

# Analysis of the low reading and writing capability of bilingual students in 'sanggar bimbingan' from a socio-cultural aspect: case study in the lower grade of sanggar bimbingan sekolah indonesia kuala lumpur

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## Abstract

*This study aims to describe the reading and writing ability of lower-grade students of Sanggar Bimbingan Sekolah Indonesia Kuala Lumpur in using Indonesian at school and Malay in everyday environments. This research uses a qualitative approach with participatory action research methods as well as action research and interview data collection techniques. Researchers work alongside participants to identify problems, develop research questions, collect and analyze data, and implement solutions or actions based on findings. Based on the results of field experience, researchers found several difficulties for students in learning Indonesian, especially in spelling, reading a text, and writing sentences in Indonesian correctly. In this study, several factors were found that influenced the low reading and writing ability of lower-grade students of the Sanggar Bimbingan Sekolah Indonesia Kuala Lumpur in socio-cultural aspects, such as the living environment, association, family, and economy.*

*Keywords: reading and writing ability, bilingual, guidance center, socio-cultural.*

## Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan kemampuan baca tulis siswa kelas bawah Sanggar Bimbingan Sekolah Indonesia Kuala Lumpur dalam menggunakan Bahasa Indonesia di sekolah dan Bahasa Melayu di lingkungan sehari-hari. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode participatory action research serta teknik pengumpulan data action research dan wawancara. Peneliti bekerja bersama peserta untuk mengidentifikasi masalah, mengembangkan pertanyaan penelitian, mengumpulkan dan menganalisis data, dan menerapkan solusi atau tindakan berdasarkan temuan. Berdasarkan hasil pengalaman lapangan, peneliti menemukan beberapa kesulitan siswa dalam mempelajari Bahasa Indonesia, utamanya dalam mengeja, membaca tulisan dan menulis kalimat berbahasa Indonesia dengan benar. Dalam penelitian ini dikemukakan beberapa faktor yang mempengaruhi rendahnya kemampuan baca tulis siswa kelas bawah Sanggar Bimbingan Sekolah Indonesia Kuala Lumpur dalam aspek sosial budaya, seperti lingkungan tempat tinggal, pergaulan, keluarga dan ekonomi.

Kata kunci: Kemampuan baca tulis, bilingual, sanggar bimbingan, sosial budaya.

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## 1. Introduction

Learning centers are non-formal education centers whose graduates receive certificates for package A, package B, and package C. Learning center children have



weak financial and social capabilities, making it difficult to implement the literacy movement. Learning center children's generally low awareness of reading and writing literacy is often influenced by social factors.

In general, the influence of the environment is passive where the environment does not provide coercion to the individual. The environment provides access to opportunities for individuals to develop themselves. This social factor is often overlooked when it comes to literacy. The social influence on the literacy skills of sanggar bimbingan children is influenced by the living environment mixed with local Malaysians in their daily lives speaking the Malaysian language and culture. It is different from Sekolah Indonesia Kuala Lumpur where many of the children live in an area or neighborhood with many Indonesians. If a child lives in an environment with Indonesian culture then the child will more easily get Indonesian culture, values, and manners. So it is important for learning centers that number 56 not to Sabah Sarawak with more than 2000 newly detected students there may be tens of thousands of children who have not received education have not received education because they do not have official documents and are not allowed to pursue education in Malaysia.

This study aims to reveal the literacy problems experienced by the children of the learning center. Given that there are no specific program methods and procedures from Indonesian schools that are commonly applied, teaching and learning are done evenly and fairly. The government improved the ability of sanggar bimbingan teachers to constantly develop through teacher training once a month to improve effective learning.

Based on the concern of Indonesian children who do not have complete documents to pursue education to achieve their dreams and hopes. Seeing the need for this education, the government provides Indonesian School Kuala Lumpur and Indonesian School Johor Baru but has not been able to cover all Indonesian children living in Peninsular Malaysia. Through the Indonesian Embassy's education attache, the Indonesian Embassy continues to strive for ways for Indonesian children to get their rights to access education services even through non-formal education.

