

# The Proficiency Levels of Bahasa Melayu Writing Skills in Malaysian Primary Schools

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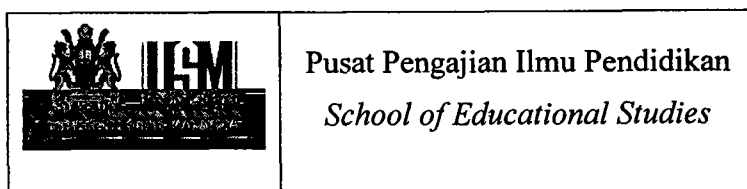
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## Abstract

The 1996 Education Act affirms the status of Bahasa Melayu as a language of knowledge and as a medium of instruction in national schools in Malaysia (Education Act, 1996; Sharifah Maimunah, 2004). Correspondingly, by the end of their primary education pupils are expected to acquire a certain level of Bahasa Melayu proficiency that will enable them to grasp lessons conducted in Bahasa Melayu at the secondary school and tertiary levels. This study set out to examine the proficiency level of Bahasa Melayu writing skills among primary school pupils who have completed six years of the Primary School Integrated Curriculum (KBSR). Two of the writing skills components, i.e., basic writing skills and functional writing skills were examined. Additionally, this study also tried to benchmark the writing skills ability of pupils from Year Two to Year Six. As a result, two sets of Bahasa Melayu writing proficiency matrix schedules were developed using valid and reliable instruments. In terms of pupils' proficiency level according to the respective categories that were assessed, for Level I Basic Writing, Discourse, and Grammar; the mean scores were 2.69, 2.48, and 2.48 respectively. For Level II, the mean scores for Sociolinguistic, Discourse, and Grammar were 3.12, 3.08, and 3.05 respectively. When effect size changes were examined, apparently overall size change between Year Three and Year Two pupils was moderate (0.742). Evidently, there were effect changes from small to moderate between the urban and rural pupils. Nonetheless, the overall effect size change between urban and rural pupils was small (0.453). In terms of gender, effect changes were trivial between female and male pupils standing at 0.230. The Level II overall size change between Year Six and Year Five was moderate (0.539), between year six and year 4 was strong (0.854) and Year Five and Year Four was small (0.233). With regards to location and gender, results indicated that effect size changes were from trivial to small. In terms of location, between urban and rural the overall effect size change was small (0.233). Generally, there was a small effect size change (0.320) between female and male pupils. Tests were also conducted to determine the potency of the instruments used and raters' concord and consistency. Evidently, confirmatory factor analysis of the content of the instruments for Level I and Level II based on KMO criteria indicated that Level I and Level II content items loaded into three main constructs of mechanics, discourse, and grammar, reflected high values of

.981 and .987 respectively. On the other hand, the variance for Level I and Level II were 79.05 percent and 87.78 percent respectively. In terms of interater reliability, results indicated that there were agreement and consistency among the raters with an overall value of above .90. This study resulted in the development of a matrix schedule that is capable of providing teachers with benchmark indicators of pupils' writing proficiency level in Bahasa Melayu. The matrix schedule is expected to be a handy tool for teachers, textbook writers, and school administrators in their endeavor to promote a higher standard of writing proficiency among pupils. This study too, has successfully developed a reliable instrument to gauge pupils' writing proficiency. The instrument as well as the method of grading the essays went through a thorough process of validation. The instrument and grading system employed were reliable and valid. It is hoped that the instrument will be able to serve teachers for purposes of examining their teaching and their pupils' learning.

## **Tahap kefasihan Kemahiran Menulis dalam Bahasa Melayu Murid Sekolah Rendah di Malaysia**

### **Abstrak**

Akta Pendidikan 1996 menetapkan Bahasa Melayu sebagai bahasa pengantar dan bahasa ilmu pengetahuan di sekolah kebangsaan Malaysia (Akta Pendidikan, 1996; Sharifah Maimunah, 2004). Seharusnya, pada akhir persekolahan rendah, murid dijangka memperoleh suatu tahap kefasihan berbahasa dalam Bahasa Melayu yang akan membolehkan mereka mengikuti pelajaran yang disampaikan dalam Bahasa Melayu pada peringkat sekolah menengah dan peringkat yang lebih tinggi. Kajian ini dijalankan bagi mengetahui tahap kefasihan kemahiran menulis dalam Bahasa Melayu murid sekolah kebangsaan yang mengikuti enam tahun Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Rendah (KBSR). Dua komponen kemahiran menulis, iaitu kemahiran menulis asas dan penulisan fungsian dikaji. Kajian ini juga bertujuan untuk menetapkan tanda aras kemahiran menulis murid dari Tahun Dua hingga Tahun Enam. Keputusannya, dua set jadual matrik kefasihan menulis dalam Bahasa Melayu telah dihasilkan dengan menggunakan instrumen yang sah dan dapat dipercayai. Dari segi tahap kefasihan menulis mengikut komponen yang ditaksir, iaitu kemahiran Menulis Asas, Wacana, dan Tatabahasa bagi Tahap I, skor min ialah 2.69, 2.48, dan 2.48 bagi komponen-komponen berkenaan. Bagi Tahap II, skor min untuk komponen-komponen Sociolinguistik, Wacana, dan Tatabahasa ialah 3.12, 3.08, dan 3.05. Berdasarkan perubahan saiz kesan, data menunjukkan perubahan saiz bagi keseluruhan murid Tahun Tiga dan Tahun Dua pada kadar agak kuat (0.742). Yang jelas, ialah perubahan kesan daripada sedikit kepada agak kuat antara murid bandar dan luar bandar. Walau bagaimanapun, perubahan saiz kesan secara keseluruhannya antara murid bandar dan luar bandar adalah kecil (0.453). Berdasarkan jantina, perubahan kesan adalah kecil antara murid lelaki dan perempuan, iaitu pada 0.230. Pada Tahap II, perubahan saiz secara keseluruhannya antara Tahun Enam dan Tahun Lima adalah agak kuat (0.539), seperti juga antara Tahun Enam dan Tahun Empat (0.854), sementara antara Tahun Lima dan Tahun Empat adalah kecil (0.233). Mengikut lokasi dan jantina, keputusan menunjukkan perubahan saiz kesan adalah daripada sangat kecil kepada kecil. Bagi lokasi antara bandar dan luar banda, perubahan saiz kesan keseluruhannya adalah



kecil (0.233). Secara umum, terdapat perubahan saiz kesan yang kecil (0.320) antara murid perempuan dan lelaki. Di samping itu, setiap instrumen yang digunakan dalam kajian turut diuji, termasuklah dalam penggunaan bagi membentuk persetujuan dan ketekalan skor antara pemeriksa. Melalui analisis faktor pengesahan terhadap kandungan instrumen untuk Tahap I dan tahap II dengan menggunakan kriteria KMO, item-itemnya tergolong dalam tiga konstruk utama, iaitu mekaniks, wacana, dan tatabahasa dengan nilai .981 dan .987 bagi setiap tahap. Konstruk berkenaan menyumbang sebanyak 79.05 peratus dan 87.78 peratus varian bagi kefasihan menulis Tahap I dan Tahap II yang dikaji. Berasaskan kebolehpayaan antara pemeriksa, keputusan menunjukkan terdapat persetujuan dan ketekalan antara pemeriksa dengan nilai keseluruhan melebihi .90. Kajian ini berjaya menghasilkan jadual matriks yang menyediakan maklumat kepada guru tentang penunjuk tanda aras tentang tahap kefasihan menulis dalam Bahasa Melayu. Jadual matrik yang dihasilkan ini berguna kepada guru, penulis buku teks, dan pentadbir sekolah untuk dimanfaatkan dalam kerja masing-masing untuk menggalakkan peningkatan standard kefasihan menulis murid. Kajian ini juga berjaya membina instrumen yang dapat dipercayai bagi mentaksir kefasihan menulis murid. Instrumen kajian bersama kaedah menggred karangan yang digunakan didapati mempunyai kesahan dan kebolehpercayaan yang tinggi. Instrumen-instrumen yang dihasilkan ini diharap dapat dimanfaatkan oleh guru Bahasa Melayu untuk membantu pengajaran dan pembelajaran.

## **The Proficiency Levels of Bahasa Melayu Writing Skills in Malaysian Primary Schools**

### **1.0 Introduction**

Bahasa Melayu with its status as the national language and official language of Malaysia must adhere to its role as a language of knowledge (Education Act, 1996). Bahasa Melayu has become the language of instruction for most school subjects in national school in Malaysia, with the exception of Mathematics and Science beginning 2004 (Sharifah Maimunah, 2004) and also as compulsory subject in all national and national type schools. By the end of year six of the primary education, pupils are expected to achieve a level of Bahasa Melayu proficiency that will enable them to follow lessons conducted in Bahasa Melayu in the secondary schools and tertiary levels. As a subject, Bahasa Melayu in the national schools could be divided into two levels namely; Level I and Level II. In terms of writing skills, the instruction in Level I (Year 1 through Year 3) focused on basic writing skills, i.e., recognition and writing of alphabets, joining of words to form phrases and sentences, while Level II (Year Four through Year Six) focused on functional writing, i.e., to generate ideas and feelings in order to fulfill the communication function. Apparently, writing skills is very important not only for purposes of seeking knowledge, but also to fulfill our social function in daily activities. For this purpose, pupils must attain a certain level of proficiency appropriate to fulfill both functions.

