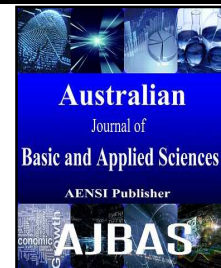




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### Effect of Background Music Treatment To Improve Interest In Teaching Of Malay Excerpt Comprehension

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#### ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify the treatment effect of background music on subjects of interest to Malay language among students. According to a research conducted, background music is effective on students' interests in teaching of Malay Comprehension passage for treatment group which consisted of 15 respondents. The findings show that there are significant differences in the mean post-test interest to teaching of Malay Comprehension passage between the treatment group and the control group. Finally, the last chapter discusses the findings, conclusions, recommendations, suggestions for further research and conclusion. In this respect, the proposal is submitted for consideration to the students, teachers, schools, publishers and the Ministry of Education in an effort to improve the implementation of background music in education.

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#### INTRODUCTION

Reading skills are fundamental to understand the complex learning process. The process of reading requires a sequence or string repeated to ensure that students understand what they are reading and mastering the reading process. Normally this is a problem in the reading process faced by many students at the primary level and this issue will be brought to the secondary school level. Problems in the learning process involve various factors, internal factors and external factors that are interrelated. Therefore, psychological factors will be the aim of this study.

Enthusiasm and motivation are very instrumental in building the habits and the ability to read. Passion for reading material makes it easier to experience and understand the process of reading. Lack of interest in reading is one of the factors that contribute to reading problems among students.

Attitudes of students by ethnicity are reflected through students' focus on activities carried out in Bahasa Melayu class. Review from Junaini Kaslan and Zaharani Ahmad (2010) found that 54.5% percent of Chinese students considered that activities in Bahasa Melayu class as unattractive. Nor Hashimah Jaladduin (2010) states that the activities

of the less attractive will give adverse effects on students' cognition, once it is seen as a driving factor to have negative inclination towards the Malay language. Bahasa Melayu is a second language for students of Chinese, Indian and other ethnic. Therefore, learning activities and teaching an attractive, interactive and easy course will have a profound impact on students.

In order to increase students' interest in reading comprehension of Malay language, music is considered as one of the tools that can help students more focused in passage reading skill. Music is a medium of learning that makes the process of learning more fun and interesting. Music could balance the intellectual and emotional intelligence that will give good results for students. Moreover, music also affects human physiology. Physiological state of relaxation will positively affect students' attention. Relaxation together with music makes mind is always willing and able to receive more attention in lessons. Nirmala (2005) stated that music therapy is a unique application to improve the quality of someone's life by doing something with positive behaviour. With the help of music, we can be more focused.

Background music is used in various contexts to create a positive atmosphere, to influence behaviour,

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to develop physiological processes, emotional and cognitive. In everyday life, music is used to create the desired atmosphere and control mood of the target group. (Saarikallio, 2007). Soft music (Easy listening music) known as pop orchestra is a popular type of music at 1950an- 1970s. (Lanza, 2008). The effect of soft music (Easy-listening music) to students of Year 5 achievement is positive (Charles & Lou, 2001). Hence, pop orchestra as background music is used as a treatment tool for year 5 students in Malay language reading comprehension.

#### **Problem Statement:**

Interest is the determining factor of student achievement to a subject. A study by Nor Hashimah and Junaini (2010) stated that Chinese students thought Malay Language learning is dull and boring. Associated with their attitudes towards Malay Language, Awang Sariyan (1996) found that 55.7% of teachers said that there are less students who were interested in learning the Malay Language. Ainaol Madziah Zubairi and Isarji Hj Sarudin (2009) found that students' motivation to learn a foreign language in Malaysia is highly dependent on intrinsic motivation, enthusiasm and positive attitude. Review from Zaharani (2010) stated that negative attitude towards Malay Language by Chinese students is high as compared to other subjects which are caused by social cognitive and existing curriculum. Therefore, any factor that can increase student's interest in learning the Malay language should be reviewed for bringing positive impact to the Malay Language.

Issues of interest to the Malay leave an unfavourable impression on individual achievement in learning. B. Hurlock Elizabeth (1980) stated that interest has the power to motivate students to learn a lesson as compared with those who accept the subject passively. Quek (2006) found that the interest has a positive influence on student's achievement for high school students to get interested and will always strive diligently to improve. Omardin (1997) stated that interest is important as the impetus for the students to be active in the learning activities.

