

Jawi in Malay Language Education in Brunei Darussalam: A Review of Empirical Research

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Abstract

In Brunei Darussalam, since 1985 Jawi education forms one of the components of Malay language education, whether at the primary or secondary school level. This research intends to identify some of the major variables that influence Jawi education process, identify gaps in researches undertaken till now, and explore the implications of current practices and research in Jawi education. The research methodology employed here is based on Creswell review approach. Research findings show that 13 empirical research works related to Jawi-Malay language education in Brunei have been done during the period from 1999 until now. This review indicates that the research on Jawi-Malay language education pertains largely to issues of Jawi spelling ability among students and teachers, students' and teachers' perceptions of Jawi as a subject and teachers' views of the Jawi subject curriculum.

Keywords: Jawi, Malay language education, Brunei, review

1. Introduction

Jawi writing is a Malay script heritage that has very close relationship with Islam, Malay race and Malay language. The history of Malay began with Jawi writing, in parallel with the establishment of the Islamic states in 14th century. The arrival of Islam in the Malay world changed the way of life in the Malay Archipelago (Seock, 1986; Musa, 2006). The conversion to Islam has not only set a new course in terms of religion, cogitation and culture, but it also has changed the Malay writing system by utilising Arabic characters to spell the Malay words. Besides, through Jawi writing, the prestige of Malay language was elevated as a scholarly language with the erudition of science, law, politics, commerce, medical, literature and so forth (Musa, 2006; Al-Attas, 1990). Among the knowledge collection that use Jawi writing are *Silsilah Raja-Raja Brunei*, *Hukum Kanun Brunei* and *Syair Awang Semaun* (Sirat, 2000). Thus, Jawi writing has become one of the Islamic Malay identities in the region.

2. The Use of Jawi Writing in Brunei

Jawi writing has gone through a long history. As time goes by, the spelling system and use of Jawi writing have also gone through significant changes. At the moment, Jawi writing is still being practised in Brunei but is limited if compared to the use with Roman alphabets in administration, education, business and daily communication.

The Bruneians are still able to enjoy this literary legacy as a result of the decree of His Majesty the Sultanate of Brunei Darussalam. His decrees on the importance of Jawi writing have upheld its status in Brunei. As an example, in his decree in 1988, His Majesty accentuated that Bruneians have the responsibility to enhance the use of Jawi writing. Thus, various efforts have been implemented to ensure Jawi writing continues to be utilized in the country. For instance, the uses of Jawi writing are monitored such as on sign ages in government buildings and business premises, including name labels, letterheads, notice boards, posters, advertisements, banners, names, road labels and so forth, are required to have double-sized Jawi writing than Roman characters (Prime Minister Office, 1988).

2.1 Jawi Education in Brunei

In Brunei, the formal Jawi education can be seen from the two different education systems namely Jawi education under the Ministry of Religious Affairs as well as under the Ministry of Education (Sani, 2013; Ariffin, 2013).

It is mandatory for children aged between 7 to 13 years to attend both education systems. The education system under the Ministry of Religious Affairs focuses on Islamic religious education that fully utilizes Jawi writing in textbooks as well as teaching and learning aids (Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2010). Its teaching workforce comprises Islamic religious teachers with qualifications from diploma to postgraduate levels. Whereas, school duration takes between two to four hours daily. Meanwhile, the education system under the Ministry of Education aims to fulfill the economic and social development needs and challenges of the 21st century which provides a holistic education to achieve the full potential of all students (Ministry of Education, 2013). School sessions takes five hours daily. Among the core subjects taught are Islamic religious education, nationalism, languages i.e. Malay and English languages, Mathematics and Science. Meanwhile, Jawi education is taught as a component of Malay language subject at the primary level (Year 1 to 6) and lower secondary level (Year 7 and 8). Apart from Jawi education, other components in the Malay language subject are listening, speaking, reading and writing skills (Curriculum Development Department, 2009). The teaching workforce comprises of Malay language teachers with qualifications from diploma to postgraduate levels. In this study, the researcher focuses on Jawi education in the Malay language subject (Jawi-Malay language).

