

Easy Learning Malay Proverbs Via Mobile Application

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ABSTRACT

Malay proverbs represent parables, sayings, quotes, and words of wisdom that carry moral and cultural values. Proverbs highly value manners regarding verbal, non-verbal communication and were traditionally created with specific purposes. However, their use in society has been declining. Besides, the students tend to misunderstand the proverbs due to a lack of understanding of the meaning of the proverbs. Hence, this study developed Easy Learning Malay Proverbs Via Mobile Application (Proverbs+) to support learning Malay proverbs based on the Bahasa Melayu textbook for Form 4 and Form 5. The Proverbs+ was implemented on a mobile platform where smartphone evolves as an effective teaching and learning tool for online education. The application was tested through the System Usability Scale (SUS) that involved 27 respondents who were 16-17-year-old students. From the evaluation that was conducted, the application achieved a good usability score, which is 81.57. The result indicated that Proverbs+ is usable for learning proverbs. A current limitation of Proverbs+ is that it only runs on the Android platform. Future development will extend to other platforms to give teachers and students more exposure to Proverbs+ as a teaching and learning tool.

Keywords: proverbs, learning, mobile application, usability, SUS questionnaire

INTRODUCTION

Figurative language has been extensively studied in psycholinguistics, primarily focusing on English and other European languages, but languages worldwide, including Malay, offer rich, untapped resources for communication. Language is essential for human interaction, allowing individuals to express thoughts, emotions, and cultural values. Malay proverbs, in particular, have historically been regarded as markers of intellectuality and have played a central role in communication, deeply rooted in social norms, cultural customs, and the natural world. These proverbs, often passed down by elders, offer profound insights into life and values; thus, preserving them is vital for maintaining cultural heritage. Proverbs enrich communication and offer students a meaningful way to convey their thoughts and ideas.

However, modern students face challenges in learning and using Malay proverbs, as they are not as integrated into contemporary education. Given this gap, a mobile application, Proverbs+, is introduced for learning Malay proverbs and idioms. It can help bridge the divide, supporting students in preserving this linguistic heritage while enhancing their communication skills. Using such technology, students can incorporate proverbs into their daily lives, improving their writing, essays, and assignments, ensuring that the Malay language thrives across generations (Abu Bakar et al., 2020).

This study has three main objectives. First, it aims to design a storyboard for a mobile application focused on teaching Malay proverbs to high school students. Second, it seeks to develop the mobile application, providing an interactive platform for students to learn and engage with Malay proverbs. Finally, the study will evaluate the application's usability to determine its effectiveness as a learning tool for enhancing students' understanding of Malay proverbs. These objectives together aim to create a meaningful and user-friendly solution to help preserve and promote the learning of Malay proverbs among the younger generation.

Related Work

Proverbs, figurative expressions rooted in ancient language, often use archaic words that have either been replaced with modern equivalents or borrowed from English. As proverbs are no longer considered markers of intellectual sophistication, the youth tend to favor more contemporary language to express themselves.

According to Shaharir (2016), Malays traditionally avoid direct speech, instead opting for parables and allusions drawn from keen observations of nature, often beginning with phrases like “bagai,” “bak,” or “umpama.” However, many in the current generation, especially urban youth, struggle to grasp the meaning of these proverbs, as they lack familiarity with the animals, plants, or objects referenced. Some species central to proverbs have even become extinct, further complicating comprehension (Anwar & Jalaluddin, 2021).

Hasmidar (2016) highlights that students’ difficulty in understanding proverbs stems from limited knowledge of lexical meanings, a lack of contextual background on the objects referenced, and the inability to apply such contextual knowledge when interpreting proverbs. School students, in particular, demonstrate a higher awareness of idioms and parables introduced earlier in their education. However, they struggle with proverbs, making it harder to use these rich linguistic tools to enhance their communication and language skills (Musnif et al., 2011). This study addresses the growing gap in proverbial comprehension within the Malay language.