To increase students' interest, music approach as a method in teaching and learning has often been put under study. According to Giles (1991), the effect of music is beneficial in reducing stress, increasing student's interest and productivity. Playing music and songs in the classroom can motivate students to concentrate. (Tan & Shi, 2005). In the study of Masnun & Sudarman (2009), the use of music to answering mathematical questions can increase students' interest in mathematics compared with students who answered in a state without music.

#### **Research Questions:**

i. Are there significant differences in the interest to teaching of Malay language comprehension between the control group and the

treatment group before conducting the background music treatment?

ii. Are there significant interest differences in the teaching of Malay language comprehension in the treatment group after conducting the background music treatment?

iii. Are there significant interest differences in the teaching of Malay language comprehension in the control group after conventional methods conducted?

iv. Are there significant interest differences in the teaching of Malay language comprehension between the control group and the treatment group after conducting the background music treatment?

#### **Hypothesis:**

i. There are no significant interest difference in the pre-test mean of interest to teaching of Malay Language Comprehension in Year 5 students between the control group and the treatment group.

ii. There are significant interest differences in teaching of Malay Language Comprehension between the post-test and pre-test in treatment group.

iii. There are no significant differences in teaching of Malay Language Comprehension between the post-test and pre-test in control group.

iv. There are significant interest difference in the post-test mean of teaching of Malay Language Comprehension in Year 5 students between the control group and the treatment group.

#### **Objective:**

This study aims to review the effect of background music treatment in the teaching of Malay Language Comprehension among Year 5 students.

## **2. Literature Review:**

### **Effect of Background Music:**

According to Blair, Jones & Simpson (1991), students who are weak need help in doing tasks that are easier and more interesting to improve their reading skills at a normal level. Many previous studies are conducted to test the effectiveness of music on children's mental development. Children who are exposed to music or play a musical instrument have better academic achievement. The findings by Droscher (2006) found that exposure to music resulted to higher level of reading age, IQ and mental development. The results of the study also showed that music can improve reading and writing skills. Results of previous studies also showed that student achievement scores increased with the use of music in the reading program (Hansen & Stuber, 2002). Butzlaff (2002) and Lamb and Gregory (1993) found there is relationship between performance and music.

Music is believed to boost the release of endorphins from the brain. Endorphin works to lower the blood pressure and the concentrations of adrenalin and corticosteroids. Thus, hormones will release to help people focus on cognitive learning

tasks such as hyperactive children. For example, Hallam (2002) has shown that background music and performance improvement in mathematics, emotional and behavioural problems of children aged 10 to 11 years are positive.

Music background increases the reading comprehension performance of children aged 11-13 years in early morning and afternoon, and mid-afternoon session. In addition, the effects of background music are beneficial in reducing stress, increasing student interest and productivity (Giles 1991). Slow tempo music can improve cognitive ability and instead fast tempo music will continue to reduce cognitive ability. Soft music plays a positive role in the performance of reading comprehension, arithmetic and memory compared with the loud music (Furnham & Strbac 2002). Recent research by Savan (1998) showed better behaviour and focus more on school work when the background music being played during science lessons.

#### **Interest:**

Interest is established through attention and learning. When people tend to remember, there is an indication for emergence of interest (Commins and Fagin, 1954). Personal interest is related to individual differences and growing since early childhood. Crow and Crow expressed that interest is often associated with attitude and prejudice against an issue. Attitude of interest is not inborn, but arise and change with experience gained through development of the individual, which is formed through the process of learning.

Interest is an activity undertaken by students on a regular basis in the learning process. According to Slameto (2010), interest is a constant tendency to pay attention and remember some of the activities. When students feel enthusiastic, satisfaction and pleasure, these activities can be enhanced. A person who has an interest in a particular activity tends to give great attention to the activity.

According to Abdul Halim Mohamad and Wan Mohamad Wan Yaman (2006), the attitude of students towards Arabic learning is crucial in determining their success. Gina Omar (2008) found a connection between attitudes and achievement in Islamic Education subject. Many researchers have proposed a theory regarding the factors that influence student academic achievement. Among the factors associated with student achievement is interest, attitudes, learning styles, teaching methods and family background.