2.2 The Development of Jawi-Malay Language Education

The Ministry of Education, Brunei Darussalam as the government agency that is responsible for the education in the country decided to integrate Jawi subject as a component in the Malay language curriculum. Besides, among other efforts implemented were the inclusion of Jawi questions in the Malay language examination papers at the primary and lower secondary levels (Examination Department, 1990) and since 1992, Jawi spelling system used in primary and secondary schools under the Ministry of Education is the same system used by the Bruneian Institute of Language and Literature (Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Brunei, DBPB) which is *Sistem Ejaan Jawi yang Di-Sempurnakan* (Curriculum Development Department, 1996). DBPB has thus become the source of reference for guidance and assistance on the proper use of Jawi writing. Every measure effected by DBPB to improve Jawi spelling system must be approved by the Ministry of Education, which differs with the Ministry of Religious Affairs which has its own Jawi spelling system policy. In the latest educational system, i.e. the National Education System for the 21st Century (SPN21), Jawi subject is still being taught. The main aim of present Jawi-Malay Language education is to fully equip the students with spelling, reading and comprehension abilities of various articles written in Jawi and encourage them to present ideas and creativity through Jawi writing and calligraphy (Curriculum Development Department, 2009). Time allocated for the teaching and learning of Jawi education within the subject of Malay language in primary schools is 60 minutes every fortnight.

3. Problem Statement

Jawi writing is the legacy script that has lifted the Malay language to a highly prestigious position and plays an important role in the rise of Malay-Islam civilization era. Seok and Rosli (2015: 64) stated that Jawi was line in the moribund and needing an antidote that brings it back to life. According to them, the main driver that inculcates Jawi in the society is education, including Jawi teaching and learning as well as continuous Jawi research. Several empirical or conceptual research related to Jawi have been conducted in Brunei and the region. However, this study builds a literature that identifies available research on Jawi-Malay Language education at the primary and secondary levels in Brunei Darussalam with a focus on the empirical research.

4. Objectives

This study aims to identify the main variable that influences Jawi education process, to identify the gaps in existing research projects and to explore the implications on education practices and Jawi education research, based on Jawi education empirical research in secondary and primary schools in Brunei Darussalam between 1999 to 2015.

5. Methodology

This current review aims to compile empirical research related to Jawi education in the Malay language subject taught in primary and secondary schools in Brunei Darussalam. Therefore, this study is rather limited within a narrow scope. This study will utilize the guidelines set by Creswell (2005). According to Creswell, this method will assist in clarifying and formulate previous and latest research based on five steps: identifying the main research keyword, the effects of literature related to the study in libraries and websites, selecting and evaluating literature critically, organizing selected literature and making analysis by summarizing selected literature.

Usually, literatures may be obtained from research papers published in journals, books, reports from organizations, government institutions or public, newspapers, research working papers in conferences and scholars as well as various other documents depending on research objectives (Creswell, 2005; Bowen, 2009). In this study, researcher will only utilize documents in the form of empirical research related to research on Jawi-Malay Language education at the primary and secondary school levels in Brunei Darussalam between 1999 and 2015. Empirical research are studies that contain objectives or specific research question, express samples, instruments and research designs as well as describing data collection process. The research documents selected for analysis have been manually identified through education lecturers and information which obtained from the Sultan Hasanah Institute of Education, Universiti Brunei Darussalam as well as electronically obtained from the university library website. Documents used were categorized according to keyword similarities in abstracts, analysis of issues as well as research scope. Throughout data analysis, each identified category has been continuously accommodated.

6. Findings and Discussions

There were thirteen documents related to research on Jawi-Malay Language education in Brunei Darussalam since 1999 selected and analysed. Majority of studies were in the form of research at the levels of Masters and undergraduate. Meanwhile, 1 study in the form of an article was obtained from a local journal (Table 1).

