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Dual Language Programme: Parent's Perception

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Abstract

Malaysian Education Blueprint emphasises on the importance of Bahasa Malaysia as well as English. As clearly stated in the Malaysian Education Blueprint (2013-2025), bilingual proficiency is one of the pupils' aspirations that is to produce pupils who are proficient in Bahasa Malaysia as the national language and the language of unity; and also in English, the international language of communication. This is important as this will help the pupils to compete globally. In line with the aspiration, the Ministry of Education has taken the initiative to introduce Dual Language Programme (DLP) with the main purpose to give pupils the opportunity to use either Malay or English as medium of instruction for Science, Technology and Mathematics subjects. The purpose of this study is to examine parents' perceptions towards the implementation of Dual Language Programme (DLP) in schools in the urban area. Using a survey method, this study observes parents' attitudes, support and satisfaction on the implementation of the programme through online questionnaire. The results of this study determine the acceptance towards the implementation on DLP from the parents' point of view. Results showed that the parents accept and satisfy with the implementation of DLP in schools but there are some improvements need to be done in order to have a successful implementation of DLP. The results of this study would be beneficial to the ministry, teachers and most importantly, the pupils in order to achieve the Ministry of Education's aspirations.

Keywords: Dual Language Programme (DLP), parents, acceptance, perceptions, urban schools

Introduction

Today, people who have good command of English language are likely to enjoy more benefits and privileges compare to person who are less proficient in English language. This is because English language plays a role as the international language of knowledge acquisition and communication. To take on the challenges of globalisation, Ministry of Education has taken the initiative to focus on bilingual proficiency, which is to have pupils who are proficient in Bahasa Malaysia as the national language and the language of unity and also English as the national language of communication. The importance of English as one of the main languages of the world urges the Ministry to stress on the usage of English in the national education system. Realizing the importance, the ministry introduced the teaching of Science and Mathematics in English (PPSMI) starting on January 2003 with the main objective to improve English language among Malaysian as well as to accelerating their mastery in Mathematics and Science (Mansor, 2007). However, PPSMI was abolished in 2012 due to some arisen controversies regarding pupils' performance, teachers' and parents' acceptance and its implementation. The abolishment of the policy was due to its failure to achieve its main objective, to improve pupils' English proficiency (Selamat et al., 2011). The policy was not only unable to improve pupils' English proficiency but also had caused more failure especially in Mathematics and Science subjects (Haron, 2007; Ho,

2010). This was caused by pupils' inability to understand the language and had led to confusion during teaching and learning process in the classroom. Pupils were unable to understand the language of instruction and also the content in the textbook (Nordin, 2005). Those who preferred the teaching of Mathematics and Science in English however also had rejected the abolishment of PPSMI. In the end of 2015, the Ministry of Education introduced Dual Language Programme (DLP), an initiative under the Empowering Bahasa Malaysia and Strengthening English (MBMMBI) policy. With one of the main objectives is to boost pupils' English proficiency, DLP emerged as the result of previously reverted PPSMI but with different strategy (Yunus & Sukri, 2017).

Dual Language Programme is a government's initiative under the Empowering Bahasa Malaysia and Strengthening English language (MBMMBI) policy. The purpose of the programme is to give pupils the opportunity to use either English or Malay in Science, Mathematics, Information Technology and Communication, and Design and Technology. The objectives of this programme are to enable pupils to have access and explore wide range of knowledge in order to compete globally; to boost English proficiency; and to enhance pupils' future employability opportunities. In order for schools to implement DLP, the schools have to fulfil the criteria stated by the Ministry. The criteria for school to implement DLP are that the schools must have adequate resources, the Principal or Headmaster and teachers are willing to implement DLP, demand and support from parents, and the school achievement in Bahasa Malaysia should be at par (MOE, 2015).

DLP was first implemented in 2016 and had been questioned for its similarity with PPSMI. However, DLP differs with PPSMI as the latter gives pupils the opportunity to choose whether to use Bahasa Malaysia or English language as the medium of instruction. Looking the failure of PPSMI, it is important to look at the factors that affect the implementation of DLP. As stated by few researchers, the successfulness of dual language programme is determined by several factors such as the parents' acceptance and support towards the programme. Hence, the purpose of this study is to examine parents' perceptions towards the implementation of DLP and identify the factors affecting its implementation.

Objectives

The objectives of this study are to examine parents' perceptions towards the implementation of Dual Language Programme (DLP) in urban schools and their satisfaction towards the implementation of DLP in urban schools.

