

Interest and Motivation of Students on Traditional Prose Teaching in Malay Language Literature Components

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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v8-i11/5351>

DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v8-i11/5351

Published Date: 13 December 2018

Abstract

Nurturing human capital with a sense of pride in Malay Language and literature requires good determination and delivery. This study aimed to identify students' interest and motivation towards the teaching and learning of the Malay literary component of the traditional prose genre as well as to identify the level of teaching of Malay teachers according to the students' perceptions. A total of 50 Form 2 students in a secondary school of Gemas, Negeri Sembilan were randomly selected as sample by various ethnic groups and achievement levels. This study was a survey, in which the data were collected through questionnaires consisting of 32 items. The data collected were analyzed descriptively using SPSS version 21. The findings showed that the level of interest and motivation of the students towards the traditional prose genre was low and the traditional method of teaching caused the respondents not interested in studying this classic Malay literature. Therefore, the Malay Language teachers should not only strengthen themselves in pedagogy but also inspire the creativity to make the teaching and learning sessions fun that attract the students to be more motivated to absorb the knowledge acquired for their lifetime needs.

Keywords: Interest, Motivation, Teaching And Learning, Traditional Prose, Malay Teacher

Introduction

Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, I.V.Braginsky and Muhammad Haji Salleh are among the hardworking scholars who analyzed the various genres of traditional-era literature, and they have discovered some concepts that formulated the theory of beauty in traditional Malay literature. Traditional Malay Literature is also known as the Classical Malay Literature, both oral and written. Oral Traditional Malay literature is known as traditional poems covering *pantun*, *syair*, *gurindam*, *seloka*, spell, and so on while Traditional Malay Literature is a story or writing known as traditional prose such as Literature Hikayat, Epic Literature, Panji Literature, Literature of History and Religious Literature, is a symbol of the identity of the Malays and the indigenous way of their life which is inherent in the guidance of manners and proper conduct as a guide to forming good morals and personality in line with the nation's

development in achieving a balanced human capital in terms of spiritual, physical and intellectual.

To ensure classic Malay literary remains intact in society, early education has been introduced at school level. The subject of Malay Literature is merged into the Malay Language because the language and literature are inseparable. History proves that Malay can be the medium of knowledge conveyance such as physics, chemistry, engineering, medicine, economics, law, literature, and religion. More proudly, Malay Language is not only studied in this country but 35 countries in the world have offered Malay studies at their Higher Education Institutions (IPTs) that the United States is the nation most widely offer this study (Omar, 2015). It explains that a person who is proficient in the language is a reflection of his life practice because the language is very closely related to the living culture and society. Therefore, the high literary, cultural and religious values contained in the Malay Language need to be expanded and the introduction of literary work in the Malay Language helped in shaping the character of self. This has been supported by Zaitul Azma Zainon Hamzah who stated that language and literary work was complementary race treasures to show civilization and uphold a nation (Mohamad Munir, 2012).

The introduction of Literary Components or better known as KOMSAS in Malay Language is identified to contribute to the spiritual and emotional enhancement in line with the aspiration of the National Education Philosophy to produce physical, emotional, spiritual and intellectually balanced persons. KOMSAS was able to attract students to learn and appreciate literary work to strengthen Malay Language skills such as listening and speaking, reading and writing (Hashim, 2016). According to Mat (2006), Malay Language teaching will be more entertaining, fun that students can master the maximum language skills through literary materials. Language activities such as poetry, poetry, singing and acting make learning Malay more interesting not to mention when combined with information technology that is in line with new generation today. In order to achieve this, educators' wisdom affects teaching especially in Malay KOMSAS. The responsibility of a teacher not only to convey knowledge but also aim at enhancing the mastery and appreciation of knowledge by encouraging students' attitudes, interests, motivation and behaviour towards goodness through pedagogical methods and approaches. With that, students are able to pursue the era of globalization by having the wisdom of common sense of mind and morals.

Referring to a variety of Traditional Malay Literary studies or known as traditional prose and its decreasing recognition, especially the younger generation today have encouraged researchers to review pupils' reactions of traditional prose teaching and learning. Therefore, the purposes of this study were to:

- i. Identify the level of student's interest in the teaching of traditional prose genre according to their perceptions.
- ii. Identify the student's motivational level towards the traditional prose genre.
- iii. Identify the level of teaching of Malay teachers according to students' perceptions.