In reference to Table 1 above, the studies can be divided into four categories:

- 1) Studies assessing level of Jawi mastery among students and teachers (13 studies),
- 2) Studies on the students' and teachers' perceptions on Jawi subject (6 studies),
- 3) A study related to students' interests in Jawi subject (1 study),
- 4) A study related to the mastery on Jawi curriculum and teaching process (1 study). From the studies obtained, majority of the research focuses on the mastery level of Jawi spelling skills among students and teachers. It's very few research on Jawi education that has been done on students' interests in Jawi subject, curriculum and teaching process. Majority of the studies were also done quantitatively, compared to qualitative research.

1) Studies related to the level of Jawi spelling proficiency among students and teachers

Studies on the level of Jawi spelling proficiency aim to make descriptive measurements on the number of correctly-spelt words in a Jawi spelling test given to teachers and/or students. From the 13 compiled empirical studies, three studies tested the level of Jawi spelling proficiency among teachers, two studies tested the proficiency level among secondary school students and eight studies were among primary school students. The finding of this study are summarized in Table 2. Previous studies have shown that Jawi spelling proficiency among primary school teachers are generally good and moderate teachers are able to correctly read sentences in written in Jawi (Ibrahim, 2007 & 2015; Zain, 2013). In addition, Ibrahim's(2015) also found that the proficiency among teachers with 4-10 years of teaching experience is better than respondents with more than 21 years of teaching experience. Meanwhile, the level of Jawi spelling proficiency among secondary school students is very good and good as for the study done by Abdullah (1999) and Muhammad (2013). On the other hand, the proficiency among primary school students is at the level of moderate and worrisome, as found by Kuntum (2002), Mohammad (2006), Brahim (2006), Wahid (2007), Siraj (2007), Tengah (2008), Besar (2009) and Rahim (2010). When compared between secondary and primary school students, it is inferred that Jawi spelling proficiency is better among secondary school students than primary school students.

2) Studies related to the students' and teachers' perceptions on Jawi subject and its importance

From the 13 compiled empirical studies, there are three related studies to the perception of students on Jawi subject (Table 3) while another three are related to the perception and sentiment of teachers on Jawi subject and its importance (Table 4). The findings of these studies are not discussed in detail. Tables 3 and 4 only summarize the highest or mean scores presented in the study findings. From the findings on students' perception on Jawi lessons (Table 3), students are aware of the Jawi subject which is mandatory in school and it is an easy subject (Tengah, 2008; Muhammad, 2013). Students also admitted that the allocated time for Jawi subject should be supplemented (Tengah, 2008). Study findings also found that students are often guided by teachers and family (Tengah, 2008; Besar, 2009).

Meanwhile, study findings on the perception of teachers on Jawi lessons (Table 4) found that teachers acknowledge that it is mandatory in school and teachers often guide students and fellow teachers who have problems in Jawi (Tengah, 2008; Besar, 2009). Teachers also recognize that Jawi has a link to al-Quran and that

Jawi must be protected as a Malay heritage in Brunei. However, a proportion of teachers believe that the importance of Jawi in the future is still unclear (Zain, 2013).

3) Studies related to students' interest in Jawi education

A study on students' interest on Jawi lessons was carried out by Rahim (2010). In this study, the researcher conducted Jawi spelling proficiency level test among students and identifying students' interest on Jawi subject through the use of questionnaires. Selected students were then invited for an interview. This study found that 68% of students are interested in Jawi subject while 32% have less or no interest whatsoever in the subject. The study concluded that students who are highly proficient in Jawi spelling are more likely to be interested in the subject and found the teaching of the subject exciting. Meanwhile, students with lower level of Jawi spelling proficiency do not have any interest in the subject because of the difficulty they faced with reading and writing Jawi as well as finding the teaching of the subject dull and unexciting. However, students with lower level of Jawi spelling proficiency have interest in the subject said that the teaching of the subject exciting and they often receive assistance from their families.

