



**THE EFFECT OF RASOP (RHYME
ALLITERATION SYLLABLE
ONSET- RIME PHONEMES)
MODULE TOWARDS WORD
READING SKILLS AMONG
THE 5 YEARS OLD
KINDERGARTEN
CHILDREN**



BALVINDER KAUR A/P SHINGAR SINGH

SULTAN IDRIS EDUCATION UNIVERSITY

2020





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Kampus Sultan Abdul Jalil Shah



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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the effect of RASOP (Rhyme Alliteration Syllable Onset-Rime Phonemes) Module towards word reading skills among the 5 years old kindergarten children. This study used Design and Development Research Approach (DDR) by Ritchey and Klein to develop the module. Based on this method, the study was divided into three phases. In the first phase, a survey using need analysis was conducted on 40 kindergarten children via score form as an instrument to identify the Phonological Awareness (PA) skills and level of reading 3-4 letters of words. The interpretation of the first phase was based on the frequencies and percentages of scores. In the second phase, Fuzzy Delphi Method (FDM) approach was exploited to develop the module based on the opinions of 7 expert panels. The data of Fuzzy Delphi Method (FDM) approach was interpreted based on the acceptance of its elements, contents and criterias by the expert panels. The third phase was the usability evaluation involving 20 kindergarten children from Batang Kali. The method used in the third phase was quasi-experimental. Samples were divided into 10 children for the treatment and control groups equally. Mann-Whitney U Test was used to evaluate the significance of the posttest scores among the two groups. The findings of the first phase exposed that 70% of the 40 children were at the low and poor level of PA skills and 15 of them scored 0 for reading 3-4 letter words. This highlights the need to develop a RASOP Module. In the second phase, the findings based on FDM analysis were positive whereby the experts accepted the five PA elements (rhyming, alliteration, syllable, onset-rime and phonemes) and 20 lesson plans to be included in the RASOP Module. The data findings in the third phase presented that the treatment group achieved higher mean rank (8.00) for total scores of posttests, compared to the control group (13.00) after 8 weeks of learning. However, the Mann-Whitney U test shows the scores between these two groups were insignificant, ($U=25$, $p=.058$). It is suggested to use the RASOP Module for a longer period of time and teachers should be trained thoroughly to ensure the effectiveness of the RASOP Module. As a conclusion, the development of the RASOP module has exposed children to PA skills which are vital for early reading. This study gives the implications that children could recognize sounds in alphabets and learn the number of sounds in words besides identifying syllables in words.





KESAN MODUL RASOP (*RHYME ALLITERATION SYLLABLE ONSET-RIME PHONEMES*) TERHADAP KEMAHIRAN PEMBACAAN PERKATAAN DALAM KALANGAN KANAK-KANAK TADIKA 5 TAHUN

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menentukan kesan Modul RASOP (*Phonological Awareness*) terhadap kemahiran pembacaan perkataan dalam kalangan kanak-kanak tadika 5 tahun. Kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan Rekabentuk dan Pembangunan (*Design and Development Research Approach*) oleh Ritchey and Klien untuk membangunkan Modul tersebut. Berdasarkan pendekatan ini, kajian ini dibahagikan kepada tiga fasa. Dalam fasa pertama, tinjauan analisis keperluan dijalankan ke atas 40 orang kanak-kanak tadika lima tahun melalui borang skor sebagai satu alat untuk mengenalpasti kemahiran fonologi (PA) dan tahap pembacaan 3-4 perkataan. Analisis keperluan ini adalah berdasarkan frekuensi dan peratusan skor. Fasa kedua menggunakan Kaedah *Fuzzy Delphi* (FDM) untuk membangunkan modul berdasarkan pandangan tujuh orang panel pakar. Interpretasi data bagi pendekatan Kaedah *Fuzzy Delphi* (FDM) adalah berdasarkan penerimaan elemen, kandungan dan kriteria yang diterima oleh panel pakar. Fasa ketiga iaitu fasa penilaian kebolegunaan melibatkan 20 orang kanak-kanak tadika dari Batang Kali. Kaedah yang digunakan dalam fasa ketiga ialah kuasi experimental. Sample dibahagikan kepada 10 orang kanak-kanak di kumpulan rawatan dan 10 orang di kumpulan kawalan. Ujian *Mann-Whitney U Test* digunakan untuk menilai signifikasi posttest antara 2 kumpulan tersebut. Hasil kajian dalam fasa pertama mendedahkan bahawa 70% daripada 40 kanak-kanak berada pada tahap yang rendah dan sangat lemah bagi kemahiran fonologi (PA) dan 15 orang kanak-kanak mendapat skor 0 bagi pembacaan 3-4 perkataan. Ini menentukan keperluan membangunkan Modul RASOP. Dalam fasa kedua, hasil kajian berdasarkan analisis FDM adalah positif di mana panel pakar menerima elemen lima elemen PA (rhyming, alliteration, syllable, onset-rime and phonemes) dan 20 rancangan mengajar untuk dimasukkan ke dalam modul RASOP. Dapatan data fasa ketiga dikemukakan bahawa kumpulan rawatan mencapai peringkat min yang lebih tinggi (8.00) bagi jumlah skor ujian posttests berbanding kumpulan kawalan (13.00) selepas pembelajaran selama 8 minggu. Walau bagaimanapun, ujian Mann-Whitney U menunjukkan skor kedua-dua kumpulan tersebut tidak signifikan, ($U=25$, $p=.058$). Dicaangkan untuk menggunakan Modul RASOP untuk tempoh masa yang lebih lama dan guru perlu dilatih secara mendalam bagi memastikan keberkesanan Modul RASOP. Kesimpulannya, pembangunan Modul RASOP telah mendedahkan kanak-kanak kepada fonologi (PA) yang sememangnya penting untuk pembacaan awal. Kajian ini memberi implikasi bahawa kanak-kanak dapat mengenal pasti bunyi dalam huruf dan mempelajari bilangan bunyi dalam perkataan selain mengenal pasti kiraan *syllable* dalam perkataan.



**CONTENTS**

	Pages
DECLARATION OF ORIGINAL WORK	ii
DECLARATION OF DISSERTATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iv
ABSTRACT	v
ABSTRAK	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
LIST OF FIGURES	xiv
LIST OF DIAGRAMS	vx
LIST OF TABLES	xvi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xxi
LIST OF APPENDIXES	xxii

CHAPTER 1	INTRODUCTION	
	1.1 Introduction	1
	1.2 Background of Research	3
	1.3 Problem Statements	7
	1.4 Aim of Research	13
	1.5 Research Objectives	14
	1.6 Research Questions	14
	1.7 Research Conceptual Framework	16
	1.7.1 Interactionist Theory of SLA	16
	1.7.2 Theory of Mind (ToM)	17





1.7.3	Vygotsky's Theory (ZPD)	17
1.7.4	EHRI'S Model	18
1.7.5	Sidek's Development Model	18
1.8	The Importance of Research	22
1.9	Limitation of Research	24
1.10	Operational definition	26
1.12	Summary	27