The poor command of proverbs among students is a significant concern in education, as many struggle to use proverbs appropriately in writing or exams. According to Sanmugam and Lambri (2021), students with moderate to weak understanding of proverbs hamper their ability to comprehend their meanings and limit their use in language learning activities. This scenario will affect overall language skills. This issue is further compounded by a lack of in-depth research on the meaning of proverbs, preventing students from connecting new knowledge to existing understanding and organizing information based on experience (Musnif et al., 2011).

Understanding proverbs becomes easier when students know their origins and can appreciate the values they convey. However, students often focus on memorizing the literal meanings of proverbs rather than exploring their contextual significance. As a result, they face challenges in applying proverbs correctly in both written and oral communication. To address this gap, there is a need to guide students in learning proverbs contextually, enabling them to use these linguistic tools effectively in the proper context and to enhance their language proficiency.

The traditional direct teaching model, where the teacher is the primary interactive resource and tools like blackboards, books, or videos are used, lacks the interactivity and creativity that modern students crave. Today’s younger generation, often called digital natives, prefer learning through technology such as video games, email, and instant messaging (Sholeh, 2019). This lack of engaging, interactive content can hinder students’ understanding of social issues in their environment, as traditional teaching methods often fail to capture their interest or foster a conducive learning atmosphere (Hamada & Hassan, 2016).

Moreover, these passive, instructor-centred methods create a communication gap between teachers and students, making learning less effective (Jailani et al., 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has further emphasized the need for more dynamic approaches, as it triggered a global shift towards online learning, with increased use of language apps, virtual coaching, and video conferencing tools (Li & Lalani, 2020). For 21st-century students, technology-based learning methods that promote active engagement are far more effective, highlighting the need for creative and interactive teaching approaches.

The importance of this project lies in its ability to create a creative and engaging environment for teaching Malay proverbs, offering users more flexibility and time to learn. By developing a mobile application, this project aims to make learning proverbs more enjoyable, removing the need for traditional methods and providing a more interactive and accessible learning experience.

While the app serves as a valuable resource for students, it also functions as a supplementary teaching aid for educators, enhancing the classroom experience without replacing the role of teachers. Additionally, the project seeks to attract more learners to Malay proverbs, helping preserve the language for future generations. This

application plays a crucial role in language education and cultural preservation by offering an easy and enjoyable learning method.

METHODOLOGY


Planning

A clear understanding of learning application technology is essential to developing this application. According to Corral, Sillitti and Succi (2016), gathering requirements and planning tasks are modest and focus on creating an initial set of ideas that welcome and respond to change, rather than going through rigorous planning. Learning how to create an application should be done before the development process to avoid unnecessary issues throughout the application development process. In addition, learning about the software to use is also very important, which has been done in this phase. This phase also identifies and records a description of the problem, the purpose of the project, the scope of the project, and the importance of the project. The description of the problem was identified through social media and observations made in the surrounding world.

Design

The design phase begins with the flowchart being designed to chart the user’s movement system as they use the application. Flow diagrams display the processes involved throughout the user’s application use. Storyboards consist of rough sketches or application development plans. Storyboards also serve as guides for developing Proverbs+. Table 1 shows the design of Proverbs+.

Table 1 The design of Proverbs+

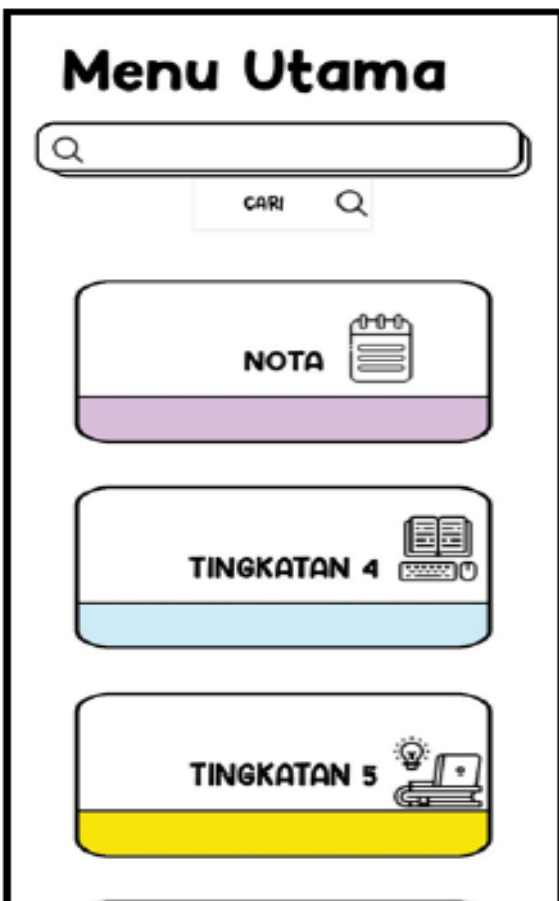
Design	Description
	<p>Reduce high memory load and increase student motivation.</p> <p>Example:</p> <p>This application uses GIFs to help students remember each of the proverbs.</p>



