

Development of nursery rhyme module in essay writing for level two students in primary school: A needs analysis

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Abstract

This study is a needs analysis study in the first phase of the design and development approach (DDR) founded by Richey and Klein (2007). The purpose of this needs analysis study is to identify the need for the development of nursery rhyme module in essay writing or level two students in primary school. The study was conducted quantitatively using the survey method. The first phase involves needs analysis using a questionnaire conducted on 285 teachers in 5 states to see the needs of modules in teaching and learning sessions. The reliability of the questionnaire was relatively high which was based on Cronbach Alpha $\alpha = 0.98$. The questionnaires consist of 8 sections approximately 72 questions. The survey data were analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) by mean value. The results of pilot test were Part A(M=3.809), Part B(M=3.766), Part C(M=3.945), Part D (M= 4.000), Part E(M=4.090), Part F(M=4.272), Part G(M=4.187) and H(M=4.6000). The findings of this study show that there is a need for researchers to develop a module. It is hoped that the nursery rhyme module can be used by teachers to increase fun learning for students to write in English.

Keywords: Nursery rhymes, module, essay writing, teaching English, fun learning

INTRODUCTION

In the Malaysian education context, English teachers are required to teach listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills (Tahir & Mohtar, 2016). Among the four skills, writing is considered the most challenging skill that ESL learners are expected to acquire as it requires the mastery of “linguistic, cognitive, and sociocultural competencies” (Barkaoui, 2007). Based on our teaching experiences, we observed that most of our students were struggling to construct sentences during writing lessons. A plausible reason that this problem occurs is due to the students’ inability to convey their intended meaning in the English language. Besides, the students’ low level of proficiency hinders them from conveying clear messages in written form. These challenges result in the students being demotivated and obstructing students' interest and eventually affecting their comprehension and performance in language learning (Hassan, Abdul Rahman & Azmi, 2021). Daud, Din, Said, and Swanto (2021) conformed to this based on their study which revealed that Malaysian ESL primary school learners struggle with writing tasks, particularly due to limited numbers of vocabulary knowledge. KSSR is an acronym for Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah or Standard Curriculum for Primary Schools (SCPS) in English. Standard Curriculum for Primary Schools aims to produce a balanced, creative, critical and innovative through communication, science and technology, physical and aesthetic development, personal skills, humanity and spirituality, attitudes and values.

Issues and Research Problem

Writing is a collection of skills that must be developed and acquired through practice (Grabe & Kaplan, 2014). Writing is a method of expressing ideas using letters and words, requiring a mental process to express ideas (Uusen, 2009). Writing is difficult for students because it does not come naturally and requires conscious effort and practice. Writing is deemed a complicated and taxing cognitive task in which writers need to show mastery of variables simultaneously. These incorporate controls of sentence structure, format, content and vocabulary, and spelling. Writing is one of the pivotal skills students must master in Oman (Al-Ani, 2017). Knowledge is obtained by students from various sources by going through others' writings. Peer evaluation or peer-editing enhances students' writing skills as they can explicitly or implicitly comment on their peers' writing production so they can reinforce their writing skills and contribute to developing other students' writing skills as well (Yuce & Aksu Atac, 2019; Harutyunyan & Poveda 2018; Ekekci, 2017 & Xuemei, 2016). The concept of peer-editing in this study conforms to Vygotsky's social interaction concept. That is because writing modules help students develop their writing skills via incorporating interesting writing topics and students' learning needs (Belet Boyaci & Guner, 2018; Al Azri & Al-Rashdi, 2014; Arianie, 2017). Writing modules also help students provide significance to the learning process and maximize students' motivation by connecting the writing materials to their daily life (Chamba & Gavilanes, 2018; Nematollahi & Maghsoudi, 2015).

Research Focus

CEFR is a framework that describes what a user can do with the language. It is an internationally recognized standard that makes it easier for students, teachers, educational institutions and future employees to understand the capabilities obtained and expectations expected for each CEFR level. Malaysian government based its English reform plan on CEFR guidelines, drawing ideas on English language teaching and learning from the popular European framework. Malaysia hopes that by adopting CEFR into their syllabus, their students are recognized at internationally accepted English levels of proficiency. CEFR identifies 3 broad levels for example basic, independent and proficient of language mastery in the areas of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

So, the researcher found a few problems arising in writing at the school. First, students suffer greatly in writing skills causing limitations in writing essays. Second, writing is a complex process for primary school students. Third, poor language proficiency due to English as a second language for multiracial backgrounds and a third language for aboriginal students and lastly minimum vocabulary due to lack of words memorization.