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1	Introduction	28
2.2	Phonological Awareness	28
2.2.1	Components of phonological awareness	32
2.2.1.1	Rhyme Awareness	32
2.2.1.2	Alliteration Awareness	33
2.2.1.3	Syllable Awareness	33
2.2.1.4	Onset-Rime Awareness	34
2.2.1.5	Phonemes	35
2.2.1.6	Phonemic Awareness	36
2.2.2	Importance of phonological awareness (PA)	36
2.3	Word reading	37
2.4	Design and Development Module	39
2.4.1	Theoretical Framework	41
i (a)	Interactionist Theory, 1996	41
i (b)	Application of Interactionist Theory in research	42
ii (a)	Theory of Mind (ToM), 1978	44
ii (b)	Application of Theory of Mind in research	45





iii (a) Vygotsky's Theory (ZPD). 1978	47
iii (b) Application of Vygotsky's Theory in research	47
iv (a) EHRI's Model	49
iv (b) Application of EHRI's Model in research	49
2.4.2 Relationships of Theories which support each other	51
2.5 Previous Studies	55
2.5.1 Nursery Rhyme in Phonolical Awareness	55
2.5.2 Phonological Awareness Intervention and Assessments	61
2.5.3 Phonological Awareness Effects on Reading Skills	67
2.6 Summary	71



CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction	72
3.2 Research Design	72
3.2.1 Research Methodology Framework	74
3.3 Research Prosedure	75
3.3.1 Requirements Analysis Phase	75
3.3.2 Design and Development Phase	78
3.3.3 Evaluation phase	87
3.4 Research samples and respondents	90
3.4.1 Need Analysis Phase	90
3.4.2 Design and Development Phase	91
3.4.3 Usability and Evaluation Phase	92
3.5 Research Instruments	94





3.5.1	Need Analysis Phase	94
3.5.2	Design and Development Phase	95
3.5.3	Usability and Evaluation Phase	96
3.6	Data collections	98
3.6.1	Need Analysis Phase	98
3.6.2	Design and Development Phase	98
3.6.3	Usability and Evaluation Phases	99
3.7	Data analysis	97
3.8	Validity and Reliability	100
3.8.1	Validity of instruments	102
3.8.1.1	First Phase – Validity of Score Forms for children	104
3.8.1.2	Second Phase – Validity of Questionnaires for experts	107
	a) Module Designing Instruments	107
	b) Module Development Instruments	108
3.8.1.3	Third Phase – Validating of Pretest and Posttest questions	109
3.8.2	Validity of module	110
3.8.3	Reliability of instruments	112
3.8.3.1	Score Forms	112
3.8.3.2	Pretest and Posttest	114
3.8.3.2(a)	Pretest questions	114
3.8.3.2(b)	Posttest questions	115
3.8.4	Reliability of module	117
3.9	Summary	117



**CHAPTER 4****RESEARCH FINDINGS**

4.1	Introduction	118
4.2	Findings of Need Analysis Phase	119
4.3	Findings of Design and Development Phase	126
4.3.1	Data findings for designing phase using FDM (Fuzzy Delphi Method)	126
4.3.1 (a)	Findings of Elements of PA	128
4.3.1 (b)	Findings of Contents of Module	130
4.3.1 (c)	Findings of Criteria of Module	133
4.3.2	Data findings for development phase using FDM (Fuzzy Delphi Method)	136
4.3.2.1	Findings of Rhyming Awareness Lesson Plans	136
4.3.2.1 (a)	Findings of Lesson 1 - Rhyming Is So Easy With /at/	136
4.3.2.1 (b)	Findings of Lesson 2 - Rhyming Memory with /op/ and /ot/	138
4.3.2.1 (c)	Findings of Lesson 3 - Rhyming Matching with /ug/ and /ub/	140
4.3.2.1 (d)	Findings of Lesson 4 - Rhyming Race and Puzzle with /an/, /it/ and /in/	142
4.3.2.2	Findings of Alliteration Awareness Lesson Plans	143
4.3.2.2 (a)	Findings of Lesson 5 - Alliteration /b/	145
4.3.2.2 (b)	Findings of Lesson 6 - Alliteration /k/ /h/ and /m/	147
4.3.2.2 (c)	Findings of Lesson 7 - Alliteration /s/, /l/ and /d/	149





4.3.2.2 (d) Findings of Lesson 8 - Alliteration /p/ /t/ and /g/	152
4.3.2.3 Findings of Syllable Awareness Lesson Plans	154
4.3.2.3 (a) Findings of Lesson 9 - Single Syllables	154
4.3.2.3 (b) Findings of Lesson 10 - One and Two Syllables (Counting cards)	156
4.3.2.3 (c) Findings of Lesson 11 - Two and Three Syllables (Board game)	158
4.3.2.3 (d) Findings of Lesson 12 - One, Two and Three Syllables - Pocket Chart	160
4.3.2.4 Findings of Onset-rime Awareness Lesson Plans	162
4.3.2.4 (a) Findings of Lesson 13 - Onset-Rime – /ap/ rime	162
4.3.2.4 (b) Findings of Lesson 14 - Onset-Rime – Spin me and blend me (/ag/rime)	164
4.3.2.4 (c) Findings of Lesson 15 - Onset-Rime – (/un/ rime)	167
4.3.2.4 (d) Findings of Lesson 16 - Onset-Rime (/an/rime)	169
4.3.2.4 Findings of Phoneme Awareness Lesson Plans	171
4.3.2.5 (a) Findings of Lesson 17 - Sounds of alphabets - Alphabets Fishing	171
4.3.2.5 (b) Findings of Lesson 18 - Ending Sounds of words - Traffic light words	173
4.3.2.5 (c) Findings of Lesson 19 - Blending- Wheels on The Bus	175
4.3.2.5 (d) Findings of Lesson 20 - Segmenting	177





4.4	Finding of Usability Evaluation Phase	181
4.4.1	Findings of posttests between control and treatment group (Mann-Whitney U Test)	182
4.5	Summary	188

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1	Introduction	189
5.2	Discussion of research finding for phase 1: Need Analysis	189
5.3	Discussion of research finding for phase 2: Design and Development	193
5.4	Discussion of research finding for phase 3: Usability Evaluation	198
5.5	Implication	201
5.5.1	Implication towards practice	202
5.5.2	Implication of Research Theories	202
5.5.3	Implications of Research Methodology	206
5.5.4	Implication of research towards the children aged 5 years old	207
5.5.5	Implication of research to the kindergartens	209
5.6	Recommendations for future researches	209
5.7	Summary	211

REFERENCES

214

APPENDIXES

219





LIST OF FIGURES

Figure No.		Pages
2.1	Sequence of phonological awareness instruction and intervention by Schuele & Boudreau (2008).	30
2.2	Five sub-components of phonological awareness, (Kenner B.B et al., 2017	31
2.3	Interactionist Theory of SLA in context of ESL learning in designing and developing of RASOP Module of PA	44
2.4	Theory of Mind (ToM) in learning phonological awareness (PA) in development of RASOP Module of PA	46
2.5	Vygotsky's Theory of ZPD in development of RASOP Module of PA	48
2.6	Ehri's phases of reading, Beech J.R., 2015	49
3.1	Adaptation of Sidek' Module Development Model, (Amalia & Sidek, 2013) in developing RASOP Module of PA	81





LIST OF DIAGRAMS

Diagrams No.	Pages
1.1 Conceptual Framework of RASOP Module of Phonoloical Awareness (PA) development in kindergartens with theories	20
1.2 Conceptual Framework of RASOP Module of Phonological Awareness (PA) development in kindergartens (DDR Approach)	21
2.1 Relationships of Theories involved in RASOP Module	51
2.2 Stages towards developing PA module	52
2.3 Development of RASOP Module of Phonological Awareness in Kindergartens	54
3.1 Research Methdology Framework	75
3.2 Flow chart of Analysis Phase	77
3.3 Flow chart of Design and Development Phase	79
3.4 Flow chart of Evaluation Phase	88
3.5 Research Procedure Framework	89
3.6 Triangular graph versus value of triangular	101
5.1 Relationships and Implications of Theories	205





