

**THE USE OF
'THE PEARL' SONG LYRICS WRITING
AND
PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES
IN TEACHING
FORM FIVE VOCATIONAL STUDENTS**

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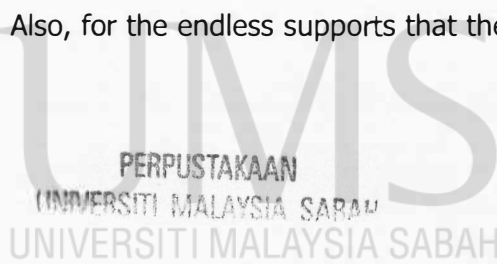
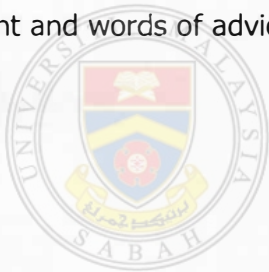
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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the use of 'The Pearl' song lyrics writing and performance activities in teaching form five vocational students who come from rural areas specifically form five vocational students who study at Sekolah Menengah Teknik Likas, Kota Kinabalu to answer 'The Pearl' novel question (Section D, Paper 2: English 1119 SPM Examination). Data were gathered through experiments that have been conducted to the experimental group as well as to the control group. The data collected was analyzed descriptively using t-Test, average, improvement count and percentage. Moreover, data were also gathered from interviews and observation. The results show that the participants score higher result and better improvement when 'The Pearl' song lyrics writing and performance activities were used.



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ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki penggunaan aktiviti persembahan dan penulisan lirik lagu 'The Pearl' untuk mengajar pelajar-pelajar tingkatan lima vokasional yang datang dari kawasan-kawasan pedalaman khususnya pelajar-pelajar tingkatan lima vokasional Sekolah Menengah Teknik Likas, Kota Kinabalu untuk menjawab soalan novel 'The Pearl' (Bahagian D, Kertas 2: Peperiksaan SPM Bahasa Inggeris 1119). Data-data telah diperolehi daripada eksperimen yang telah dijalankan ke atas kumpulan eksperimen dan kumpulan kawalan. Data-data yang diperolehi dianalisa dengan menggunakan Ujian t, nilai purata dan peningkatan dan juga peratus. Selain dari itu, data-data juga diperolehi daripada temubual dan pemerhatian. Hasil kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa pelajar-pelajar mendapat keputusan yang lebih baik dan peningkatan yang lebih tinggi apabila aktiviti persembahan dan penulisan lirik lagu 'The Pearl' digunakan dalam mengajar pelajar-pelajar untuk menjawab soalan novel 'The Pearl' (Bahagian D, Kertas 2: Peperiksaan SPM Bahasa Inggeris 1119).

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

Literature, in a broad sense, is compositions that tell stories, dramatize situations, express emotions, and analyze and advocate ideas (Roberts, 2003). Literature has been a significant part in the English language education in Malaysia, particularly in the level of secondary school. According to Applebee (1991), literature course should include works of substantial quality and interest that will promote beneficial study and discussion.

In the KBSM (New Integrated Curriculum for Secondary School) approach to English language teaching which emphasizes on the language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary (Meng, 1995), literature has become a vital part of the system. Regarding this matter, Sidhu and Loo (2002) mentioned, "Current language teaching pedagogy reflects a revival of a literature enriched curriculum. This move is seen in the current Malaysian KBSM English language syllabus where the infusion of literary elements is clearly spelled out in its objectives i.e. at the end of secondary school education, students should be able to read and understand prose and poetry for information and enjoyments." In addition, in referring to Haji Senan Ibrahim, the Director of Textbooks Division of Ministry of Education Malaysia, the Literature in English component complements previous efforts by the Ministry of Education to encourage the study of literature. It incorporates the study of literature in the language classroom. This component answers to literature and not just language. The aim is that this component would found the base for an appreciation of literature in English with its concerns with

humanity, values, beliefs and customs as well as its great intellectual tradition and heights of imagination and creativity. It is hoped also that the study of the literature would enhance the learning of the language in providing interesting language in context for students.

