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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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LOST IN THE LABYRINTH OF MY MIND

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ABSTRACT:

'Lost in the Labyrinth of My Mind' is an e-book of song lyrics and interpretations, particularly nine songs from four albums; Midnights, folklore, Red, and Lover by Taylor Swift, a famous singer-songwriter. Her discography spans multiple genres, and her songwriting is often inspired by her personal life and has received critical praise and wide media coverage. The purpose of this e-book is to persuade students to be engrossed in literature as well as to teach them literary devices in an interesting way. Song lyrics can be considered a great tool for learning as it is accessible; hence, making it easy for everyone to comprehend anywhere at any time. Other than the interpretations, simple yet fun illustrations are included to encourage readers to appreciate art as well as a form of edutainment. Not only readers could learn about metaphors, but the interpretations written are also relatable and engaging. Developing 'Lost in the Labyrinth of My Mind' required the meticulous processes of researching, writing, illustrating, and finalising the product's outcome. Thus, this e-book aims to introduce that songwriting and lyrics are a part of literature as figurative language gives a deeper meaning than lexical language.

Keywords: lyrics, Taylor Swift, literature, literary devices, e-book, figurative language, lexical language, interpretations

1. INTRODUCTION

There's the formal aspect of poetry, which allows music lyrics to fit into literary works. Music lyrics frequently have a rhyme and measure, offer the aesthetic beauty that we expect from poetry, and are usually full of emotions. Therefore, it is considered literature. Music lyrics usually have some sort of intention, are often filled with figurative language, and have multiple layers of meaning. Academic research can be conducted on lyrics. Some lyrics, for example, can be interpreted as social commentary. Lyrics frequently include political, social, and economic themes, as well as aesthetic elements, and thus can convey culturally significant messages. These messages can be explicit or implicit, as in metaphor or symbolism. Lyrics are forms of expression used by songwriters in their music. The only goal is to get what is on their mind or heart down on paper (Winston, 2017). It all comes together to make something beautiful that the artist can share and use to change people's minds. This enables the listener to see things from their point of view. If the lyrics are relatable, they will strike a chord with you and become therapeutic. A lot of people, specifically students, tend to dislike poetry and interpreting the meaning behind each line because some are quite difficult to understand, and they are often less accessible than other forms of fiction. They usually do not get the purpose of writing a short verse of lyrics or poetry. Due to this, an e-book called 'Lost in the Labyrinth of My Mind' has been created to encourage people of all ages, especially students, to understand the beauty of

poetry and art, which connects strings of strangers by conveying emotions through song lyrics by Taylor Swift. The songs that have been chosen to interpret are *Anti-Hero, You're On Your Own Kid, Mirrorball, All Too Well, Nothing New, Red, The Archer, Death By A Thousand Cuts*, and, *Daylight*. This e-book includes illustrations that symbolise each song and album to attract readers.

1.1 Project Objective / Purpose

Poetry is a type of creative writing that can be found in every cultures all over the world. It is vital to humanity's literary and cultural landscape for a variety of reasons. Poetry can be an effective teaching tool, assisting students in improving their literacy skills. It can also allow writers to express their emotions and connect with their readers. Aesthetics, or the study of what is beautiful in the world, is also linked to poetry. Each poem will almost certainly have its own reason for existing while others use language to express personal truths about the world, philosophical ideas, to paint a vivid picture of an event or concept, or to entertain audiences (Blakeley, 2022).

This project aims to encourage students to get into poetry and literature by interpreting songs that have meaningful lyrics. There is no doubt that the arts encompass a wide range of artistic expression. That umbrella usually includes music, literature, painting, and dance (Laube, 2016). Furthermore, literary devices such as metaphor and imagery are incorporated into the book as well. Therefore, this will increase students' ability to interpret the meanings behind songs or poems easily as they get to relate to their own experiences. Other than that, it can enhance their language and literary skills. It is well known that illustrations that are interesting and contemporary in a book will undoubtedly attract more people to read it.

