

## KNOWLEDGE APPLICATION IN TEACHING PRACTICES OF MALAY LANGUAGE IN SECONDARY SCHOOL

NOR, Z. H.<sup>1</sup> – WAN, M. R. W. M.<sup>2\*</sup> – SAHLAN, B. S.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Faculty of Education, The National University of Malaysia, Selangor, Malaysia.*

*\*Corresponding author  
e-mail: munaruzanna[at]ukm.edu.my*

(Received 24<sup>th</sup> February 2021; accepted 19<sup>th</sup> May 2021)

**Abstract.** Knowledge application and problem-solving skills are two important aspects that should be possessed by every student in the 21st century. This study examines students' application of higher-order thinking skills in Malay language classes. This study focuses on students' knowledge application and problem-solving skills in learning the literature component Malay (KOMSAS). This study involved four Form Four students who were purposively selected from a private secondary school. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and document analysis. Data were analysed descriptively and presented narratively. The findings showed that knowledge application in (1) reading poems and writing on the whiteboard and (2) giving meaning to verses from the poems read, and students' problem-solving skills in (a) finding language style, (b) identifying the situation, and (c) solving the problem in learning KOMSAS can be improved by applying higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) in the classroom. The application of HOTS in learning is in-line with the national curriculum's aspiration to develop quality students for the country in the future. Teachers can design many interesting and fun HOTS activities and encourage students to be actively involved in them. This study implies that students who are taught using HOTS showed a higher level of thinking. Thus, future studies should consider examining HOTS elements further in the teaching of other languages and subjects.

**Keywords:** *Malay language, HOT, school, classroom practices, KOMSAS*

### Introduction

The Malay language is taught to all primary and secondary school students in Malaysia, and some students have received Malay language education starting at the preschool level. In giving and receiving education, there are two parties involved, namely the teachers and the students. In this regard, there some students who have low mastery of Malay language skills. This situation causes them to have difficulties in mastering problem-solving skills in the learning process. The Malay language curriculum aims to equip students with the language and communication skills to meet their personal needs in daily affairs, education, and employment by using grammatical rules correctly and accurately (Mazlan et al., 2020). The development of quality students should be implemented systematically from time to time. As stated in the National Education Philosophy, there are six key elements for developing globally competent students: knowledge, leadership skills, bilingual skills, spiritual ethics, national identity, and thinking skills (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2013). It is hoped that integrating these six elements into teaching would help students to compete globally in the future.

Every student needs to have HOTS and always be able to adapt to the various challenges of life. Therefore, students need to be equipped with higher-order thinking skills to evaluate their learning content and subsequently, solve real-life problems (Ichsan et al., 2019). Thinking skills can help students generate ideas, while problem-solving and decision-making skills are important in students' daily lives and future

careers (Mahanal et al., 2019). Meanwhile, according to Afdareza et al. (2020), thinking skills are the most basic skills developed in the classroom and are the key to producing high-performing students. As high achievement is much needed by students for a better future, thinking skills such as generating ideas, problem-solving, and decision-making are essential elements in their personal and professional development (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2003).

Rozani (2017) mentioned that the success of T&L depends on teachers' competency to plan, deliver lesson contents, and assess their teaching continuously. In today's world of education, the T&L process is very important, and the methods used in T&L need to be managed in a more impactful way. Without a systematic teaching process, effective T&L would not be possible. In general, this study aims to explore HOTS in the T&L of KOMSAS. Specifically, the objectives of this study are; (a) to explore Form Four students' knowledge application skills in the T&L of Malay language KOMSAS; and (b) to explore Form Four students' problem-solving skills in the T&L of Malay language KOMSAS.

### ***Review of literature***

The literature component (KOMSAS) in the Malay language subject provides an interesting platform to generate higher-order thinking skills among students (Daud et al., 2020). Teachers have various responsibilities that need to be implemented besides their teaching responsibilities that revolve around four domains, curriculum management, teaching management, learning environment, and monitoring students' performance (Abdullah and Laji, 2014). The implementation of HOTS-style teaching and learning is necessary for the KOMSAS component as part of the Malay language subject in the national education system.