According to Robert (2003), literature may be classified into four categories, or genres: (1) prose fiction, (2) poetry, (3) drama, and (4) nonfiction prose. Usually the first three are classified as imaginative literature. Prose fiction, or narrative fiction, includes myths, parables, romances, novels, and short stories. Basically, the Literature in English component covers selected poems and short stories in specific collections and novels for the secondary school level. For SPM (Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia) level, students have to cover 5 short stories, 6 poems and a novel. Out of the three choices of novels which are "Jungle of Hope," "The Return," and "The Pearl," one is to be selected (Ho, Semanjalan, Omar, Muthusami, 2003).

As one of the selected novels, "The Pearl" by John Steinbeck has the criteria for the text appropriateness which are interesting content, accessible language, and attractive physical features (Chitravelu, Sithamparam, Choon, 1997). In terms of the literature activities, Chitravelu, Sithamparam, and Choon stated that there are 3 phases of activities; one is preparing for the text: the pre-reading stage: before the encounter of the text. Two is working with the text: the while reading stage where activities focus on the language and content of text. Three is working out from the text: the post-reading stage where the text is used as a springboard for extension activities. For the third phase which is the working out from the text, there are numbers of follow up activities that teachers can utilize this phase especially to enhance students understanding, memorization, and interest in the novel or the story. These activities can enable students reading experience to be enjoyable. As stated by Chitravelu, Sithamparam, and Choon, the activities can be in term of oral

or writing activities. As we go along, we will look at a set of activities that cover both of oral and writing activities which are the lyric writing and performance of the story 'The Pearl.'

1.1.1. "The Pearl" lyrics writing and performance activities

As a guide, "The Pearl" lyrics writing and performance is a set of activities in which after the students have finished reading the novel and studying the literary elements (such as the plot, characters, and themes as they go along the story), the students are given a creative cooperative writing task in which they have to write "The Pearl" song lyrics in which the lyrics has to tell about the story or in other words, they have to write a story-type songs. According to Cox (2000), in story-type songs, which occur most often in country, folk, and some pop, rock and alternative, the words may convey a particular time and place and paint a picture of the character(s), feelings and events with colorful adjectives, adverbs, metaphors and other devices that also help to make the story more specific. In just few lines of verse, words can establish when and where the action (what) is happening, who is doing it and how he or she feels about it. In doing this, the students are told to include as much as possible the plot, the characters, and the themes into the lyrics. The lyrics can be modified from any existing songs that they know, or, they can create their own song with their own lyrics.

They are to do this in a group of 5 to 6 students in a group. There will be 4 stages of the activities (please refer to Table 3.3.1.). First is to decide what song to choose and what to include in the lyrics. In doing this, the teacher gives freedom for the students to choose any song or any type of song that they prefer. If they decide to compose their own song then they can go straight on discussing the lyrics content.

The second stage is the writing of the lyrics. At this stage, the teacher acts as a facilitator and facilitates the students' discussion. At the end of the stage, the teacher will check and correct the students' lyrics before approving the lyrics.

In the next stage, the students practice singing the song with their own lyrics. The forth and final stage is when the groups perform their song to the class. They can do this with background music, using musical instruments or in acapella style. At this stage, while watching the performance, students can also read their friends lyrics through the lyrics sheets that are prepared earlier by the teacher. As the lyrics concern the content of the story, it is automatically also become the students' notes for the novel.

Next, the teacher will do video recording of the performance and produces video clips of the students' performance with the lyrics appear on the screen as the students perform the songs (please refer to Appendix 8). This video recording method is indeed a positive way of teaching as according to Wah (2005), cognitive psychologists support the use of more than one media of presenting information as it is shown to help students process information better. Wah also adds that Alessi and Trollip (2001) stated that computer diagrams, animations and video presentations have great potential for developing mental models.

1.2. Background of the Problem

The lyrics writing and performance activities are very much about coming out with a song of about something that the students have learnt. In many aspects, the use of songs in teaching language has proven to be an effective way of teaching language due to the factor of authenticity, as well as positive impact of using songs in teaching and learning.