4) Studies related to mastering Jawi curriculum and teaching process

A study on the mastering of Jawi education curriculum and its teaching process was carried out by Ibrahim (2015). The study was conducted by assessing the level of Jawi spelling proficiency and identifying the mastery of the curriculum and teaching process using questionnaires among Jawi education teachers in the primary schools.

In the study, mastering the Jawi curriculum is defined as knowledge and experience in Jawi education obtained in the teaching of the subject. Among such items are mastering the contents of Jawi subject, Jawi spelling system proficiency, mastering Jawi syllabus and mastering the philosophy of Jawi education. Meanwhile, among items for Jawi teaching process are teacher's use of a clear language, guidance given to students and method of Jawi teaching. The study discovered that mastering on curriculum has a significant influence on Jawi teaching process. Mastering the curriculum is the most dominant predictor variable, followed by Jawi proficiency.

7. Recommendations

From the analysis of empirical studies related to Jawi education in Brunei, some recommendations for the improvement and empowerment of Jawi education in Brunei are as follows.

1. Improving students' level of Jawi proficiency

Among steps that can help improve students' Jawi proficiency are to use diverse Jawi education teaching and learning strategies, methods, techniques and activities based on reading and writing skills strategies, methods, techniques and activities which have been established by language education theories; expanding teaching and learning aid materials such as story books and electronic media materials written in Jawi; creating the ambience or space that provides opportunities for students to obtain materials written in Jawi; and exposing the students to the importance of Jawi writing through exhibitions, talks and activities in and outside the school.

2. Reinforcing the quality of curriculum and teachers' professionalism

In order to reinforce the quality of curriculum, several measures are recommended such as ensuring the participation of Jawi and Malay Language experts to consolidate Jawi-Malay Language education curriculum. This includes sustaining long-term objectives of Jawi education so that the future of this heritage is ensured. Furthermore, a review of time allocation for Jawi teaching and learning sessions need to be given attention too. To further underscore teachers' professionalism, teachers must be given opportunities to attend courses related to Jawi education either short or long courses to improve the quality of their teaching. Teaching institutes also need to provide a solid program in terms of contents and Jawi education pedagogy to improve the professionalism of Jawi education teachers.

3. Consolidating students' interest with the support of parents and family

Continuous efforts and cooperation from all stakeholders, either parents, family and society are important in ensuring Jawi writing continues to be accepted and fully utilized, even in limited contexts.

Societal activities related to Jawi writing are expected to help increasing and sustaining the interest of students and the younger generation towards Jawi writing.