Generally, literacy is referred to as minimal competency to use Auditing and writing skills to fulfill the demands of daily living and it is a necessity for each and every individuals. Based on this concept, several studies conducted in Malaysia indicated that the literacy level has progressed. A study conducted by Atan Long and colleagues (1983) found that literacy among Malaysian was at 74 percent, i.e., 47 percent Malays, 39 percent Chinese, and 37 percent Indian. A later study conducted by the National Library (1996) found that 93 percent of the Malaysians ages from 10 and above are literate based on consensus of participants who attended formal primary education. This percentage is high compared to a study conducted by UNESCO (1995) that indicated that literacy was

only at 83 %, which is behind Indonesia (93.8 %), Philippines (94.65 %), Singapore (91.1 %) and Thailand (93.8 %). The literacy study conducted by UNESCO primarily focused on Audiing skills rather than writing skills (Mariam, 1997; Awang Had Salleh, 1997).

Data pertaining to literacy involving writing proficiency was conducted by the Penang State Education Department in 2001. Results of the survey indicated that writings skills proficiency was at 86.0 %. In other words, 86.0 % of the primary school pupils in Penang are literate. The schools on the island lead with 88.0 percent, followed by North and Central District schools at 84.5 % and the Southern District at 81.6 %. As such, if the state of Penang UPSR achievement, which normally surpass the national average is to be used as a national indicator for writing proficiency, then many pupils in this country would fall below the minimum level of writing proficiency.

## **2.0 Rationale**

As part of literacy, writing skills according to UNESCO (1980) is regarded as one of the human rights that a country must provide for its citizens. There are very few studies pertaining to functional literacy involving writing skills and this resulted in the incomplete data on the literacy level in Malaysia, primarily in Bahasa Melayu. A study focusing on writing skills is needed to complete previous studies on literacy that primarily focused on Audiing skills so that comparisons can be made with studies done abroad (Purve, 1992). This study findings may be able to close this gap and provide a clearer picture pertaining to communication proficiency among primary school pupils in Malaysia. This generation will be responsible towards the realization of vision 2020 as a developed nation with knowledge acquisition through sophisticated technology and through local expertise. This study also evaluated the KBSR Bahasa Melayu programme in terms of the extent of the programme being able to produce literate pupils, i.e., not only recognition of alphabets and numbers, but also the ability to use knowledge and language skills to solve daily problems in formal and non formal context. Specifically, this study is expected to provide information with regard to pupils' writing skills proficiency in Bahasa Melayu at the national school level.

Writing skills is a very high level of language skill that developed parallel to the brain development of a person. As a language skill, its function is to assist communication and solve various tasks in our daily affairs, which include education, social, and work related tasks. Based on the premise that the main function of language is a communication tool, a study that used communicative models (Hymes, 1972; Canale, 1983; Allen and colleagues, 1983; Bachman, 1990; Hutchinson, 1990) was conducted by a team of researchers from the School of Educational Studies, University Sains Malaysia in 2003. This study funded by the *Fundamental Research Grant Scheme (FRGS)* was conducted to evaluate the writing skills proficiency level in Bahasa Melayu among National Primary school pupils. Data was gathered from samples in Peninsular Malaysia for the purpose of developing a matrix schedule of primary school pupils writing proficiency benchmark from Year Two through Year Six.

### **3.0 Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to determine the proficiency level of Bahasa Melayu writing skills among primary school pupils who have completed six years of the Primary School Integrated Curriculum (KBSR). Two writing skills components, i.e., the basic writing skills and functional writing skills that were emphasized in Level I and Level II of primary school were examined. Within the basic writing skills, pupils were expected to write letters of the alphabets, join letters to form words, phrases, and sentences. Later, these basic skills will then be used to develop ideas and expressions in order to fulfill the communication function through the use of written symbols. Notably, writing skills are critical in our daily lives. Thus, in acquiring knowledge and in the education process, writing skills are basic skills that should be acquired by every pupil right from the start of his or her primary education.

Equipped with this information next is to develop the benchmark level of Year Two to Year Six primary school pupils' writing skills proficiency through the development of two sets of Bahasa Melayu writing proficiency matrix schedules. Consequently, an assessment instrument and a matrix schedule will also be developed to assess these pupils' writing skills. Bahasa Melayu teachers can then utilize these tools in

order to determine their pupils' written achievement level in school-based achievement assessments. The study design includes research and development which is focused towards developing an instrument to collect data pertaining to basic writing and functional writing skills. The data obtained will be analyzed to determine writing skills acquisition benchmark and to develop the writing skills matrix. In order to obtain a valid and reliable instrument, the development of the instrument must be based upon a strong theoretical model in the area of writing and assessment. Primary school pupils from Year Two to Year Six primary school pupils from Peninsular Malaysia schools participated in this study. As such the writing acquisition matrix skills schedule will be for the Peninsular Malaysia primary school pupils.

#### **4.0 Methodology**

The study combines the approaches of quantitative and qualitative methods. This is because both types of data were needed to achieve the purposes of the study. The study of Bahasa Melayu proficiency level and the development of the writing proficiency matrix were developed based on the data collected from writing samples of pupils from the two levels from primary schools in Peninsular Malaysia. The analysis of the data enabled the two sets of matrix schedules to be developed.

#### **4.1 Instrument**

Two primary instruments were used to collect data: a) essay analysis schema and; b) pupils essay.

##### **4.1.2 Essay Analysis Schema**

There were two sets of Essay Analysis Schema. One for Level I and the other for Level II. This is because Level I and Level II. Level I and Level II have different focuses. The writing proficiency list was categorized according to their respective components. For Level I the list consists of: (a) Basic Writing, (b) Discourse, and (c) Grammar. Level II consisted of: (a) Sociolinguistic, (b) Discourse, and (c) Grammar. The primary references to build this schema were the Primary School Bahasa Melayu Syllabus (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2003a) and its Year One to Year Six

Teachers' Guide to the syllabus (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2003b) and the Communicative Models (see Hymes, 1972; Bachman, 1990; Hutchinson, 1990; and Hashim, 2003 & 2005).

Table 1 shows the instrument used for Level I that consists of components, subcomponents, and items for writing proficiency skills in Bahasa Melayu for Year Two and Year Three. In the basic writing component, there are subcomponents for mechanics and early writing, consisting of copying, writing, and build and complete sentences. In the discourse component, there are subcomponents for coherence and cohesion. Coherence is the competency to arrange ideas to develop meaning, while cohesion is the competency to arrange sentences appropriately to developed a complete text. The grammar component consists of subcomponents for mechanics, morphology, and syntax which is the competency to select and used the correct punctuations and language structures for communication purposes. The entire analysis schemas for Level I contains 33 items.

Table 1: Instrument Content for Level I

Component/ Subcomponent	Proficiency
<b>(a) Mechanics</b>	
<i>Copying</i>	1. Copying words
	2. Copying simple sentences
	3. Copying paragraphs
<i>Writing</i>	4. Writing simple words
	5. Writing simple statements from stimulating materials
	6. Writing simple information
<i>Build-Complete</i>	7. Developing and writing of words that have diphthong
	8. Developing and writing of words that have compounding vocal
	9. Developing and writing of words that have compounding consonant
	10. Developing and writing simple words
	11. Developing sentences from given words
	12. Completing sentences using phrases
	13. Completing sentences using proverbs
	14. Using correct punctuation
<b>(b) Discourse</b>	
<i>Coherence</i>	15. Arrange and writing of sentences according to a series of pictures
	16. Arrange paragraphs according to idea sequence
	17. Developing and writing topic sentences and elaboration of sentences
	18. Completing stories/Discourse
<i>Cohesion</i>	19. Developing cohesion using appropriate suffix and prefix
	20. Developing cohesion using appropriate words (Repetition of words, synonym, antonym etc.,)
	21. Using appropriate discourse markers
	22. Developing a complete discourse for essay
<b>© Grammar</b>	
<i>Mechanics</i>	23. Using Malay Language spelling system correctly
	24. Using appropriate punctuation
	25. Using lower/upper case correctly
<i>Morphology</i>	26. Using appropriate vocabulary
	27. Selecting and using of words correctly
	28. Using prefix and suffix correctly
	29. Using phrase correctly
	30. Using appropriate language register
<i>Syntax</i>	31. Using correct sentence structure (complete)
	32. Developing clear meaning sentences
	33. Using various types of sentences

Table 2 shows the contents of the instrument used for Level II that contains components, subcomponents, and proficiency items for Year Four, Year Five, and Year Six. The focus of Level II is to strengthen the writing skills and its usage for the communicative function. The sociolinguistic component consists of intention and audience, discourse component which includes relationship and continuity, and grammar components which consists of the mechanics subcomponent, morphology, and syntax. Overall, the Level II schema contains 31 items on writing proficiency.