There are several cases of children leaving the learning center, which is very unfortunate if children are leaving the learning center. The administration of the learning center payments is covered by the Indonesian government so no one is charged. To overcome the lack of facilities and teachers, the learning center works hand in hand to improve student learning activities. This effort is done through a real work program

This study aims to describe the reading and writing ability of lower-grade students of Sanggar Bimbingan Sekolah Indonesia Kuala Lumpur in using Indonesian at school and Malay in everyday environments. This research uses a qualitative approach with participatory action research methods as well as action research and interview data collection techniques. Researchers work alongside participants to identify problems, develop research questions, collect and analyze data, and implement solutions or



actions based on findings. Based on the results of field experience, researchers found several difficulties for students in learning Indonesian, especially in spelling, reading a text, and writing sentences in Indonesian correctly. In this study, several factors were found that influenced the low reading and writing ability of lower-grade students of the Sanggar Bimbingan Sekolah Indonesia Kuala Lumpur in socio-cultural aspects, such as the living environment, association, family, and economy.

### **3. Method**

Practitioners of PAR engage in a variety of research projects, in a variety of contexts, using a wide range of research practices that are related to an equally wide range of political ideologies. Yet there are underlying tenets that are specific to the field of PAR and that inform the majority of PAR projects: (a) a collective commitment to investigate an issue or problem, (b) a desire to engage in self- and collective reflection to gain clarity about the issue under investigation, (c) a joint decision to engage in individual and/or collective action that leads to a useful solution that benefits the people involved, and (d) the building of alliances between researchers and participants in the planning, implementation, and dissemination of the research process.

These aims are achieved through a cyclical process of exploration, knowledge construction, and action at different moments throughout the research process. As participants engage in PAR, they simultaneously address integral aspects of the research process, for example, the question of who benefits from a PAR project, what constitutes data; how decision-making will be implemented; and how, and to whom, will the information generated within the PAR project be disseminated? As the PAR process evolves, these and other questions are problematized in the light of critical reflection and dialogue between and among participating actors. It is by actively engaging in critical dialogue and collective reflection that the participants of PAR recognize that they have a stake in the overall project. Thus, PAR becomes a living dialectical process, changing the researcher (McIntyre, 2008).

Participatory research is the systematic inquiry with the collaboration of those affected by the issue being studied for education and taking action or affecting social change.

There are four key elements :

- a. first participatory research involves a partnership among the academic researchers and the people who will either be affected by the results or who will need to use the results. for example patients or community members
- b. participatory research is an approach to research that can use quantitative qualitative or mixed methods
- c. it always involves learning all the research partners learning something throughout the process often from each other
- d. participatory research involves action researchers do not undertake participatory research just for the sake of learning something about the object

of study they do it because they want to create a change for example a practice change to improve dementia care access.

what makes participatory research so unique is that the research partners make decisions together regarding at least these four stages of the research process. first, everyone agrees on what will be studied the idea can come from any member of the partnership the important thing is that decision to conduct the study is made jointly all research partners decide together what data to collect and how to analyze it making the data collection decisions together can make the results more relevant and applicable all partnership members can participate in decisions regarding the analysis of the data collected they do not all have to actually conduct the analysis but all members can provide valuable ideas in terms of interpreting the results members of the partnership who have insider knowledge can make more pertinent interpretations than say the academic researchers who as outsiders do not have the same perspective the same can be true for decisions regarding what results to disseminate to whom and how adapting study messages to specific audiences is important if researchers want the messages to be heard and acted upon overall researchers undertake participatory research because they want to make a change and partnering with a variety of stakeholders can help ensure their work is relevant and used.