Another aim of this project is to provide a new form of edutainment through a modern medium for students to be able to relate to the story behind each song that has been interpreted. The songs that have been chosen are not just about Taylor Swift's personal life and literary devices, but it is also about entering adulthood, mental health, and insecurities. By doing this, students will feel connected to the e-book because they are not going through these obstacles alone.

1.2 Entrepreneurial Opportunities

A significant entrepreneurial opportunity for this product is publishing a physical copy of the e-book. The physical book would be marketed towards 18 to 22-year-olds, most of whom are going through a transition from teenage to adulthood. However; it can also be targeted toward Taylor Swift's fans and poetry lovers as well. People of all ages are allowed to buy this book because the writing is simple and easy to read. The physical book's price point would be RM10, which would fit the writing and the number of songs interpreted. This includes the illustrations that have been made by the writer.

At the same time, a digital version or an e-book could also be made available for purchase. Customers can easily scan and the e-book could be published digitally on platforms such as Kindle and Apple Books. The e-book would be priced at only RM5, making it cheaper and inexpensive for individuals with different income levels. Moreover, both physical book and e-book has a QR code for each song. This will lead you to the application, 'Spotify', making it easier and more interesting for readers to listen to the lyrics that have been interpreted in the book.

2. METHODOLOGY

The Gantt chart below outlines the process and tasks taken to create the e-book. To make the process smoother, idea preparation and idea pitching were conducted with the supervisor. Next, choosing appropriate songs that could be interpreted was a part of the process too. An e-book without illustrations would be empty and plain. Hence, illustrations were done prior to its creation through Canva and ProCreate. Furthermore, a follow-up interview and a survey were conducted to collect the readers' feedback and satisfaction with the e-book. The final product is shown down below:

Figure 1: Lost in the Labyrinth of My Mind's Gantt chart

Figure 2: Lost in the Labyrinth of My Mind's contents and cover page

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1 Interview Between the Author and Two Students

An interview with two students who are in semester 5, taking the course English for Professional Communications (LG120) from UiTM Alor Gajah was conducted to observe their fondness towards poetry and song lyrics before selling the e-book. The results from the interview are shown below in the form of excerpts:

Question 1 (Do you think poetry is fun and interesting?)

Student 1: Yes, I do. To me, poetry is a way of expressing impressions, emotions, and events that is highly compressed, and in which every word counts, so it tends to be the most beautiful form of literature. I like to figure out the meaning behind each poem because it gives me satisfaction and I find most of them relatable.

Student 2: No, I do not. I am not big on reading hence why. I don't always understand it and I never seem to get the answer. I understand that poetry books are meant to look aesthetically pleasing, but I would love to know more about the author's thoughts on their own poetry and writing by creating a story or simply stating the meaning of the poem. Since the point of communication is to transfer an idea to someone else, then it follows that the best way to communicate is as efficiently and precisely as possible. Well, poetry kind of defeats the whole purpose of that.

Question 2 (Are you familiar with literary devices?)

Student 1: Only a few such as metaphor and simile. I could never differentiate between metaphor and imagery. Both of them are quite similar if you ask me. However, I would love to learn more about literary devices.

Student 2: Not really. The only one I know is metaphor. The reason why poetry and literature are hard is because of foreign concepts.

Question 3 (What do you think is the reason why students dislike poetry?)

Student 1: It's probably because most of them find poetry and literature boring. Young adults these days prefer something that is more mainstream, modern, and something that they can feel connected to. From my observation, they love it when the content is relatable enough. Moreover, the poems that we usually learn are old ones, which makes them uninterested.

Student 2: Oh, definitely because of the literary devices that you mentioned just now. There are just too many! I think I would love it if we learn only a few that are usually being used in poems these days. Other than that, poetry is indirect. It's hard to point out what you mean in the form of poetry.

3.2 Feedback from Customers Who Purchased the E-book

The survey that was carried out had six questions in total. The aim is to collect feedback from customers who had purchased the e-book, 'Lost in the Labyrinth of My Mind', to

determine whether or not the project was fruitful and effective. Based on the findings, the e-book most definitely gained attention. 32 responses were successfully collected.