Table 2: Instrument Content for Level II

Component/ Subcomponent	Proficiency
a) Sociolinguistic	
<i>Intention</i>	1. Essay writing based on information/Audier/writer
	2. Produce information based on context and situation
	3. Explaining main idea and supporting ideas
	4. Persuade Audiers' elaboration
	5. Develop Audier's feeling/experience
<i>Audience</i>	6. Use of appropriate pronouns in public
	7. Understand public background
	8. Interaction with Audier
b) Discourse	
<i>Coherence</i>	9. Possess control idea
	10. Develop idea based on cause and effect relationship
	11. Proposed issues based on topics
	12. Develop idea based on control idea
	13. Use of correct writing style
<i>Cohesion</i>	14. Making the conclusion based on the topic
	15. Develop cohesion using the correct joint word
	16. Develop cohesion using appropriate words (repeated words, synonym, antonym etc)
	17. Use of appropriate discourse indicator
	18. Develop a perfect discourse for essay
c) Grammar	
<i>Mechanics</i>	19. Use of correct Bahasa Melayu spelling system
	20. Use of correct punctuation
	21. Use of correct small and upper case
	22. Making proper essay paragraphs
	23. Use of correct essay format
<i>Morphology</i>	24. Use of broad vocabulary
	25. Use of correct words
	26. Use of correct prefix/suffix
	27. Use of correct sentences/sayings
	28. Use of sentence that has the correct language register
<i>Syntax</i>	29. Use of sentence that has the correct structure (complete)
	30. Develop sentences that have clear meaning
	31. Uses various type words in a discourse

Both versions of the instrument used the 5-point Likert Scale to assess the acquisition of writing proficiency in Bahasa Melayu. The value of the scale is as follows:

- 1 = Extremely Weak
- 2 = Weak
- 3 = Average
- 4 = Good
- 5 = Very Good

A pilot study was conducted to test both versions of the instrument. 50 Year Three pupils and 50 Year Six pupils of a school in the Kuala Muda District, in Kedah participated in the pilot study. Results indicate that both versions of the instrument have very high reliability values of overall alpha value of .99.



### **4.1.3 Essay Questions**

Two sets of essay questions were used for each level to generate a response in terms of essays. These essays were analysed using the essay analysis schema in the attempt to collect data pertaining to writing proficiency of each pupil. Pupils were given one and half hours to complete the tasks (see Caudery, 1990; Weir, 1993). The Level I question paper consisted of questions that require pupil to arrange pictures based on the sequence of stories; complete sentences based on the given picture, arrange and copy paragraph to complete an essay; and write an essay based on a given topic with a minimum of 60 words. While Level II paper consisted of questions that required pupils to write two essays, i.e., descriptive and imaginative essays of about 100 words each.

The development of questions for this study was done based on Weir's (1993) ideas that specified—task to collect writing proficiency data needed discourse process and the development of the essay must depict actual situation. Both sets of questions for Level I and Level II were been referred to four experienced teachers that have taught Bahasa Melayu in national schools. Feedbacks from these teachers were used to refine the essay questions prior to the actual study.

## **4.2 Samples**

Data for this study were the essays generated by the pupils in the primary school, i.e., pupils in Year Two and Three (Level I) and pupils in Year Four, Five, and Six (Level II). These pupils have gone through the experience of learning Bahasa Melayu for at least a year and have been verified by their teachers that they were able to recognize alphabets and had early writing skills. The samples represent population in Peninsular Malaysia. The samples were taken from national schools in the urban and rural categories of the respective zones. The zones were Northern (Perlis, Kedah, Pulau Pinang and Perak), Central Zone (Selangor, Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya, and Negeri Sembilan). Southern zone (Melaka and Johor) and Earthern Zone (Kelantan, Trengganu, and Pahang). Data collection was conducted from 4<sup>th</sup> April 2004 to 8<sup>th</sup> May 2004. Overall, a total of 1,932 of Level I essays and 3,019 essays from the Level II were successfully collected.

### **4.3 Essay Grading**

Grading of essays for Level I and II were carried out by two teams of raters. Each team consists of five experienced Bahasa Melayu teachers who were also UPSR essay papers graders with at least five years experience. On the 18<sup>th</sup> of May 2005 these raters attended a briefing and training session and were introduced to and attempted the grading using the essay analysis schema. After the session on the usage of the schema calibration of grading of essays, the raters were given a month to complete the grading tasks. The essays were categorised according to school and year and each rater were given approximately 1,000 essays to grade. Two raters graded each essay sample and the entire grading process was completed on July 16, 2005.

### **5.0 Data Analysis**

Essays from both levels were firstly quantitatively analysed before giving quantitative grading. The first set consisted 1,932 of Level I essays and the second set consisted of 3,019 Level II essays. The two data sets provided mean scores to reflect the level of Bahasa Melayu writing skills proficiency among national type primary school pupils.

#### **5.1 Sample Demographic Information**

There was a total of 4951 essays altogether which came from 1,932 Level I pupils and 3,019 pupils Level II pupils. participated in this study. The pupils who participated in this study were fairly distributed from the urban and rural schools. Similarly, there was also fairly good gender mixed as well. Special attention was paid to this aspect in order to reflect the actual population in our school system.

**Table 3: Distribution of Level I Samples According to Year of Schooling, Gender, and School Location**

Year of Schooling	Gender	School Location		Total
		Urban	Rural	
Year 2	Male	230	222	452
	Female	224	293	517
	Total	454	515	969
Year 3	Male	241	256	497
	Female	209	257	466
	Total	450	513	963
Total	Male	471	478	949
	Female	433	550	983

Table 3 provides information pertaining to samples for Level I. Their distribution is given according to their year of schooling, gender, and school location. As shown, they were a total 904 samples from urban schools and 1025 samples from rural schools. Comparatively, the number of samples from rural schools was slightly higher than urban schools. In terms of gender, the samples were fairly distributed as there were 949 male samples and 983 female samples.

**Table 4: Distribution of Level I Samples According to School Location**

Location	Urban		Rural		Overall	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Overall	471	433	478	550	949	983
North	102	99	114	121	216	220
Central	109	88	129	164	238	252
South	152	107	135	114	287	221
East	108	139	100	151	208	290

Table 4 shows the distribution of Level I samples according to school locations. As can be seen from the table samples were fairly distributed according to their zones with exception of the Northern region. As indicated in the table, the zone with the highest number of samples was from the Southern Zone (n=508), followed by the Eastern Zone (498), Central Zone (490), and Northern Zone (436).

**Table 5: Distribution of Level II Samples According to School Year, Gender, and School Location**

School Year	Gender	School Location		Total
		Urban	Rural	
Year 4	Male	205	189	394
	Female	255	357	612
	Total	460	546	1006
Year 5	Male	181	254	435
	Female	273	285	558
	Total	454	539	993
Year 6	Male	216	252	468
	Female	245	307	552
	Total	461	559	1020
Total	Male	602	695	1297
	Female	773	949	1722

Table 5 provides information pertaining to samples for Level II. Their distribution according to their schooling year, gender, and school location. As shown, they were a total 1375 samples from urban schools and 1640 samples from rural schools. The number of samples from rural schools were higher than urban schools. In terms of gender, there were also more female ( $n= 1722$ ) than male samples ( $n=1297$ ).

**Table 6: Distribution of Level I Samples According to Location**

Location	Urban		Rural		Overall	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Female	Male
Overall	463	663	560	820	1483	1023
North	98	205	105	323	528	202
Central	151	167	221	222	389	372
South	57	69	76	60	129	133
East	222	157	215	158	437	315

Table 6 shows the distribution of Level II samples according to their school locations. Apparently, samples were fairly distributed according to their zones with the exception of Southern Zone. As indicated in the table, the zone with the highest number

of samples was Central Zone (n=761), This was followed by Eastern Zone (n=752), Northern Zone (n=730), and Southern Zone (n=262).

## **5.2 Reliability of Essay Analysis Schema**

The reliability of both instruments used to gather the Bahasa Melayu writing proficiency for Primary school Level I and Level II data were very high. Checks for the reliability of the instruments include looking into the internal consistency based on reliability of item-total, and the schema correlation with its components for Year 3 and Year 6 essay samples.