#### 4. Result



Picture 1 – Teaching Practice in Sanggar Bimbingan

Social development, intricately woven into the fabric of the human experience, epitomizes the pursuit of maturity in social relationships. As experts assert, this developmental odyssey not only signifies the attainment of social maturity but also encapsulates a profound learning experience, entailing adaptation and interaction with a myriad of individuals—ranging from parents and siblings to playmates and the broader community (Hurlock, 2014).

In essence, social development transcends mere maturation, encompassing the acquisition of skills necessary to conform to group norms, morals, and traditions. It involves integrating into a cohesive unit, emphasizing effective communication,



collaboration, and adherence to ethical values (Hurlock, 2014). Early childhood emerges as a pivotal phase, shaping an individual's personality and imprinting attitudes that resonate into later stages of life (Susanto, 2011).

Efforts directed at fostering positive social behavior in early childhood underscore the critical importance of cultivating communication skills, nurturing a joyful spirit, building friendships, and instilling ethics and good manners (Khoiruzzadi & Karimah, 2020). The goals of early childhood education are multifaceted, addressing physical, intellectual, social, emotional, and language development, thereby recognizing the interconnectedness of these facets (Wardani et al., 2013).

Transitioning to the discourse on bilingualism, defined as proficiency in using two languages (Language Development and Development Agency, Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia, 2023), holds profound implications for cognitive development in children. Exposure to multiple languages during the sensitive period of early childhood enhances adaptability, with bilingual abilities fostering cognitive prowess (Khoiruzzadi & Karimah, 2020).

However, the social development of bilingual children exhibits distinctive traits. Bilingualism may empower children to effortlessly engage with diverse cultures, especially in international settings where English is prevalent (Obied, 2009). Conversely, challenges arise, as noted by Purba (2015), indicating a potential social gap between bilingual and monolingual individuals. Tarigan (2008) underscores that bilingualism can burden children, impacting their relationships and academic performance when dealing with unfamiliar languages.

Addressing factors influencing literacy skills in bilingual students, socio-economic status emerges as a significant determinant. Economic privileges associated with socioeconomic status may afford certain children the opportunity to excel in language learning. Additionally, the impact of the living environment, particularly the communication system within the family, plays a pivotal role in shaping reading and writing abilities in bilingual children.

The geographical and linguistic context further exacerbates challenges for students, as seen in the case of SIKL guidance studio attendees predominantly speaking Malay. This linguistic preference hampers the students' proficiency in Indonesian, affecting their reading and writing skills (Djamarah, 2002).

Moreover, family dynamics and social status contribute to students' literacy skills. Djamarah's theory highlights the influence of family factors, such as parental relationships and economic conditions, on students' reading abilities. Mardika (2017) emphasizes the role of parental attention, with inadequate focus potentially hindering literacy development. Additionally, Arnold (Saliza, 2021) underscores the impact of environmental factors, including students' background and experiences at home, on their initial reading abilities.

Delving into the complex interplay of societal factors, the role of Indonesian migrant workers (PMI) in students' families emerges as a noteworthy aspect. According to



surveys and in-depth interviews, the majority of students' parents work as Indonesian migrant workers. Under these circumstances, the demanding nature of PMI occupations may result in limited time available for family interactions. This lack of parental attention can subsequently impact children's motivation to engage with and apply Indonesian in their daily lives, contributing to lower reading and writing abilities (Saliza, 2021).

Additionally, parental involvement in fostering literacy skills cannot be overstated. The level of attention and support parents provide significantly influences students' reading and writing abilities (Mardika, 2017). When parents actively engage in their children's linguistic development, creating an environment that encourages reading and writing, students are more likely to excel in these skills.

The broader economic landscape also plays a role in shaping literacy outcomes. Economic conditions can influence the availability of resources for language learning, potentially creating disparities in reading and writing abilities among students (Djamarah, 2002). Access to educational materials, extracurricular activities, and language enrichment programs may be limited in economically disadvantaged environments, impacting students' overall language proficiency.

