

## Improving Comprehension of the 'Jungle Book Graphic Novel' Using Multimedia Package

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### Abstract

It is expected that English literature component is able to assist pupils in having a greater exposure to English language and hence enhance their English proficiency level. This action research was aimed to determine the effectiveness of using the Multimedia Package to improve Year 4 pupil's comprehension of the Jungle Book graphic novel. The participants of this research comprised of 10 pupils from an urban school in Cheras, Malaysia. The research instruments consisted of tests, semi structured interviews and observations. The data of this study was collected by using Test 1 and Test 2. The results revealed that all the participants achieved significant improvements in Test 2 as compared to Test 1. The findings from the interview and observations also concluded that the participants were engaged during the teaching and learning process which incorporated the use of the Multimedia Package.

**Keywords:** Year 4 pupils, Multimedia Package, comprehension, Jungle Book

### Introduction

The term *lingua franca* was first coined in the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century by the Italians during the Middle Ages. It is used as a means of communication between speakers whose native languages are different from each other. English is an international language or *lingua franca*, spoken and written in many countries (Harmer, 2001). Today, the English language is considered to be a common *lingua franca* across the globe, whereby it is extensively used as the main language in the communication process across many countries.

In 2006, the literature component was first introduced to pupils in the Malaysian primary schools through two programmes: Contemporary Children's Literature (hereafter CCL) and Extensive Reading Program (Salina Mustakim, Ramlee Mustapha & Othman Lebar, 2012). Sharif (2015) asserted that it is best to emphasise the teaching of literature at the early stages of second language acquisition. Thus, the language arts module has been introduced to pupils in Primary 4 to be taught to pupils in primary schools (Ministry of Education, 2013). According to MOE (2012), English is taught as a second language in all Malaysian primary and secondary schools. The Ministry of education has introduced the new education system which

is the Standard Curriculum for Primary School (KSSR). The new curriculum under KSSR has been structured in the modular structure with five modules which consists of listening and speaking, reading, writing, language arts and grammar (MOE, 2001; 2013).

Through these modules, it can be seen that the teaching of literature through CCL is one of the integral parts in teaching and learning of the English language by embedding the language arts module in the English syllabus. According to MOE (2012), the CCL component is taught during the Language Arts lessons to expose pupils to different literary genres such as short stories, poems and graphic novels. Pupils need to be taught the fundamentals of literature whereby they could use the knowledge acquired in this skill to stimulate their imagination. Hence, the language arts module aims to develop pupils' ability to achieve personal growth and confidence in functioning as an effective and productive member of our society, which is in line with the goals of the National Philosophy of Education which seeks to optimise the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual potential of all pupils.

Since its introduction in the Malaysian primary English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom, the literature component has been a challenge to both pupils and teachers (Salina et al., 2012). This in particular was due to the fact that the pupils were having poor repertoire of vocabulary. Salina and her associates further explained that teachers, especially inexperienced ones find it difficult to teach the component due to language limitations among the pupils in understanding novels. Similarly, Prince (2004) asserted that teachers also tend to spoon-feed their students so that they can get everything ready easily to face examinations.

However, according to Low (2014), students lack personal insight when reading because there is lack of guidance by teachers due to exam-oriented system. This is because teachers teach and guide in the way to prepare their students to be able to answer in the examination. It is believed that the norm of efferent reading may be one of the causes. When pupils read for the sake of looking for information in the text, they lack thinking and thus when required to think creatively and critically, they may find it problematical.

The major problem that impedes pupils understanding is, however, the fact that novel 'The Jungle Book' is a multimodal text. A multimodal text is a text with the combinations of the modes of prints, images, gestures and movements (Siegal, 2012). The book includes features such as narration, dialogues and onomatopoeia. The existence of these features in the book is a challenge to the pupils as they need to be able to process the information conveyed by these features in order to understand the message conveyed. This is in line findings reported by Suriani Mohd Yusof (2017) in her study. Furthermore, Year 4 pupils may also find the inter-play of these features confusing because this is the first multimodal text introduced in their primary schooling and they may not be familiar to these form of texts (Malini, 2010).