### **5.2.1 Item-Total Reliability of Essay Schema Analysis**

The reliability of item-total and the analysis of the schema for Level I essay as shown in table 7 was based on its 33 items distribution. Mean scores were between 2.10 to 3.57, while the standard deviation were between .69 to 1.0.

**Table 7: Item-Total Reliability of Bahasa Melayu Essay Schema Analysis  
Level 1 Version (Year 3)**

No.	Component	Sub-component	Item	Mean	Standard deviation	Corrected item-total correlation	Alpha if item eliminated	Reliability of sub-component	Reliability of component	Reliability of essay schema analysis
1.	Basic writing	Copying	Copy1	3.52	.81	.89	.99	.95	.98	.99
			Copy2	3.52	.83	.91	.99			
			Copy3	3.33	.88	.85	.99			
		Writing	Write 4	3.57	.87	.89	.99	.96		
			Write5	3.36	.98	.89	.99			
			Write6	3.26	.96	.90	.99			
		Build-Complete	Develop7	2.55	.79	.89	.99	.95		
			Develop8	2.45	.84	.89	.99			
			Develop9	2.38	.84	.90	.99			
			Develop10	3.05	1.02	.91	.99			
			Develop11	3.01	1.03	.91	.99			
			Develop12	2.64	.95	.90	.99			
			Develop13	2.53	.69	.33	.99			
			Develop14	3.12	.92	.88	.99			
2.	Discourse	Coherence	Cohe15	3.26	1.06	.63	.99	.91	.97	
			Cohe16	2.96	1.04	.82	.99			
			Cohe17	2.38	.94	.92	.99			
			Cohe18	2.37	.93	.92	.99			
		Cohesion	Cohes19	2.56	.99	.90	.99	.97		
			Cohes20	2.40	.95	.90	.99			
			Cohes21	2.34	.98	.92	.99			
			Cohes22	2.14	.93	.92	.99			
			Mech23	3.20	.85	.86	.99			.93
			Mech24	3.08	.93	.87	.99			
Mech25	3.18	.96	.85	.99						
3.	Grammar	Mechanics	Morpho26	2.94	.93	.90	.99	.97	.98	
			Morpho27	2.87	.94	.91	.99			
			Morpho28	3.11	.92	.89	.99			
		Morpho29	2.45	.90	.91	.99				
		Morpho30	2.36	.96	.92	.99				
		Synt31	2.44	1.02	.93	.99	.96			
		Synt32	2.44	1.05	.93	.99				
		Synt33	2.10	.90	.90	.99				

The schema alpha value was also found to be high, i.e., .99, while the alpha value for each component and subcomponent were high, i.e. between .97 and .98 for discourse, basic writing, and grammar, and between .91 to .97 for the subcomponents schema. The highest alpha value for the basic writing component and grammar was .98. While all other schema subcomponents recorded alpha values between .91, (lowest for coherence) and .97 the (highest for cohesion) in the discourse component, and morphology in the grammar components. Two writing proficiency items, i.e., Develop13 (complete sentences using proverbs) in the basic writing component have a item-total correlation which is rather low (.33) and Cohe15 (arrange and write appropriate sentences according to a series of pictures) in the discourse component indicated reasonable correlation (.63).

The existence of both low and reasonable correlation values did not affect the reliability of the subcomponents which had a relatively high correlation.

Reliability of the essay schema analysis version for Level II (Year Six) is shown in Table 8. Based on the item distribution totaling 31, the mean score for its items were between 3.18 to 4.02, while the standard deviation is between .93 to 1.17.

Schema reliability coefficient was high with an alpha value of .99 with each component, i.e., sociolinguistic, discourse, and grammar having a value exceeding .95. The total writing proficiency item correlations, ranges from the lowest alpha value of .85 to the highest .93. The high correlation of all items have contributed to the high reliability for each schema subcomponent.

**Table 8: Item-Total Reliability of Bahasa Melayu Essay Schema Analysis Level II Version (Year 6)**

No.	Component	Sub-component	Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	Corrected item-total correlation	Alpha if item eliminated	Reliability of sub-component	Reliability of component	Reliability of essay schema analysis						
1.	Socio-Linguistic	Intention	Inte1	3.64	1.02	.92	.99	.98	.98							
			Inte2	3.59	1.08	.93	.99									
			Inte3	3.63	1.11	.93	.99									
			Inte4	3.54	1.10	.93	.99									
			Inte5	3.51	1.09	.92	.99									
		Audience	Audi6	3.35	1.08	.90	.99	.97								
			Audi7	3.36	1.05	.90	.99									
			Audi8	3.35	1.05	.91	.99									
2.	Discourse	Coherence	Cohe9	3.96	1.06	.92	.99	.97	.98	.99						
			Cohe10	3.44	1.13	.89	.99									
			Cohe11	3.71	1.11	.91	.99									
			Cohe12	3.70	1.10	.93	.99									
			Cohe13	3.66	1.14	.92	.99									
			Cohe14	3.42	1.17	.91	.99									
			Cohesion	Cohes15	3.54	1.10	.91				.99	.95				
		Cohes16		3.34	1.04	.89	.99									
		Cohes17		3.22	1.04	.87	.99									
		Cohes18		3.43	1.04	.90	.99									
		3.		Grammar	Mechanics	Mech19	3.65	.95			.86		.99	.95	.98	
						Mech20	3.87	1.05			.87		.99			
						Mech21	3.89	1.09			.87		.99			
			Mech22			4.02	1.15	.85			.99					
Mech23	3.87		1.17			.86	.99									
Morphology	Morpho24		3.65		1.12	.89	.99	.96								
	Morpho25		3.74		1.10	.90	.99									
	Morpho26	3.67	1.09	.91	.99											
	Morpho27	3.52	1.16	.88	.99											
Syntax	Morpho28	3.64	1.11	.91	.99	.96										
	Synt29	3.60	1.11	.89	.99											
	Synt30	3.32	.95	.89	.99											
	Synt31	3.18	.93	.92	.99											

### 5.2.2 Correlation of Essay Schema Analysis and Its Components

Correlation between Level I (Year Three) schema and its components are shown in Table 9. It was found that the schema that has a high and significant correlation among its components was basic writing, discourse, and grammar with alpha value exceeding .97. Correlation among components is also high and significant, however a little lower compared to reliability coefficient were basic writing and discourse (.92), basic writing and grammar (.93), and discourse and grammar (.94). Overall, the schema has internal validity and discriminant validity that proves the validity of the instrument construct (Crocker and Algina, 1986; Anastasi, 1988).

**Table 9: Item-Total Reliability of Essay Schema Analysis for Level I (Year 3) with its Components**

	SCHEMA	BASIC WRITING	DISCOURSE	GRAMMAR
SCHEMA	1.00	.98**	.97**	.98**
BASIC WRITING	.98**	1.00	.92**	.93**
DISCOURSE	.97**	.92**	1.00	.94**
GRAMMAR	.98**	.93**	.94**	1.00

\*\* Significant at 0.01 level (one-tail)

Correlation between the essay schema for the Level II version (Year 6) and its components are shown in Table 10. It was found that the schema has a high and significant correlation among its components, i.e., basic writing, discourse, and grammar with alpha value exceeding .97. Correlation among components is also high and significant, however slightly lower compared to the reliability coefficient, i.e., sociolinguistic and discourse (.95), sociolinguistic and grammar (.92), and discourse and grammar (.95). Overall, the schema has internal validity and difference validity that provided the validity of instrument construct (Crocker and Algina, 1986; Anastasi, 1988).



**Table 10: Item-Total Reliability of Essay Schema Analysis for Level I (Year 6) with Its Components**

	SCHEMA	SOCIOLINGUISTIC	DISCOURSE	GRAMMAR
SCHEMA	1.00	.97**	.98**	.98**
SOCIOLINGUISTIC	.97**	1.00	.95**	.92**
DISCOURSE	.98**	.95**	1.00	.95**
GRAMMAR	.98**	.92**	.95**	1.00

**\*\*.** Significant at 0.01 level (one-tail)

Statistical analysis of item-total validity and schema correlation of components indicated high validity for both essay analysis schema. The Level I version of the instrument has an alpha value of .99, while Level II version also has an alpha value of .99. High validity coefficients for both instruments were the result of high validity of each subcomponent and this contributed directly to the increased the validity value of its components. As such the level I instrument overall high item-total correlation does not require the elimination of item B13 (complete sentences using proverbs) which was relatively weak to increase the alpha value. However, this is turn reflected existence of internal consistency. The Level II version of the instrument also indicated high validity that reflected internal consistency.

Internal consistencies for both instruments were further validated by the results of schema analysis correlation and components. The Level I version instrument internal validity coefficient was high, i.e., basic writing (.98), discourse (.97) and grammar (.98). The Level II instrument was also high, i.e., sociolinguistic (.97), discourse (.98) and grammar (.98). The high schema correlation with each component suggested that there was an overall instrument internal consistency (Anastasi, 1988).

