa Malaysia, each school term, an average of three broadcasts per week for secondary school, and ten broadcasts per week for primary schools are made. Teacher's notes are also available for each programme, (Jadual Siaran, 1979).

Unfortunately, owing to the constraint of time-tabling problem, the educational radio language programmes are not very extensively used in the secondary schools. However, one way to overcome this problem is to have them recorded on audio tapes so that they are readily available for use by any teacher at any time. This means the setting up of an audio tape library as well as a loan service of tape recorders for use by both teachers and pupils in the school. Such a library will certainly encourage the use of the audio media in the teaching of languages.

Radio News & Forum

Besides the use of Educational Radio Programmes, the daily radio programmes produced and broadcast by Radio and Television Malaysia (R.T.M.), especially the daily news and forum can be pre-recorded on cassette tapes and brought to the classroom as supplementary materials for a listening-comprehension lesson. Because these news or forum programmes are of local context, they are of greater relevance and interest to the pupils than a straight recording of a prose or a comprehension passage taken out of a book. The use of these off-air recorded programmes has the added advantage of providing opportunity for students to discuss current affairs and news items intelligently with others, after all Communication English is to help students acquire the skills of interacting and communicating effectively in everyday life with those around them.

Radio Plays

In addition to radio news, certain radio plays can be very useful materials for teaching a language (whether it be in Bahasa Malaysia or Bahasa Inggeris). They are not too long because generally they are one-act plays and seldom last for more than half an hour each, and hence is appropriate for classroom use. Normally the language is very descriptive and picturesque since no visuals are available to hold the attention of the listeners. Clear speech and good dramatization help to captivate the listening audience. The school library can have a collection of some such plays pre-recorded on tapes for use by teachers who are innovative and are looking for alternative media and materials to make their language teaching come alive and meaningful.

Cassette Tapes

The teaching of spoken language requires the use of the audio medium. In most of our Malaysian schools this audio stimulus is supplied only by the language teacher themselves using their own voices. However, this is unsatisfactory because it is one-way listening to the teacher only, and often it can become boring after a while. It is rather surprising that very few teachers make use of the audio cassette tapes to teach Oral Bahasa Malaysia or Oral Bahasa Inggeris considering the fact that it is a relatively cheap medium and the machine can be battery-operated if the schools do not have electricity supply. Why do we not give the pupils a chance to listen to their own voices by using the cassette tape recorder? They are able to hear themselves talk and listen to their own mistakes. They become clearer as to why a certain pronunciation is not correct and in what way and to what extent they have deviated from the correct pronunciation. The audio cassette tape recorder is a very useful tool for teaching proper pronunciation and speech and ought to be more widely used by our teachers. One effective way this machine can be utilized in the classroom is to use it to record a conversation between two pupils and then replay it to the class for evaluation and discussion. If several pieces of this machine are available the pupils can be divided into smaller groups and meaningful group learning centering around a cassette tape recorder can take place during a language lesson.

One other significant use of the cassette tape recorder is to harness it for relieving the teacher of the tedious work of drilling the pupils, as well as providing different pacing of learning for the individual learner. No two children learn a language at the same rate, and one may need more drill than the other. This is why a fast learner is often bored to death by numerous drills given in class. Therefore, if we can provide learning materials and tapes with varying amount of repetitions and drills to suit the different learners, we are providing the pupils the opportunity to learn and also to learn at their own pace. Individualized learning through the use of audio tapes has proved

to be effective for language instruction since it enables self-pacing to take place. It is therefore recommended that if a school can afford it, it should consider setting up individualized learning facilities using cassette tape recorders and headphones. Perhaps a section of the school library can be equipped to enable pupils to walk in at anytime when they are free and learn at their own pace. Moreover, this type of audio facilities can be invaluable for remedial teaching and learning, if properly utilized.

School 'Radio' Programmes

As a vehicle for promoting the learning and use of a language, the school can set up a school radio system through which school announcements, and regular entertainment programmes can be 'broadcast' through the public address system during recess for all to listen. The 'radio' programmes should be produced by the pupils themselves with the assistance of their class teachers. Different classes can take turns to produce these regular programmes. Although this audio facility is not directly for classroom teaching and may be time consuming to operate, however, if properly utilised it, can be a very effective means of promoting interest in learning a language, as well as raising the competency level of the spoken language of the pupils concerned. One particular school that has successfully employed this type of audio media for the benefit of its pupils is Sekolah Rendah Kebangsaan Jalan Selama, Serdang, Kedah. The School 'Radio' was very effectively utilized during the 'Learn English' campaign months. It is encouraging to know that the time and effort that the headmaster, teachers and pupils have put in to make the School 'Radio' a success have been richly rewarded. According to Mr. Marks, the headmaster of this school, the standard of English has risen within the last few years; and more importantly, this achievement in learning English is transferred to other subject areas. The school's overall performance in the Standard Five Government Assessment Examination improved significantly. Before the extensive use of educational media and the regular 'Learn English' campaigns (including the use of School Radio Programmes) were carried out in the school, the average result of the school in the Standard Five Examination was only about 25% passes. However, since 1972 when educational media was utilized on a large scale, the performance steadily improved and today it has well over 60% passes and is considered to be one of the best primary schools in the state of Kedah.

Conclusion

In conclusion, teachers are reminded that it is not the intention of this paper to give them the impression that the use of the audio media is the panacea for all ills associated with the teaching and learning of Bahasa Malaysia or Bahasa Inggeris because the factors contributing to language learning problems are numerous and complex, and there is no one solution to the problems. On the other hand, if the right media and materials are selected and properly utilized in the right context and environment they can be extremely useful tools in the hands of concerned and dedicated teachers. They can help to enhance the quality and effectiveness of their teaching and ultimately make learning more meaningful and interesting for the pupils – after all learning ought to be fun and enjoyable! Thus, it is strongly recommended that every encouragement ought to be given to our language teachers to utilize a wide range of educational resources, particularly audio media and materials to help raise the standard and effectiveness of the teaching of both Bahasa Malaysia and Bahasa Inggeris in schools.

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