LIST OF TABLES

Tables No.		Pages
1.1	Content Standard and Learning Standard for listening and speaking skills in KSPK, DSKPS (2017) (p. 36)	4
1.2	Content Standard and Learning Standard for reading skills in KSPK, DSKPS (2017) (p. 39)	5
3.1	Summary of research methods that are most frequently used in the various types and phases of developmental research by (Richey & Klein, 2005).	74
3.2	Sample and Respondents	93
3.3	5 Likert Scale from the structured questionnaires in appendix A	94
3.4	7 Likert Scale from the structured questionnaires in appendixes E & F	95
3.5	5 Likert Scale from the structured questionnaires in appendixes G & H	97
3.6	Research Instruments for three phases	97
3.7	Data Collection Table for three phases	100
3.8	Data Analysis Table for three phases	102
3.9	List of experts for instrument validating (content validity)	103
3.10	Comments by experts for score forms for children	104
3.11	Comments by experts for the questionnaires in designing phase	107
3.12	Comments by experts for the questionnaires in development phase	108
3.13	Comments by experts for the questionnaires in usability evaluation Phase	109
3.14	Validity Coefficient for the RASOP module of PA	111
3.15	Reliability Statistics of Cronbach's Alpha with 6 items	113
3.16	Cronbach Alpha for each item during pilot test with 10 children	113
3.17	Reliability Statistics of Cronbach's Alpha with 10 items for pretest	114
3.18	Cronbach's Alpha for each item during pretest with 10 children	115





3.19	Reliability Statistics of Cronbach's Alpha with 10 items for posttest	115
3.20	Cronbach's Alpha for each item during posttest with 10 children	116
4.1	Frequency and percent of respondents during need analysis phase	119
4.2	Scores of Rhyme Awareness during analysis phase	120
4.3	Scores of Alliteration Awareness during need analysis phase	120
4.4	Scores of Syllable Awareness during need analysis phase	121
4.5	Scores of Onset-rime Awareness during need analysis phase	122
4.6	Scores of Phonemic Awareness (Blending) during need analysis phase	122
4.7	Total scores of PA skills during need analysis phase	123
4.8	Scores of reading 3-4 letters of words during need analysis phase	124
4.9	Frequency and percent of total score of PA skills of respondent during need analysis phase	125
4.10	Frequency and percent of total reading scores of 3-4 letter of words during need analysis phase	125
4.11	Elements of PA in designing RASOP Module using Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (FDM) according to panel of experts	128
4.12	Elements of PA for the designing of RASOP Module based on the Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (FDM)	129
4.13	Contents of Module in designing RASOP Module using Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (FDM) according to panel of experts	130
4.14	Contents of Module in designing RASOP Module using Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (FDM)	131
4.15	Criteria of module in designing RASOP Module using Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (FDM) according to panel of experts	133
4.16	Criteria of module in designing RASOP Module using Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (FDM)	134
4.17	Lesson 1 in developing RASOP Module using Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (FDM) according to panel of experts	136
4.18	Lesson 1 in developing RASOP Module using Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (FDM)	137
4.19	Lesson 2 in developing RASOP Module using Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (FDM) according to panel of experts	138





4.20	Lesson 2 in developing RASOP Module using Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (FDM)	139
4.21	Lesson 3 in developing RASOP Module using Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (FDM) according to panel of experts	140
4.22	Lesson 3 in developing RASOP Module using Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (FDM)	141
4.23	Lesson 4 in developing RASOP Module using Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (FDM) according to panel of experts	142
4.24	Lesson 4 in developing RASOP Module using Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (FDM)	144
4.25	Lesson 5 in developing RASOP Module using Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (FDM) according to panel of experts	145
4.26	Lesson 5 in developing RASOP Module using Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (FDM)	146
4.27	Lesson 6 in developing RASOP Module using Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (FDM) according to panels of experts	147
4.28	Lesson 6 in developing RASOP Module using Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (FDM)	148
4.29	Lesson 7 in developing RASOP Module using Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (FDM) according to panels of experts	149
4.30	Lesson 7 in developing RASOP Module using Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (FDM)	150
4.31	Lesson 8 in developing RASOP Module using Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (FDM) according to panels of experts	152
4.32	Lesson 8 in developing RASOP Module using Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (FDM)	153
4.33	Lesson 9 in developing RASOP Module using Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (FDM) according to panel of experts	154
4.34	Lesson 9 in developing RASOP Module using Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (FDM)	155
4.35	Lesson 10 in developing RASOP Module using Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (FDM) according to panel of experts	156
4.36	Lesson 10 in developing RASOP Module using Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (FDM)	157
4.37	Lesson 11 in developing RASOP Module using Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (FDM) according to the panel of experts	158





4.38	Lesson 11 in developing RASOP Module using Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (FDM)	159
4.39	Lesson 12 in developing RASOP Module using Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (FDM) according to panel of experts	160
4.40	Lesson 12 in developing RASOP Module using Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (FDM)	161
4.41	Lesson 13 in developing RASOP Module using Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (FDM) according to the panel of experts	162
4.42	Lesson 13 in developing RASOP Module using Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (FDM)	163
4.43	Lesson 14 in developing RASOP Module using Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (FDM) according to the panel of experts	164
4.44	Lesson 14 in developing RASOP Module using Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (FDM)	165
4.45	Lesson 15 in developing RASOP Module using Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (FDM) according to the panel of experts	167
4.46	Lesson 15 in developing RASOP Module using Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (FDM)	168
4.47	Lesson 16 in developing RASOP Module using Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (FDM) according to the panel of experts	169
4.48	Lesson 16 in developing RASOP Module using Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (FDM)	170
4.49	Lesson 17 in developing RASOP Module using Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (FDM) according to the panel of experts	171
4.50	Lesson 17 in developing RASOP Module using Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (FDM)	172
4.51	Lesson 18 in developing RASOP Module using Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (FDM) according to the panel of experts	173
4.52	Lesson 18 in developing RASOP Module using Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (FDM)	174
4.53	Lesson 19 in developing RASOP Module using Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (FDM) according to the panel of experts	175
4.54	Lesson 19 in developing RASOP Module using Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (FDM)	176
4.55	Lesson 20 in developing RASOP Module using Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (FDM) according to the panel of experts	177



4.56	Lesson 20 in developing RASOP Module using Fuzzy Delphi Analysis (FDM)	178
4.57	Results of second phase of research findings	180
4.58	Mean Ranks for posttest for control and treatment groups	185
4.59	Mann-Whitney U Test for the skills assessed in posttests for control and treatment group	186
4.60	Mean ranks of total scores of posttests for control and treatment groups	187
4.61	Mann-Whitney U Test for total scores of post tests	187
5.1	Experts' Field of Expertise	193

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ESL	English for Second Language
FDM	Fuzzy Delphi Method
PA	Phonological Awareness
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development