Research Questions

To facilitate this investigation, the research questions were formulated as follow: 1) What are the parents' perceptions towards the implementation of DLP in the urban schools? 2) How satisfied the parents towards the implementation of DLP in the urban schools?

Literature Review

Dual Language Programme (DLP) also known as bilingual education or two way immersion programme refer to academic programme where it uses two languages; English language and the native language of certain community (Lindholm-Leary, 2001). The objective of this programme is to ensure the pupils become proficient in English as well as their native language and each country implement this programme differently to serve their demographic context. It has been initiated since 1962 in Florida which the need to fulfill the non-English speaker as well as to preserve their culture at their government schools. However, the implementation of this programme is the use of English language as medium of instruction in Mathematics and Science subjects whereby Bahasa Malaysia remains as medium of instructions in other subjects.

There is a study done in United States schools conducted by Collier & Thomas (2004) conclude that the implementation of DLP benefits the pupils and gained supports from the parents, teachers and administrators. The programme is also successfully implemented because the stakeholders monitors and make improvement for the programme. This shows that involvement of the stakeholders viewing the programme and make betterment will benefits the pupils in academic performance.

DLP is a reverted programme after the abolishment of Teaching Mathematics and Science in English (PPSMI) in 2012 (Yunus, M. M., & Shukri, S. I. A. 2017). The decision of the abolishment of PPSMI was doubt by certain parties especially from parents in the urban area. As there is growing demands from the parents who wants their children to learn Mathematics and Science in English, the DLP was introduced. (Aziz and Nair, 2015). The concept of the DLP is similar to PPSMI whereby English is the medium of instructions of teaching Mathematics and Science. The differences are the resources and the selection of the pupils where for DLP the schools and the pupils are given option either to use English or Bahasa Malaysia during teaching and learning Mathematics and Science as for PPSMI it was compulsory for all Malaysian pupils to use English as the medium of instructions for both subjects.

Methodology

Research Design

The study employed a survey in which the researcher collected quantitative data with the aims of examining the perceptions and satisfaction by the parents towards the implementation of DLP in urban schools. The reason for adopting survey research is because the data can be collected in a short time of period (Piaw, 2016).

Respondents

The respondents of this study were comprised of 84 parents who their kids were involved with the DLP in the urban schools. They were chosen based on purposive sampling which the number of sample were non-probability and selected based on the accessibility, geographical proximity, availability and their willingness to participate in the study. The participants chosen have 1 to 3 years of experience in enrolling their child to this programme. Among the 84 respondents, 12 (14.3%) were males and 72 (85.7%) were females.

Instrument

The questionnaire items were adapted from the study of Efrini (2006). The questionnaire consisted of 3 sections: 1) their profile, 2) their perceptions towards the implementation of DLP in urban schools, and 3) their level of satisfaction and suggestion towards the implementation of DLP in urban schools. The first section contained 10 items, the second section contained 28 items using 5-point Likert scale and the third section was made up 2 open - ended items. The feedback from the open-ended items was categorized, coded and analysed depending on the extracted themes.

Data Collection Procedures and Analysis

Before proceeding to the actual study, a pilot study was conducted whereby a total of 20 parents were selected to answer all the items in the online questionnaires given. Majority of them took 20 minutes answering the questionnaire. Based on the feedback obtained, it showed that all respondents able to understand the items and respond by giving the answer for each item. On the week of collecting actual data, the researcher informed the parents about the purpose of the research and explained briefly on how to go about the questionnaire. All of them managed to fully answer the items in the online questionnaires and all the data obtained were then reported in frequency counts, percentage and mean.

Findings

Table 1

Parents' Profile

	Background	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	31 to 35 years old	27	32.1
	36 to 40 years old	27	32.1
	41 to 45 years old	22	26.2
	46 to 50 years old	6	7.1
	51 to 55 years old	1	1.2
	56 to 60 years old	1	1.2
Race	Malay	61	72.6
	Chinese	7	8.3
	Indian	14	16.7
	Others	2	2.4
Education Background	PMR/LCE	1	1.2
	SPM/MCE	8	9.5
	STPM	1	1.2
	Certificate	2	2.4
	Diploma	20	23.8
	Degree	41	48.8
	Master	10	11.9
	PHd	1	1.2
Salary	less than RM 1000	9	10.7
	RM 1001 - RM 2000	4	4.8
	RM 2001 - RM 3000	5	6.0
	RM 3001 - RM 4000	9	10.7
	RM 4001 - RM 5000	13	15.5
	RM 5001 - RM 6000	11	13.1
	more than RM 6000	33	39.3
Language Spoken at Home	Malay	40	47.6
	English	36	42.9
	Mandarin	1	1.2
	Tamil	1	1.2
	Mixed Language	6	7.1
How did you hear about DLP?	Friends	2	2.4
	School	79	94
	Media	2	2.4
	Others	1	1.2

