ABSTRACT

Due to limited exposure and usage of the English language, many secondary school students in rural areas have difficulty in writing a narrative essay. The main reason given is lack of vocabulary. Hence, this research is to find out the student’s performance in narrative essay writing after an intervention in vocabulary acquisition using The Star newspaper as an alternative teaching and learning material. Activities using the newspaper are carried out for six weeks, at a frequency of 2 to 3 times a week. The methods applied in this study are pretest, post-test and interviews. The pre-test and post-test design is used to gather the quantitative data and interviews with the teacher and students are used to obtain qualitative data. The tests comprise free writing where the participants write a story that ends with the ‘line’ given. The participants of this research are 30 Form Four students from a rural secondary school in the district of Gombak, Selangor. After the administration of the pre-test, the students carry out 5 vocabulary worksheets and 3 writing worksheets based on selected articles from The Star. During the treatment, their behaviors or attitudes in responding to the questions asked and also their reactions to the teacher’s instruction were recorded as field notes. Upon completion of the 8 worksheets, a post-test was administered. The difference between the pre and post-test scores for each student was then analyzed. Out of the 30 participants, 9 students (30%) were selected to be interviewed. The teacher was also interviewed. The result indicated that the activities using the newspaper did help the students to acquire more vocabulary, however, the newly acquired vocabulary helped improve the narrative writing of good and average students only. This is because these students know how to use the words learned correctly in elaborating their ideas. Whereas, for the weak students, they need more time to learn how to apply the words in their essay.
ABSTRAK

MENGGUNAKAN AKHBAR UNTUK MENINGKATKAN PENULISAN KARANGAN NARATIF DALAM KALANGAN PELAJAR SEKOLAH MENENGAH

perbendaharaan kata yang baru diperoleh hanya membantu memperbaiki penulisan naratif pelajar tahap baik dan sederhana sahaja. Ini adalah kerana pelajar-pelajar ini tahu bagaimana untuk menggunakan perkataan yang dipelajari dengan betul dalam menghuraikan idea-idea mereka. Manakala, bagi pelajar yang lemah, mereka memerlukan lebih banyak masa untuk mempelajari bagaimana untuk menggunakan perkataan-perkataan baru tersebut dalam esei mereka.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Alhamdulillah all praise be to Allah S.W.T. Thank you for giving me strength and courage to complete my Ma studies successfully.

My special appreciation goes to my beloved mother Hajah Rokiah binti Sulaiman who never stopped giving me advice and praying for my success; to my parents in law Haji Ahmad bin Juraimi and Hajah Sakdiah binti Ahmad who were always ready to lend a helping hand when things got a bit more challenging; their love and sacrifices will never be forgotten. Thank you also to all my siblings and in laws.

To my supervisor, Dr Jawakhir Mior Jaafar, thank you for being so helpful, patient and understanding. Also thank you to the lecturers and staff of the Faculty of Language and Linguistics.

Thank you to the Headmistress, school teachers and students who participated and contributed in a big or small way to this study, without their kind cooperation and support, this study would never be.

Last but not least my most sincere gratitude goes to my beloved husband Haji Anzaruddin bin Haji Ahmad for his endless advice, support and love through the years of my MA study. Thank you too to my children ‘Athirah, ‘Aisyah and Aiman who showed so much understanding and tolerance towards my situation and tried their best to help ease my stress and frustrations.

To all these people, thank you so much. May Allah bless you all.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Declaration of Academic Work</th>
<th>ii</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstrak</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study  
1.2 Statement to the Problem  
1.3 Objectives of the Study  
1.4 The Research Questions  
1.5 Scope and Limitations  
1.6 Significance of the Study  
1.7 Summary  

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction  
2.2 Teaching and Learning Vocabulary  
2.3 Genres of Written texts  
2.3.1 Narrative Text
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction
3.2 Research Design
3.3 The Participants
3.4 Instruments
  3.4.1 The Newspaper
  3.4.2 The Activity Worksheets
  3.4.3 The Pre and Post-test
  3.4.4 Informal Structured Interviews
3.5 Data Collecting Procedures
3.6 Data Analysis Procedures
  3.6.1 The Activity Worksheets
  3.6.2 Pre and Post-Tests
  3.6.3 Informal Structured Interviews
    3.6.3.1 The Teacher Interview
    3.6.3.2 The Student Interviews
3.7 Ethical Consideration

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction
4.2 Analysis of the data  45
4.2.1 Test Scores and Students’ Essays  45
  4.2.1.1 Result from the Tests  46
  4.2.1.2 Students’ Essays  48
4.2.2 Data from the Informal Structured Interviews  50
  4.2.2.1 Responses from the teacher  50
  4.2.2.2 Responses from the students  52
4.2.3 Observation from Activity Worksheets  58
4.3 Summary  60

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction  62
5.2 Findings and Discussion  62
  5.2.1 In what ways can *The Star* help students increase their vocabulary?  62
  5.2.2 To what extent can the vocabulary obtained from *The Star* help the students write better narrative essays?  64
5.3 Implications to the teachers  66
5.4 Implications to the students  66
5.5 Recommendation  67
5.6 Conclusion  67

REFERENCES  69
APPENDICES  73
Appendix 1 The Form Four English Language syllabus  73
Appendix 2 Curriculum Specifications for English Form 4  76
Appendix 3 Word List (Form Four)  77
LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Format of the SPM English Examination Paper (E1119)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>List of items in each grade</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Marking Criteria for Pre-Test and Post-Test</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>The Test Descriptor</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Summary of the students’ grades</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>The Students’ Responses to the General Questions</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>A chart depicting the development of a plot (Freytag’s pyramid)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>The results of the pre and post-test</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>