The focus of this study is the development of a nursery rhyme module in essay writing for level two students in primary school. This is because the Ministry of Education has set up Ujian Pertengahan Sesi Akademik and Ujian Akhir Sesi Akademik for Year 4, 5 and 6 students. As for the English subject paper, it has 7 parts of questions whereby part 6 consist of 80 words essay and part 7 consists of 100 words essay. It is a challenging task for teachers to teach essays for the students and how to write essays within the allocated time.

Moreover, we realized that the major problem occurs when students are lacking in vocabulary knowledge. Often, they would use their first language as direct translation when they were unable to make up the words in sentences. Al-Khasawneh (2010) found that the hindrance to the development of students' writing skills is "a reasonable vocabulary size is needed for students to function effectively in their program". Choosing the right vocabulary while pouring ideas into writing is one of the best ways to deliver the message to the participants. Moreover, vocabulary plays an important role in language skills as it determines the success of the language. Subsequently, this leads to many students finding that it is one of the most perplexing skills to master as they suffer greatly in developing their writing skills. This can also result in causing various problems during writing attempts and can develop a negative impact on their overall written output. In response to the problem, we needed to be responsible to ensure that the students can successfully develop writing skills using suitable strategies and techniques that befit them. We also needed to create a writing module that would support their process of writing skills acquisition.

Literature Review

A nursery rhyme can be defined as a short poem or song for children, considered sleep songs, waking songs and engaging verses for an adult to sing or chant with their kids. Many of these anonymous verses, with their rich oral tradition, have travelled from generation to generation and one can often use the echoes of these poems in collections by later poets (Zipes, 2005). Usually composed by an anonymous poet; these verses are “highly rhythmic, tightly rhymed and popular with small children (Temple, Martinez & Yakota, 2011). Whether a particular music experience is meaningful can be attributed to a number of things, including the characteristics within the music itself (e.g., dynamics, tempo, rhythm, melody, and harmony (Barret and Veblan, 2018; Green, 1988; Street, 2017).

Charanjit, Rhashvinder, Tarsame, Nor Azmi and Tunku (2018) clarify that based on the preliminary Report of the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025, most English lessons in schools do not highlight constructive thinking as most classrooms are teacher based and focused on the lower order thinking skills which are recalling or stating information. Teachers are unaware of how to teach thinking skills to a number of students at the same time. Based on Tajularipin, Vickneswary, Diwiyah, Raidah and Suzieleez (2017), it is difficult to teach HOTS to a big class of students compared to a small class. This phenomenon occurs when teachers are unaware of how to tap and tackle students’ thinking skills. Tajularipin et al. (2017) suggest that teachers first need to understand what HOTS entail. Only then are they able to apply this knowledge in teaching HOTS to the students, especially when teaching productive skills.

OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this study:

1. To identify the need for the development of nursery rhyme module in essay writing or level two students in primary school.

Research Questions

Research questions align with research objectives which is:

RQ1: What are the need for the development of nursery rhyme module in essay writing or level two students in primary school?

METHODOLOGY

Design and Development Research (DDR) was employed in this study. The design and development approach is defined as systematic research to conduct the design, development, and evaluation process to establish an empirical basis for creating and producing products and equipment. This study aims to develop of a nursery rhyme module in essay writing for level two students in primary school. Richey and Klein (2007) elucidated that a study utilizing the DDR method follows an orderly and systematic process, comprising the needs analysis phase, the design and development phase, and the evaluation phase, which includes testing the usability of the module. The Design and Development Research approach (DDR) denotes a systematic research process encompassing the development of education-related products, models, or modules. The strength inherent in this DDR-based research approach is its systematic nature, which can guide researchers in developing their studies, provided that each method used adheres to the prescribed procedures (Mohd Jamil & Mat Noh, 2020).

To strengthen and ensure that the research conducted is more organized and systematic. Figure 2.1 is built to display the flow of research that uses the Design & Developmental and Research (DDR Approach) method where it is divided into 3 phases, namely the needs analysis phase, the design and development phase of the model and the model usability evaluation phase.