Moreover, the impact of societal perceptions and attitudes toward language learning cannot be overlooked. In some cases, societal expectations and biases may create additional challenges for bilingual students. Stereotypes or prejudices associated with certain languages or language proficiency levels can affect students' self-esteem and motivation to engage with language learning, influencing their reading and writing abilities (Saliza, 2021).

In conclusion, social development intertwines with linguistic competencies, creating a complex web of influences on students' reading and writing abilities. Factors such as socioeconomic status, family dynamics, linguistic context, parental involvement, and societal perceptions play pivotal roles in shaping literacy outcomes. Understanding the multifaceted nature of these influences is essential for developing effective strategies to support bilingual students in their journey toward enhanced reading and writing proficiency.

In exploring the intricate relationship between social development and linguistic competencies, it becomes apparent that a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics involved is crucial. The intersection of these factors extends beyond individual experiences, encapsulating broader societal influences that contribute to the complex tapestry of students' reading and writing abilities.

Examining the impact of language exposure in early childhood, it is evident that the linguistic environment plays a pivotal role. Children exposed to a rich linguistic milieu from an early age tend to develop robust language skills. In bilingual contexts, this exposure extends beyond the native language, encompassing the complexities of multiple linguistic systems. Researchers such as Genesee (2004) highlight the



cognitive benefits of early bilingualism, emphasizing its positive influence on various aspects of language development.

However, the challenges associated with bilingualism also warrant consideration. The potential for code-switching, where individuals seamlessly switch between languages, may be advantageous in certain contexts but can pose challenges in formal educational settings. Educators and parents need to navigate this linguistic flexibility, ensuring that it enhances rather than impedes the development of strong reading and writing skills.

Moreover, the socio-cultural aspects of language use contribute significantly to students' literacy abilities. Language is not merely a tool for communication; it serves as a vehicle for cultural expression and identity. Bilingual students navigate not only linguistic diversity but also cultural nuances embedded in each language. This interplay can enrich their perspectives but may also present hurdles, particularly when societal expectations and educational curricula do not fully acknowledge or appreciate diverse cultural backgrounds.

As students progress through their educational journey, the role of teachers becomes paramount. Educators must possess a nuanced understanding of linguistic diversity and its implications for literacy development. Professional development programs that equip teachers with strategies to address the unique needs of bilingual learners can contribute to fostering a supportive learning environment.

In the realm of bilingual education, curriculum design emerges as a critical factor. A well-crafted curriculum acknowledges the linguistic diversity of students and integrates approaches that cater to various proficiency levels. Additionally, incorporating literature and educational materials that reflect diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds fosters inclusivity, creating a more engaging and relevant learning experience for students.

Collaboration between educators, parents, and the broader community is integral to creating an ecosystem that nurtures bilingual students' literacy skills. Workshops and outreach programs can facilitate productive conversations, fostering awareness and understanding of the challenges and strengths associated with bilingualism. By building a collective commitment to supporting bilingual learners, communities can create an environment where linguistic diversity is celebrated, rather than seen as a barrier.

Considering the impact of technology on education, digital resources tailored to bilingual learners can offer interactive and adaptive learning experiences. Educational apps and online platforms designed to enhance language proficiency can provide supplementary support, catering to diverse learning styles. However, it is essential to approach technology integration thoughtfully, ensuring that it complements rather than substitutes for holistic pedagogical approaches.

In addressing the linguistic challenges faced by bilingual students, it is crucial to recognize the role of assessment strategies. Traditional standardized assessments



may not accurately capture the linguistic capabilities of bilingual learners. Culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate assessment tools, including performance-based assessments and portfolios, can offer a more comprehensive understanding of students' reading and writing abilities.

Furthermore, fostering a positive attitude toward bilingualism within the broader societal context is pivotal. Recognizing and appreciating linguistic diversity as an asset rather than a deficit contributes to creating an inclusive and supportive atmosphere for bilingual learners. This shift in perspective can influence not only educational policies but also societal attitudes, ultimately benefiting the literacy outcomes of bilingual students.