LIST OF APPENDIXES

- A QUESTIONNAIRES FOR EXPERTS –NEED ANALYSIS
- B SCORE FORM FOR NEED ANALYSIS PHASE
- C DIRECTIONS FOR CHILDREN – NEED ANALYSIS
- D FLASHCARDS FOR NEED ANALYSIS PHASE
- E QUESTIONNAIRES FOR EXPERTS – MODULE DESIGNING
- F QUESTIONNAIRES FOR EXPERTS – MODULE DEVELOPMENT
- G QUESTIONNAIRES FOR EXPERTS – USABILITY EVALUATION
- PRETEST
- H QUESTIONNAIRES FOR EXPERTS – USABILITY EVALUATION
- POSTTEST
- I EVALUATION PHASE –CHILDREN -PRETEST
- J ATTACHMENT FOR PRETEST
- K EVALUATION PHASE –CHILDREN -POSTTEST
- L ATTACHMENT OF POSTTEST
- M CONTENT VALIDATION – NEED ANALYSIS SCORE FORM /
MODULE DESIGNING/MODULE DEVELOPMENT/– PRETEST &
POSTTEST (EARLY CHILDHOOD/PHONOLOGY / ENGLISH/TESL)
- N STUDENT VERIFICATION FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH
- O LIST OF EXPERTS
- P1 APPOINTMENT LETTER TO EXPERT 1/2/3
- P2 APPOINTMENT LETTER TO EXPERT 4/5/6/7
- Q AGREEMENT LETTER AND VERIFICATION FROM EXPERTS
- R LETTER TO KINDERGARTEN 1 –PILOT TEST PHASE 1
- S LETTER FROM KINDERGARTEN 1/2/3/4





CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION



It is common to hear the relationship of literacy with the language development of an individual. Literacy includes all the elements such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. All of these elements continuously develop together, (Wilkinson & Silliman as cited in Cooper & Kiger, 2003).

Among all the literacy elements reading is considered to be one of the important and crucial aspects. According to Morrow (2012), reading is the communication between readers and written language. Morrow (2012) further elaborated that the relationship between reading and language is evident in studies of children who are early readers.





According to Rasinski (2017, p 519), “reading is a complex activity, so there are many reasons and factors children can struggle in reading”, hence have low reading proficiency. Among them can be family’s background, peer factors, environmental and socioeconomic factors, parental factors, education, language skills and attitudes.

In order to be par with the other developed countries, Malaysia need to ensure the new generation mainly the young children have excellent reading abilities in the process of countries’ positive development. There are many methods which can be used or implemented in order to improve the reading skill among the average and struggling readers. However, according to the (NELP,2009, p.13) teaching phonological awareness alone provides positive results although many recommend combination of methods.



There are numerous studies which agree that phonological awareness is one of the vital elements which contribute to reading skills in children. Studies by Ehri et al.; Lonigan; Snow, Burns, & Griffin (as cited in Kaminski & Powell-Smith, 2017) stated that phonological awareness is both highly predictive and causally related to the ease with which children learn to read and their later reading ability.

RASOP module refers to Rhyming Awareness, Alliteration, Syllables Awareness, Onset-rime and Phoneme. Further explanations of these variables are in the second chapter.





1.2 Background of Research

Education for All 2015 National Review Report: Malaysia reported that early education in Malaysia is compulsory as a formal education.

Formal education starts with early childhood education catering for children from the ages of 4+ to 5+, followed by 6 years of primary education, which is compulsory (p.6).

Education for All 2015 National Review Report: Malaysia further elaborated about the Malaysia Blueprint 2013-2025 which indicates the role of education in Malaysia.



The Blueprint affirms the critical role of education in turning Malaysia into a knowledge-based economy, able to compete in the increasingly globalized economy. The focus is on improving access to education, raising standards, closing achievement gaps, promoting unity among the students, and maximizing system efficiency (p.13).

Furthermore, the second from eleven transformation Shifts in the Education Blueprint 2013-2105 is “Ensure every child is proficient in Bahasa Malaysia and English language and is encouraged to learn an additional language”, (Education for All 2015 National Review Report: Malaysia, p.12). Therefore, in order to be aligned with the Education Blueprint which emphasized on education mainly English language, early reading is an important element in early literacy which will enable the children to compete in the challenging environment.



Besides that, (Education for All 2015 National Review Report: Malaysia, p. 22) also revealed that “preschools operated by KEMAS, JPNIN, and MoE receive a daily meal grant of RM2 per child per day in Peninsular Malaysia and RM2.25 in East Malaysia, and an annual allocation of RM100 per child for learning materials”. If each preschool class has 25 children, it means that the school can receive up to RM 2,500 per year for the purchase of teaching and learning materials. This clearly shows that resources for learning English in preschools can be arranged and provided accordingly via the annual allocation for each child.

The Ministry of Education Malaysia (2016) has highlighted in Kurikulum Standard Prasekolah Kebangsaan (KSPK), (2016), under the (Dokumen Standard Kurikulum Dan Pentaksiran Semakan, 2017) under the communication domain (English Language) the content standards of the listening and speaking skills are in table 1.1:

Table 1.1

Content Standard and Learning Standard for listening and speaking skills in KSPK, DSKPS (2017) (p. 36)

CONTENT STANDARDS	LEARNING STANDARD (5+)
BI 1.0 LISTENING AND SPEAKING SKILLS	
BI 1.1. Listen to and identify sounds	BI 1.1.2 Listen to and respond to stimulus given: (iii) rhythm and rhyme (iv) alliteration.

Source :Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia. (2016, April). Kurikulum Standard Prasekolah Kebangsaan (KSPK),. *Pendidikan Prasekolah (Dokumen Standard Kurikulum Dan Pentaksiran Semakan 2017)*. Malaysia.

The above table 1.1, explains that KSPK, DSKPS (2017) has content standards under listening and speaking skills which are “listen to and identify sounds”. Next, the learning standard for children age 5 and above, rhyme and alliteration are included so that children are though these skills.

In addition, the content standards under the reading skills are in table 1.2:

Table 1.2

Content Standard and Learning Standard for reading skills in KSPK, DSKPS (2017) (p. 39)

CONTENT STANDARDS	LEARNING STANDARD (5+)
BI 2.0 READING SKILLS	
BI 2.2, apply sounds of letters to recognize words	<p>BI 2.25 Recognise and sound out letters of the alphabet.</p> <p>BI 2.26 Recognise and sound out initial, medial and ending sound in a word</p> <p>BI 2.2.7 blend phoneme (sounds) to form single syllable words.</p>

Source :Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia. (2016, April). Kurikulum Standard Prasekolah Kebangsaan (KSPK),. Pendidikan Prasekolah (Dokumen Standard Kurikulum Dan Pentaksiran Semakan 2017). Malaysia.

Table 1.2, explains about the reading skills’ content standards and learning standards. It can be seen clearly that sounds of letters are given priority such as



recognizing the sounds of letters, sounds in words and blending the sounds to form words.

This shows that the curriculum for preschools is align with the development of phonological awareness skill. However, it is not given sufficient focus in the early childhood education curriculum although some elements of it are included in the KSPK. It could be due to some factors and reasons why not sufficient attention is given to the phonological awareness elements such as lack of trainings, lack of resources, lack of experts, lack of confidence, lack of teaching methods awareness and many more.

In addition, Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) in Malaysia “comprises preschools for children aged 4-6 years, and childcare centers for younger children aged 0-4 years” (Education for All 2015 National Review Report: Malaysia, p.16). Based on the same report there are statements by the National Policies and Legislation Regarding Provision of ECCE such as “every child is precious” and that “children are the most valuable resource of the nation”. This shows that great importance is given to the ECCE in Malaysia and every child deserve to learn holistic skills. This indicates that in order to have the best quality of future generations who will lead the nation, obviously one of the vital skill is having a good grab of English skills such as speaking and reading.