Literature Review

Concept of Interest

According to Long (1988), interest as a driving force encouraged someone to focus on one's, something or something followed, and individuals who are interested in learning will be encouraged to focus on learning (Crow & Crow, 1981 in Nasir & Hamzah (2013). This explains that a person who has an interest in a subject will encourage them to do their best to be acquainted with something. The influence of a strong interest on a subject will make the learning process easier. Without interest, something will be perceived as too difficult and the presentation of the concept will be stunted. Interests will also influence students to learn more about the content of the ongoing lessons as well as to determine the achievement of a person in a subject (Abu & Eu, 2014).

Effective learning exists if there is an interest in the students and the interest can be obtained through teaching methods and interesting learning activities (Jamian & Ismail, 2013). In learning Malay Language, among the objectives of teaching and learning KOMSAS are to cultivate the students' interest in reading as well as to appreciate the values and teachings embedded in literary work, and reading interest are closely related to the achievement factor (Osman, 1979). Therefore, cultivating learning interest should be given a priority because interest will shape change of attitude, perception and deep appreciation of the lesson. Interest is also very closely related to motivation. There are several factors that affect students who are less interested in literature, especially in classical or literary texts, that are a difficulty to understand classical texts, time constraints, lack of motivation and literary exposures, and literary teaching and learning that are less interesting (Hong, 2005).

Concept of Motivation

Motivation is the process of raising, maintaining and controlling interest (H. W. Bernard, 1965 in Nasir & Hamzah, 2013) while according to Mohd (2003) motivation is a combination of two words namely motive and action. This is because in the context of everyday life, to achieve a desired thing, one needs to have a motive and implement it through action. Therefore, motivation can be defined as an encouragement to act that influence the learning and achievement of students through counselling, conversing and mingling with them to enhance the willingness of learning (Sabri *et al.*, 2014).

The success and excellence of a student requires high motivation. Motivated students will actively participate in the learning process as well as master the existing knowledge and skills (Faizal & Williams, 2014). An effective learning process is needed in learning Malay Language, especially in traditional prose. The 21st century learning method and digital usage in learning Malay Language is said to increase students' motivation and interest (Langan & Mahamod; 2011 and Tuan Soh; 2011). However, teachers should identify the pupils' wants and abilities while planning creative fun teaching and learning sessions so that students are motivated to continue learning.

Research Methodology

This study was a survey and utilized a quantitative approach. The design of this study was appropriate to provide a comprehensive overview of the studied variables namely the level of interest, students' motivation and the level of teacher's teaching skill. The sample consisted of 50 randomly selected Form 2 pupils who were the first students to receive the new KSSM

curriculum. A set of questionnaires was distributed to obtain data and information. The questionnaire consisted of two sections; Part A which included respondents' profiles such as gender and their achievement grades in Malay Language while Part B was related to the students' interest in traditional prose, their motivation in the genre and the level of teacher's teaching skill. The students' interest and motivation data on traditional prose were analyzed by using descriptive statistics of SPSS for Windows (IBM SPSS 21) which involved percentage, mean and standard deviation in order to recognize the level of identity and character of the students through the study of literary work.

Findings

Respondent Demographics

Table 1:

Respondents Demographics

		f	%
Gender	Male	27	54
	Female	23	46
	Total	50	100.0
Achievement Grade Malay Language Examination	A	2	4
	B	6	12
	C	11	22
	D	11	22
	E	8	16
	F	12	24
	Total	50	100.00

Based on the Table 1 above, 50 respondents involved in this study consisted of 27 male students (54%) and 23 female students (46%) from various ethnic and religious groups as well as diversity in achievement in the Malay Language examination i.e. 8 respondents (16%) Grade A (Good); 22 respondents (44%) in Grades C and D (Moderate) and 20 respondents (40%) in Grades E and F (Weak). The diversity of races, religions and various levels of achievement facilitated researchers to observe the overall perceptions of pupils on the traditional prose genre which was difficult to understand by many students. The findings of the Zaitul Azma Zainon Hamzah (2007) confirmed that traditional prose was the most difficult genre and less desirable by students because of its difficult terms (Sulakah, 2017).

Students' Interest in the Traditional Prose Genre

Table 2 below shows that the student's interest in the traditional prose genre is at a moderate level because the average mean value is between 2.01 and 3.00.