In terms of authenticity, it is a very good way to expose the learners to the targeted language as well as facilitate their learning. Other than that, there is also a great connection between authentic material and students' motivation. According to Peacock (1997), many writers agree that authentic materials have a positive effect on learner motivation in the foreign language classroom, as they are more interesting or stimulating than artificial non-authentic material. Peacock, who conducted a research on the effect of authentic materials on the motivation of EFL learners, used American pop song as one of his materials. In his findings, he found out that the authentic materials increased students level of non-task behavior, concentration, and involvement in the target activity more than artificial material. In this case, a song written by the students themselves is indeed very authentic. Furthermore, McFerran-Skewes (2004) said that music has the ability to facilitate authentic self-expression and promote the achievement of group cohesion. In addition, Schoepp (2001) said that studies found out that music is often the major source of English outside the classroom and the exposure to authentic English is an important factor in promoting language learning. He also adds that from the students point of view, songs are fun, accessible, relaxing, emotive, and most importantly, they are highly memorable.

Moreover, on the other positive effects of songs activity, Abbot (2000) said that ESOL educators frequently use music to enrich the classroom experience

because music activities not only have the capacity to engage and motivate learners but also the power to make a language lesson a memorable, enjoyable event. Furthermore, Hamilton (1998) stated that the reasons for using music and songs are obvious: a pleasant change from book-based teaching, a common interest among students and teachers, and an excellent medium from the presentation of language. Meanwhile, Arban (1996) said that to teach through music and its song lyrics is a fun and lovely way to learn language, as well as being extremely affective. Also, Cullen (1998) mentioned; "As most teachers find out, students love listening to music in the language classroom. It can also be a teaching tool. Often students hold strong views about music and students who are usually quiet can become very talkative when discussing it." In addition, Clarke (2007) mentioned that there are many ways for using and exploiting songs in the classroom. They are for reinforcing grammar points, to teach vocabulary, developing listening skills, and stimulus for reading and writing.

Furthermore, Rogers (2006) quoted Burkart and Sheppard as said that music lowers the 'affective filter'. The affective filter can be described as a negative attitude towards learning caused by numerous personal factors in a student's life. When music lowers the affective filter it makes learning a fun and more natural activity. This means that they have a positive and open attitude towards acquisition because they see their need to learn. They recognize that the teacher has their best interests at heart. When they find themselves in a low stress environment they are not afraid to make mistakes. Music, movement, sound and song can be powerful tools in lowering the affective filter because they appeal to the emotions and to the more intuitive right side of the brain. It is on the right side of the brain that the melody of music and the emotion melodies can produce are perceived. These tools can help children to feel that there are going to have fun. To add, using music and songs in

the classroom can be a highly motivating force, for this is an area which is of direct relevance, importance and interest to most students (Sanderson, 1998).

1.3. Statement of the Problem

There have been many researches on the various ways of teaching English, particularly on literature components like the novel. However, there is no research that has been done specifically concerning the effects of lyrics writing and performance in teaching students, specifically vocational students from rural areas to answer literature writing question such as the Section D question in Paper 2 English (1119) SPM Examination Paper.

One factor that this study will investigate is the post-reading method used by the teacher to teach the novel and, how and what are the effects of the methods to the novel content learning outcome. The post-reading method used in this research is the 'The Pearl' song lyrics writing and performance activities. This method has several stages and it involves lyrics writing activity and also performance of the written song to the class.

Other than that, as part of social responsibility and taking the aspiration from the School of Education and Social Development interest, this study specifically focuses on the vocational students from rural areas. Basically, in terms of performance, the vocational students generally perform lower in the English 1119 subject in the technical school, as compare to the technical students.

This can be seen through the overall performance of the 2005 SPM English 1119 subject between the technical and the vocational students of Sekolah Menengah Teknik Likas, the school where the population of this research is selected. In 2005, the passing percentage for SPM English 119 for technical students is 97.5 percent while the passing for the vocational students is 79.02 percent.

