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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF
RESEARCH ON LANGUAGE EDUCATION 2023

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

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FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE! AN EDUCATIONAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY

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ABSTRACT:

Creative writing is a known expressive form of writing in literature and carries an invaluable significance in the field of education. Possessing creative writing skills allow students to expand on their creativity, therefore allowing their cognitive thinking skills to develop. The present paper discusses the importance of creative writing and figurative language, and language students' perception on the matter. For this, research was carried out in the form of a Google Form questionnaire. The findings revealed that there is a lack of educational reading material focusing on creative writing amongst the students of LG120 of UiTM Cawangan Melaka. Thus, the end goal of the research is to come up with an academic autobiographic E-book focusing on creative writing to be used as a leisure reading material for LG120 students. The project intends to expose the many components of figurative language in creative writing to readers and help them understand better, fully taking advantage of the ease of convenience provided by E-books in the current era's ever-evolving educational materials.

Keywords: creative writing, E-book, figurative language, language students

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Overview

Creative writing is a type of literature that can be distinguished by its informal ways of writing in comparison to the likes of academic and technical forms of writing. These include written work such as poetry and short stories. When writing a piece of creative work, there are many literature components involved. One instance of this is figurative language. In definition, figurative language is a type of language used to express complicated ideas with a creative twist, where the words are used in a style that diverges from the standard meaning and order. Using figurative language helps the writers paint a clear imagery or picture in their readers' minds when they read the story's narratives (MasterClass, 2021). As such, there will be no misinterpretation concerning the story's plot, for example. Thus, it can be deduced that figurative language is important in helping to convey the intended story to the readers clearly and precisely, amongst its other beneficial values. From this, it can be inferred that having a good mastery over the use and understanding of figurative language can be good for readers and writers alike.

Figurative Language! An Educational Autobiography intends to provide a leisure reading academic book for not only the LG120 students of UiTM Cawangan Melaka but also members of the public. The content of the book delves into the use of figurative language in creative written work with the intention of helping the readers gain a better understanding of it. Readers will be introduced to various figurative language such as metaphors, similes, and hyperboles, and

will be provided with tips on how to best use them in written content. The project incorporates lessons learnt from subjects of the previous semesters, one of them which falls under Creative Writing such as the literary devices mentioned. Another subject involved but to a lesser extent is Linguistics in which readers can find phonetical elements in the book. The project was completed in a 12-week timespan and promoted through a social media platform, Instagram. It was finalized in the shape of an autobiographic E-book revolved around one of the author's life related to exposure to the English language.

1.2 Problem Statement

A small-scaled pre-survey conducted amongst language students of the LG120 course in UiTM Cawangan Melaka shows that there is a severe lack of academic book focusing on the creative aspects of writing, as seen in Figure 1, where 90.9 percent or 20 out of the 22 respondents responded that they rarely encounter academic books focusing on creative writing. The absence of these type of books means that these students are missing out on an alternative learning media that may help make learning more fun and efficient (Nagabushhanam, 2019). Therefore, this educational autobiography project serves as an incentive to provide language students with an educational E-book for casual reading focusing on creative writing as its core content.

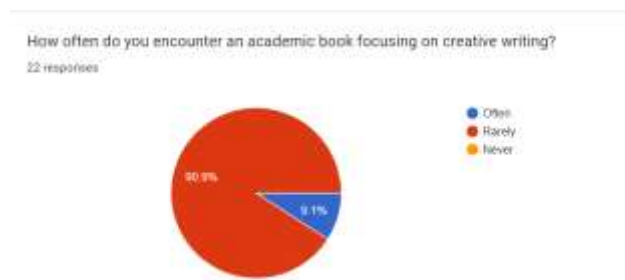


Figure 1: How often do you encounter an academic book focusing on creative writing?

1.3 Purpose and Objectives

This project aims to:

- Provide language students of LG120 course in UiTM Cawangan Melaka with an academic E-book focusing on creative writing for leisure reading.
- Expose elements of English language to the readers such as literary devices like simile, metaphors, hyperboles, and vice versa.
- Help readers get a better comprehension in the usage of figurative language through the literary device guides given in the book.
- Expose readers to a Linguistic element called phonetics through guides given in the book.