In relation to these findings, it is crucial to introduce the multimedia package to encourage readers to experience interaction with the text in a literature classroom. Hence, the aim of this paper is to determine the effectiveness of using Multimedia Package in enhancing the understanding of the graphic novel 'The Jungle Book' among Year 4 pupils.

### ***Review of Related Literature***

#### ***Multiple Intelligence in Literature Classroom***

Multimedia is often applied to many courses as it provides a wide diversity of learning styles and modalities. Learning style is the term that relates to characteristic cognitive behaviour and helps in defining how learners perceive, interact with, and respond to learning setting. It

is proved that learners are more comfortable with gaining knowledge in the environment which is connected to their predominant learning style. Each student in the classroom has a preferred learning modality as visual, aural, and kinesthetic. Some learners are multimodal which the combination of all mentioned modalities above. Multimedia helps in establishing curriculum that appeals to visual, aural and kinesthetic students, therefore, learners have equal opportunities in their performances. Students are encouraged to develop a versatile approach to learning through presentation of material in a diversity of modes.

The use of Multimedia Package (hereafter MP) coincides with the concept of multiple intelligence because when one interacts with the Multiple Package, the person or pupil can see it for real. This emanates the concept of one of the learning styles researched by Howard Gardner. In his book, Gardner (2011) embraced the different notions of intelligences that existed within the minds of people. In his research product, he encompassed nine different notions of intelligences that can be linked with one's learning style. Of the nine types, one is very closely related to the MP; the spatial intelligence. Yalda & Neda (2012) quoted 'spatial intelligence' as 'picture smart'. They then summarized the concept saying that spatial intelligence or the 'picture smart' group of people relates well to interpretation and creation of visual images, pictorial imagination and expression. They understand relationship between images and their respective meanings. Using illustrations, it is believed that pupils are able to respond to the text. Baker (2014) believes that an estimated of 80 percent of what children learn is through their vision. They are drawn to paintings, crafts and have a wonderful imagination. Baker further stressed that children of this style learn better when they see instead of reading.

### ***Making Connections***

The idea of interacting with the MP is to enhance one's understanding which is also linked to meaning-making. This, in a way, is a constructivist approach to learning. Made famous by Vygotsky, the constructivism theory solely depends on the basis that learning is an active, contextualized process of constructing knowledge rather than acquiring it (Behraves, 2011). By responding the text in the MP, pupils are actually constructing their understanding and meaning. This is supported again by Behraves (2011) who noted that knowledge is constructed from the learner's previous knowledge. Therefore, by using background knowledge and linking it with illustrations which is an effective learning technique, pupils will be able to fabricate leaning better all in the run of gaining better understanding of the literary text that is being studied.

### ***Technology in Literature Classroom***

Teaching in the 21st century means facing language on many different levels. Students nowadays are constantly exposed to computer networks (Yunus, Hashim, Embi & Lubis, 210) and, more often than not, occupied by the many distractions that come with using cell phones, internet and social media, which teachers could use to their advantage. In addition, technology is one other method that one can exploit to teach literary texts. Tweddle, Adams, Clarke, Scrimshaw and Walton (1997, as cited in Xerri, 2012) emphasize the fact that the changes enabled and driven by technology have become so far-reaching that for English teachers to ignore them would prove ultimately irresponsible. As such, teaching literary texts can also be accomplished using ICT. For example, in the Malaysian Year 4 English classroom, the short story entitled 'King of Kites' by Judith Heneghan and Laura Fournier describes about

the different experiences the main character went through. The teacher can show videos of life in India when teaching the literary text.

The use of Power Point Presentation (PPT) is wide spread across the globe. The intervention which is the Multimedia Package (MP) uses PPT as a tool to enhance learning literature in Malaysian classroom. People from all walks of life use PPT be it for work or business purposes. It is undeniable that PPT is very useful tool in people's everyday life due to the easy access to it.

The production of the MP in this case applies similar concept. The researchers have access to PPT thus able to come out with this intervention at a low budget. Unlike certain interventions or products, the MP does not need to be manufactured into a costly software which might cause policy makers or teachers a fortune. Thus, it could be sold at a reasonable price.