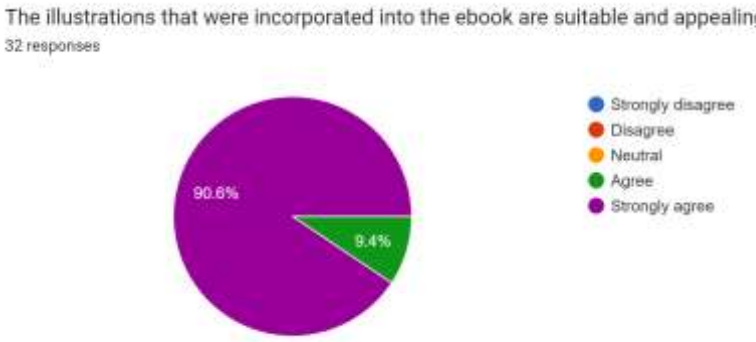

Figure 3: 90.6% of the customers strongly agree that the illustrations that were incorporated into the e-book are suitable and appealing.

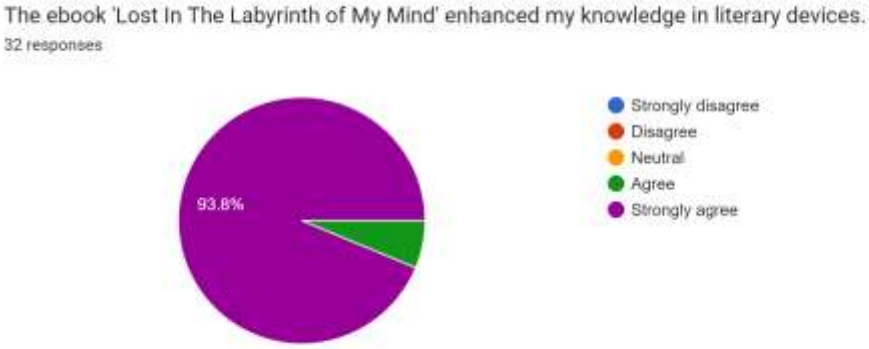

Figure 4: 93.8% of the customers strongly agree that the e-book enhanced their knowledge in literary devices.

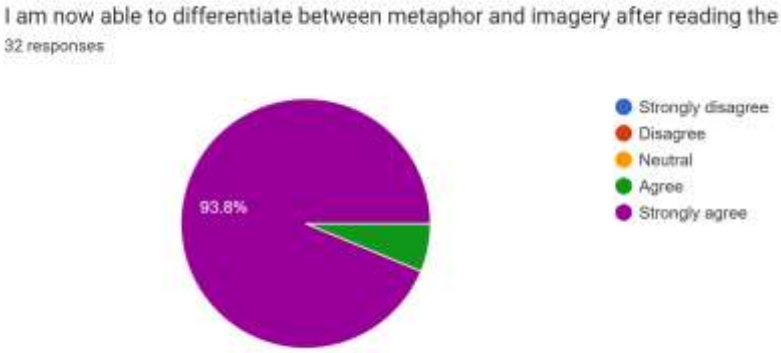

Figure 5: 93.8% of the customers strongly agree that they are able to differentiate between metaphor and imagery after reading the e-book.

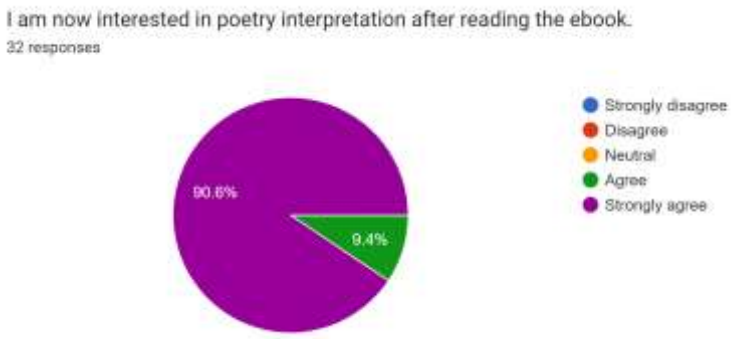

Figure 6: 90.6% of the customers strongly agree that they are interested in poetry interpretation after reading the e-book.