Table 2:
Students' Interest in the Traditional Prose Genre

Bil	Item / Question	Min	SP
1	I am interested in the traditional prose genre	2.40	.700
2	Learning the traditional prose genre is fun	2.28	.757
3	I will ask teachers and parents if I have problems with the traditional prose genre	2.38	1.08
4	Learning traditional prose is not difficult and not boring	1.80	.495
5	I always watch classical stories like Musang Berjanggal, Hang Tuah	1.74	.777
6	I want to master the traditional prose genre better	2.08	.889
7	I always focus on traditional prose teaching	2.78	.790
8	I will ask for guidance to understand traditional prose	2.82	.918
9	I am interested in reading classical books such as Hikayat Hang Tuah and Sejarah Melayu	2.18	.978
10	I seek to understand the classic language by referring to the dictionary	2.32	.999

The findings clarified that the students' interest in the traditional prose genre was moderate low (mean = 2.40, SP = .700) and their desire to master this genre was also low (mean = 2.08). According to Long (1998), interest will motivate a person to focus and put attention on something learned. From the study, it is obvious that they are not interested with traditional prose genre, thus, they do not focus in class (Min = 2.78, SP = .790), not interested in reading classical materials (min = 2.18, SP = .978), watching classical video/movie (min = 1.74, SP = .777) and hesitate to ask (min = 2.38, SP = 1.08) or refuse to ask for guidance to understand traditional prose (min = 2.82, SP = .918). According to Ashaari (1996), enthusiasm has been a driving force for students to be more active in learning activities. In order to ensure students are active and able to focus on teaching and learning sessions, effective teacher teaching methods and techniques undoubtedly contribute to student's interest in the subjects (Said & Jamian, 2012). Many respondents agree with their statement that the traditional prose genre is considered as difficult and boring (min = 1.80, SP = .495) and less fun (min = 2.28, SP = .700) that causes them fail to understand the classical language (mean = 2.32, SP = .999) and lack of interest in traditional prose.

This coincides with Bloom's (1976) opinion in Royo & Mahmood (2011: 150-151) stating three reasons students are not interested in any subject:

- i. Assuming the subject is difficult
- ii. This subject fails to attract students
- iii. Teacher who teaches the subject

In other words, their satisfaction will be achieved when they study and understand the traditional prose genre in a fun atmosphere. The influence of high interest on certain subject also affects the level of student achievement.

Student Motivation Level towards the Traditional Prose Genre

Based on Table 3 below, student motivation towards the traditional prose genre is at moderate low level because the average mean value is between 2.01 and 3.00.

Table 3:

Students' Motivation Level towards the Traditional Prose Genre

Bil	Item / Question	Min	SP
1	I am confident that I can answer the traditional prose questions correctly and accurately in the examination	2.23	.764
2	I feel satisfied when I can finish traditional prose training	2.68	.808
3	I like to make extra traditional prose training besides the training given by the teacher	1.90	.735
4	I give more time to learn traditional prose than reading novels and short stories	2.08	.889
5	I am willing to ask my teachers and friends about traditional prose	2.76	.660
6	I will be accessing the internet for information on traditional prose	2.30	1.111
7	I am trying to gain a high score in traditional prose	2.66	.895
8	I am actively involved in traditional prose learning	2.18	.681
9	Activities in traditional prose give useful lessons in my life	2.82	.808
10	I am passionate about the activities in traditional prose teaching	2.24	.744

At item 3 which is "I like to make additional prose training in addition to the training given by the teacher" shows the lowest level (min = 1.90, SP = .735). In addition, the respondents are lack accessing to internet (min = 2.30, SP = 1.11) and less asking teachers and friends to master traditional prose (min = 2.76, SP = .660) because of lack of motivation to answer the question (min = 2.23, SP = .764) and to complete traditional prose training (min = 2.68, SP = .808). This suggests that almost all respondents are unwilling to add knowledge about traditional prose learning including completing the assignment given by teachers in the classroom. What's more, respondents agree that they are less likely to gain a good score in the traditional prose genre (min = 2.66, SP = .895) due to the low level of motivation. According to Faizal & Williams (2014), motivated students will actively participate in the learning process as well as be able to master existing knowledge and skills. In this study, it is clear that respondents are not motivated to learn traditional prose so they do not actively participate in learning (min = 2.18, SP = .681), the teacher's activity (min = 2.24, SP = .744) and they do not master the knowledge contained in the traditional prose genre (min = 2.82, SP = .808).

According to Nasir & Hamzah (2014) motivated pupils can be stimulated to include motives and incentives. Incentives encourage individuals to seek rewards such as scores, grades, gifts, certificate and so on while motives arise from natural impulses or interests, derived from dynamic forces affecting thoughts, emotions and behaviours (Hamsari & Yahaya, 2012). Hence, it is the role of teachers to stimulate them to inspire students to master the traditional prose genre. This is because motivation is very important in the process of teaching and learning as it can determine its direction and effectiveness.