In more recent development, for 2006 SPM, the score percentage for the vocational courses students is 81.5 with average grade of 6.9, which is lower than the score percentage of the technical students; 99.5 with average grade of 4.9. In terms of the entry requirement, the PMR (Penilaian Menengah Rendah) requirements for the vocational courses are also lower as compare to the PMR requirement for the technical course (www.sabah.edu.my/smt.likas/index.htm, 2007).

With regard to this matter, this research also concern in investigating whether the method can help the vocational students, specifically the ones from rural area, to answer the section D better, as the novel question is one of the challenging questions in the paper since it is about writing and literature.

1.4. Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of using 'The Pearl' song lyrics writing and performance activities in teaching form five vocational students from rural areas to learn 'The Pearl' novel. Specifically, this study objectives are;

1. To look at whether the use of 'The Pearl' song lyrics writing and performance activities help the students in answering the novel question better.
2. To identify the difference between the conventional way and the use of 'The Pearl' song lyrics writing and performance activities as compare to the conventional ways (such as giving exercises and notes) in terms of the effectiveness of the activities to the form 5 vocational students from rural areas.
3. To analyze whether the students learn the novel better after they use of 'The Pearl' song lyrics writing and performance activities.

1.5. Research Questions

1. Do the use of 'The Pearl' song lyrics writing and performance activities help the students in answering the novel question better?
2. Is there a difference between the conventional way and the use of 'The Pearl' song lyrics writing and performance activities compare to the conventional ways (such as giving exercises and notes) in terms of the effectiveness of the activities to the form 5 vocational students?
3. Do the students to learn the novel better after they use of 'The Pearl' song lyrics writing and performance activities?

1.6. Hypothesis

Ho1: There is a difference in terms of effectiveness between the conventional and 'The Pearl' lyric writing and performance activities in teaching the Pearl novel.

Ho2: The use of 'The Pearl' song lyric writing and performance activities in teaching 'The Pearl' novel will help the students in learning the novel better.

1.7. Research Significance

With regard to the aim, the study wants to see the advantages and weaknesses of using such activities for future consideration especially for the English teachers involve in the teaching of English language literature. Moreover, this study also concerns with whether the activities can help I students to improve in the language, specifically in the literature and novel part.

To conclude, it is to see whether these activities should be encouraged or vise versa. Either way, it is hoped that this study can be a point of reference by the ministry or the curriculum board for such activities in the future. Other than that, it is also hoped that it can contribute to the improvement of the teaching and learning of English language in the country.



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1.8. Limitations of the Study

There are number of factors that limit the study. One is the time constraint. Normally, form five students do not finish reading the novel and studying the literary elements at the early period of the school term, and, towards the end of the school term, they may be busy preparing for their examination. Thus, the researcher has to manage the time well and ensure that the methodology can be done in the limited available time.

The teacher may have to read or make the students read to ensure that the students have finished reading the novel before they go through the pre-test. In doing this, teachers are encouraged to guide, help with the reading, and yet allow the students to independently respond to the work. To add, students must first understand the simple plotline of the tale before they enjoy its symbolic and thematic significance. So that students can take their own meaning from the story, it is essential to help them outline the surface story. (TeacherVision.com, 2007)

Furthermore, as this study focusing on rural vocational students, it is conducted at Sekolah Menengah Teknik Likas (SMTL), Kota Kinabalu. As what has being mentioned earlier, due to the time constraint, the study should be done in Kota Kinabalu as research outside Kota Kinabalu would require more time and that would not be practical. The school has being selected as it is the only school in Kota Kinabalu that offers full vocational courses, other than the technical courses (Platinum, 2006). Thus, this study cannot be generalized to the schools in whole Sabah. In addition, with regard to the rural factor, the number of population and samples also limited to the population available in the particular school, specifically the hostel vocational students who stay at the school hostel.

1.9. Operational Definition

1.9.1.

'The Pearl'

A novella/ novel by John Steinbeck that is inspired by a Mexican legend. The novel has the criteria for the text appropriateness which are interesting content, accessible language, and attractive physical features.

-Hardwig (2006)

-Chitravelu, Sithamparam, Choon. (1997)

The Pearl is the most teachable of all John Steinbeck's novellas. The story is simple but exciting. However, within its simplicity is the great complexity of a tale filled with imagery, symbolism, and thematic significance.