Table 1 shows the profile of the parents. It describes the number and the percentages of the respondent profile. From the total respondents, majority of the parents which are 54 parents (64.2%) are less than 40 years old and only 2 parents (2.4%) are more than 50 years old. Besides that, majority of the respondents are Malay which are about 61 parents (72.6%). The second largest groups is Indian 14 parents (16.7%) and the smallest group is the other race as there are 2 parents (2.4%) from Punjabi and Dusun. The respondents among the parents also have different education background. 10 parents (11.9%) had their education

until secondary level. Majority of the respondents which are 41 parents (48.8%) had degree. Majority of the respondents which are 33 parents (39.3%) had more than RM 6000 income per month.

The parents also speak Malay Language with their children at home (47.6%). The second highest language spoken at home is English Language which are 36 parents (42.9%) speak using English Language. There were 6 parents (7.1%) speak using mixed language such as Malay Language and English Language and Mandarin and English Language. It shows that most of the parents use English language as medium of communication at home. Most of the parents (94.0%) know about this dual language programme from the school as the school brief the parents during the orientation day.

Table 2
Parents' Attitude towards DLP

Items	SD (%)	D (%)	NAD (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean
The goal of dual language programme (DLP) is to develop English Language	5 (5.95)	1 (1.19)	9 (10.71)	36 (42.9)	33 (39.3)	4.08
I think dual language programme (DLP) can increase children's motivation in learning.	4 (4.76)	-	19 (22.6)	40 (47.6)	21 (25.0)	3.88
Children learn English faster through dual language programme (DLP).	5 (5.95)	4 (4.76)	17 (20.2)	37 (44.0)	21 (25.0)	3.77
I hope my children can be proficient in speaking English through dual language programme (DLP).	4 (4.76)	3 (3.57)	6 (7.14)	38 (45.2)	33 (39.3)	4.11
I am proud because my children are selected in dual language programme (DLP).	3 (3.57)	5 (5.95)	20 (23.8)	26 (30.9)	30 (35.7)	3.89
I am proud because my children show good achievement in school through DLP.	3 (3.57)	5 (5.95)	18 (21.4)	34 (40.5)	24 (28.6)	3.85
I am worry my child does not understand the teacher's explanation in DLP class.	5 (5.95)	20 (23.8)	24 (28.6)	24 (28.6)	11 (13.1)	3.19
I am happy my child's English proficiency increases in DLP.	4 (4.76)	5 (5.95)	21 (25.0)	39 (46.4)	23 (27.4)	4.14
The DLP burden me.	28 (33.3)	26 (31.0)	23 (27.4)	7 (8.33)	-	2.11
I prefer to choose school which conducting DLP.	4 (4.76)	1 (1.19)	16 (19.0)	32 (38.1)	31 (36.9)	4.01
I read books and articles about DLP.	2 (2.38)	9 (10.71)	21 (25.0)	37 (44.0)	15 (17.9)	3.64
Overall findings						3.70

The following table displays the parents' attitudes towards the implementation of DLP in the urban schools. The overall mean score for this section is 3.70 that indicate the positive attitudes among the parents towards the programme. The data show that most of the parents prefer to choose school that implement DLP. This is proven through the result, whereby (75%) were preferred sending their children to the school that conduct teaching and learning

session of Mathematics and Science in English. Besides that, only (8.33%) respondents agreed that this dual language programme burden them and this item has the lowest mean score with 2.11 which indicate negative perception. This shows that most of the parents were willingly enrolled their child in this programme. As displayed in the above table, more than half of them (73.81%) were happy to see their child's English proficiency has increases and improved when they enrolled their child in DLP. This shows that the programme had meet the goal of the programme as to develop the English Language among the pupils. This is also proven with the next item as (82.14%) agreed that the goal of DLP is to develop the English Language. Besides that, the 72.61% respondents also agreed that through this programme, their child motivation in learning can be increased. . A total of 58 respondents (69.05%) agreed that they proud because their child show good achievement in school through the dual language programme.

