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I-RoLE 2023

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF
RESEARCH ON LANGUAGE EDUCATION 2023

**EMBRACING CHANGE:
EMANCIPATING THE LANDSCAPE
OF RESEARCH IN LINGUISTIC,
LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE**

13 - 14 MARCH 2023

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BEYOND WHAT EYE SAW

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ABSTRACT

Given how many people lack exposure to creative writing in general, this project, *Beyond What Eye Saw*, could be an eye-opener for the targeted audience of non-English language major students. This project is focused on poetry about life written from the perspective of a student who went through a phase in life to balance personal life and education. The poems also help the audience understand the contents of the poems because they are not explicitly written, which helps them develop their English ability to a greater degree. There were several procedures involved in completing this project, from the first phase of planning and discussing, to the second phase of writing, designing, recording, and editing the poems, to the final phase of sharing and analysing the poems completed. To achieve the greatest results, each process was meticulously completed with thorough guidance. To make creative writing more appealing to the audience, the author created an interactive e-book in which readers could read and watch recitations of the poetry.

Keywords: creative writing, literature, life, interactive e-book, poems

1. INTRODUCTION

Beyond What Eye Saw is a project that is based on poems about life from the perspective of a student who went through a period of life balancing personal life and education. The title of this project describes how the content of the poems goes beyond what the author has seen in life by expressing feelings through literature. The scope of this project falls under creative writing and content creation as the poems share stories about life while using flowers as the main inspiration for the poems written, which is presented through an interactive e-book.

According to Kumar, T., (2020), another writing style that has been prevalent in the language acquisition era for nearly decades is creative writing, which includes creative activities such as story writing, poetry creation, and playwriting that foster successful self-discovery learning. When planning creative writing course tasks, university lecturers should consider students' expectations, which may lead to the perceived pleasantness of the course (Burkšaitienė, N., 2014). Given how a lot of people in general lack exposure to creative writing, this project could become an eye-opener to the targeted audience, non-English language major students, since they are most likely to not be involved with creative writing.

From the e-book, the audiences could listen to the recitations of the poems written while watching visuals that correlate to the content of the poem through a link embedded in the e-book; that is to understand the flow of the poem better and have a better experience understanding the poems. In research from Asrowi, A., et al. (2019), books in electronic form are thought to be capable of overcoming some of the constraints of printed books. Especially when e-books are enhanced with multimedia (animation, music, noises, highlighting), it can capture students'

attention and encourage them to read (Roskos, K., et al., 2017). Furthermore, because of the novelty effect, which explains the desire to perform when new technology is presented, participants may feel excited about utilising interactive e-books, resulting in increased achievement when compared to regular e-books (Lim, B. C. Y., et al., 2020).

1.1. Project Objective / Purpose

Self-made literary materials like poems, short stories, journals, or even letters are something that has been around for a long as well as exposed to a lot of people. Even so, the ratio of those writing such materials to those who do not are higher than the latter. Therefore, the main objective of this project is to instil more interest towards creative writing among non-English language major associate degree students. This project is also for the sole purpose of the students gaining inspiration to produce creative pieces without any pressure that they must be perfect.

Through the poems, the targeted audience is put to understand the contents of the poem as the meanings are not directly written; that is to help them improve their English language proficiency at a higher level as well as improve their critical thinking skills. From the poems, the structures are different with using wordplays to convey the diverseness of writing creatively while it being a short read. The visualisers in the recitations also act as a helping tool for them to come up with their interpretations of the poems they read.

1.2. Entrepreneurial Opportunities

Because this e-book is designed to be interactive, with clickable links to recitation videos, it is critical that it be promoted on different major e-book platforms accessible in Malaysia, such as Google Play Books, Maxis Ebuks, Rakuten KOBO, and many more. It appears more attractive to potential purchasers when published on said popular platforms. The selling price for the e-book would be RM5.00, making it affordable for a lot of other potential readers and not only focusing on the targeted audience.

For readers who prefer physical books, a mini, booklet-style book could be made and sold at the price point of RM10.00 or lower. This will include the production cost which could be costly as high-quality products should be the most prioritised aspect aside from the quality of the contents inside the book. To make the book still engaging, the readers could still access the recitation videos through QR codes embedded in the book that will direct them to an online folder of the compiled recitations.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Phase One: Planning and Discussing

Photographs of the surroundings sparked the idea of creating poems that reflect a lot on life. After a meticulous discussion of the contents of the poems as well as the theme of the poems, it has been decided that the theme should focus on one item to create harmony and not all over the place if different themes were to be combined in one book. The thing closest to people, flowers, was decided to be the main theme or inspiration for all the poems. Five flowers; Dandelion, Lily, Daisy, Pansy, and Dahlia, were chosen as the title of the poems.