The National Early Literacy Panel (NELP), 2009 report identifies the converging evidence about building children’s language and literacy skills in the preschool period. It identifies the early skills that give children the strongest foundation for learning to read, spell and write. Further stated in (NELP, 2009) that whether children are in preschool or





kindergarten, focusing on phonological awareness skills can have a significant effect on children's literacy learning.

Many children who enter kindergarten lack of language and early literacy skills foundation. Due to that, in Kaminski & Powell-Smith's (2017) research affirms a statement by (National Early Literacy Panel, 2008) that "of the critical emergent literacy skills necessary for reading, phonological awareness has consistently been identified as an important predictor of later reading achievement". In relation to that, a study by Gillon & National Early Literacy Panel (as cited in Kaminski & Powell-Smith 2017) describe that interventions to increase phonological awareness in preschool and kindergarten, prior to formal reading instruction, have been shown to positively affect reading readiness.



1.3 Problem Statements

A Study by Lonigan, Burgess, & Anthony; Snow, Burns & Griffin (cited in Harper, 2011, p. 66) stated that children in kindergarten are expected to have mastery in sound-based such as rhyming skills and beginning letter sounds. Research by Harper, 2011 states that children who were exposed to early nursery rhymes knowledge from the age of 3 and 4, showed a strong predictor of growing their skill in rhyme and alliteration and at the same time it clearly indicates the relations between early knowledge of nursery rhyme and succes in reading later on.

In Malaysia, the nurseries and kindergartens do use nursery rhymes and rhyming sounds in the nursery rhymes. Normally, nursery rhymes are used during the





circle time or during the children's rest time. There are exercise books on ending sounds (rhyming) and beginning sounds (alliteration) which are used by the teachers. However, there is no proper guidances or activities which give exposure of rhyming and alliteration. This is supported with the research by Nor Ain Ahmad Apandi & Faizah Mohamad Nor, 2019 which stated that teachers gain their first-hand knowledge of phonological awareness by attending in-service courses or from what they learned during pre-service training. The study also further stated that not all possess adequate information regarding phonological awareness. This can be seen as a factor or problem which indicates poor usage of phonological awareness skills by teachers in preschools or kindergartens.



In addition to the above matter, The Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2016 has included the elements of rhyming, alliteration, recognizing beginning, middle and ending sounds and blending of phonemes in the Dokumen Standard Kurikulum Dan Pentaksiran Semakan, 2017 of preschools in Malaysia. However, the educators are not exposed on how to implement these skills and they are not aware in fact that these elements come under the subset of phonological awareness. This is because the teachers themselves claimed that the courses they attended did not provide them with sufficient knowledge to conduct the programme, especially, in relation to phonological awareness (Nor Aini & Faizah, 2019). The explicit instruction on phonological awareness will prepare and equip the pupils to be proficient enough to read independently and become lifelong readers. This is the reason why this study is vital so that the teachers, educators and communities will be exposed to the knowledge of phonological awareness.





Another interesting study by Khairul Azhar, Norlidah & Roselina (n.d.) is about content analysis of eight selected articles from 2008 to 2013. The paper aimed to research on phonemic awareness and reading development. Among the eight articles, only three studies (37.5%) used kindergarten children as their samples (Khairul Azhar et.al., n.d.). The rest of the research studies used primary school students as their samples. This clearly shows that research done in kindergartens or among the children who are aged 3-6 years old are quite low in number. This create a gap for the research for RASOP Module to take place in kindergartens. Furthermore, the research which is conducted by Khairul Azhar et.al. (n.d.) which selected eight articles, surprisingly none of the articles are from Malaysia. This is another crystal-clear gap which creates urgency to do the research related to phonological awareness in Malaysia



Another research by (Sari & Acar, 2013, p.2210) point out in their studies that phonological awareness is working with sounds without looking at the alphabets or printed materials. In the same article, Sari & Acar, 2013, p.2210 shared about a study by Lundberg, Larsman & Strid which involved 2000 children aged of 6 who went through phonological awareness program. Activities during the study were aimed at listening to sounds, distinguishing between the first and last sound and dividing the word into its phonemes. The results of the research revealed that phonological awareness is a skill which can be taught and changed.

In Turkey, (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 2012) the National Preschool Education Programme has highlighted on the importance of phonological awareness in early childhood education. This is because Turkey believe that research of phonological awareness is lacking in early childhood education (Sari & Acar, 2013, p.2210). This





indicates that there is lack of research in phonemic awareness and this create a gap as well to tap into this research.

Sari & Acar (2013) stated that phonological awareness is a skill of listening to sounds which can be taught and changed. This means phonological awareness is a fun skill and should be taught by all preschools or kindergartens. The way and method of teaching and implementing the skills of phonological awareness can be changed according to the culture and level of children in the kindergartens. Another issue which is noticeable is that if other countries such as Turkey are having the perception that phonological awareness is lacking in early childhood education in their country.



It is definite that phonological awareness (PA) skill is much more lacking in early childhood education in Malaysia as the research by Khairul Azhar et.al. (n.d.) did not indicate any research in Malaysia at all. The recent research by Nor Ain & Faizah (2019), was done with the teachers of primary school. Therefore it is a high time to introduce PA at kindergartens in Malaysia as there is no specific research in the context of early childhood education. So, there is where another problem or gap is indicated for this study.

Woldmo R. (n.d.) stated that phonological awareness (PA) can be considered the ability to listen inside a word with a skill of having a sensitivity or explicit awareness of and ability to manipulate the phonological structures within words. Phonemic awareness is the most complex or advanced part of a part of phonological awareness. It refers to a person's knowledge of words at the level of individual sounds which are known as phonemes (Woldmo R.,n.d.). Phonemic awareness comes under the umbrella of





phonological awareness and it's the toughest skill to acquire in PA. Phonemic awareness assist pupils to be aware that words are made from combination of sounds and combinations of sounds will create words combinations of sounds and combinations of sounds will create words (Nor Ain & Faizah, 2019)

It is stated by (National Early Literacy Panel [NELP], 2009 as cited in Skibbe, Gerde & Wright, 2016) that “phonological awareness is the strongest predictors of later reading success skills concerning with perceiving, maipulating and evaluating the sounds in spoken language” (p. 225). In the same article Skibble et al. (2016) cited Stanovich's explanation that “phonemic awareness as a critical skill for children because they need to understand that letters of the alphabets correspond to sounds in English”. An example given is that children need to understand that the word cat can be broken into phonemes like /c/ /a/ /t/ so that eventually children can map the sounds into the letters of C-A-T. Besides that, in the same study , Phillips et al. (as cited in Skibble et al., 2016) stated that researchers have argued that many preschool curriculums are lacking of sound instructions.

In phonemic awareness, children learn on the skills how to break words into phonemes according to the individual sounds of alphabets. The statement by Philips (as cited in Skibble et al.2016) is agreeable “preschool curriculums are lacking of sound instructions.” as the same scenario happens in Malaysia whereby preschools or kindergartens are just focusing on skills in English without having to know the right method to polish the foundation of the children. In order to get them to learn English using the correct method which lead them to understand and apply the concept throughout their life, phonological awareness is vital to be introduced in kindergartens.