#### **Music Generates Interest:**

Interest is something that gives someone encouragement to do something. Music used by teachers as extrinsic motivation that can help students more eager to learn. Music serves to relief tension atmosphere in classroom. Elements of music

can attract and help students memorize facts and structure's label (Zainuree, 2003)

The use of music while presenting ideas and concepts could create narrative elements to evoke mood, emotion and imagination of pupils to the story content or events that are involved. The effect of background music create a scenario that describes the environment for a story, staging to interest arouse, mood and trigger certain emotions and stimulate pupils' imagination. (Noriati 2009)

The role of music in the teaching and learning process is by influencing students' interest. For example, while teaching Malay language, teachers can use folk songs to convey the content of the subjects. Through this approach, students are more interested in knowing what they have learnt. Students will get more interested during the teaching and learning process.

### **3. Research Methodology:**

#### **Research Sample:**

The study is consisted of 30 students from Year Five in SJK (C) Kampung Tawas, Ipoh. The students are divided into 2 groups which is 15 students from the experimental group and 15 students from the control group. The respondents have similar family background and Malay Language level. This is to ensure validity of the study.

#### **Instrument of the study:**

#### **Interest to teaching Malay language comprehension (Pre-test):**

The questionnaire has 20 question items to be answered by both experimental group and the control group as a pre-test on their interest in Malay language. The purpose of the questionnaire is to ensure the level of respondents' interest in the Malay language between the two groups. A score is given based on the Likert scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = not sure, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree.

#### **The Background Music:**

There are 3 selected songs as background music. They are Gangnam style (Orchestra Version by Korean Pop Orchestra), Tontoro (crystal music version), You are the Apple of My Eye (piano version). All the three songs are popular among students, characterized by easy listening / orchestra, pop music, and the period of time is approximately 5 minutes. The background music will be played during the experimental group reading the passages and answering comprehension questions passages in the 3 treatment sessions.

#### **Malay Language Comprehension. (Post-test):**

There are three passages has approximately 250 words with 5 comprehension questions each, 1 passage is given in each session of treatment. The experimental group read a passage and answer the questions along with the background music while the control group read passages and answer questions in

silence. To obtain the validity, chairman of the Malay language committee who have been teaching for 15 years has revised the questions and answers for the pre and post-test exam scheme. The teacher is not related and not involved with the study. The purpose of this test is to identify the level of achievement answered questions of Malay language comprehension passages after treatment has been carried out.

#### **Interest to the teaching of Malay Language comprehension (Pre-test):**

The questionnaire has 20 items of question to be answered by the experimental group and the control group as a post-test about their interest in Malay to identify the treatment effect. A score is given based on the Likert scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = not sure, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree.

**Table 1:** T-test differences between the control group and treatment group in pre-test.

Variables	Group	Mean	Standard Deviation	DK (N-2)	Value t	Value p
Interest to teaching Malay Language Comprehension	C	31.53	3.56	14	0.13	0.90
	T	31.40	2.13			

Significant at the alpha value ( $\alpha$ ) = 0.05

Based on Table 1, the pre-test mean of Interest to Malay Language for the control group was 31.53, while the pre-test mean of interest to Malay Language for the treatment group was 31.40, and the mean difference of the two group is 0.13. A t-test was significant when the p value is less than the alpha level. The test results show that the value of p is less than the level of alpha ( $\alpha$ ). The results show that the value p is 0.90 and the significant level of alpha ( $\alpha$ ) is 0.05. So the value p was found to be higher than the level of significance ( $\alpha$ ) of 0.90 > 0.05.

**Table 2:** The T-test mean difference of interest to teaching of Malay Language Comprehension between the post-test and pre-test in the treatment group.

Variable	Test	Mean	Standard Deviation	DK(N-1)	Value t	Value p
Interest to teaching of Malay Language Comprehension	Pre	31.53	3.56	14	-47.86	0.00
	Post	84.47	2.87			

Significant at the value alpha ( $\alpha$ ) = 0.05

Based on Table 2, the pre-test mean of interest to teaching of Malay Language Comprehension for the treatment group was 31.53, while the post-test mean of interest to teaching of Malay Language Comprehension for the treatment group was 84.47, and the mean difference of the two test is -47.86. A t-test was significant when the p value is less than the alpha level. The test results show that the value of p is less than the level of alpha ( $\alpha$ ). The results show that the value p is 0.00 and the significant level of alpha ( $\alpha$ ) is 0.05. So the value p was found to be

#### **4. Data analysis:**

SPSS program is used to analyse the data for this study in statistical methods. The data analysis is descriptive, frequency to elaborate the information collected from both groups.