In addition, correlation was also high within instrument component for both versions. The correlation between Level I basic writing and discourse is .92, basic writing and grammar is .93, discourse and grammar is .94, while the correlation between Level II, sociolinguistic correlation with discourse is .95, sociolinguistic and grammar is

.92, discourse and grammar is .95. This was a high correlation between instrument components for both versions which indicated that there is a strong relationship within components and this suggest that the construct, i.e. writing skills for Level I and Level II in the national primary schools. This phenomenon reflected that there is a concurrent validity in the instruments and as such reflected unitary construct validity existed (Messicks, 1993 & 1994).

### **5.3 Writing Proficiency Level**

The first part of this section summarizes the proficiency level of Bahasa Melayu writing skills among primary school pupils in terms of their year of schooling, school location, region, gender and the item components that were tested. The second part summarizes the effect sizes in terms of pupils' year schooling, school location, and respondents gender.

#### **5.3.1 Mean Analysis**

Pupils were graded by means of a Likert-scale in which 1 = Very Weak; and 5 = Very Good. The overall mean score of pupils in Level I was 2.51. Evidently, as shown in Tables 11, pupils in Level I were somewhat average in terms of their writing skills proficiency level. Apparently, females ( $m = 2.63$ ) performed slightly better than males ( $m = 2.42$ ) in all aspects of the writing skills proficiency items that were tested. It was also apparent that urban pupils ( $m = 2.76$ ) and Year Three pupils ( $m = 2.85$ ) performed better than rural ( $m = 2.23$ ) and Year Two pupils ( $m = 2.21$ ) respectively. In terms of regions, apparently the Northern states schools led the other regions with the average mean score of 2.64, followed by the Southern states, Central states and Eastern states with the average mean scores of 2.57, 2.46 and 2.34 respectively.

Table 11: Overall Level I Mean Scores for Various Writing Skills

Item	Overall	Year		Location		Region				Gender	
		2	3	Urban	Rural	North	Central	South	East	Male	Female
Basic Writing – Copying	2.87	2.45	3.29	3.06	2.70	3.06	2.86	2.83	2.75	2.77	2.97
Basic Writing – Writing	2.81	2.49	3.13	3.00	2.64	3.03	2.89	2.70	2.64	2.68	2.93
Basic Writing – Building and Completing	NA	NA	2.78	NA	2.26	2.59	2.34	NA	2.47	NA	2.53
Discourse – Relationship and Coherence	2.57	2.23	2.91	2.82	2.35	2.58	2.46	2.66	2.58	2.47	2.66
Discourse – Connection and Cohesion	2.12	1.67	2.57	2.32	1.94	2.22	1.98	2.01	2.27	2.02	2.21
Grammar – Mechanics	2.68	2.40	2.96	2.91	2.47	2.85	2.63	2.75	2.50	2.54	2.81
Grammar – Morphology	2.56	2.33	2.78	2.82	2.32	2.63	2.52	2.65	2.44	2.42	2.69
Grammar – Syntax	2.20	1.93	2.48	2.43	2.00	2.25	2.08	2.82	2.20	2.09	2.32
Writing – Build/Complete	2.16	NA	3.07	NA	2.53	2.89	2.70	NA	2.62	NA	2.81
Discourse – Relationship and Connection	2.35	1.95	2.74	2.57	2.15	2.41	2.22	2.34	2.43	2.26	2.43
Grammar – Mechanics, Morphology and Syntax	2.48	2.22	2.74	2.72	2.27	2.58	2.41	2.56	2.38	2.35	2.60
Basic Writing – Copying (Repeat)	2.92	2.59	3.24	3.13	2.73	3.12	2.84	2.85	2.89	2.82	3.01
Basic Writing – Writing (Repeat)	2.82	2.60	3.03	3.03	2.62	2.99	2.86	2.72	2.72	2.69	2.93
Basic Writing – Building and Completing (Repeat)	2.52	2.18	2.83	2.77	2.29	2.68	2.37	2.48	2.55	2.43	2.60
Discourse – Relationship and Coherence (Repeat)	2.61	2.29	2.94	2.90	2.36	2.64	2.47	2.71	2.63	2.54	2.68
Discourse – Connection and Cohesion (Repeat)	2.10	1.60	2.59	2.31	1.90	2.16	1.97	2.04	2.22	2.02	2.17
Grammar – Mechanics (Repeat)	2.69	2.46	2.93	2.95	2.47	2.84	2.65	2.80	2.51	2.55	2.83
Grammar – Morphology (Repeat)	2.56	2.33	2.78	2.82	2.32	2.62	2.52	2.65	2.44	2.42	2.67
Grammar – Syntax (Repeat)	2.19	1.86	2.51	2.41	1.99	2.17	2.10	2.30	2.16	2.08	2.29
Basic Writing (Repeat)	2.75	2.46	3.04	2.98	2.55	2.93	2.69	2.68	2.73	2.65	2.85
Discourse (Repeat)	2.36	1.95	2.77	2.61	2.14	2.40	2.22	2.37	2.43	2.28	2.43
Grammar (Repeat)	2.48	2.22	2.74	2.73	2.26	2.54	2.42	2.58	2.37	2.35	2.60
Mean (Average)	2.51	2.21	2.85	2.76	2.23	2.64	2.46	2.57	2.34	2.42	2.63

The overall mean score of pupils in Level II was 3.08. Evidently, as shown in Tables 12, pupils in Level II could be considered in the average category of the scale in terms of their writing skills proficiency level. Similar to Level 1 trends, it appears that females ( $m = 3.40$ ) tend to perform better than males ( $m = 3.02$ ) in all aspects of the writing skills proficiency items that were tested. A Similar trend was also found in terms of location. Urban pupils ( $m = 3.34$ ) tend to perform better than rural pupils ( $m = 2.87$ ). As expected, Year Six pupils ( $m = 3.58$ ) tend to perform better than Year Five ( $m = 2.94$ ) and Year Four pupils ( $m = 2.71$ ). In terms of regions, apparently Northern states led the other regions with the average mean score of 3.13, followed by Southern states, Eastern states and Central states with the average mean scores of 3.06, 3.00 and 2.93 respectively.

**Table 12: Overall Level II Mean Scores for Various Writing Skills**

Item	Overall	Year			Location		Region				Gender	
		4	5	6	Urban	Rural	North	Central	South	East	Male	Female
Sociolinguistic – Intention	3.21	2.80	3.06	3.75	3.44	3.01	3.27	2.98	3.09	3.23	2.99	3.37
Sociolinguistic – Audience	2.98	2.71	2.89	3.32	3.22	2.77	3.04	2.77	2.87	2.89	2.76	3.14
Discourse – Relationship (Coherence)	3.12	2.66	2.98	3.71	3.53	2.93	3.17	2.91	2.97	3.12	2.92	3.27
Discourse – Connection (Cohesion)	2.95	2.64	2.76	3.43	3.19	2.74	2.97	2.76	2.74	2.94	2.75	3.09
Grammar - Mechanics	3.09	2.53	2.87	3.84	3.33	2.88	3.19	2.83	2.93	3.06	2.87	3.25
Grammar – Morphology	3.04	2.69	2.88	3.55	3.27	2.85	3.08	2.86	2.89	2.94	2.85	3.19
Grammar – Syntax	2.80	2.47	2.63	3.26	3.03	2.59	2.80	2.55	2.75	2.76	2.61	2.93
Sociolinguistic – Intention (Repeat)	3.30	2.94	3.21	3.73	3.56	3.08	3.30	3.14	3.23	3.28	3.08	3.45
Sociolinguistic – Audience (Repeat)	3.02	2.90	2.79	3.38	3.29	2.80	3.03	2.82	2.94	2.92	2.80	3.19
Discourse – Relationship (Coherence Repeat)	3.25	2.86	3.18	3.70	3.51	3.03	3.22	3.11	3.15	3.20	3.04	3.40
Discourse – Connection (Cohesion Repeat)	3.05	2.76	2.91	3.49	3.31	2.84	3.00	2.88	3.06	2.99	2.84	3.22
Grammar – Mechanics (Repeat)	3.22	2.60	3.02	4.00	3.50	2.98	3.21	3.02	3.08	3.14	3.01	3.37
Grammar – Morphology (Repeat)	3.16	2.85	3.05	3.56	3.42	2.94	3.15	2.98	3.11	3.05	2.94	3.32
Grammar – Syntax (Repeat)	3.00	2.56	2.89	3.53	3.27	2.77	3.03	2.78	3.00	2.83	2.79	3.15
Sociolinguistic – Initial Test	3.09	2.76	2.97	3.53	3.33	2.89	3.15	2.88	2.98	3.06	2.88	3.25
Discourse – Initial Test	3.03	2.65	2.87	3.57	3.27	2.83	3.07	2.84	2.85	3.03	2.83	3.18
Grammar – Initial Test	2.97	2.56	2.97	3.55	3.21	2.77	3.03	2.75	2.85	2.92	2.78	3.12
Sociolinguistic – Repeated Test	3.16	2.92	3.00	3.55	3.43	2.94	3.16	2.98	3.09	3.10	2.94	3.33
Discourse – Repeated Test	3.15	2.81	3.04	3.59	3.41	2.93	3.11	2.99	3.11	3.10	2.94	3.31
Grammar – Repeated Test	3.12	2.67	2.99	3.70	3.39	2.90	3.13	2.93	3.06	3.00	2.92	3.28
Mean (Average)	3.08	2.71	2.94	3.58	3.34	2.87	3.10	2.88	2.98	3.02	3.02	3.40

Pupils' performance according to the respective categories that were tested was also examined. As shown in Table 13, for Level I Basic Writing, the average mean score was 2.69. The average mean score for Discourse was 2.48 and the average mean score for Grammar was 2.48. For Level II as can be seen in Tables 14, the average mean score for Sociolinguistic was 3.12 and Discourse was at 3.08. The average mean score for Grammar was 3.05.