It is stated by Mohd Mokhtar Tahar, Hasnah Toran, Mohd Hanafi Mohd, and Safani Barid, (2010) that the education system in Malaysia still faces the issue of reading incompetency among students, and this situation occurred because of failures in the early stages of reading the native language which is Malay. According to Alidou et al. and Baker (as cited by Comings, 2014) that learning to read first in the first language, L1 greatly benefits second language, L2 learning because the student will not need to relearn most of the necessary skills in the L2.

In the context of English as the L2 in Malaysia, most of the students have poor reading ability. It is most likely as stated by the research done by Comings, J.P. (2014) which supports the study done by Mohd Mokhtar Tahar et al. (2010) which stated that in Malaysia reading skill is a major problem. Another contributing factor of poor reading skill could be the language anxiety among the people in Malaysia because learning L2 or foreign language, FL is a complex task susceptible to human anxiety as stated by Brown (1994) cited by (Ramiza Darmi & Albion P., 2013).

The young children especially preschool children in Malaysia face language anxiety because they can be quite confused between their native language, L1 and second language, L2. Due to this and many other contributing factors, children face challenges to read in English mainly. According to Bailet, Repper, Piasta, & Murphy (as cited by Kaminski & Powell-Smith, 2017) many children entering kindergarten lack the language and early literacy skills foundational to school success. Reflecting on this issue, reading problem should be detected from early stage such as from the age of 3 to 5 years old especially for English as the second language in Malaysia.





As we are aware now that phonological awareness is believed to be a skill which can assist children to learn literacy skills mainly reading by relating the sounds and letters. The elements in phonological awareness starting from rhyming up to phonemes can contribute to the reading skills among the children in kindergarten. Early childhood education being the most critical and foundation for further education in the children's life, should be by now already concentrating on phonological awareness skills. As far it is concern, researches in Malaysia on phonological awareness are seriously limited and this certainly creates a large gap for this study.

Once phonological awareness is widely used in early childhood education system in Malaysia, preschools and kindergartens will get the benefits out of it. This is said so as more trainings and awareness on phonological awareness will be carried out throughout Malaysia and it create a situation where children will be learning to read by connecting to the sounds of letters. In addition, according to (Barker, Sevcik, and Ronski, 2013) many studies have indicated that successful beginning readers have strong phonological awareness.

1.4 Aim of Research

This research is aim to develop RASOP Module of PA to teach word reading by focusing on the basic elements in the continuum of phonological awareness (PA). The purpose is also to examine RASOP Module's effectiveness among the kindergarten children.





1.5 Research objectives

Based on the problem statements and the aim of research, there are specific research objectives: -

1. Identify the need of RASOP module of PA towards word reading skills among the 5 years old children in kindergartens.
2. Develop the RASOP module to implement the PA elements towards word reading skills among the 5 years old children in kindergartens.
3. Evaluate the usability of the RASOP module of PA among the 5 years old children in kindergartens.



1.6 Research Questions

The process of developing the RASOP module of phonological awareness (PA) towards word reading skills among the 5 years old children in kindergartens involves 3 phases particularly need analysis phase, design and development phase and usability evaluation phase. Based on these phases, the research questions are developed:





First Phase: Requirements Analysis

Is there any need of developing the RASOP Module of PA towards word reading skills among the 5 years old children in kindergartens?

- i. What is the need of the RASOP module of PA towards word reading skills among the 5 years old children in kindergartens?

Second Phase: Design and Development of RASOP module

How to design and develop the RASOP module of PA towards word reading skills among the 5 years old children in kindergartens based on the experts' view?

- ii. What are the main elements to be included in the RASOP module based on the experts' views?



Third Phase: Usability Evaluation of RASOP module

What is the usability evaluation of RASOP module of phonological awareness towards word reading skills among the 5 years old children in kindergartens?

- iii. Is there a significant difference between the scores of posttests between the control group and experimental group?





1.7 Research Conceptual Framework

This research has two main divisions which are the construction of the theoretical framework for the research and development of RASOP module of phonological awareness (PA). The construction of theoretical framework for this research combined three theories and two models to develop the RASOP module of PA for children aged 5 years in kindergartens. The theories are Interactionist Theory, Theory of Mind (ToM) and Vygotsky's theory of ZPD (1978) while the model are Ehri's reading model, and Sidek's Development Model. Diagram 1.2 explains further about the conceptual framework of the research. It includes the theories, models and the phases included in Design and Development Research (DDR).



1.7.1 Interactionist Theory of SLA, (1996)

There are quite a number of theories which supports second language acquisition (SLA). According to Vygotsky (1978), social interaction plays an important role in the learning process (cited in Muho & Kurani, n.d.). On the other hand, in the same article Muho & Kurani (n.d) cited Ariza and Hancock's statement that interactionists acknowledge the importance of two ways communication in the target language. In this study, the target language is English (ESL).

Interactionist is derived from the word interact. It is stated by Grossmann and Johnson, (as cited in Verga & Kotz, 2013) that the ability to socially interact emerges very early in life and is represented by a number of basic interactions that children in the





first year of life are able to master the language. In this research, interaction theory is suitable as it focuses on English as the second language in the context of Malaysia.

1.7.2 Theory of Mind (ToM), (1978)

Premack & Woodruff (1978) first introduced the term Theory of mind (ToM). Theory of mind is being chosen for this research of developing RASOP module of phonological awareness (PA) based on the previous studies as a support. Flavell & Miller, 1998 (as cited in Jeffrey, Ashwell, & Maag, 2005) stated that theory of mind refers to the understanding of the role of mental states (e.g., beliefs, desires) in guiding and predicting behavior.



1.7.3 Vygotsky's Theory of ZPD, (1978)

The 'zone of proximal development (ZPD)' is the basic concept of Vygotsky's theory (1978). ZPD is the region outside of the children's capacity and they need intervention. This theory is well known as social development theory. The main concept of the theory is that how individuals interact with others and their culture affects their mental abilities (Saracho, 2017). Language and literacy development are interconnected with culture development as culture is the main contributor to children's learning process as mentioned in the research by (Saracho, 2017).





1.7.4 EHRI'S Model, (2005)

In this study, the Ehri's model theory is referred for the reading levels in children. Ehri's model theory consist of four phases, pre-alphabetic, partial alphabetic, full alphabetic and consolidated alphabetic. Ehri, 2005 in her research states that recent studies show that alphabetic knowledge enhances children's learning of new vocabulary words, and it influences their memory for doubled letters in words.

1.7.5 Sidek's Development Model, (2001)

According to NuruL & Mastura, 2016, that Sidek (2001) introduced an integration model which is more comprehensive in developing a module. Further is stated that many Malaysia researchers referred and used this model in their research to such as Amalia and Sidek (2013), Mastura (2011), Mohd Ali (2010) and Abdul Hanid (2007) in order to determine the validity and reliability of their modules. This model comprises of two stages, each with different purposes.

Once the theoretical framework is finished, this research will be done in three major phases, refer Diagram 1.3.

Phase 1: Need Analysis

Phase 2: Design and Development of RASOP Module

Phase 3: Usability Evaluation of RASOP Module





In the first phase, the research for need analysis is carried out to find out the need of developing RASOP Module of PA to improve word reading skill among the 5 years old children in kindergartens through score forms which carried out among 40 children aged 5 years old in Selangor.