In this era of globalisation, advances in technology have affected every area of our everyday lives. The rapid development of information technology and the extensive use of computers have great implications in education. Specifically, the Malay language education faces many challenges as some think it is less important in the current education system (Mansor et al., 2020; Yunus, 2015). Thus, Malay Language teachers need to use thinking tools to improve students' ability to solve problems, create something new, and be competitive to attract students' attention (Hasnah and Jamaludin, 2017). As creating a technologically-enriched classroom environment seems to impact the acquisition of higher thinking skill, Malay language teachers could also use various methods to attract students' interest to learn the subject.

Students' lack of interest in learning the Malay language is due to its usually perceived as static and less fun to learn (Zamri, 2012). In this light, teachers usually use traditional teaching methods, such as lecturing, to convey information. Furthermore, some teachers have failed to stimulate students' thinking, and this situation hindered the students from actively engaging in the teaching and learning (T&L) processes. It was reported that some teachers only ask questions that require low or moderate cognitive thinking (Harmi, 2019; Zulkifli and Hashim, 2019).

In Malaysia, the Ministry of Education has made various efforts to improve its education system. However, teachers are concerned about whether the intentions, philosophies, content, or policies enacted can be understood. Many parties suggest that any changes or development should come from within the organisation itself, especially among school teachers. The Malaysian education system is centralised and hierarchical due to the large scale. At times, it is also plagued with complicated bureaucracy. To

some extents, this top-down system hinders the creativity and innovativeness of the teachers because most programs and innovations are planned centrally by the Ministry of Education Malaysia. There is a weakness in the national education system that most students are unable to use the knowledge and think critically in non-academic contexts. Therefore, a new initiative, namely the Standard Primary School Curriculum (KSSR), was implemented in 2011 to overcome the existing problems and transform education.

Embedding higher-order thinking skills in teaching and learning has become increasingly popular in the world of education. However, to ensure teaching effectiveness, Malay language teachers need to have a deep understanding of HOTS (Hasnah and Jamaludin, 2017). An educational institution's effectiveness and success are highly dependent on teachers' ability to implement quality teaching and learning processes (Subri et al., 2020). However, teachers are often unclear on how to apply thinking skills in T&L, despite some of them have had formal exposure to HOTS. Torff and Sessions (2003) state that teachers who gain experience from the teaching process in the classroom and in-service training tend not to develop a wide range of expert skills, especially concerning higher-order thinking skills.

## Materials and Methods

The study was conducted using the qualitative approach. The research design applied is the case study research design. This study involved a secondary school in Hulu Langat, Selangor. The researchers have developed their interview protocol which has been validated by two experts in the field. Interviews were conducted with four students and a Malay Language teacher to examine the HOTS elements applied in the T&L of Malay language KOMSAS. Interview data were analysed using ATLAS.ti to generate themes to answer the research questions. All of the students have been learning HOTS through the Malay language subject before.

## Results and Discussion

The researchers conducted observations of the students' learning in their classroom. During the observation, the discussion focused on the '*Sajak Gelanggang*', a Malay poem under the KOMSAS component. The observation was conducted to examine how students apply knowledge to solve problems. *Table 1* presents the indicators and sub-indicators of HOTS in T&L of Malay language KOMSAS in the aspect of "Applying students' knowledge".

**Table 1.** Indicator and sub-indicator for 'Applying students' knowledge'.

Indicator for HOTS in KOMSAS	Sub-indicator	Quotations
Applying students' knowledge	Read poems and write on the whiteboard.	1:2 Writing answers on the whiteboard R3 writing slowly.
		2:1 R2 handwriting too small
		3:1 R1 answering too quickly
		4:1 R4 and R1 answering too quickly

The students were instructed to read the poem and discuss their understanding of the author's message. The teacher then instructed the students to write the meaning of the poem on the whiteboard. The observation found that respondent (R1) and R4 could write their understanding fluently in the whiteboard, while R3 could not write fast, and

his writing was difficult to read. R2 handwriting was very small, and the teacher instructed him to write with bigger handwriting. The students appreciated the words used in the poem. They were able to record the meaning of the poem found on the board based on their understanding. In the T&L process, it is clear that the students understood and master what they have learned, as shown in *Table 2* below.