Table 3
Parents' Attitude towards English Language

Items	SD (%)	D (%)	NAD (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean
Learning subject in English is better than in Malay Language	4 (4.76)	2 (2.38)	27 (32.1)	32 (38.1)	19 (22.6)	3.71
Items	SD (%)	D (%)	NAD (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean
If pupils are proficient in English, therefore it will help them in class.	4 (4.76)	3 (3.57)	9 (10.71)	37 (44.0)	31 (36.9)	4.05
Children have to learn English in early ages.	4 (4.76)	2 (2.38)	7 (8.33)	36 (42.9)	35 (41.7)	4.17
Children get confused when learning in Malay Language.	4 (4.76)	23 (27.4)	32 (38.1)	18 (21.4)	7 (8.33)	3.01
It is important to learn English to get better future life.	5 (5.95)	1 (1.19)	7 (8.33)	28 (33.3)	43 (51.2)	4.23
Knowing Malay Language and English makes people clever.	3 (3.57)	8 (9.52)	20 (23.8)	29 (34.5)	24 (28.6)	4.18
Overall findings						3.89

The table above shows the levels of parents' attitudes towards English Language, The overall mean score is 3.89 whereby the interpretation of the mean of the parents' attitudes towards the English Language is positive. As shown in Table 3, it is unarguable that the respondents were aware on the importance of English Language and will benefit their child in future as 84.5% of them agree with the statement. As they realised the importance of learning English, most of the parents agreed that the child has to learn the language in the early age.

Table 4
Parents' Support

Items	SD (%)	D (%)	NAD (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean
I speak English with my partner.	11 (13.1)	30 (35.7)	28 (33.3)	15 (17.9)	-	2.56
I speak English with my children.	2 (2.38)	6 (7.14)	20 (23.8)	34 (40.5)	22 (26.2)	3.81
I sent my children to English course.	8 (9.52)	27 (32.1)	24 (28.6)	18 (21.4)	7 (8.33)	2.87
I buy English storybooks for my children.	2 (2.38)	5 (5.95)	14 (19.7)	36 (42.9)	27 (32.1)	3.94
I buy English children films.	8 (9.52)	8 (9.52)	17 (20.2)	40 (47.6)	11 (13.1)	3.45
I buy learning English software for my children.	8 (9.52)	17 (20.2)	33 (39.3)	20 (23.8)	6 (7.14)	2.99
I make sure my children watched TV programme in English.	3 (3.57)	2 (2.38)	16 (19.0)	40 (47.6)	23 (27.4)	3.96
I take my children to the library.	1 (1.19)	12 (14.3)	32 (38.1)	27 (32.1)	12 (14.3)	3.44

Overall findings

3.38

The following table displays the parents' support in the implementation of DLP. The overall mean score for this section is 3.38 which indicate positive attitudes. The results reveal the support given by the parents in helping their child in learning Mathematics and Science in English in terms of acquiring the language. This is proven through the result, whereby 54 respondents out of 84 respondents speak English with their child. Besides that, 39 respondents agreed (20 agreed and 6 strongly agreed) that they took their child to the library. The respondents tried to inculcate reading habit among their child as they believe reading will help the child to acquire the language. This also could be seen in item 5 and item 7 where most of the parents admitted that they encouraged their child to watch TV programme and movie in English.

Figure 1 below shows the level of satisfaction by the parents on the implementation of the DLP and their child's progress in DLP. 91.7% of the respondents satisfied with the implementation of the programme in the schools. However, there were 8.3% of the respondents dissatisfied with the implementation of DLP in the urban schools as there were some weaknesses identified and some improvement should be done. From the figure below, 81% of the parents satisfied with their child's progress after their child enrolled in this programme.