2.2 Phase Two: Writing, Designing, Recording, and Editing

The process of writing the poems to a satisfactory degree took ten weeks in total, as a lot of trial and error was involved in this process. The drafts were first written to get approval from the supervisor before moving on to the final poems to be read by the audience. Concomitantly, the process of designing the e-book also took a lot of trial and error to achieve the desired aesthetic that suited the poems. Two designs were made throughout the period of 6 weeks: the first one was a straightforward, simple, brown-toned design, with a self-made logo made using the application ProCreate. The second one turned out to be minimalist, with more engaging colours and visuals. Both designs were done using the website Canva. The finalised e-book was in the form of a flipbook from a free website so that it could be easily accessed. Once the poems and e-book design were done, the recording of the recitations as well as the introduction video, started. The recording and editing process for both contents took around nine days to complete.

2.3 Phase Three: Preparing Questions

After finishing the e-book and video content, the author began creating questions for the feedback form in Google Forms. The feedback form focuses on the respondents' views after reviewing the project. It required one week of proper discussion to finalise the questions, as well as the flow of the questions.

2.4 Phase four: Finalising, Sharing and Analysing

At the start of week 12, a final discussion took place to check the design and content of the e-book, recitation videos, as well as feedback form. After the discussion, the link to the materials mentioned was given to the supervisor to be shared with the targeted audience, which received a total of 80 respondents after three consecutive days of sharing the e-book. From the answers received, it managed to reveal the strengths and weaknesses of the project.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A post-project feedback form was prepared with a total of 10 questions that consisted of nine Likert-scaled questions (1 as strongly disagree, 2 as disagree, 3 as neutral, 4 as agree, and 5 as strongly agree) and one open-ended question. The feedback form mainly focuses on what the target audience may feel from the project, with questions that range from success rate, improvements in English literacy, and appropriateness of the contents, as well as the overall feedback. This project managed to collect 80 respondents, with all of them sharing the same background as first-semester non-language degree students from UiTM Bandaraya Melaka.

3.1: Success rate

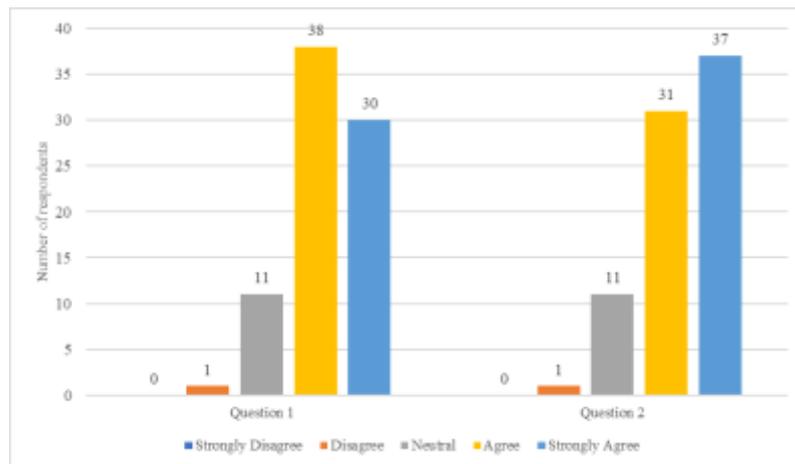


Figure 1. Results from questions 1 and 2

Q1: Did the project interest you to start writing your own creative work?

Q2: Did you find the project helpful to you in a way for you to start your own creative work?

The questions above investigated the interests of the students post reading the poems. It could be seen that this project inspired them to start and that the project was indeed helpful to them for them to start writing their own creative work.

3.2: Literacy level

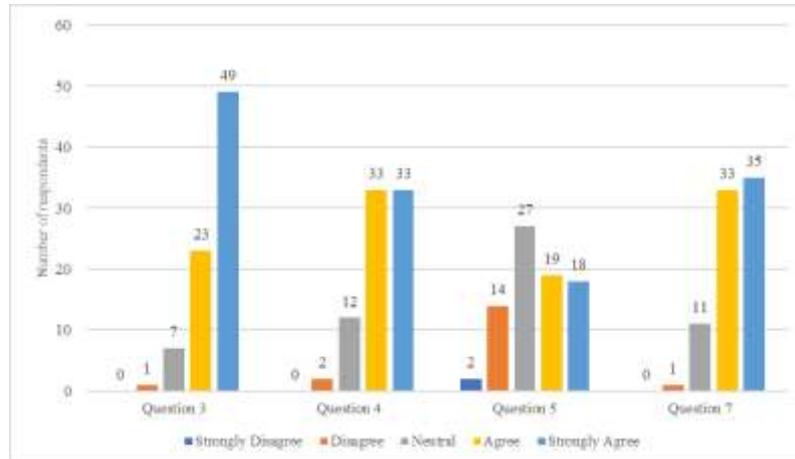


Figure 2. Results from questions 3, 4, 5, and 7

Q3: Did you find the content of the poems interesting?