**Table 2.** Indicator and sub-indicator for 'Applying students' knowledge'..

Indicator for HOTS in KOMSAS	Sub-indicator	Quotations
Applying students' knowledge	Give the meaning of verses from the poem read.	<p>1:1 All citizens obey and strengthen the bonds of relationship, avoiding quarrels between...</p> <p>2:2 Malaysia was formed by a leader consisting of the common people. His homeland is prosperous and...</p> <p>3:1 R1 answer very quickly</p> <p>3:2 Malaysia was established by the leaders of the previous generation about fifty years ago...</p> <p>4:2 The independent generation today is the heir of a nation born of the sacrifice of generations...</p> <p>5:1 Coorporate, work together and help each other</p> <p>6:2 Join hands and unite with each other to defend the country</p> <p>7:1 We need to have vatiuous kinds of values in ourselves such as courage and love of country...</p> <p>8:1 Tells how ancient generations fought to achieve racial unity</p>

The study's findings provide a comprehensive picture that all respondents successfully achieved the expected level of knowledge application. The respondents gave meanings to the poem by exploring the poem line by line and successfully used their higher-order thinking. They were able to apply the knowledge gained to describe the poem and focused on the topics given by the teacher. They were also able to expand the lesson contents to provide a more complex and detailed description. *Table 3* presents the indicator dan sub-indicator for HOTS in the T&L of Malay language KOMSAS in the aspect of "Solving".

**Table 3.** Indicator and sub-indicator for 'solving'.

Indicator for HOTS in KOMSAS	Sub-indicator	Quotations
Solving	Looking for language style	<p>1:3 Assonance repetition language style. Example: <i>Marilah para pahlawan setia, kita kukuhkan ukwah</i></p> <p>2:3 The language style in <i>Sajak Gelanggang</i> is assonance repetition, which is the repetition of the word 'a.'</p> <p>3:3 R1 tells that the style of language is there and only one. Then R1 completes the task l...</p> <p>4:3 It looks like R4 is working hard to pay attention to solve the problem of finding a style of language in poetry...</p> <p>5:3 Anaphora style of language, which is repetition at the beginning of a verse</p> <p>5:4 Double word repetition</p> <p>6:4 Assonance repetition, which is the</p>

repetition of the word 'a.'  
7:3 Reduplication language style. For example, "*pendekar-pendekar*", the word *pendekar* is reduplicated and assonance repetition...  
8:3 Anaphora which is the repetition of the word '*kita*'. For example, "*kita pelihara gelanggang ini, kita mempertahankan*"...

Some respondents managed to find and determine the type of language style in the poem that they learned. This observation means that the respondents involved in the study have successfully applied problem-solving as part of the higher-order thinking skills. The students were able to identify the language styles used in the poem, as described below:

- (i) R1 identified reduplication as one of the language styles used in the poem, i.e. *pendekar-pendekar*. (7:3 Reduplication language style);
- (ii) R4 stated that the author used anaphora, which refers to the repetition of words at the beginning of the sentence: "*Kita pelihara gelanggang ini, kita mempertahankan kedaulatan ini*". (5:3 The anaphora style is a repetition at the beginning of the verse); and
- (iii) R2 and R3 were unable to identify any of the language styles learned in the poem the style learned. (5:3 The anaphora style is a repetition at the beginning of the verse).

Apart from the language styles mentioned above, the author of *Sajak Gelanggang* also used personification and hyperbole language styles. In this situation, the teacher should guide the students to identify the language styles used throughout the poem. It was observed that not all respondents were able to identify the language styles used in the poem. This indicated that some respondents did not understand and did not master the basic concepts of the intrinsic elements learned. Thus, the students need to have more practice identifying the language style used in the poem, as part of the KOMSAS syllabus. This will help them develop a deeper understanding of what been taught. *Table 4* is an indicator and sub-indicator of HOTS in the T&L Malay language KOMSAS in the aspect of "Solving".

**Table 4.** Indicator and sub-indicator for 'solving'.

Indicator for HOTS in KOMSAS	Sub-indicator	Quotations
Solving	Presenting situation	1:5 The people work together to defend the country
		2:5 Creating harmony and peace
		3:5 Must strive to strengthen unity for the progress of the country
		4:5 Defending the country's sovereignty from evil elements because it has been proven to be able to unite...
		5:5 About leadership
		6:5 An interesting situation that I can express is that as citizens, we must be united and not...
		7:4 The events of the previous warriors' efforts in ensuring racial unity were given importance so that...
		7:5 I will practice racial unity by mixing with various races and strengthening relationships...
		8:4 The situation is how the people of the

past opposed the external elements to...