Increasing and strengthening Jawi education research

Source	Focus	Context	Methodology
Abdullah (1999)	Evaluation of Jawi spelling proficiency among students and identify students' perception towards Jawi lessons in government secondary schools.	180 secondary students from 4 secondary schools in Brunei Muara District.	Quantitative
Kuntum (2002)	Evaluation of Jawi spelling proficiency among pupil in government primary and private schools	208 primary 6 pupils from 3 government and private schools in Brunei Muara District.	Quantitative
Mohammad (2006)	Evaluation of Jawi spelling proficiency among pupils in government primary schools.	73 primary 6 pupils from 4 primary schools in Tutong District.	Quantitative
Brahim (2006)	Evaluation of Jawi spelling proficiency among pupils as well as teachers' and pupils' perception towards Jawi lessons in government primary school.	171 pupils of primary 6 and 13 Malay Language teachers from 6 primary schools in Brunei Muara District.	Quantitative
Wahid (2007)	Evaluation of Jawi spelling proficiency among pupils in government primary schools.	44 primary 6 pupils from a primary school in Belait District.	Quantitative
Siraj (2007)	Evaluation of Jawi spelling proficiency of pupils from either gender in government primary and religious schools.	40 pupils i.e. 20 pupils from a primary school and 20 pupils from a religious school in Brunei Muara District.	Quantitative
Ibrahim (2007)	Evaluation of Jawi spelling proficiency among primary school teachers.	22 Malay Language teachers from 2 schools in Brunei Muara District.	Quantitative
Tengah (2008)	Evaluation of Jawi spelling proficiency among primary 6 pupils in primary (government and private) schools as well as pupils' and teachers' perception towards Jawi lessons.	62 pupils and 4 Malay Language teachers from one government primary school and one private primary school in Brunei Muara District.	Quantitative
Besar (2009)	Evaluation of Jawi spelling proficiency among primary 6 pupils as well as pupils' and teachers' perception towards Jawi lessons.	80 pupils and 12 Malay language teachers from one government primary school and one private primary school in Brunei Muara District.	Quantitative
Rahim (2010)	Evaluation of Jawi spelling proficiency, attitude and motivation towards Jawi education among pupils and pupils' view on way of teaching of Jawi education teachers in primary schools.	100 pupils of Year 5 from 5 schools in Brunei Muara District and further, 2 students from each school are interviewed.	Quantitative & Qualitative
Muhammad (2013)	Evaluation of Jawi spelling proficiency among pupils and identify pupils' perception towards Jawi lessons.	208 Year 8 students from 5 schools in Brunei Muara District.	Quantitative
Zain (2013)	Evaluation of Jawi spelling proficiency among teachers, identification of teacher's perception towards importance of Jawi, problem factors in gaining Jawi proficiency and teachers' suggestions in overcoming the problem of Jawi usage in government primary schools.	260 teachers from 11 primary schools in Brunei Muara District	Quantitative & Qualitative
Ibrahim (2015)	Evaluation of Jawi spelling proficiency among teachers and identification of differences, relationships and the influence of Jawi orthography proficiency and Jawi education curriculum among Malay Language teachers at primary schools.	150 Malay language teachers from 50 primary schools throughout the country	Quantitative

There are multiple problems in Jawi education need to be analysed and properly reviewed. Based on the analysis of the 13 studies compiled, a few research have been identified for future endeavors. Examples are an empirical research on Jawi spelling system from the perspective of linguistic, research to identify the reason behind higher Jawi proficiency among secondary school students when compared to primary school students, an interventional research using reading and writing teaching strategies, methods and techniques to improve students' Jawi proficiency, research related to the assessment and evaluation of Jawi spelling, research on Jawi curriculum based on Jawi education policy or long-term objectives and research on pedagogical content knowledge of Jawi education teachers. In addition, empirical research on Jawi reading proficiency and its relation to Quran reading proficiency may also be done. The cooperation from teachers, researchers and all stakeholders in producing academic research can help to strengthen Jawi's position in Brunei.

8. Conclusion

This study aims to understand the main variable that influences Jawi education process, identifying current research gaps and exploring the implications on education practices and Jawi education research based on Jawi education in secondary and primary schools in Brunei Darussalam between 1999 and 2015. This literature research identified four main categories selected by Jawi education researchers at the primary and secondary schools level, research related to teachers' and students' Jawi spelling proficiency, teachers and students perception on Jawi and its education, students' interest on Jawi education as well as mastery of Jawi curriculum and teaching process of Jawi education teachers. The findings from these studies have been discussed and some directions for future research related to the use of Jawi-Malay language education in primary and secondary school settings are also suggested. This literature will assist researchers to further improve research related to Jawi education in Brunei.