Using this tool, students are given the platform to discover literary text in depth. The MP is designed to maximize pupils' understanding of the literary text and to capture their short attention span. This can be achieved through the activities designed which are paired with animations and pictures. It is believed that learning will be fun and meaningful in a more conducive environment. Hence, this will create a positive behavioral change thus allowing them to have a better perception towards engagement with any literary text.

The MP is designed in such a way that it can be accessed not only by teachers and students but parents as well. Parents are provided with the platform to be directly involved in their child's learning. They are also given the opportunity to connect and collaborate with teachers thus maximizing their child's learning.

### **Methodology**

The research design was action research to help the pupils to comprehend the literary text from the graphic novel entitled 'The Jungle Book. The spiral model of action research proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart is used to conduct this study. The study was conducted in an urban school in Cheras, Malaysia. The participants for this research are limited to ten pupils. All participants were given pseudonyms to protect their identities. They were comprised of intermediate proficiency level pupils. A pre-data collection was gained through the March monthly test and Mid-year exam scores.

The research instrument employed in this study was Test 1 and Test 2. These tests were conducted before and after the intervention to note if there were significant improvements in pupils' understanding of the literary text. Besides, semi-structured interviews consisting of four sections seeking to discover the effectiveness of the intervention were used as a secondary data collection. Pupils who scored well, average and low were called out for an interview to investigate the reasons that underlie their performance. Finally, observations were utilised to answer research inquiries. A senior English language teacher from the school was assigned to observe the intervention lessons. Her observations were based on the lesson checklist that entails the to-do-list needs to be adhered by the researcher during the lesson. The comments of the observing teacher were also taken into triangulate the findings from the test scores and interviews carried out. Prior to carrying out the research, the instruments were piloted to ensure the reliability of the instruments for use in this research.

The study was conducted for three weeks to get the data collection process completed. The study was particularly conducted during language arts lessons which were conducted for one hour in each week and an additional hour during co-curricular activities

meeting every week. The participants were first introduced to conventional teaching method before the intervention was employed.

### Findings and Discussion

The results of both tests were collected and tabulated. The results were then presented in a table as below. From Table 1, the participants' achievement in Test 1 and Test 2 were compared based on their grades. A grading system provided by the School Examination System or Sistem Analisis Peperiksaan Sekolah (SAPS) was used. SAPS is a school exam analysis developed by the Ministry for storing, collecting and analysing pupils' exam results data in schools (MOE, 2017).

The participants were considered to have passed the tests if they obtained a grade of distinction, good, or satisfactory whereas pupils who obtained a grade of weak or very weak are deemed to have failed the tests.

Table 1 shows that none of the participants (0%) obtained distinction (A) in Test 1 as compared to a total of six participants (60%) who obtained distinction in Test 2 meanwhile there were two (20%) participants who obtained good (B) in Test 1 as compared to three (30%) in Test 2. Six (60%) participants scored satisfactory (C) for Test 1 as compared to 1 participant (10%) in Test 2. Also, there were two participants (20%) who scored weak (D) and very weak (E) respectively, failed in Test 1. However, none of the participants scored lower than satisfactory (C) in Test 2. This demonstrates that in Test 2, the data demonstrated improvement as there were more participants who scored distinction while none of them failed. It can be inferred that the participants performed better in Test 2 as compared to Test 1. The results compliments to the finding of a study conducted by Yunus, Salehi and John (2013) who investigated the benefits of using visual aids in teaching English literature. Their study proved that the understanding of abstract ideas found within literary text is increased by the use of ICT in classroom.

Table 1

#### *Analysis of test result*

Research participants	Scores (%)		Difference
	Test 1	Test 2 (MP)	
A	56	100	44
B	33	78	45
C	44	56	12
D	67	67	0
E	56	89	33
F	44	100	56
G	11	100	89
H	56	100	44
I	67	89	22
J	56	78	22
Total	49	857	367
Mean	49	85.7	36.7

The finding is also consistent with responses of the participants to the question in the interview. This result leads to the fact that the Multimedia Package method is more effective as the participants were able to be more focused during the lesson thus improving their understanding of the story. Hence, it is evident that the implementation of the MP method helped the participants to trigger their curiosity thus improving their comprehension of the text.