The respondents also analysed the poem to identify the situation described in the poem. Most respondents have their own opinions about the situation in the poem. The situation that presented does not go beyond the scope of the theme studied. They were able to identify the situation based on the words used in the poem, such as country, cooperation, harmony, unity, bravery, external elements, ancestor, socialising, relationship, unity, national sovereignty, and defending the country. Table 5 presents the indicator and sub-indicator of HOTS in T&L of Malay language KOMSAS in the aspect of "Solving".

**Table 5.** Indicator and sub-indicator for 'solving'.

Indicator for HOTS in KOMSAS	Sub-indicator	Quotations
Solving	Solving main question	1:4 Cooperation in developing the country
		2:4 The importance of unity in a multiracial society, unwavering love for the country, and...
		3:4 The importance of unity among multiracial communities
		4:4 Courageous to be against those who intend to destroy the country
		5:2 No answer
		6:3 We as citizens must unite to defend our country
		7:2 The question of perseverance in ensuring racial unity is always given importance and questions...
		8:2 We must be brave to oppose foreign elements who want to threaten our country, besides...

The respondents could list the poem's main problems within the scope of its theme, which is the country's struggle. Among the main questions posted are;

- (i) R1 stated that the poem's main problem could be solved by preserving unity within a multiracial society;
- (ii) R2 stated that the main solution for the problem is prioritising unity in a multiracial society, unwavering love for the country, and tolerance;
- (iii) R3 stated that the solution to the main problem is working collaboratively to develop the country; and
- (iv) R4 stated that the solution to the problem in the poem is to fight against those who intend to destroy the country.

The study found that students and teachers need to work together in the T&L process to ensure T&L sessions are more effective. Thus, teachers need to implement various learning methods and systems and include different learning components to ensure effective and meaningful learning (Subri et al., 2020). It could be argued that the effectiveness of the Malay language T&L is influenced by the teachers' understanding and application of HOTS during the T&L process (Hasnah and Jamaludin, 2017). Therefore, teachers must apply elements that encourage the application of different skills, such as HOTS during lessons to develop students' thinking abilities. Skills in applying knowledge and problem-solving should be emphasised in producing human capital that can meet the country's needs in the 21st century. With the available knowledge, the respondents can explore the poem to solve problems by proposing the main questions in the poem learned. The success of T&L depends on the teachers'

competency to plan, deliver lesson content, and assess their teaching continuously (Rozani, 2017).

## **Conclusion**

This study was conducted to explore the level of knowledge application and problem-solving using HOTS in Malay language KOMSAS component among four form four students in a school in Hulu Langat district in Selangor. The application of appropriate HOTS element can help teachers develop HOTS among students to ensure the effectiveness of T&L in schools, and ultimately, produce quality students in line with the country's aspiration. It was found that the respondents were able to apply HOTS when learning KOMSAS. Furthermore, it was found that the application of HOTS allow teachers to conduct a variety of interesting and fun activities which encouraged students to be actively involved in the lessons, and eventually, improve their knowledge and language proficiency skills. Therefore, these findings further strengthen the view on HOTS, which is a program that supports the national learning curriculum. Teachers' mastery of HOTS can also make them more innovative and deliver quality and effective T&L. At the same time, the application of HOTS motivates the students to learn as it provides various activities that can stimulate the mind and build their language skills. It is also important to acknowledge that the application of HOTS does pose some challenges to the teachers. However, with the right guidance and planning, teachers can implement HOTS to produce students who can contribute to the country's future development.

The results prove that the participants showed increased thinking skills after the implementation of HOTS in their lessons. Thus, the application of HOTS is beneficial. Hence, it should be given attention and developed on a larger scale. The mastery of HOTS can encourage students to think more maturely. This is because they must generate new ideas to obtain relevant information, filter information, and produce and convey oral and written information. This process could eventually help students to think more maturely and independently. HOTS is an important 21st-century skill that could help develop more knowledgeable, highly skilled, and competent citizens who could empower the country's economic resources and create a resilient and sustainable business sector.