Approach Design & Developmental Research
(DDR) Model Development

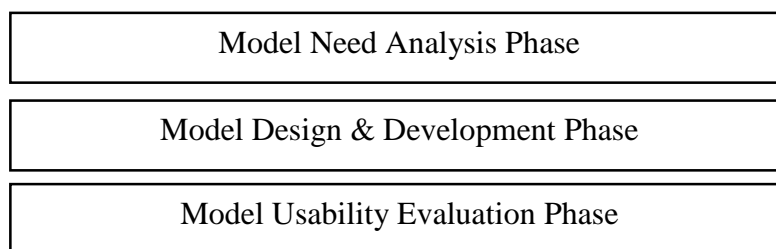


Figure 2.1: Research methodology framework

In this study, needs analysis is the first phase in DDR. The researcher uses a quantitative approach using a survey. The first phase involves needs analysis using a questionnaire conducted on 285 teachers in 5 states to see the needs of modules in teaching and learning sessions.

Participants

The focus of this study is the development of a nursery rhyme module in essay writing for level two students in primary school. The needs analysis using a questionnaire conducted on 285 teachers in 5 states to see the needs of modules in teaching and learning sessions.

Data Collection Method

Osang et al (2013) refers data collection as the conduct of collecting facts in research, it can be collected in many ways. The study was conducted quantitatively using the survey method. A questionnaire consist of 72 questions. Reddy (2011) mentioned that at least one expert is needed for the face validation. In this study, a total of two experts are chosen. The experts need to be involved in this study so that they can make a face validity analysis on the content of questionnaire. The experts are the lecturers in English Language.

In order to see the reliability test of the items, a pilot study of 32 English teachers was also conducted to ensure that the questionnaire used measured the things to be measured and it has been displayed in Table 3. The selection of English teachers in the state of Perak is based on the justification that they have the same criteria as primary school English teachers throughout Malaysia. According to Nadilah Abdul Pisal and Kamarul Shukri (2019), the number of pilot study samples does not require a large number of samples. To conduct a pilot study, Johanson and Brooks (2010) suggested the minimum number of samples selected was 32 people through googleform with respondents. The respondents of this pilot study consisted of English teachers in the state of Perak. Researchers conducted this pilot study by distributing questionnaires to 32 teachers in the state of Perak. The purpose of the researcher face to face with the respondent is to give the researcher an opportunity to explain the purpose of the study, the title of the study and the pilot study being conducted. The respondents seemed satisfied with the explanation given by the researcher. Respondents were given 3 days to answer the questionnaire in the google form provided.

Each respondent was given a set of questionnaires and the researcher asked for the respondents' cooperation in answering honestly, transparently and giving comments on the questionnaires given. Respondents are also guaranteed that all data obtained is confidential and only for scientific purposes. The researcher also explained that the purpose of this pilot study is to get feedback from the respondents whether they can understand the statements in the questionnaire or otherwise, to find out the appropriateness of the words used and to identify whether the sentences used are grammatically correct or otherwise. The researcher also explains about the Likert scale used by the researcher.

In the study of Shafiqah Yaakob (2018), the sample is part of the population selected to represent the population available for the purpose of the study. The number of samples will determine the accuracy of the study results. The number of samples is influenced by the size of the level of reliability desired, the number of subgroups of the population required for analysis as well as the

adequacy of resources and finances. In this connection, the qualification of a sample that represents the population is very important to increase the level of reliability (Syafiqah Yaakob, 2018; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; Creswell, 2005). Since the respondents are teachers in five states namely Perak, Kelantan, Selangor, Terengganu and Selangor where the data can be managed, also without cost, the questionnaire has been distributed to all English teachers via WhatsApp and Googleform to provide an equal opportunity. The questionnaire that has been answered and successfully received back by the researcher is only 285. This amount of sample size is sufficient to be analyzed in this study which is based on the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination table, where this table has listed the sample size that matches the size of the study population (Krejcie & Morgan 1970, pp. 607-610 as in Table 3.2.)

Based on Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size determination table, the population of this study is 1100, which is a sample of 285 people. The sampling method used is a simple random sampling method which involves respondents in groups of teachers in 5 states. A simple random sampling method was chosen because the study respondents answered the questionnaire with their own consent and willingness. Questionnaires were distributed to all the study population English teachers in 5 states as stated in the data collection procedure. This method is used to ensure that every subject in the population has an equal chance of being selected. In this study, the questionnaire was tested with a pilot study to determine its reliability. With this statement in the questionnaire can be understood by them. This pilot study was conducted to test the success and clarity of the questionnaire. Improvements to the questionnaire were made based on the comments obtained from this pilot study.

