

Research Unit for Languages & Linguistics of Sabah (RULLS) - Brown Bag Seminar Series for Languages & Linguistics, 2/2018

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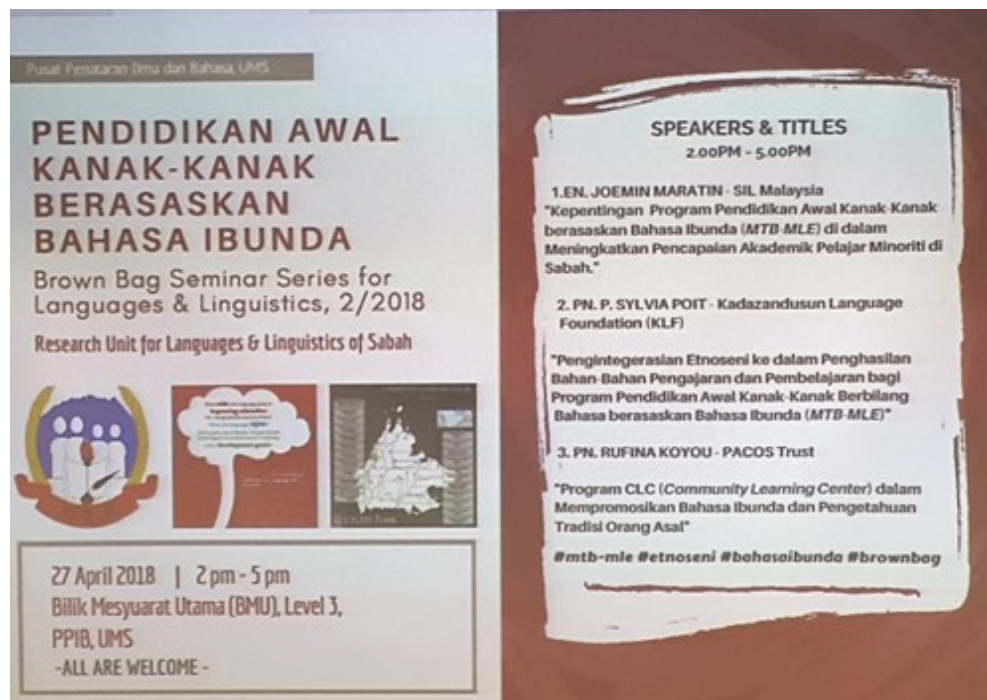
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Theme: *Pendidikan Awal Kanak-Kanak berasaskan Bahasa Ibunda*

“If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart” – Nelson Mandela.

Bahasa Ibunda. The mother tongue. It is defined as a child’s first language, the language learned in the home with older family members (UNESCO, 2007, p. 6) and lies at the heart of the Mother Tongue-based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE). The vital information to take away from the lengthy phrase of Mother Tongue-based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) is best summarized by UNESCO itself: “Since SDG 4 is so foundational to the other Sustainable Development Goals, without mother tongue-based multilingual education the other 16 goals will remain unachievable”[1].



The announcement by the Minister of Education, Dr. Maszlee Malik, that he plans to focus on “increasing the number of students with multi-language skills” (NST, 22/05/2018[2]) could not have come at a more positive time. The Research Unit for Languages & Linguistics of Sabah (RULLS) at Universiti Malaysia Sabah is delighted to be on the same wavelength as the Minister of Education. The Research Unit for Languages & Linguistics of Sabah (RULLS) successfully held its second Brown Bag Seminar Series for Languages & Linguistics on 27 April 2018 with the theme *Pendidikan Awal Kanak-Kanak berasaskan Bahasa Ibunda* (Mother

Tongue-based Early Childhood Education) at Bilik Mesyuarat Utama, Pusat Penataran Ilmu dan Bahasa, Universiti Malaysia Sabah. Following the success of the previous Brown Bag seminar with two speakers, the third seminar featured three speakers who are each very experienced in early childhood education in the mother tongue. The three speakers, Mr. Joemin Maratin (SIL Malaysia), Mdm. P. Sylvia Poit (Kadazandusun Language Foundation), and Mdm. Rufina Koyou (PACOS Trust) took turn speaking to a packed audience of 116 people mainly from the public. The audience was welcomed by the Dean for the Centre for the Promotion of Knowledge and Language, AP. Dr. Jualang Azlan Gansau.

Among those in attendance were Mdm. Rita Lasimbang, CEO of Kadazandusun Language Foundation; Dr. Mark Miller, Academic Director for SIL Sabah, Mdm. Evelyn Annol of IPGK Kent and lecturer in the Bachelor of Teaching (Hons) Kadazandusun Language for Primary Education and several graduates from the first batch of the

IPGK Kent's pioneering degree program; members of the Lotud Community Learning Centre; preschool teachers from Tadika Harmoni Penampang, Tadika Suriaku Limbanak, Tadika Sacred Heart Inobong; indigenous language advocates and university staff. PACOS Trust as well as the Lotud Community Learning Centre had both set up their exhibition booths which featured interesting publications and indigenous languages teaching materials.

The papers presented were '*Kepentingan Program Pendidikan Awal Kanak-Kanak berasaskan Bahasa Ibunda (MTB-MLE) di dalam Meningkatkan Pencapaian Akademik Pelajar Minoriti di Sabah*' by Mr. Joemin Maratin, '*Pengintegrasian Etnoseni ke dalam Penghasilan Bahan-Bahan Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran bagi Program Pendidikan Awal Kanak-Kanak Berbilang Bahasa berasaskan Bahasa Ibunda*' by Mdm. P. Sylvia Poit, and '*Program CLC – Community Learning Centre – dalam Mempromosikan Bahasa Ibunda dan Pengetahuan Tradisi Orang Asal*' by Mdm. Rufina Koyou. The attendees and speakers then had an active session of Q&A that lasted for about 30 minutes after which was followed by presentation of certificates to the speakers. The closing speech was delivered by Dr. Jeannet Stephen, Head of the Research Unit for Languages and Linguistics of Sabah (RULLS).

As part of its core research areas, RULLS is committed to continue engaging with relevant agencies which promote the mother tongue-based multilingual education. The Brown Bag Seminar Series features local and international speakers sharing and highlighting their research in the fields of languages and linguistics - two very rich sources of research data on Sabah's indigenous communities. Interested individuals or organizations may contact Dr. Jeannet Stephen (jeannets@ums.edu.my) or Dr. Jane Wong (jane@ums.edu.my) for further details.
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[1] <https://bangkok.unesco.org/content/mother-tongue-based-multilingual-education-key-unlocking-sdg-4-quality-education-all>

[2] <https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2018/05/372106/edu-minister-pushes-multi-lingual-learning-nurture-generation-good-values>