**Table 13: Overall Level 1 Mean Scores for Various Categories**

Category	Average Mean Score
Basic Writing	2.69
Discourse	2.35
Grammar	2.48

Table 13 shows the mean distribution for categories for level I. Apparently, the findings indicated that pupils fair slightly better in basic writing category compared to grammar and discourse.

Table 14: Overall Level II Mean Scores for Various Categories

Category	Average Mean Score
Sociolinguistic	3.12
Discourse	3.08
Grammar	3.05

Table 14 shows the mean distribution for various categories for Level II. Findings indicated that pupils fair slightly better in sociolinguistic category compared to discourse and grammar.

### 5.3 Interrater Realibity

In spite of the high content validity, it is important to examine interater reliability in terms of the raters' agreement as well as raters' consistency when grading the respective essay scripts. Table 15 indicates the interrater reliability for the main construct as well as its subconstructs. It was found that the interrater value was above .90. Findings from the study indicated that there is agreement and consistency among the raters and this ensure interater reliability.

Table 15: Interrater Reliability for Level I and Level II

Main Construct	Level 1		Main Construct	Level 2	
	Construct	Correlation		Construct	Correlation
Mechanics	Copying	.881	Sociolinguistic	Intention	.942
	Writing	.954		Audience	.939
	Build-Comp	.908			.914
Discourse		.875	Discourse		.948
		.963		Coherence	.939
	Coherence	.958		Cohesion	.927
Grammar	Cohesion	.948	Grammar		.950
		.956		Mechanics	.939
	Mechanics	.953		Morphology	.933
	Morphology	.938		Syntax	.916
	Syntax	.921			
Overall		.962	Overall		.959

## 5.5 Factor Analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis of the content of the instruments for Level 1 and Level II were conducted utilizing the KMO criteria (see Appendix XX). The items for Level I and Level II were loaded into three main constructs; mechanics, discourse and; grammar. Overall, the factor analysis values according to KMO criteria were high. Generally the KMO criteria values on the three loaded factors for Level I and Level II were .981 and .987 respectively. While the variance for Level I and Level II were 79.05 % and 87.78 % respectively.

## 5.6 Effect Size Analysis

As reflected in the objectives, it was not the intention of this study to examine nor report the circumstances that may lead to the proficiency writing skills levels of the pupils. Rather the main intention of this study was to develop a national matrix schedule for Bahasa Melayu proficiency level. As such report the effect size as suggested by Cohen (1988) to indicate pupils' performance. Cohen suggestion that the most common interpretation of effect size is as follows:

- 0.0 to 0.2: trivial effect size
- 0.2 to 0.5: small effect size
- 0.5 to 0.8: moderate effect size
- 0.8 and above: strong effect size

### 5.6.1 Level I Effect Size Analysis

With reference to Level I pupils, Table 16 indicated there were moderate to strong effect size changes in all the items tested among Year Three and Year Two pupils. Apparently, overall size change between Year Three and Year Two pupils was moderate (0.742). Evidently, there were effect changes from small to moderate between the urban and rural pupils. The overall size change between urban and rural pupils was small (0.453). In terms of gender, there were effect changes from trivial to small among female and male pupils. Overall effect size change between female and male pupils was small (0.230).

Table 16: Level I Effect Size for Various Writing Skills

Item	Effect Size	Effect Size	Effect Size
	Year 3 and Year 2	Urban and Rural	Female and Male
Basic Writing – Copying	0.843	0.333	0.198
Basic Writing – Writing	0.633	0.277	0.247
Basic Writing – Building and Completing	NA	NA	NA
Discourse – Relationship and Coherence	0.763	0.492	0.186
Discourse – Connection and Cohesion	1.188	0.414	0.216
Grammar – Mechanics	0.571	0.429	0.283
Grammar – Morphology	0.425	0.492	0.281
Grammar – Syntax	0.721	0.487	0.281
Writing – Build/Complete	0.723	NA	NA
Discourse – Relationship and Connection	1.018	0.468	0.210
Grammar – Mechanics, Morphology and Syntax	0.615	0.487	0.294
Basic Writing – Copying (Repeat)	0.402	0.382	0.202
Basic Writing – Writing (Repeat)	0.778	0.399	0.204
Basic Writing – Building and Completing (Repeat)	0.682	0.536	0.192
Discourse – Relationship and Coherence (Repeat)	1.467	0.566	0.154
Discourse – Connection and Cohesion (Repeat)	0.429	0.475	0.170
Grammar – Mechanics (Repeat)	0.425	0.474	0.276
Grammar – Morphology (Repeat)	0.929	0.346	0.281
Grammar – Syntax (Repeat)	0.602	0.500	0.251
Basic Writing (Repeat)	1.063	0.451	0.221
Discourse (Repeat)	0.559	0.540	0.168
Grammar (Repeat)	NA	0.502	0.279
Average	0.742	0.453	0.230

## 5.6.2 Level II Effect Size Analysis

Table 17, reflected similar trends found in Level I. Year six pupils' effect size changes were from small, moderate to strong in comparison to Year Four and Five pupils respectively. Overall effect size change between Year Six and Year Five was moderate (0.539), between Year Six and Year Four was strong (0.854) and Year Five and Year Four was small (0.233). School location and gender also indicated effect size changes from trivial to small. In terms of location, between urban and rural the overall effect size change was small (0.233). Overall, there was a small effect size change (0.320) between female and male pupils.

Table 17: Level II Effect Size for Various Writing Skills

Item	Effect Size			Effect Size	
	Year 6 and Year 5	Year 6 and Year 4	Year 5 and Year 4	Urban and Rural	Female and Male
Sociolinguistic – Intention	0.603	1.043	0.284	0.391	0.357
Sociolinguistic – Audience	0.382	0.640	0.186	0.437	0.366
Discourse – Relationship (Coherence)	0.652	1.187	0.360	0.391	0.338
Discourse – Connection (Cohesion)	0.609	0.894	0.135	0.451	0.344
Grammar – Mechanics	0.859	1.447	0.379	0.398	0.201
Grammar – Morphology	0.592	0.958	0.212	0.393	0.328
Grammar – Syntax	0.587	0.942	0.194	0.437	0.326
Sociolinguistic – Intention (Repeat)	0.444	0.754	0.255	0.428	0.348
Sociolinguistic – Audience (Repeat)	0.512	0.444	0.100	0.450	0.373
Discourse – Relationship (Coherence Repeat)	0.443	0.793	0.301	0.425	0.339
Discourse – Connection (Cohesion Repeat)	0.493	0.678	0.146	0.431	0.353
Grammar – Mechanics (Repeat)	0.788	1.237	0.737	0.406	0.289
Grammar – Morphology (Repeat)	0.428	0.669	0.193	0.428	0.348
Grammar – Syntax (Repeat)	0.537	0.907	0.311	0.421	0.324
Sociolinguistic – Initial Test	0.498	0.842	0.236	0.420	0.368
Discourse – Initial Test	0.636	1.051	0.250	0.424	0.344
Grammar – Initial Test	0.693	1.146	0.166	0.417	0.340
Sociolinguistic – Repeated Test	0.484	0.599	0.077	0.446	0.366
Discourse – Repeated Test	0.473	0.741	0.225	0.436	0.350
Grammar – Repeated Test	0.597	0.966	0.300	0.426	0.326
Average	0.539	0.854	0.233	0.403	0.320

It appears that in all the areas assessed there were small, moderate to strong effect size changes. The effect size changes according to the respective categories that were tested were also examined. For example, for Level I Basic Writing, the average effect size changes were 0.641, 0.396 and 0.211 between Year Three and Year Two pupils,



between urban and rural, and between males and females respectively. The average effect size changes for Discourse were 0.904, 0.493, and 0.184 between Year Three and Year Two pupils, between urban and rural, and between males and females respectively. The effect size changes for Grammar were 0.612, 0.461 and 0.278 between Year Three and Year Two pupils, between urban and rural, and between males and females respectively.