Table 1 Topic and Context in Jawi-Malay Education Research

Table 2 Findings summary on Jawi spelling control level student and/or teacher

Source	Sampel	Findings
Ibrahim (2007)	Primary school teachers	In Jawi spelling test, primary school teachers is in moderate level (59.55% of them passed).
Zain (2013)	Primary school teachers	In overall teachers are capable to read a Jawi sentence properly.
Ibrahim (2015)	Primary school teachers	72.7% teachers are good in spelling Jawi, 26.7% teachers less capable in Jawi spelling and only 0.7% teachers not be able to spell Jawi.
Abdullah (1999)	Secondary school students	79% students pass and in good levels in Jawi spelling test.
Muhammad (2013)	Secondary school students	16.3% student are excellent, 62% student are good, 19.3% students are medium and 3.3% student are weak.
Kuntum (2002)	Primary school children	Only 22.3% pupils can spell Jawi correctly.
Mohammad (2006)	Primary school children	Only 35.2% pupils can spell Jawi correctly.
Brahim (2006)	Primary school children	36.3% pupils pass and 63.7% people failed pupil the test.
Wahid (2007)	Primary school children	23.8% pupils spell jawi correctly. Meanwhile, 18.3% pupils spell phrase in Jawi spelling correctly.
Siraj (2007)	Primary school children	Only 44.6% pupils that can spell correctly.
Tengah (2008)	Primary school children	Only 20.1% pupils that can spell correctly.
Besar (2009)	Primary school children	45.8% pupils have been able to select correct Jawi spelling and 54.2% pupils have been unable to select correct Jawi spelling.
Rahim (2010)	Primary school children	51.0% pupils answered correctly in test.

Table 3 Summary findings on student's perception towards Jawi

Source	Findings
Tengah (2008)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pupil perception towards curriculum: 95.2% pupils agreed Jawi education is compulsory in primary school & 83.9% pupils agreed that length of time for Jawi lessons need to be extended. 2. Pupil perception towards teachers' teachings: 98.4% pupils agreed teacher always guide pupils spell Jawi word properly & 98.4% pupils agreed that teacher always helps pupils who are weak in Jawi. 3. Pupil perception towards problems on Jawi learning: 83.9% pupils agreed that pupils are always assisted by their family in Jawi if the pupils found it difficult & 77.4% pupils agreed that pupils rather answer grammatical questions than Jawi lesson.
Besar (2009)	100% pupils agreed that Jawi lesson is compulsory in school and teacher always guide pupil spell Jawi correctly.
Muhammad (2013)	Students are more interested in answering questions that require students change Jawi to roman script (mean 4.01, sp 1.026) and Jawi lesson is a subject that is easy (mean 3.8, sp 1.011)

Table 4 Summary of the findings on teacher's perception towards Jawi lesson and importance of Jawi

Source	Findings
Tengah (2008)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teacher's perception towards Jawi lesson: 100% teachers agreed that Jawi lesson is compulsory in primary schools and length of time for Jawi lessons need to be extended. 2. Teacher's perception towards his lesson: 100% teachers agreed that teachers correct pupil Jawi letter form, guide pupil spell Jawi words properly, correct their spelling and always help pupils who are weak in Jawi. 3. Teacher's perception towards problems in Jawi lesson: 75% teachers agreed that Jawi lesson is a subject that is difficult and teachers are always assisted by friends if they encounter problems in Jawi lesson and teachers always help other friends who have problems in Jawi lessons.
Besar (2009)	All teachers agreed Jawi lesson is compulsory in schools, guide pupils spell Jawi word correctly, help pupils who are weak in Jawi and teachers try to find alternatives to improve teachers' teachings technique in Jawi lessons.
Zain (2013)	<p>From the findings, the most importance of Jawi are</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. related to the Quran such as producing a generation that embodies the Quran, know the alphabets and read it, able to master Quranic alphabets, and read the Quran as a whole (mean 4.72 for Malay Language teacher & mean 4.5-4.6 for non-Malay Language teachers) 2. preserving Malay heritage in Brunei (mean 4.64 for Malay Language teacher agreed & mean 4.57 for non-Malay Language teachers agreed). <p>From the interviews, respondents stated their unsureness in the importance of Jawi and some respondents stated that Jawi writing is not very important for future.</p>

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