When students are challenged, it is intended that their satisfaction may serve as both their own reward and more memory work.

Example:

This Proverbs+ has a quiz section to challenge their mind.



Connect various learning activities to the objectives and requirements of the students.

Example:

Options for learning are provided for students based on their level.

Development

The development of this application begins based on the plans and concepts drawn up during the design phase. During this process, multimedia elements such as buttons, audio, and pictures are applied to each application screen. At the same time, application design combines user interface (UI) and user experience (UX). While the user interface fits the overall style of the application (including colors, fonts and the overall look and feel), the UX focuses on actual functionality and ease of use (Liu et al., 2018).

Evaluation

The evaluation utilized the SUS questionnaire as an evaluation instrument to measure the usability of Proverbs+. Feedback from users is used to enhance the application. This also involves addressing any bugs that may still be present in the system. Respondents must answer the 10 SUS questionnaire, rated from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Table 2 shows the SUS scale.

Table 2 The System Usability Scale (SUS)

No.	Item
1	I think that I would like to use this system.
2	I found the system unnecessarily complex.
3	I thought the system was easy to use.
4	I think that I would need the support of a technical person to be able to use this system.
5	I found the various functions in the system were well integrated.
6	I thought there was too much inconsistency in this system.
7	I would imagine that most people would learn to use this system very quickly.
8	I found the system very cumbersome to use.
9	I felt very confident using the system.
10	I needed to learn a lot of things before I could get going with this system.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The testing aimed to determine the usability of the developed application using the SUS questionnaire. The calculation to get the score of SUS must follow the procedure:

1. Prepare Questionnaire

- 10 items (odd = positive, even = negative).
- 5-point Likert scale (Strongly Disagree = 1 to Strongly Agree = 5).

2. Adjust Scores

- For odd-numbered items: calculate score = (user rating – 1).
- For even-numbered items: calculate score = (5 – user rating).

3. Sum Scores

- Add up all adjusted scores (range = 0 to 40).

4. Multiply by 2.5

- Final SUS score = sum × 2.5.
- Score range = 0 to 100.

After calculating the final SUS score, it must be interpreted to show whether the Proverbs+ performance is excellent or poor by adding all the scores and scaling them from 0 to 100. The findings indicated that the usability score for the Proverbs+ is 81.57, which is a Grade A or Excellent rating. It shows that Proverbs+ is usable as one of the tools for learning proverbs. Table 3 shows the SUS score interpretation (Majjodi et al., 2019).

Table 3 The SUS Score Interpretation

SUS Score	Grade	Adjective Rating
> 80.3	A	Excellent
68 – 80.3	B	Good
68	C	Okay
51-68	D	Poor
< 51	F	Awful

CONCLUSION

The development of Proverbs+ successfully addressed students’ difficulties in understanding Malay proverbs by providing an engaging learning platform. The project ensured a structured process from design to evaluation by being guided through the agile methodology. The application achieved a SUS score of 81.57, above the global benchmark of 68, indicating excellent usability. This outcome demonstrates the application’s effectiveness as a teaching and learning tool that benefits students and teachers while supporting the preservation and appreciation

of Malay cultural heritage. Currently, Proverbs+ is limited to Android devices only. Future work can be considered for IOS users and can be enhanced by including English and Chinese languages.

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