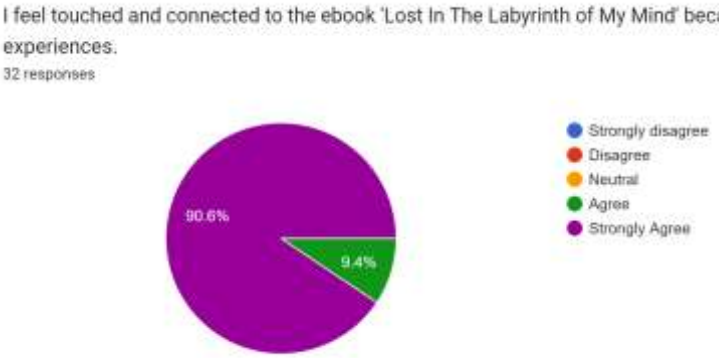

Figure 7: 90.6% of the customers feel touched and connected to the e-book because of the shared experiences.

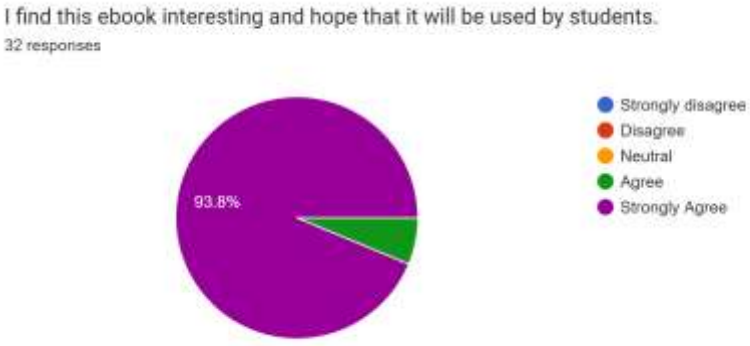

Figure 8: 93.8% of the customers strongly agree that they find the e-book interesting and hope that it will be used by students.

As can be seen from the figures presented above, the e-book titled 'Lost in the Labyrinth of My Mind' was extremely successful in achieving all of its goals. The initial and main goal of the e-book is to persuade students to love poetry through song lyrics and the meaning behind it. Some illustrations and literary devices such as metaphor and imagery are also included in the e-book for edutainment purposes. As seen in Figure 3, 90.6% of the customers strongly agree that the illustrations that were incorporated into the e-book are suitable and appealing. In addition, as shown in Figure 4, 93.8% of the customers strongly agree that the e-book enhanced their knowledge in literary devices. Moreover, in Figure 5, 93.8% of the customers strongly agree that

they are able to differentiate between metaphor and imagery after reading the e-book. Poetry and song lyric interpretations are not as hard as before after inserting the meanings and the author's own experiences in the e-book, as shown in Figure 6, 90.6% of the customers strongly agree that they are interested in poetry interpretation after reading the e-book. Moreover, in Figure 7, 90.6% of the customers feel touched and connected to the e-book because of the shared experiences. Last but not least, as seen in Figure 8, 93.8% of the customers strongly agree that they find the e-book interesting and hope that it will be used by students. The findings in the survey show that the e-book has successfully attained its main goal and purpose.

4. CONCLUSION

To crown it all, poetry and literature are not as mainstream and accessible as other fiction available in the market. 'Lost in the Labyrinth of My Mind' includes interpretations, literary devices, and personal stories for students to grasp the beauty of poetry. In addition, a plethora of valuable insights in completing the e-book was discovered and skills in illustrating and designing were polished by the author. After publishing this e-book, it was determined that the main objective is achieved. Based on the results and discussions, the e-book is fruitful and credible as it has helped a number of readers to gain new knowledge on literary devices in an easy way. In wrapping up the project, it is hoped that this e-book will shed some light upon poetry and that students will always use it for edutainment purposes.

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