For Level II, the average effect size changes for Sociolinguistic were 0.487, 0.701, 0.334, 0.429 and 0.424 between Year Six and Year Five, Year Six and Year Four, and Year Five and Year Four pupils, between urban and rural, and between males and females respectively. The average effect size changes for Discourse were 0.551, 0.891, 0.236, 0.426 and 0.345 between Year Six and Year Five, Year Six and Year Four, and Year Five and Year Four pupils, between urban and rural, and between males and females respectively. The average effect size changes for Grammar were 0.635, 1.034, 0.312, 0.416 and 0.310 between Year Six and Year Five, Year Six and Year Four, and Year Five and Year Four pupils, between urban and rural, and between males and females respectively.

As reflected in this study through the mean scores as well as the effect size changes, it was evident that female pupils tend to do better than male pupils in writing skills proficiency. It was also evident that urban school pupils tend to do better than their rural counterparts. Finally, as expected, due to content coverage matter, it was apparent that pupils in the higher years of schooling performed better than pupils in the lower years of schooling.

### **5.7 Writing Skills Matrix Schedule**

As a direct result of this study, a simple matrix schedule indicating pupils' proficiency level was developed. This matrix schedule may be able to provide some form of information pertaining to pupils' writing proficiency levels as a frame of reference. Specifically, Table 13 and Table 14 show the Peninsular Malaysia Level I and Level II

pupils' proficiency levels respectively in terms of their writing skills based on a scale in which 1 = Very Weak, 2 = Weak, 3 = Average, 4 = Good, and 5 = Very Good.

### 5.7.1 Level I Writing Proficiency Matrix Schedule

Table 18 shows the overall Level I Matrix schedule for various writing skills items. As indicated in the previous section, the study findings indicated that pupils fair slightly better in basic writing category compared to grammar and discourse. The table 18 also provides detail information pertaining to pupils' proficiency on various items under each category (basic writing, discourse, and grammar) that were assessed.

Table 18: Overall Level I Matrix Schedule for Various Writing Skills

Item	Overall
Basic Writing – Copying	2.87
Basic Writing – Writing	2.81
Basic Writing – Building and Completing	NA
Discourse – Relationship and Coherence	2.57
Discourse – Connection and Cohesion	2.12
Grammar – Mechanics	2.68
Grammar – Morphology	2.56
Grammar – Syntax	2.20
Writing – Build-Complete	2.16
Discourse – Relationship and Connection	2.35
Grammar – Mechanics, Morphology and Syntax	2.48
Basic Writing – Copying (Repeat)	2.92
Basic Writing – Writing (Repeat)	2.82
Basic Writing – Building and Completing (Repeat)	2.52
Discourse – Relationship and Coherence (Repeat)	2.61
Discourse – Connection and Cohesion (Repeat)	2.10
Grammar – Mechanics (Repeat)	2.69
Grammar – Morphology (Repeat)	2.56
Grammar – Syntax (Repeat)	2.19
Basic Writing (Repeat)	2.75
Discourse (Repeat)	2.36
Grammar (Repeat)	2.48
Mean (Average)	2.51

### 5.7.2 Level II Writing Proficiency Matrix Schedule

Table 19 below shows the overall Level II Matrix schedule for various writing skills items. As indicated in the previous section, our study findings indicated that pupils fair slightly better in sociolinguistic category compared to discourse and grammar. The table below provides a more detail information pertaining to pupils' proficiency on

various items under each category (sociolinguistic, discourse, and grammar) that were assessed.

**Table 19: Overall Level II Matrix Schedule for Various Writing Skills**

Item	Overall
Sociolinguistic – Intention	3.21
Sociolinguistic – Audience	2.98
Discourse – Relationship (Coherence)	3.12
Discourse – Connection (Cohesion)	2.95
Grammar – Mechanics	3.09
Grammar – Morphology	3.04
Grammar – Syntax	2.80
Sociolinguistic – Intention (Repeat)	3.30
Sociolinguistic – Audience (Repeat)	3.02
Discourse – Relationship (Coherence Repeat)	3.25
Discourse – Connection (Cohesion Repeat)	3.05
Grammar – Mechanics (Repeat)	3.22
Grammar – Morphology (Repeat)	3.16
Grammar – Syntax (Repeat)	3.00
Sociolinguistic – Initial Test	3.09
Discourse – Initial Test	3.03
Grammar – Initial Test	2.97
Sociolinguistic – Repeated Test	3.16
Discourse – Repeated Test	3.15
Grammar – Repeated Test	3.12
Mean (Average)	3.08

## 6.0 Summary

Generally, the overall results may not reflect the pupils' actual achievement or ability. For example, in Level I, the pupils that were assessed consist of Year Two and Year Three but in actual fact they have just completed Year One and Year Two. This was due to the fact that these pupils were assessed in the beginning of the year (just in time after they have completed the year prior to their present year of schooling). This scenario was similar for pupils in Level II. Although the year of schooling were Four, Five, and Six, in actual fact, these pupils have just completed Years Three, Four, and Five.

Another issue that we believe needed explanation was pertaining to the regional results. Apparently, northern region pupils performed better than the other regions. There may be have been some form of bias elements may have affected the results. This could be attributed to the fact that the test instruments were developed by Northern region

teachers and piloted in Northern region schools which most likely may have affected the outcomes of the results. However, it came as no surprise that urban schools tend to perform better than rural schools and that girls tend to perform better than boys.

Regardless of the minor technicality issues detected, we believe that with the progress made by this study and the data yielded, may be able to support future policy decisions particularly pertaining to pupils' writing proficiency skills. The findings of this study, as intended, may provide policy makers with a tangible form of reference particularly in terms of matrix schedules that may reflect the level of our nationwide pupils' writing proficiency skills. Since this type of study has never been attempted before, the data yielded and analysed to develop the matrix schedules may be able to provide a reasonable foundation for ongoing use by policy makers, curriculum planners, teachers and parents.

## **7.0 Implication and Recommendation**

In language teaching, particularly a language that is so important in the Malaysian context as reflected in the National Education Philosophy, it is important that all Bahasa Melayu teachers be given reasonable and sufficient information pertaining to their pupils' achievement and performance. It is crucial that teachers have a set of criteria and a set of pupils' grades in each component. Therefore, a matrix schedule that contains this information is no longer a luxury item rather an item that must be provided as a manual. It is important that teachers of this important language which is intended to serve as a language of knowledge, medium of instruction for various subject matter in schools and a language to intergrate the people create their own matrix schedule as a point of reference in order to teachers teach and evaluate more effectively. One of the most unique aspects of this matrix schedule is that it provides important information such as the dimension and scope that is needed in a particular task. In the writing skills alone there are various skills that pupil must master prior to generating a high quality essay. As such teachers must be make to be aware of the problems that pupils may encounter. The matrix schedule could also provide valuable information into the strengths or weaknesses of the students. The matrix schedule could be used by teachers to implement curriculum objectives to ensure better pupils' performance. This study has paid special attention to

the reliability of the instruments, marking system, and raters agreement and consistency. A well-designed instrument followed by effective marking system, and high interater reliability may help teachers to assess pupils effectively. These instruments is useful to provide information about pupils' learning, provide feedback to improve instruction, and most importantly, provide teachers with guidelines and monitoring devices towards better instruction and learning processes.

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APPENDIX 1

SKEMA ANALISIS KARANGAN TAHAP I

Isikan maklumat berikut:					Petak
No. Sampel					1-4
Tahap					5
Tahun/Darjah					6
Jantina					7
Zon					8
Bandar/Luar bandar					9
No. Pemeriksa					10

Arahan: Baca jawapan murid bagi arahan no. 1, 2, 3, dan 4 sebanyak dua kali. Pembacaan pertama adalah bagi mendapat kesan keseluruhan. Pembacaan kedua adalah bagi menilai tahap penguasaan kecekapan menulis oleh murid. Selepas pembacaan kedua, tandakan (✓) bagi jawapan yang paling tepat untuk setiap pernyataan mengikut skala berikut:

- 1 = Sangat lemah
- 2 = Lemah
- 3 = Sederhana
- 4 = Baik
- 5 = Sangat baik

Komponen	Kecekapan	Skala					Petak
		1	2	3	4	5	
<b>(a) Menulis Asas</b>							
<b>Menyalin</b>	34. Menyalin perkataan						11
	35. Menyalin ayat mudah						12
	36. Menyalin perenggan						13
<b>Menulis</b>	37. Menulis perkataan mudah						14
	38. Menulis pernyataan mudah berdasarkan bahan rangsangan						15
	39. Menulis maklumat mudah						16
<b>Bina-lengkapkan</b>	40. Membina dan menulis perkataan yang mengandungi diftong						17
	41. Membina dan menulis perkataan yang mengandungi vokal berganding						18
	42. Membina dan menulis perkataan yang mengandungi konsonan bergabung						19
	43. Membina dan menulis ayat mudah						20
	44. Membina ayat daripada perkataan yang diberi						21
	45. Melengkapkan ayat menggunakan frasa						22
	46. Melengkapkan ayat menggunakan peribahasa						23
	47. Menggunakan tanda baca yang betul						24
<b>(b) Wacana</b>							
<b>Pertalian (Koheren)</b>	48. Menyusun dan menulis ayat yang sesuai mengikut gambar bersiri						25
	49. Menyusun perenggan mengikut urutan idea						26
	50. Membina dan menulis ayat topik dan ayat huraian						27
	51. Melengkapkan cerita/wacana						28
<b>Pertautan (Kohesi)</b>	52. Membina pertautan dengan kata hubung yang sesuai						29
	53. Membina pertautan dengan menggunakan perkataan yang sesuai (pengulangan kata, sinonim, antonim dll)						30
	54. Menggunakan penanda wacana yang sesuai						31
	55. Membina wacana yang sempurna bagi karangan						32
<b>(c) Tatabahasa</b>							
<b>Mekanis</b>	56. Menggunakan sistem ejaan bahasa Melayu dengan betul						33
	57. Menggunakan tanda baca yang sesuai						34
	58. Menggunakan huruf kecil/besar dengan betul						35
<b>Morfologi</b>	59. Menggunakan kosa kata yang sesuai						36
	60. Memilih dan menggunakan kata dengan betul						37
	61. Menggunakan imbuhan dengan betul						38
	62. Menggunakan frasa/ungkapan dengan betul						39
	63. Menggunakan laras bahasa yang sesuai						40
<b>Sintaksis</b>	64. Menggunakan ayat yang betul strukturnya (lengkap)						41
	65. Membina ayat yang jelas maknanya						42
	66. Menggunakan pelbagai ragam ayat dalam wacana						43

## APPENDIX 2

### SKEMA ANALISIS KEMAHIRAN MENULIS TAHAP II

Isikan maklumat berikut:					Petak
No. Sampel					1-4
Tahap					5
Tahun/Darjah					6
Jantina					7
Zon					8
Bandar/Luar bandar					9
No. Pemeriksa					10

**Arahan:** Baca karangan murid dalam Bahagian A dan B sebanyak dua kali. Pembacaan pertama adalah bagi mendapat kesan keseluruhan. Pembacaan kedua adalah bagi menilai tahap penguasaan kecekapan menulis oleh murid. Selepas pembacaan kedua, tandakan (✓) bagi jawapan yang paling tepat untuk setiap pernyataan mengikut skala berikut:

- 1 = Sangat Lemah
- 2 = Lemah
- 3 = Sederhana
- 4 = Baik
- 5 = Sangat baik

Komponen	Kecekapan	Skala					Petak
		1	2	3	4	5	
<b>(a) Sosiolinguistik</b>							
Tujuan	1. Menulis karangan berorientasikan maklumat / pembaca / penulis						11
	2. Menghuraikan maklumat mengikut konteks dan situasi						12
	3. Menjelaskan idea utama dan idea-idea sokongan						13
	4. Memujuk pembaca dalam huraian						14
	5. Melahirkan perasaan/pengalaman penulis						15
Pembaca	6. Menggunakan kata panggilan yang sesuai untuk khalayak						16
	7. Memahami latar belakang khalayak						17
	8. Berinteraksi dengan pembaca						18
<b>(b) Wacana</b>							
Pertalian (koheren)	9. Mempunyai idea kawalan						19
	10. Mengembangkan idea berasaskan hubungan sebab-akibat						20
	11. Mengemukakan isu-isu yang berkaitan dengan tajuk						21
	12. Menghurai idea berdasarkan idea kawalan						22
	13. Menggunakan gaya penulisan yang tepat						23
Pertautan (kohesi)	14. Membuat kesimpulan yang sesuai dengan tajuk						24
	15. Membina pertautan dengan kata hubung yang sesuai						25
	16. Membina pertautan dengan menggunakan perkataan yang sesuai (pengulangan kata, sinonim, antonim dll)						26
	17. Menggunakan penanda wacana yang sesuai						27
	18. Membina wacana yang sempurna bagi karangan						28
<b>(c) Tatabahasa</b>							
Mekanis	19. Menggunakan sistem ejaan bahasa Melayu dengan betul						29
	20. Menggunakan tanda baca yang sesuai						30
	21. Menggunakan huruf kecil/besar dengan betul						31
	22. Memerenggankan karangan dengan rapi						32
	23. Menggunakan format karangan yang betul						33
Morfologi	24. Menggunakan kosa kata yang luas						34
	25. Menggunakan kata dengan betul						35
	26. Menggunakan imbuhan dengan betul						36
	27. Menggunakan rangkai kata/ungkapan dengan betul						37
	28. Menggunakan laras bahasa yang sesuai						38
Sintaksis	29. Menggunakan ayat yang betul strukturnya (lengkap)						39
	30. Membina ayat yang jelas maknanya						40
	31. Menggunakan pelbagai ragam ayat dalam wacana						41

Soalan Karangan Tahap I

NO.

**UJIAN PENULISAN  
BAHASA MELAYU  
SEKOLAH RENDAH**

**TAHAP I**

**MASA: SATU JAM SETENGAH**

Penyelidikan ini dijalankan

*oleh*



Pusat Pengajian Ilmu Pendidikan  
Universiti Sains Malaysia



*dengan kerjasama*



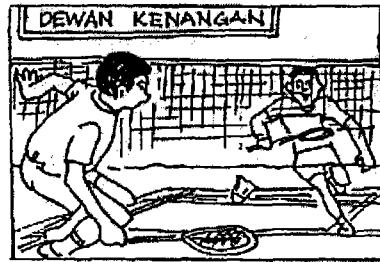
Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia

*di bawah pembiayaan*

**Skim Geran Penyelidikan Fundamental (FRGS)**

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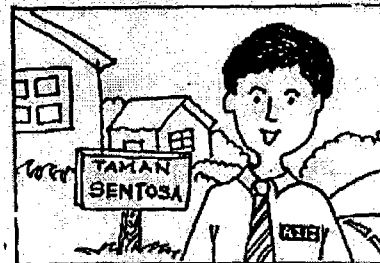
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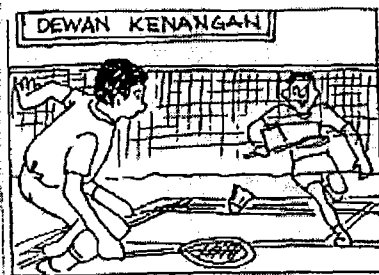


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NO.

2. Lengkapi ayat berdasarkan gambar.



Pada waktu petang, Cikgu \_\_\_\_\_

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Dia bermain dengan \_\_\_\_\_

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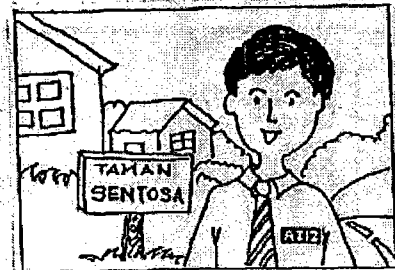


Cikgu \_\_\_\_\_ mengajar di Sekolah

Kebangsaan \_\_\_\_\_

Dia \_\_\_\_\_

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Ini Cikgu \_\_\_\_\_

Dia tinggal di \_\_\_\_\_



Hari ini \_\_\_\_\_

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Soalan Karangan Tahap II

NO.

**UJIAN PENULISAN  
BAHASA MELAYU  
SEKOLAH RENDAH**

**TAHAP II**

**MASA: SATU JAM SETENGAH**

Penyelidikan ini dijalankan

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Universiti Sains Malaysia

*dengan kerjasama*



Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia

*di bawah pembiayaan*



**Skim Geran Penyelidikan Fundamental (FRGS)**



## Bahagian A

Pilih satu soalan

1. Tuliskan sebuah karangan tentang makanan ringan.
2. Anda telah dipilih sebagai pelajar cemerlang sekolah bagi tahun 2003. Anda diminta untuk menyampaikan ucapan tentang kejayaan anda dalam perhimpunan sekolah.

Sediakan ucapan anda selengkapnya.

## Bahagian B

Pilih satu soalan

3. Petang itu aku berjalan seorang diri di pinggir bandar. Keadaan sekeliling sunyi sepi. Cuaca agak gelap kerana matahari hampir terbenam. Apabila aku sampai di bawah sepohon ara yang besar dan rindang, aku terpancang.....

Lengkapkan cerita di atas.

4. Tuliskan sebuah karangan yang bertajuk "Aku sebuah komputer".

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