The results of phase 1 will be used in phase 2, designing of RASOP Module of PA to improve word reading skill among the 5 years old children in kindergartens based on the Ehri's Model and through Fuzzy Delphi method. Developing RASOP Module of PA is based on Sidek Module Development (2001). Phase 3 involved the phase of usability evaluation of RASOP module of PA to improve word reading skill among the 5 years old children in kindergartens. This phase will be carried out through quasi experiment method. Pretest and posttest will be given to the control and treatment groups in the chosen kindergarten by the researcher. The targeted number of kindergarten children for the usability evaluation phase are 40.



Diagram 1.1 Conceptual Framework of RASOP Module of Phonological Awareness (PA) development in kindergartens with theories

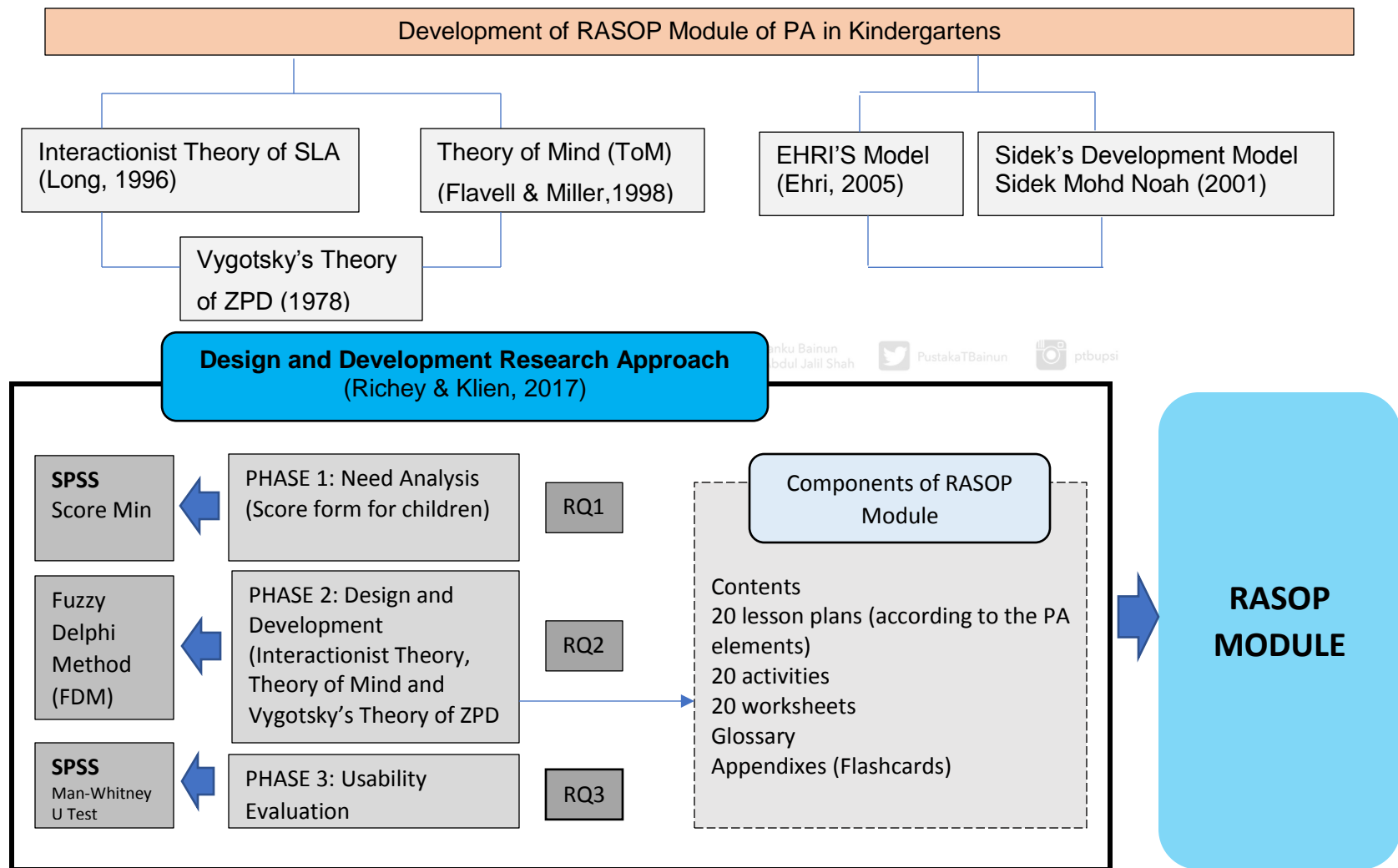
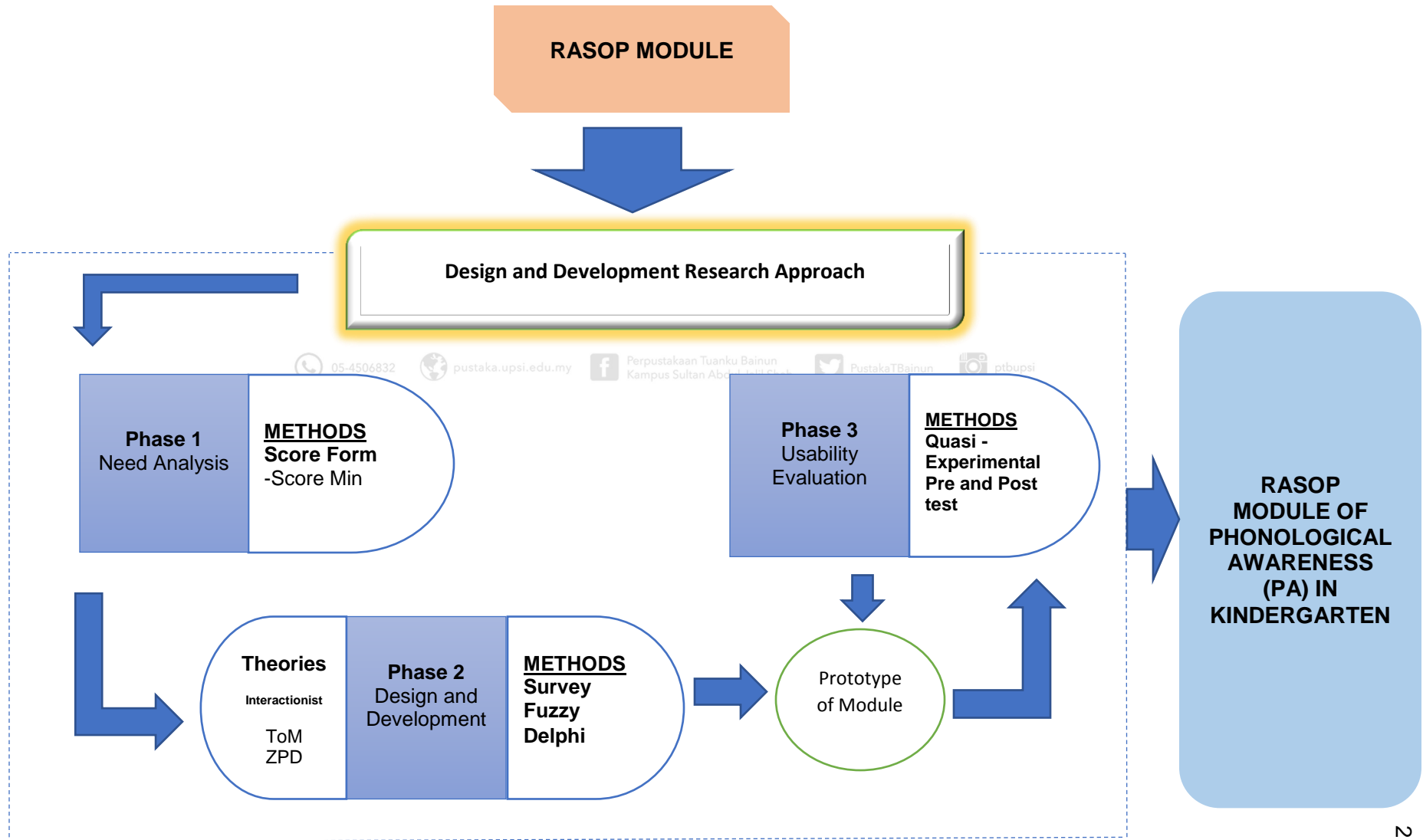