In conclusion, the journey toward enhancing the reading and writing abilities of bilingual students involves navigating a multifaceted terrain. From early exposure to diverse linguistic environments in childhood to the complexities of cultural identity and societal perceptions, each aspect plays a role in shaping literacy outcomes. Through collaborative efforts, informed educational practices, and a shift in societal attitudes, it is possible to create an environment where bilingual learners thrive academically and linguistically.

Diving deeper into the nuances of bilingual education, the importance of language maintenance strategies comes to the forefront. Bilingual students often grapple with the challenge of preserving proficiency in both languages, especially when one language is more dominant in their daily lives. Implementing strategies that encourage consistent use of both languages is essential.

One effective approach is promoting language-rich environments both at school and at home. In educational settings, classrooms can be designed to celebrate linguistic diversity. Bilingual signage, multicultural literature, and language-focused activities create an inclusive atmosphere where both languages are valued. Similarly, at home, parents can play a crucial role in maintaining a balanced linguistic environment by actively engaging in conversations and activities in both languages.

Moreover, the concept of translanguaging, where individuals fluidly draw upon their entire linguistic repertoire, is gaining prominence in bilingual education. Recognizing and embracing translanguaging practices can enhance students' literacy skills by allowing them to leverage the strengths of both languages. This pedagogical approach challenges traditional language boundaries and encourages a more holistic understanding of language use.

The role of literature in bilingual education cannot be overstated. Exposure to diverse literary works in both languages not only enhances linguistic proficiency but also fosters cultural appreciation. Bilingual students benefit from reading materials that reflect their cultural background as well as those that introduce them to a global literary landscape. Incorporating multicultural literature into the curriculum helps students connect with characters and stories that resonate with their own experiences.





Furthermore, the concept of language ideologies, or societal beliefs about languages, significantly influences bilingual students' experiences. Acknowledging and challenging language ideologies that may stigmatize certain languages or dialects is crucial for fostering an inclusive educational environment. By promoting positive language attitudes, educators can contribute to a more equitable learning experience for bilingual students.

In the context of bilingualism and literacy, the digital divide is a pertinent consideration. Access to technology and digital resources varies across communities, potentially creating disparities in educational opportunities. Bridging this gap requires concerted efforts to ensure that all bilingual learners have equitable access to digital tools that can enhance their language skills.

The impact of peer interactions on bilingual students' literacy development should also be explored. Collaborative learning environments that encourage language exchange among students with diverse linguistic backgrounds can be instrumental. Pairing students with varying language proficiencies for collaborative projects fosters mutual support and creates a space for linguistic growth.

Considering the globalized nature of society, bilingualism is increasingly recognized as a valuable skill in the workforce. As such, incorporating real-world applications of bilingualism in educational settings becomes pertinent. Projects that involve the practical use of languages, such as creating multilingual presentations or engaging in cross-cultural collaborations, not only enhance language skills but also prepare students for a linguistically diverse professional landscape.

In conclusion, the journey to bolster the reading and writing abilities of bilingual students is a multifaceted endeavor. From language maintenance strategies and translanguaging practices to the influence of literature, language ideologies, and digital accessibility, each facet contributes to the intricate landscape of bilingual education. By fostering inclusive environments, challenging societal beliefs, and embracing the richness of linguistic diversity, educators can play a pivotal role in empowering bilingual learners to excel both academically and linguistically.

## **5. Conclusion**

Early childhood is in a sensitive period, during which children easily accept the influences around them, both at home and in the community or school. Several factors causing the low reading and writing ability of bilingual students are socio-economic status, where this factor has a big influence because there are children who have the privilege due to their socio-economic status to learn languages; Apart from that, the living environment to some extent influences the level of students' reading and writing abilities. The next social factors causing the low reading and writing abilities of bilingual children are the communication system and family social status. So the factors that influence students' initial reading and writing abilities are environmental factors which include the student's background and experience at home as well as the student's family economy.



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