Table 2

*Analysis of Interview*

Question 3: Which one do you like more? The first lesson or the lesson using the Multimedia Package?

After Test 2	
<b>Respondent B</b>	I like today's lesson that have pictures and voice.
<b>Respondent E</b>	Er...Multimedia Package.
<b>Respondent F</b>	I am like today lesson using the computer because best.
<b>Respondent H</b>	<i>Hari ni punya. Di computer lab tu..</i> (I prefer today's lesson. The one in the computer lab.)

Further evidence on the impact of the Multimedia Package method in promoting participants' comprehension of the text can be found in the remaining interview data collected during both conventional and intervening lesson. The interview was conducted in a controlled manner; semi-structured to guarantee that responses can be reliably collected and comparisons can be made between pupils' responses.

Table 3

*Analysis of Interview*

After Test 1	
Question: Were you able to answer the questions in the test?	
<b>Respondent B</b>	No...
<b>Respondent E</b>	<i>Can lah.</i> But not all. (I can answer some of them. But not all of them)
<b>Respondent F</b>	Yes. But not able to answer question number 5.
<b>Respondent H</b>	A little bit.
<b>Respondent J</b>	Yes. I can answer.

  

After Test 2	
Question: Were you able to answer the questions in the test?	
<b>Respondent B</b>	Yes. Most of them yes.
<b>Respondent E</b>	<i>Sikit lah. Nombor 3 tak boleh.</i> (A little bit. I do not know the answer for question number 3)
<b>Respondent F</b>	Yes.
<b>Respondent H</b>	Boleh jawab banyak soalan. (I can answer most of the questions).
<b>Respondent J</b>	Yes. So easy, teacher.

Based on the interview data, most of the participants gave positive responses to answer the question in Test 2. For example, participant B, F and H answered 'yes'. Similarly, participant J commented that the questions were 'easy'. However, although participant H claimed that the questions are rather difficult but answerable, based on observation during the teaching and learning process, participant H had demonstrated satisfactory response level during the intervening lesson as compared to his participation during the traditional lesson. Besides, participants H's also scored higher marks in Test 2. Hence, it could be concluded that



the Multimedia Package had given a positive impact on the participants' comprehension of the literary text in the graphic novel.

Yunus and Suliman (2014) presented a study conducted in Asia, which showed that 89.6% of the 58 students involved in the study agreed that using ICT improved their overall language skills. Similarly, the interview in this study also clearly demonstrates that the participants immersed themselves during the intervening lesson. It appeared that the MP method managed to help them understand the plot of the story thus relating themselves to the character of the story. Participant F, H, and J were able to retell the story in detail until the end of the story when they were interviewed after the intervening lesson. For instance, participant J mentioned 'Mowgli was kidnapped by some monkeys and was taken to cold liars'. Similarly, participant H also mentioned that 'Mowgli heads to the village and was raised as a human by Messua'. Likewise, participant J mentioned that 'the villagers were threatened by Mowgli's strength so they drove him out of the village'. Hence, it is evident that the MP method is effective to help the participants to analyse the story due to the fact that they were able to retell the story and analyse what happened to the main character, Mowgli.

In order to understand the rationale behind the participants' better performance using the MP method, several other participants were interviewed until a saturation point was reached. Their responses were transcribed, coded and categorized to determine emerging themes (reasons). From the analysis, the data is presented below in Table 4.

From Table 4, five main themes were identified. The theme with the highest frequency was 'discuss and share answer'. It was mentioned 11 times (31.4%). According to Yunus et al. (2013), visual aids will motivate learners to be engaged in literature, claiming it will help to bridge over the difficulties in reading literature. This indicates that the MP helped them to internalise the characters and the story plot. This was followed by 'Understand the story'. It was mentioned nine times (25.7%). The participants claimed that they gain better understanding of the story by sharing and discussing their opinion with other participants. By doing so, they were able to understand and analyse both the story and the characters. The following theme was 'Lesson is fun'. It was mentioned seven times (20.0%). Most of the participants mentioned that the lesson using the Multimedia Package was fun and enjoyable.