Diagram 1.2 Conceptual Framework of RASOP Module of Phonological Awareness (PA) development in kindergartens (DDR Approach)



1.8 The Importance of Research

We get familiar and realize that phonological awareness (PA) is a method which helps many children in their later stage of life when come to reading. All these years, phonics have been stressed in many kindergarten and smart reading schools in Malaysia. However, only by implementing phonics it does not really help a child from the beginning to acquire the reading skills.

Based on the problem statements, we are assured that there are need for RASOP Module to be developed which includes the elements such as rhyming, alliteration, syllables, onset-rime and phonemes. The development of RASOP Module in this research is also certainly related with the statement by Melby-Lervåg, Lyster, & Hulme ; Wood & Terrell, (as cited in Kuppen & Bourke, 2017, p.181) which describe that being the fundamental in learning to read, phonological awareness provides a strong predictor of a child's early literacy development.

RASOP Module of PA which is based on the elements of phonological awareness certainly has numerous importance to this research. Below is some importance on why this research need to be carried out:

1. RASOP Module is able to create awareness to the kindergartens in Malaysia about the importance of phonological awareness which concentrate on the larger part of words and then slowly to smaller parts.

2. RASOP Module help children in kindergarten to identify the sounds in words and this will increase the performance of sounds instruction which is lacking in most of the kindergartens.
3. RASOP Module starts with rhyming which can help the children in kindergartens to have awareness of the ending sounds in words. The interesting activities related to rhyming in RASOP Module can assist children to identify the ending sounds such as /at/ and /op/. Alliteration is the second element of PA which is included in RASOP Module which help the children to identify the beginning sounds in words. This element is introduced via simple tongue twisters and jazz chant activities.
4. RASOP Module prepare children in kindergarten on syllable awareness which is considered to be the most interesting element in PA. This is because children learn this element via clapping their hands and they able to identify the number of syllables in words for example: fish (1 clap/1 syllable); table (2 claps/ 2 syllables)
5. RASOP Module have children to learn about blending and segmenting activities especially during the onset-rime element. This is considered to be difficult skills to be acquired by children as children have to recognize the beginning sound in a word and then the ending letters in a word for example: /b/ /ag/ becomes bag. So, it is vital for the children in kindergartens to be introduced to this skill in order for them to get ready for the more complex task.



6. RASOP Module also introduce the most complex task which is phoneme awareness. Here, children learn to segment and blend individual sounds in words for example: cat - /c//a//t/ which has 3 phonemes or sounds.
7. RASOP Module concentrate on reading CVC words. As most of the children in kindergarten struggle in reading simple words, this research via RASOP Module prepare the children with the basic foundation towards reading of words.

There is no module developed in Malaysia to teach word reading by using phonological awareness (PA) skills. Therefore, it is vital to have a module which gives a guideline to learn PA skills which consists the phonemic awareness as a subset to learn reading of words among the 5 years old preschools children. Hence, an experimental research to evaluate the usability of RASOP module of PA to learn word reading skills is necessary to be carried in preschools as many studies has shown the positive results through the PA elements.

1.9 Limitation of Research

The purpose of this research is to develop and evaluate the usability of RASOP Module of phonological awareness (PA) towards the word reading skills among the 5 years old kindergarten children in Selangor. Therefore, the research concentrates on designing and developing.





This research focus on reading of words in English as Second Language (ESL) in kindergartens via listening to the sounds of words. Although, other literacy skills are not highlighted in this research, it does have listening, speaking and reading integrated as they are interrelated. The only skill not concentrated is writing. This research limits the skills to listening, speaking and reading. Reading being a complex activity has many stages, in this research only word reading of 3 letter words are concentrated. So, the limitation here is only CVC words (3 letter words)

The elements of phonological awareness (PA) is chosen to be the contents of the RASOP module towards the word reading skills. PA has various activities which enable children towards the reading skills such as segmenting, blending, substituting, adding, and deleting. In this research, the activities are concentrated on blending and segmenting words in syllables, onset-rime and phonemes (individual sounds). Only blending and segmentation is introduced as to not confuse the children who has low level of English proficiency.

The samples of this research are limited to only 5 years old kindergarten children in Selangor. The respondents for the usability evaluation of the prototype RASOP Module of PA involves Malay ethnic kindergarten children in Ulu Yam and Kota Damansara in Selangor.

The implementation of this research is carried via experimental research which involves pre and posttest among the control and treatment group. Normally such a research is not able to be generalized as an experimental research is unable to



represent larger population due to the small sample numbers. However, after the usability evaluation of the RASOP learning module, this module can be generalized.

1.10 Operational definition

Phonological awareness:

Phonological awareness is the awareness of the sound structure of language and it involves identifying and manipulating larger parts of spoken language such as whole word, syllables, and word chunks such as *at* or *an* (Morrow, 2012, p.157). In this research phonological awareness (PA) is looking at the levels of elements from rhymes, alliteration, syllables, onset-rime and phoneme. It concentrates on sound structure of 3 letter words (CVC words).

Phonemic awareness:

Phonemic awareness is the ability to recognize that words are made up of individual speech sounds (Burns, Snow, & Griffin, 1999; Soderman & Farrell, 2008; Strickland & Schickedanz, 2009; Tompkins, 2003 cited in Morrow, 2012, p.157). In this research, phonemic awareness starts from the onset-rime to phonemes level and it is combined with the alphabetic knowledge together with sound awareness concentrating on blending and segmenting the individual sounds in words.

Word reading skills:

Word reading skills may take several forms such as readers may utilize decoding, analogizing, or predicting to read unfamiliar words (Ehri, 2005). In this research, word



reading skill is the ability to attend to the individual sounds within words (phonological and phonemic awareness) because it is also an oral skill that is closely associated with reading ability according to Walberg H.J (n.d.).

Kindergarten:

Kinder meaning child and garten meaning garden (Headley, 1965 as cited in Muelle, n.d.). The teachers, called kindergarteners, were called to educate the children from the earliest years through their own experiences to become integrated and whole people (Froebel, 1967a cited in Muelle, n.d.). In this research, kindergarten means private education centre where children aged 4- 6 years old learn before they proceed to year 1



Summary



This chapter is the introductory of the researcher's topic of research. The discussion involved in this chapter is about the background of research, aim of research, research objectives, research questions, research conceptual framework, operational definition, importance of research, limitation of research and summary. This research is to find out the need of Phonological awareness (PA) towards word reading skills at kindergartens, design the RASOP Module of PA, develop the RASOP Module and evaluate the usability of the RASOP Module of PA.