Table 2.1: Cronbatch alpha values for each element of the needs analysis questionnaire (pilot test)

Variables	No of items	Alpha Cronbach Values
Part A Usage of Nursery Rhymes in the classroom	7	0.858
Part B Perception towards the usage of rhymes and songs in the classroom	5	0.836
Part C Knowledge on the usage of rhymes and songs in the classroom	11	0.824
Part D Usage of songs in my class	8	0.845
Part E Perception towards the usability of nursery rhymes module in writing essay	10	0.816
Part F Need of the development of nursery rhymes module in writing essay for level two students in primary school	11	0.980
Part G Validation of the content nursery rhymes module	14	0.919
Part H Validation of the checklist instrument	6	0.890

Based on table 2.1, the results show the design & development phase rhymes in writing essay for level two students in primary school has the highest Cronbatch Alpha value of 0.980, while perception

towards the usability of nursery rhymes module in writing essay has the lowest Cronbach Alpha value which is 0.816. In conclusion, the Cronbach Alpha value is at a very good level which is above the value of 0.8 and there is one lowest item (perception towards the usability of nursery rhymes module in writing essay) which is at an acceptable level. (Azleen and Zulkeflee, 2016).

The Cronbach Alpha value for each item and the overall Cronbach Alpha value for the 8 variables and instruments of those variables ranged from 0.816 to 0.0980. Overall pilot findings show value Cronbach Alpha which is close to 1000 for each variable and instrument. This will also show that the items in this questionnaire instrument have high reliability and the effect of error on the measurement is small (Nor'aidah Nordin & Ruhizan Muhammad Yasin, 2015; Creswell 2012). This means that the Cronbach Alpha value of the entire study variable found in the same questionnaire was used in the actual study. According to Balnaves and Caputi (2001), research design is a guide to how a study is constructed and implemented. Based on Creswell (2012) research design can be used to collect, analyse and interpret data. From the theories presented, the researcher will obtain data that has validity and then find answers to the research problems being conducted.

Data Analysis Method

The study was conducted quantitatively using the survey method. A questionnaire was distributed. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 20) was used. It is to test mean, standard deviation, and frequencies were implemented. The questionnaire answers and checklist data collected were analysed through descriptive statistics.

Table 2.2: Interpretation of Mean

Mean Value	Interpretation
1.00-1.49	Very low
1.50-2.49	Low
2.50-3.49	Satisfying
3.50-4.49	High
4.50-5.00	Very high

FINDINGS

Table 2.3: Mean values for each element of needs analysis questionnaire

Part	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level of Mean
A	3.809	0.413	High
B	3.766	0.348	High
C	3.945	0.265	High
D	4.000	0.262	High
E	4.090	0.176	High
F	4.272	0.373	High
G	4.187	0.416	High
H	4.600	0.490	High

The results of pilot test were Part A, usage of nursery rhymes in the classroom (M=3.809), Part B, perception towards the usage of rhymes and songs in the classroom (M=3.766), Part C, knowledge on the usage of rhymes and songs in the classroom (M=3.945), Part D, usage of songs in my class (M=4.000), Part E, perception towards the usability (M=4.090), Part F, perception towards the usability of nursery rhymes module in writing essay (M=4.272), Part G, validation of the content nursery rhymes module (M=4.187) and H, Validation of the checklist instrument (M=4.6000). All the level of mean questionnaires are high. Based on the survey, the respondents have agreed that there is a need to develop a nursery rhyme module in essay writing for level two students in primary school.

CONCLUSION

Based on the conducted research, it can be concluded that the requirements analysis phase needs to be implemented as the initial step in the Design and Development Study (DDR). Through the needs analysis, respondents concurred on developing a nursery rhyme module in essay writing for level two students in primary school. As stated in Nahari and Alfadda (2016) describe spelling as the ability to produce words, orally or in written format, by positioning letters in a precise order. So, the researcher found that information in superb way could arouse students' interest.

Secondly, the nursery rhymes improved the motivation of students in essay writing. Fun learning in teaching particularly for primary school is vital in improving their knowledge. Pre operational children tend to love music more in learning as they parallel their growth. So, nursery rhymes is the best way in upgrading the students' essay writing. The element of music was integrated to fulfil left and right brain. Traditionally, educators consider intrinsic motivation to be more desirable and to get result in better learning outcomes than extrinsic motivation (Guay et. al. 2010). As he seconded left and right brain has different function. Left brain empower language, mathematics, science and others academic activities. Whereas right brain empower music, imagination, colours and so on. Left brain will function effectively if right brain integrated with left brain (language) and right brain (music and songs) which is applied in this research (Guay et. al. 2010). Besides, students who are good readers are usually good spellers and vice versa (Johnson, 2013).