Students' Opinion on the Teaching of Malay Language Teachers

Table 3 shows the students' perception on the aspect of assessment of the teaching of Malay language teachers as a whole which is at a moderate level because the average means are between 2.00 and 5.00.

Table 3:

Students' Opinion on the Teaching of Malay Language Teachers

Bil	Item / Question	Min	SP
1	My teacher is very knowledgeable about traditional prose	3.28	.904
2	I like the way teacher teaches traditional prose	2.82	.918
3	Teacher always helps me understand traditional prose	3.10	.735
4	The teacher asks me to read a traditional prose review before reading the text	1.88	.799
5	Teacher uses BBM like CDs, videos, and computers while teaching traditional prose	2.12	.824
6	Teacher often gives me the opportunity to ask questions about traditional prose	3.00	.857
7	I understand very well when teacher teaches traditional prose	2.72	.809
8	Teacher gives encouragement or praises to me to continue to engage in traditional prose	2.74	.777
9	During teaching, teacher focuses on and gives fair attention to all students	2.98	.916
10	Teacher's teaching in traditional prose is fun	2.66	.895

The findings show that among the highest students perceptions, students agree that teacher has deep knowledge in the Malay Language and literature (min = 3.28, SP = .904) and has a high attitude towards understanding the traditional prose genre (min = 3.10, SP = .735) as well as giving a chance to ask (min = 3.00, SP = .857) showing that teachers are highly skilled and knowledgeable in teaching. According to Ab Majid (2017), each teacher needed to master pedagogical knowledge so that the process of transfer of knowledge to pupils can be implemented perfectly while ensuring pedagogical knowledge was at parallel with the changing times and current needs. However, although teachers are highly knowledgeable in the traditional prose genre, many respondents agree that the way teachers teach traditional prose is less desirable (min = 2.82, SP = .918) due to less fun teaching (min = 2.66, SP = .895), less using CDs, videos, computers in traditional prose teaching (min = 2.12, SP = .824) and often use texts in traditional prose teaching sessions (min = 1.88, SP = .799). In today's technology and globalization, the teaching and learning process is focused not only on textbooks and chalk-and-talk teaching methods, but rather than the use of technology that provides modern and interactive learning to foster interest and create a learning environment effective.

Based on the perception of the students on the teaching of less creative and boring Malay teachers and conventional teaching methods, many students agree that they are unaware of the teaching of teachers (min = 2.72, SP = .809) and teachers who cannot focus on all students (min = 2.98, SP = .916) and less encouraging and compliments (min = 2.74, SP = .777) have become the cause of the teaching of the traditional prose genre less favorable to the students.

Conclusion

The main goal of KOMSAS teaching and learning in Bahasa Melayu is to strengthen language proficiency, to cultivate interest in reading and appreciation of literary work as well as literacy skills (Standard Curriculum for Secondary Language, 2016). Based on the research, the level of motivation and motivation towards KOMSAS teaching and learning is still low especially in the traditional prose genre. The high literary, cultural and religious values, contained in Malay Language need to be expanded and the introduction of literary work in this language helps in shaping the character of self. This is supported by Zaitul Azma Zainon Hamzah who stated that language and literary work are complementary race treasures to show civilization and uphold a nation (Mohamad Munir, 2012). The role of teachers is not only to equip themselves with pedagogy but it is wise to choose interesting and fun activities. The diversity of approaches and strategies should be emphasized by teachers because it will influence the enthusiasm, motivation and determination of students in learning traditional prose. In line with the era of information and communication technology, teachers should continue to make a paradigm shift using interactive and interactive media to enhance the level of knowledge and skills of students in line with the changes in the current globalization world (Meerah & Syed Mustapa, 2017). Along with the evolution of the internet and the development of this technology, the 21st century educators need to be willing to have knowledge in curriculum, pedagogy and technology skills in order to keep pace with the current education system's development (2016-2020 School Preservation Strategic Plan). This is because today's generation of students is often exposed to the development of computer-based technology and electronic equipment as they are born and grow up with the Internet and ICT environment (Oblinger & Oblinger, 2007). What's more, the ease of the internet and the technology is the most popular because it is easy to use when they are searching for a variety of information, related to teaching and learning (Arthur & Brafi, 2013). Therefore, educators should creatively apply technological advances in learning KOMSAS, especially the classic Malay prose so that this legacy can be aligned with Jamian, *et al.* (2012) in which teaching Malay becomes more interesting, meaningful and productive with the incorporation of multimedia use. Therefore, teachers need to integrate technology in determining the methods and techniques, used in teaching. This study is expected to be a clearer reference to anyone who is interested with literary and language learning.

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