This study only involved a small sample size, specifically four form four students studying the Malay language KOMSAS in a school in the Hulu Langat district in Selangor. Moreover, this study only focused on students' knowledge application skills and problem-solving skills in the T&L of the Malay language KOMSAS component. The researchers hope that this study can motivate other researchers to study the application of HOTS, not only in the teaching and learning of the Malay language subject but also in other subjects.

## **Acknowledgement**

This research study is self-funded.

## Conflict of interest

The author confirm that there are no conflict of interest involve with any parties in this research.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Abdullah, M.K., Laji, A. (2014): Kempimpinan pengajaran dan sikap guru bahasa melayu. – *Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Melayu* 4(1): 48-58.
- [2] Afdareza, M.Y., Yuanita, P., Maimunah, M. (2020): Development of learning device based on 21st century skill with implementation of problem based learning to increase critical thinking skill of students on polyhedron for grade 8th junior high school. – *Journal of Educational Sciences* 4(2): 273-284.
- [3] Daud, R., Ab Rahman, R., Adnan, A.W. (2020): Keberkesanan peta pemikiran i-think dalam meningkatkan kemahiran berfikir aras tinggi (KBAT)[The effectiveness of i-think thinking maps in improving higher order thinking skills (HOTS)]. – *AL-QIYAM International Social Science and Humanities Journal* 3(1): 64-78.
- [4] Harmi, N.N.F.N. (2019): Keberkesanan kaedah peta pemikiran i-think terhadap pencapaian dan sikap murid dalam pembelajaran komsas (The effectiveness of i-think thinking map through achievements and students attitude of literature component learning (KOMSAS)). – *Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Melayu* 9(3): 23-32.
- [5] Hasnah, I., Jamaludin, B. (2017): Kompetensi guru Bahasa Melayu dalam menerapkan kemahiran berfikir aras tinggi dalam pengajaran dan pembelajaran. – *Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Melayu* 7(1): 56-65.
- [6] Ichsan, I.Z., Sigit, D.V., Miarsyah, M., Ali, A., Arif, W.P., Prayitno, T.A. (2019): HOTS-AEP: Higher order thinking skills from elementary to master students in environmental learning. – *European Journal of Educational Research* 8(4): 935-942.
- [7] Mahanal, S., Zubaidah, S., Sumiati, I.D., Sari, T.M., Ismirawati, N. (2019): RICOSRE: A learning model to develop critical thinking skills for students with different academic abilities. – *International Journal of Instruction* 12(2): 417-434.
- [8] Mansor, R., Abdul Rashid, R., Zakaria, R.M.R. (2020): A literature summary of Malay language sustainability: From industrial revolution perspective. – *International Journal of Advanced Science and Technology* 29(5s): 2003-2014.
- [9] Mazlan, N.H., Halili, S.H., Leng, C.H. (2020): Evaluating collaborative learning in malay language writing instruction: A case study. – *JuKu: Jurnal Kurikulum & Pengajaran Asia Pasifik* 8(3): 49-57.
- [10] Ministry of Education Malaysia (2013): Malaysia Education Development Plan 2013-2025. – Ministry of Education Malaysia 292p.
- [11] Ministry of Education Malaysia (2003): Sukatan pelajaran Bahasa Melayu. – Ministry of Education Malaysia 26p.
- [12] Rozani, A. (2017): Keupayaan menggunakan KOMSAS sebagai kompetensi pengajaran guru Bahasa Melayu. – *Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Melayu* 7(2): 65-76.
- [13] Subri, M.R., Yaakub, R., Nudin, A.B. (2020): Analisis komunikasi bukan lisan guru cemerlang bahasa melayu ketika melaksanakan pengajaran dan pembelajaran KOMSAS. – *Jurnal Dunia Pendidikan* 2(3): 267-277.
- [14] Torff, B., Sessions, D. (2003): Developmental changes in teachers' use of higher order thinking and content knowledge. – *Journal of Educational Psychology* 95(3): 563-569.
- [15] Yunos, M. (2015): Hubungan sikap dan persepsi murid terhadap pembelajaran Bahasa Melayu dengan kemahiran abad ke-21. – *Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Melayu* 5(2): 22-30.
- [16] Zamri, M. (2012): Inovatif P&P dalam pendidikan Bahasa Melayu. – Penerbit Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris 406p.

- [17] Zulkifli, H., Hashim, R. (2019): The development of questioning skills through hikmah (wisdom) pedagogy. – Creative Education 10(12): 2593-2605.