1.4 Entrepreneurial Opportunity

The project is finalized in the form of an E-book business. The product can potentially be sold online as a digital book, as this method is very convenient since it provides portability amongst many other advantages. E-books are much easier to access, requiring only a mobile phone to access which people regularly carry with them in their daily lives (Stone & Rich, 2009). The target audience of the product is mainly LG120 students to which the Instagram account used for selling and promotion has been introduced to them via advertisement on the same app. Other users who are interested can simply visit the social platform page and personal message



the seller to purchase the book. Should the sales of the digital copies become successful, and the demand is high, the project can then proceed to be published as printed versions to be marketed.

1.5 Related Studies

The importance of creative writing in education cannot be contested and is to be consistently reminded of, especially amongst students of higher education. Studies show that even between academic teachers, 90% of them agreed that teaching writing skills to their students is a necessity (Pawliczak, 2015). The notion does not come off as surprising, given the many worthwhile values that having a good mastery over creative writing could provide. One such instance includes opening opportunities for students to improve on their academic performance (Senel, 2018). Furthermore, writing a piece of creative work can enable prospering writers to indirectly polish their communication skills (Glatch, 2022). The researcher argues that when writers immerse themselves in the extensive writing process, they are bound to gradually improve on their vocabulary. The newly acquired words can be used by writers to help express themselves better, and therefore their communication skills will be subconsciously refined. With the knowledge that creative writing is important to students, undoubtedly, active effort to improve on students' writing skills should be highlighted even further. A study reveals that lack of motivation and interest to learn in writing classes are one of the problems faced by teachers (Senel, 2018). Therefore, to ensure development in students' writing skills, effort to combat these weaknesses must be made. One such effort that can be taken is to adopt digital learning amongst students, such as the use of E-books. A study reveals that the varied nature of digital media like E-books removes boredom in students, and these innovations in learning media make learning a lot less dull and therefore increasing students' interest in learning (Rahmatina et al., 2020). As such, students can thus improve on their writing skills due to the high motivation to learn.

2. METHODOLOGY

The project was developed chronologically as followed by a timeline of a Gantt chart. Before the project had begun its first phase of development, a pre-questionnaire was sent out to collect data concerning audience's Perception on Creative Writing and Figurative Language. The results are as described in the Results and Discussion section.

2.1 Pre-Questionnaire

This project used a qualitative approach for its data collection. A Google Form questionnaire about the Perception on Creative Writing and Figurative Language was carried out amongst a few students of the LG120 course of UiTM Cawangan Melaka. The questionnaire consists of Part A: Demographic Background questions and Part B: General Questions section. A total of 22 students participated in the questionnaire, with 20 aged 18-21 and the remaining 2 aged 22-25. There were 15 females and 7 males, and all 22 respondents were of the Malay race. All 22 respondents were undergraduates.

2.2 Canva

In the first week's drafting of the E-book, the graphic designing platform known as Canva had been chosen as the medium in which the E-book was to be designed in. The platform's user-friendly interface, ease of use, and the many utilities it provides such as the numerous graphic decorations to choose from prompted this decision.



2.3 Proofreading and Editing

The product was teased and promoted through Instagram, a popular social media platform. Instagram is regularly used for photo sharing, which suits the autobiographical nature of the project. Additionally, the platform has been chosen due to its popularity amongst people aged 19 and above, which is within the age range of typical university language students. This observation is supported by a recent statistic shown in Statista, where the percentage of users aged 18-24 ranked second in the bar chart (Dixon, 2022).

2.4 Instagram

The proofreading and editing process of the E-book content relied on both manual and software-related methods. The E-book was first put through the proofreading software Grammarly, before being manually proofread and edited accordingly by the authors. Additionally, phonetic transcription in the book were checked using Oxford Advanced Dictionary 10th Edition to ensure more accurate transcriptions.