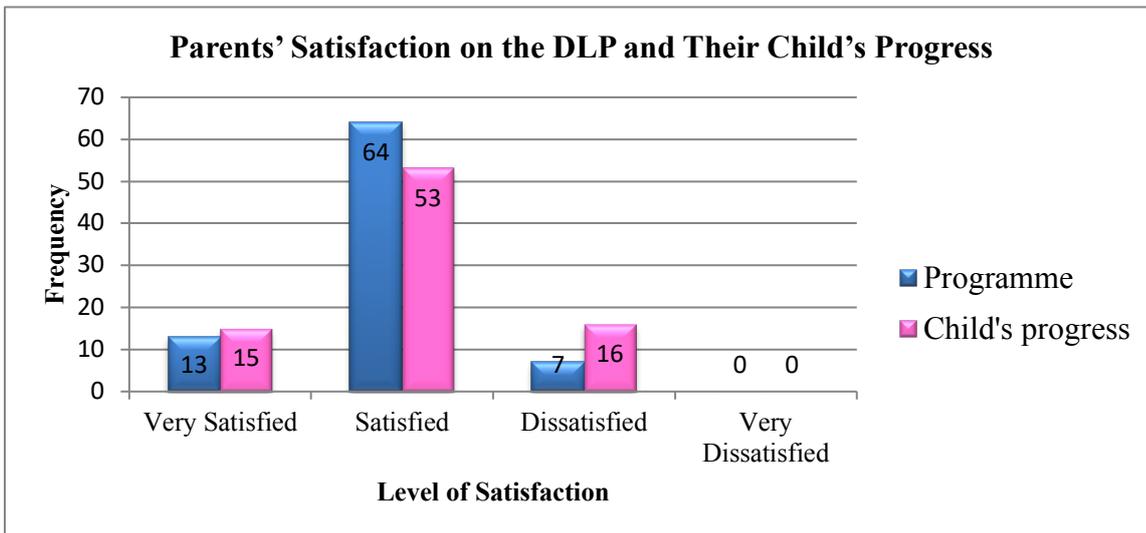


Figure 1. Parents’ Satisfaction on The Implementation of DLP

Parents who participated in this study had suggested few suggestions on improving the implementation of dual language programme in urban schools as shown in Figure 2 below. There were three main suggestions in improving the implementation of DLP in the urban schools. Out of 84 respondents, 44.05% of them suggested that the ministry or the school administrators should provide enough and current teaching and learning materials and resources for teaching and learning Mathematics and Science in English. Besides that, 29 respondents (34.5%) suggested that the teachers who are teaching Mathematics and Science in English should improve their proficiency. Moreover, a large number of them (17.86%) suggested that the ministry or school should increase the teaching and learning period for Mathematics and Science or the teacher should conduct extra classes for both subjects.