-TeacherVision.com (2007)



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1.9.2.

Song

A song combines words and melody in a particular time and rhythmic structure to express feelings, thoughts, dreams, intentions, or actions of a particular person or persons. The two basic components of a song are words and melody. Ideally, the words sing and give a story to the emotion of the melody, and the melody captures and enhances the meaning and feeling of the words. The words are organized into lyric lines with particular meters and rhyme schemes which ideally match the rhythms and sounds of the notes and "melodic phrases" that make up the melody.

-Cox (2000)

1.9.3.

Lyrics

The words of a song.* Lyrics is a verse or poem that is, or supposedly is, susceptible of being sung to the accompaniment of a musical instrument (in ancient times, usually a lyre) or that expresses intense personal emotion in a manner suggestive of a song.

-Encyclopedia Britannica (2006)

Many lyrics are written in tight rhyming structure and often use iambic line.

-Abbs and Richardson (1995),

Many songs or lyrics have been set to music, and some were written expressly for that purpose.

-Roberts (2003)

1.9.4.

Writing

A system for interpersonal communication using visible signs or graphic symbols on a flat surface. Malaysian educators classify writing as personal, professional/transactional or creative.

-Chitravelu, Sithamparam, Choon. (1997)

Writing involves the basic skills of handwriting or typing, spelling, constructing grammatical sentences, and punctuating. At higher levels, writing involves cognitive skills such as:

- gathering information and ideas relevant to the topic, and discarding what is not relevant
- organizing the information and ideas into a logical sequence
- structuring the sequence into sections and paragraphs
- expressing the information and ideas in a written draft
- editing the draft and writing out a final text

-Davies, Pearse. (2002)

1.9.5.

Performance

The action or an act of performing a (character in a) play, a piece of music, tricks, etc., especially in the presence of the public.* In relation to this, a performance art is an event in which one group of people (the performer or performers) behave in a particular way for another group of people (the audience).

-www.wikipedia.com (2007)

1.9.6.

Novel

A long written story, not in poetry, dealing with invented people and events*.

In literature, it falls under the category of prose fiction, or narrative fiction.

-Roberts (2003)

*-Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (1987)

A novel is a long story, usually a piece of fiction. It could be autobiographical. It tells the true life-story of the author. It could also be semi-autobiographical, dealing with part real-life and part fiction. It has many characters and focuses on the development of characters and the relationships between people.

-Cheah (2001)

1.9.7.

Rural

Rural refer to those who belong to the rural community, which includes the coastal areas of the river and sea, islands, interior province and mountain site who live more than 25 kilometers either from the city center, or the PPG (Pusat Pendidikan Gabungan). Besides their location, they can be also categorized as rural based on their facilities and economic factors.

-Dr. Nai'mah Yusoff of Center for Rural Education Development (CRED), School of Education and Social Development, Universiti Malaysia Sabah (2007)

1.9.8.

Vocational Students

Students who undergo vocational education courses in Sekolah Menengah Teknik (Technical Secondary School). This post PMR (Penilaian Menengah Rendah) course is undertaken by these students for 2 years.

There are 5 major field offered. One is the Engineering Skills Field that includes Electric, Electronic, Workshop Machine Practice, Metal Fabrication, Automotive, Building Construction, and Air Conditioning and Cooling courses. Two is Domestic Economy that includes Catering and Food Preparation, Fashion Design and Making Beauty Art Clothes, Children Nurturing, and Bakery and Confectionery courses. Three is the Commerce Field that concerns with the Business Management course. Four is the Agriculture Field that concerns with the Horticulture Decoration course, and five is the Plantation Machinery that includes Plantation Management. The availability of the fields and courses is different according to the different schools.

-Gerbang Web Rasmi Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia (2007)

1.9.9.

Novel Question (Section D, Paper 2: English 1119 SPM Examination)

The novel question in section D (literature component section) contains 1 subjective question that requires students to give perscnal response and the mark provided for the question is 15.

-Sidhu and Loo (2003)