Q4: Did you find the recitations of the poems helpful for you to understand the poems better?

Q5: Did you find the poems hard to comprehend?

Q7: Did you find the poems helped you to gain better literacy in English?

Most of the respondents strongly agreed that the content of the poems was interesting. The respondents also mostly found the recitations of the poems helpful though it seems that they struggled to comprehend the poems as they were mostly written using a lot of metaphors and figurative language. It could also be seen how the poems managed to achieve the sub-objective

of this project as a whole; to help students improve their English language comprehension through reading and understanding poems.

3.3 Content appropriateness

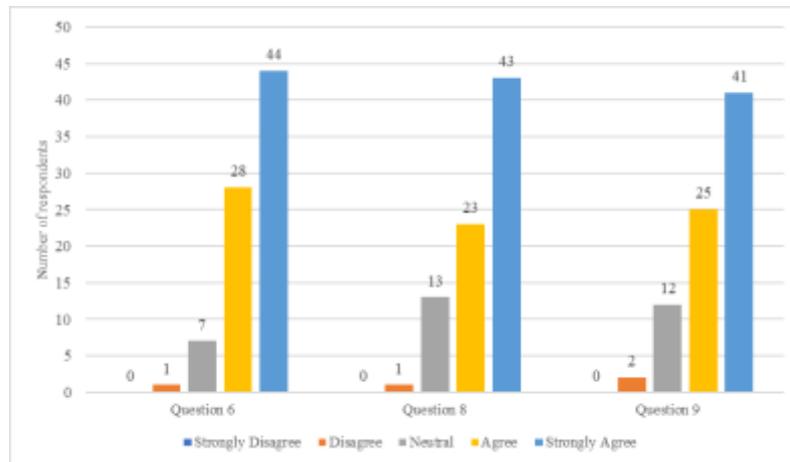


Figure 3. Results from questions 6, 8, and 9

Q6: Did you find the poems' themes interesting (that you may relate to it)?

Q8: Did you find the design of the e-book appropriate to the content of the poems?

Q9: Did you find the content of the videos appropriate to the message of the poems?

The themes of the poems are all relatable as they share the stories a university student had gone through and the majority of the respondents found that the themes were interesting. Given how a lot of people prefer minimalism, the e-book's design was heavily inspired by a lot of other published books that are simple yet eye-catching, to which the majority of the respondents agreed that the design of the e-book was appropriate to its content. All the content for the recitation videos were owned by the writer, so the choices were limited. Even so, the videos managed to match the atmosphere that each poem needed, and the respondents mostly agreed with the question.

3.4 Overall feedback



Figure 4. Results from question 10

The final question was an open-ended question where the respondents were free to answer anything. The response to this final question gave the opportunity for the respondents to share other comments that were not included in the previous questions. A lot of the answers



received commented on the volume of the recitations, which revealed the part of the project that was lacking. A lot of the respondents also shared how the poems were all beautifully done and wished for more poems to be shared in the future.

4. LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the post-project feedback, a lot of the respondents commented on the volume of the recitation videos, mainly the recital part. The volume of the recordings had to be lowered to 60% as the volume of the surroundings could be heard clearly without it being lowered, even though the recording took place in a silent room.

Before proceeding with sharing the e-book, a discussion was done between the author and the supervisor, which suggested an increase in volume. The videos were then edited to increase the volume to 100%, but as expected, the background noises were heard. The writer then kept the original form of the videos with the volume level at 60% maximum. During the sharing of the e-book, the videos were showcased through a projector along with a speaker, but the audience still had trouble with the volume being too slow which was understandable.

Of the few methods to prevent this matter from happening in future circumstances is by recording the audio using a more professional microphone and using a more advanced editing application that could reduce noise from the audio recorded. Besides professional equipment for the audio, a higher-quality camera could also be used to produce better videos with high-resolution pictures, allowing the audience to immerse themselves in the recitations. Another method is to record in a better location with sound-proof walls, which may reduce the reflection of the sound waves that produce echoes, which affects the quality of the audio.

5. CONCLUSION

In an effort to make creative writing more approachable to students that are not from the language background, the author successfully instilled an interest in creative writing in the targeted audience as well as managed to help students improve their comprehension level in the English language. Even with minimal resources, the author's endeavour resulted in the effective creation of an interactive e-book. Based on the numerous positive responses to the project, a higher quality interactive e-book might be created by using the comments and recommendations as a basis for future productions. Overall, it is hoped that more interactive e-books about creative writing will be created so that more people can appreciate the beauty of literature.

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