2.5 Post Questionnaire

A post-questionnaire survey was sent out to a couple LG120 students who have reviewed the finished product. The questionnaire consists of Part A: Demographic Background questions and Part B: General Questions section. The aim of the questionnaire was to collect data concerning their satisfaction for the product. A total of 7 diploma students participated in the questionnaire, all aged 18-21. There were 5 females and 2 males of all Malay respondents.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Respondents' perception on Creative Writing and Figurative Language

The questions in the survey are multiple-choice based. Table 1 highlights some of the results of the questionnaire concerning language students' perception on creative writing and figurative language.

No	General Questions		Number	Percentage
1.	Do you know what creative writing is?	Yes	19	86.4
		No	-	-
		Unsure	3	13.6
2.	Do you agree that creative writing is important?	Agree	21	95.5
		Disagree	-	-
		Unsure	1	4.5
3.	Do you know what figurative language in creative writing is?	Yes	18	81.8
		No	-	-
		Unsure	4	18.2
4.	Of the following, which figurative language are you most familiar with?	Personification	9	40.9
		Metaphor	3	13.6
		Hyperbole	10	45.5
		None of the above	-	-
5.	Would you be	Yes	21	95.5

	interested in an educational autobiography book for casual reading?	No	-	-
		Unsure	1	4.5

Table 1: Pre-questionnaire results

The results show that 86.4 percent of the respondents are fully aware of what creative writing is. While the remaining 13.6 percent are hesitant and answered with unsure. When asked about whether respondents agree that creative writing is important, 95.5 percent of the majority agreed with the statement and only 4.5 percent was unsure. In the follow-up question, 81.8 percent respondents are confident that they know what figurative language in creative writing is, while the remaining 18.2 percent answered with unsure. When asked about which figurative language of the given options respondents are most familiar with, 45.5 percent of them answered with hyperbole. 40.9 percent respondents answered personification while the remaining 13.6 answered with metaphor. From the results, it can be observed that most of the respondents are quite well-equipped with knowledge concerning creative writing and figurative language, however there are a few who are unsure. When the respondents were asked if they would be interesting in reading an educational autobiography for casual reading, 95.5 percent answered with yes.

3.2 Finalized product

Figure 2 is the front and back cover page of the finalized E-book. The book is titled *Figurative Language! An Educational Autobiography*. A grey background has been chosen to give a neutral look to the book (MasterClass, 2021), and the author has adopted a simplistic design for the book overall. The lighter pink is to contrast the neutral background of the grey. An image of one of the authors is placed at the front page, framed by a lighter grey box and complete with full name at the bottom.



Figure 2: Front and back cover of product

3.3 Product reception on social media

An account to promote the product (*eduautoLG120*) had been created on Instagram. The product is steadily well-received amongst account followers. The account used to promote the product has reached 27 users from November to December 26th, 2 of which are from non-followers. Promotion of the product was posted biweekly, where content teasers of the book were dropped. The posts were typically engaged by 6 accounts in total and received 12 to 18 likes per post. Throughout the duration, a total of 29 followers had been gained.



Figure 3: Account and post insights



Figure 4: Post sample

3.4 Results of product feedback survey

The questions in the survey are multiple-choice based. When asked about students' enjoyment of the product's content, 100 percent of the respondents said yes. Similarly, when asked if the guides in the book helped them to understand figurative language better, 100 percent of the students agreed. In the follow-up question, the students were asked which figurative language they understand better now than before. 71.4 percent of the students answered "metaphor", while the remaining 28.6 percent answered "personification". Students were also asked if the addition of phonetic content in the book were interesting and helpful. 85.7 percent said yes, while the remaining 14.3 was unsure. Respondents were asked about what aspect of the E-book can be improved. 71.4 percent answered "design", while the remaining 28.6 percent responded to "content".

4. CONCLUSION

From the findings revealed in this research, providing LG120 students of UiTM Cawangan Melaka leisure reading educational books can be beneficial in the long run. It can be seen from the questionnaire that these alternative types of academic media which deviates from the typical formally written media content piques the students' interest. For the E-book project itself, there are still rooms for improvements to be made. One such improvements planned for this project is to increase the amount of promotion posts on Instagram as well as to engage with the audience more. The authors believe that by doing so, more attention to the product can be achieved, and customers would feel a deeper connection to the author. Such improvement is sure to be made for the product in the future.



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