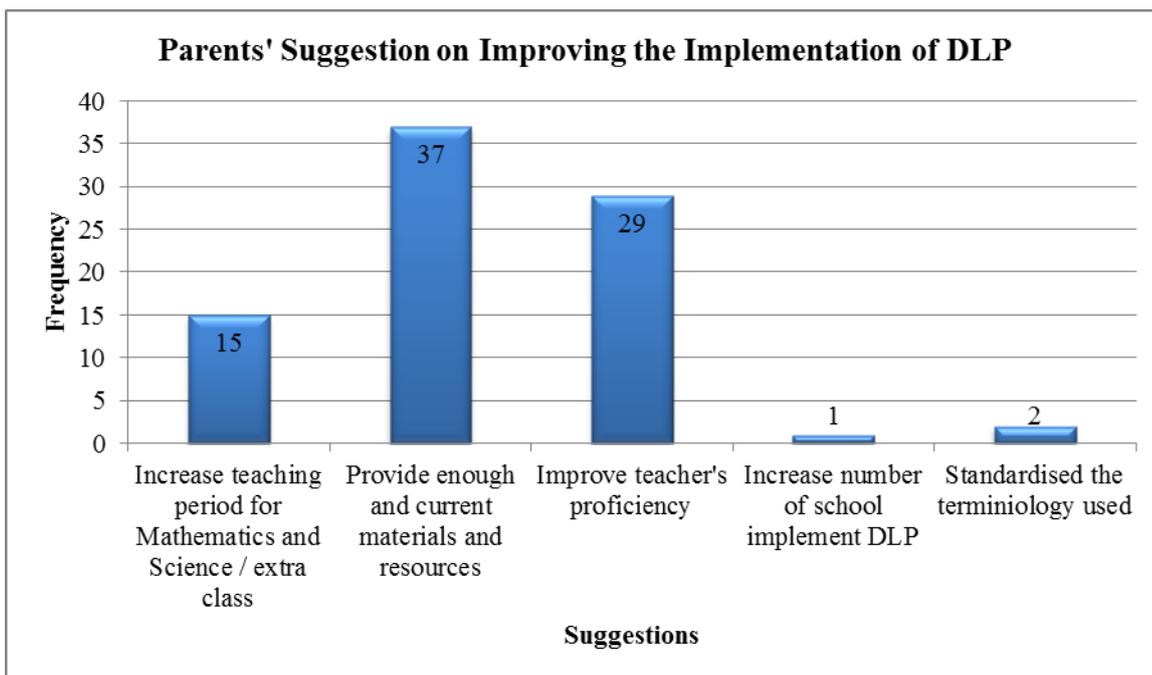


Figure 2. Parents’ Suggestion to Improve The Implementation of DLP

Discussion

In this section, the findings of the study are discussed in relation to the parents' perception and satisfaction towards the implementation of DLP. Based on this study, majority of the respondents possessed positive perceptions towards the implementation of DLP in the urban schools. Parents' perceptions towards the implementation of DLP are described with regards to attitudes towards DLP and English language as well as parental support. The main objective of DLP is to improve pupils' English proficiency and for this reason, parents chose to enrol their child in DLP. As asserted by Davis et al (2013), language preferences are influenced by the importance of English and to master the language and these served as the driven factor to the parents to choose DLP. IT is also supported by Baldauf et al (2011), that parents choose for schools that provide English linguistic environment for several reason such as a better quality education (Nepal) and better exposure to English (Malaysia). It is also supported by Lao, 2004; & Romero-gonzalez, 2008 that proofed parents' believed that their children would be more clever and confidence besides getting better job in future after learning English since early age. This shows that the parents are aware on the importance of English language and expose the language to their child as early as possible by providing suitable learning environment.

The other findings show that the parental support towards the implementation of DLP is good. According to Barbara (1996), most parents who keep positive attitudes toward the early English education would provide variety ways to support their child's learning. The parents were committed and actively support their child to be proficient in the language. Alanis and Rodriguez (2008) in their study found that parents were committed and actively participated in the programme and activities held by the school in order to sustain the bilingual programme.

In relation to parents' suggestion towards the improvement of the programme, the parents hope that some action should be taken as to improve the teacher' proficiency as to make sure that it will not affect their child's performance in acquiring the language. Inability of the teachers to use the language to convey the content effectively will cause the pupils to be demotivated as they could not understand the lesson (Hamidah et al, 2005 & Hamzah et al, 2009). Although general language and language of Mathematics and Science are two different thing but language plays important role to convey the content effectively to the pupils.

From the study, it is found that the parents suggested to the ministry or the school administrators should provide enough and current teaching and learning materials and resources for teaching and learning Mathematics and Science in English. Most of the schools used teaching aids and references from the previous PPSMI. However, the appropriateness of these resources and materials were questioned, as they did not suit the content of the present syllabus. Supported by few researches on the importance of having enough teaching and learning materials and resources (Bujang & Mohd Hamzah, 2016; Idris, 2006; Mansor, 2011; Surif, 2006), providing the teachers and pupils with suitable and enough materials, resources and references helped to make sure that the objectives of the programme were achieved. Suitable and sufficient teaching and learning materials help to support and facilitate the teaching and learning process in the classroom. Interesting materials and teaching aids that suit the need and interest of the pupils could attract the pupils' attention as serve as motivator to encourage them to learn. This is further supported by Suhaimi (1995), teaching materials are important in order to improve teaching and learning process.

Conclusion

The successfulness of a programme was determined by several factors and one it is parents' attitudes and support towards the programme. As indicated, the parents have positive attitudes toward the programme and the language as well as very supportive towards

the programme. Besides that, the parents also satisfied with the implementation of DLP and theory child's performance. Realising the importance of English language for their child and the benefits of being bilingual, parents take the opportunity to enrol their child in DLP. Parents choose English as their preferences as English has become the international language especially in education and technology. This is to make sure that their children are able to compete and survive in this globalization era.

The results of the study also shed a light on the importance of teaching and learning materials to improve the implementation of DLP and achieve the objectives. Along with the experience the teachers had during the implementation of PPSMI, it is hope that with enough support from the government, ministry and the school in providing enough resources and facilities, the implementation of DLP will continue to achieve the objectives. Since DLP is still at the early stage of implementation, it is hope that necessary actions should be taken as to improve the programme. The deficiency of materials and teachers' proficiency as discussed earlier, must be taken seriously as it gives impact to the implementation of DLP. Updated materials, teaching aids and references should be provided as to suit the needs of 21st century learning. With the emphasis of 21st century learning is expected we will be able to achieve the national educational aspirations, which is to produce students who are able to compete globally.

Besides that, teacher plays an important role as the implementers of the programme. They need to prepare themselves ready to conduct the lesson by improving their language proficiency. The ministry and school administrators should prepared courses or programme for the teachers to have their knowledge and skills as well as proficiency improved.

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