Table 4

*Emerging themes from the interview data.*

Num.	Categories of themes	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Lesson is fun	7	20.0
2	Test question was easy	5	14.3
3	Discuss and share answer during group discussion	11	31.4
4	Learn new words	3	8.6
5	'Multimedia Package' helps in better understanding of the story	9	25.7
Total		35	100

Overall, the analysis of test results, semi-structured interviews and observations steered the objective of this research into affirmation that the use of the 'MP' method is effective in promoting Year 4 pupils' comprehension of the 'Jungle Book graphic novel' among the research participants to a large extent.

### **Conclusion**

The findings are a clear indication that visual aids act as a potential tool in motivating students to read literary texts. Teachers should fully utilise the use of visual aids in their teaching. This is in line with the Blueprint's aspiration to realise the transformative potential of ICT in education in Malaysian schools (Ministry of Education Malaysia 2013).

The study also serves as a springboard for the teachers to implement learner-centred approach in their literature class. Traditional teaching methods such as "chalk and talk" no longer conform to the needs of the today's students. Yunus and Suliman (2014) believe that the integration of ICT in literature teaching benefits students in motivational aspect. The elements of visual aids help to cultivate learning interest in literature among students. Other than that, the use of ICT in teaching and learning can promote independent learning. Since students these days are IT savvies, they can explore their own learning.

However, it is noticed that during the conventional lesson, a few participants were reluctant to answer the questions posted. They tend to switch code to their mother tongue; Bahasa Malaysia, whenever they cannot use the right term to express their opinion. It is because they have low self-efficacy as the lesson did not integrate much of their participation. Despite that, their responses were somehow alleviated during the intervening lessons. They responded better as they were willing to volunteer to both ask and answer questions.

Therefore, as proficiency level is one of most common problems, policy makers should select more local texts to arouse students' interest and bridge their cultural background to the texts. After all, Malaysia is rich in folklores. As this study is limited, further research may be carried out to glean more information about the differences in ESL trainees' and teachers' teaching approaches and cover the gaps between them so that the teaching of literature can be made more effective in the 21st century.

Another drawback of merging the application of multimedia technology in classroom is lack of facilities in the Malaysian ESL classrooms. To conduct a lesson that incorporates ICT, teachers often faces challenges in terms lacking in facility and internet connection in the school. A study conducted by Yunus, Nordin, Salehi, Sun and Embi (2013) pointed out that bad connection to the Internet was also a disadvantage when using ICT in teaching. It is believed that these situations in the classroom might disrupt the teaching and learning process.

To worsen the situation, some teachers do not possess ICT skills in order to deliver their lesson which is up to the standard of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning. According to a study conducted by Parilah and Empungan (2015), teachers have low familiarity on other ICT tools such as the internet and the Web 2.0 applications. This finding is parallel to a study by Yunus and Suliman (2014) who asserted that teachers did not utilize most online applications like YouTube and other social media into their lessons. Hence, in order for teachers to fully maximize the use the Multimedia Package, they need to be equipped with at least basic ICT skills. It is believe that it will indirectly help them to conduct a meaningful and purposeful lesson.



## **Implications**

From the study, it could be concluded that the Multimedia Package was able to improve pupils' comprehension of the literary text. It was found that that it could bring positive effects among Year 4 pupils' comprehension of the graphic novel. This was proven by the students' increasing scores, their positive feedback from the interview and the responses during the intervening lesson from the observations done as well. Thus, it is concluded that the MP method is effective to help pupils comprehend the literary text better. Besides, it could also increase students' interest in learning literature and motivates them to learn. Since it was also found in the findings that the use of ICT to enhance the understading of literary texts are meant to cater the needs of advanced and some of the intermediate proficiency levels of students, the future set of literary texts should give equal weightage to this particular group of students needs too.

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