Thirdly, nursery rhymes improved interest and at the same time reduce passive action, motivate students to participate in learning actively and minimize discipline matters among them. Songs can reinforce the sense of interest to the classroom routine and practically improve students' motivation (York, 2011). In addition, (Bodden, 2010) stated that nursery rhymes can make readers feel strong emotions manifested through crying or laughing, sighing or screaming. Hence, if someone integrated both brains impressively, learning will be fun, student- centered learning, improves memories, and effective. They learn basic story patterns, encounter vivid plots, develop a sense of theme, and meet intriguing characters that in turn become the stepping stones for subsequent literary education (Bodden, 2010). It can be proved by output derived from questionnaires that teaching and learning will be fun in nursery rhymes method if compared with traditional practices.

The nursery rhymes improved achievement in essay writing. (Bodden,2010) suggested that in order for children to understand what they listen depends on an understanding of what exactly a word is for each function. Nahari and Alfadda (2016) describe spelling as the ability to produce words, orally or in written format, by positioning letters in a precise order. So, nursery rhymes will help someone to revise facts and help education. They are bound by social conventions, learner's expectations to school and ministry's policies about how to teach and what methodology to follow (Hall, 2011). As for the teacher, it seems that utilising songs in the classroom can be a nice break that can be accommodated in the curriculum (Blondel & Miller, 2011). Nursery rhymes are one of the musical factor to upgrade students' achievement in English.

Implications of the study

a) Ministry of Education

Music and nursery could assist students to recognize, say, memorize structure to engage the lesson to make English is fun learning to both pupils and teachers. The researchers found that the research about nursery rhymes showed a positive response when they managed to do essay writing in two months period compared to the first period. It will create enthusiasm in essay writing and arouse their interest. So, edutainment is important in essay writing and the teachers will practice it in Malaysia, particularly primary school. For the time being, Ministry of Education are conducting the edutainment programme via Education TV by TV OKEY, Radio Televisyen Malaysia (RTM). It is a free channel to encounter primary school and secondary school students.

b) Public Universities/ Private Universities

As an international language, English Language plays an important role in our daily life. It also has lingua franca status in most countries. Based on this context, the acquisition of the English Language has been an indicator for competent graduates in writing, communication, public speaking, high-order thinking skills and problem-solving, multiple intelligences and leadership. By the way, the nursery rhymes method can be applied at public universities to make sure their mastery level in English Language either communication or writing could turn them into a great person in the market job. Early Childhood Education, Primary School Education and Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) either in public institutions of higher learning (IPTA) or private institutions of higher learning (IPTS) definitely have the topic about nursery rhymes in the courses pertaining to certain subjects that the students are required to take for certain semesters.

c) Kindergarten

Nursery rhymes method in teaching and learning sessions could attract pupils effectively in learning English Language. It simplified the teacher, and students eager to study with fun learning. So, it clearly showed that nursery rhymes as a splendid medium in nurturing English Language as a second language in Malaysia. So, kindergarten as the first house to implement nature of nursery rhymes for toddlers and children. For example, National Child Development Centre (NCDRC) at UPSI had their PERMATA curriculum for babies up to 4 years old. During kindergarten time, they have some selected nursery rhyme songs according to their curriculum to teach and let the children cater the language and songs verbally. The teachers teach them nursery rhymes and they imitate their movements. On the other hand, they do role play to make nursery rhyme comes alive.

Suggestions for improvement

Nursery rhymes in teaching and learning the English Language are notably effective in assisting pupils to memorize new vocabulary, enhancing motivation and interest. In total, the research managed to achieve the objectives. Therefore, a few suggestions to upgrade the research in the future as follows: i) to add more respondents in order to widen the effectiveness of the research to the students. ii) use interviews to gather detailed information in research. iii) create new songs and new melodies for a certain focusing topic without reusing the same songs in order to create versatility. iv) to integrate songs and physical movements in video recording to let students engage in learning more fun to activate student-centered learning. V) use animation with lyrics shown on the screen to associate with google classroom.

Therefore, nursery rhymes can act as a fun learning method for teachers to implement as it has proven its importance. The teachers play a vital role in diversifying their teaching techniques to create fun learning in 21st Century Learning. Thus, music gives a big impact on students at large in learning, motivation and interest. It could be proven that nursery rhymes as an indicator to grasp the lesson effectively in widening their vocabularies. When vocabulary, motivation, interest and achievement improved, the pupils could upgrade their interest to achieve the objectives.

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