#### **Result:**

##### **Research Question 1:**

Are there significant interest differences in the interest to teaching of Malay language comprehension between the control group and treatment group before conducting the background music treatment?

Hypothesis1: There was no significant interest difference in the pre-test mean of interest to the teaching of Malay Language Comprehension in Year 5 students between the control group and the treatment group.

##### **Research Question 2:**

Are there significant interest differences in the teaching of Malay Language comprehension in the treatment group after conducting the background music treatment?

Hypothesis 2: There are significant interest differences in teaching of Malay Language Comprehension between the post-test and pre-test in treatment group.

higher than the level of significance ( $\alpha$ ) of 0.90 > 0.05.

##### **Research Question 3:**

Are there significant interest differences in the teaching of Malay Language comprehension in the control group after conventional methods conducted?

Hypothesis3: There are no significant differences in the teaching of Malay Language Comprehension between the post-test and pre-test in the control group.

**Table 3:** The T-test mean difference of interest to the teaching of Malay Language Comprehension between the post-test and pre-test in control group.

Variable	Test	Mean	Standard Deviation	DK(N-1)	Value t	Value p
Interest to teaching Malay Language Comprehension	Pre	31.40	2.13	14	-0.21	0.84
	Post	31.60	3.13			

Significant at the value alpha ( $\alpha$ ) =0.05

Based on Table 3, the pre-test mean of Interest to the teaching of Malay Language Comprehension for the control group was 31.40, while the post-test mean of interest to Malay Language for the control group was 31.60, and the mean difference of the two test is -0.21. A t-test was significant when the p value is less than the alpha level. The test results show that the value of p is less than the level of alpha ( $\alpha$ ). The results show that the value p is 0.84 and the significant level of alpha ( $\alpha$ ) is 0.05. So the value p was found to be higher than the level of significance ( $\alpha$ ) of  $0.84 > 0.05$ . The results showed that there was no significant difference in the mean pre-test and

post-test of interest to the teaching of Malay Language Comprehension in the control group.

#### **Research Question 4:**

Are there significant interest differences in the teaching of Malay Language comprehension between the control group and the treatment group after conducting the background music treatment?

Hypothesis 4: There are significant interest difference in the post-test mean in the teaching of Malay Language Comprehension to Year 5 students between the control group and the treatment group.

**Table 4:** T-test differences between the control group and treatment group in post-test.

Variable	Group	Mean	Standard Deviation	DK (N-2)	Value t	Value p
Interest to teaching Malay Language Comprehension	C	31.60	3.13	14	57.79	0.00
	T	84.47	2.87			

Significant at the value alpha ( $\alpha$ ) =0.05

Based on Table 4, the post-test mean of Interest to Malay Language for the control group was 31.60, while the post-test mean of interest to Malay Language for the treatment group was 84.47, and the mean difference of the two groups is 57.79. A t-test was significant when the p value is less than the alpha level. The test results show that the value of p is less than the level of alpha ( $\alpha$ ). The results show that the value p is 0.00 and the significant level of alpha ( $\alpha$ ) is 0.05. So the value p was found to be less than the level of significance ( $\alpha$ ) of  $0.00 < 0.05$ . The results of the study showed there are there are significant interest difference in the post-test mean of teaching Malay Language Comprehension to Year 5 students between the control group and the treatment group.

#### **Discussion:**

##### **Students' interest to the teaching of Malay Language Comprehension before treatment:**

Based on the analysis of students' interest towards teaching Malay Language Comprehension shows that they are not interested without treatment and showed their interest after the treatment of background music being performed. The result shows students has low interest to this subject particularly Chinese students as stated by Nor Hashimah and Junaini (2010) because they assumed Malay Language is unattractive and boring which affected student achievement in the subject. Review from Zaharani (2010) stated that negative attitude by Chinese students is high compared with other

subjects caused by social cognition factors and existing curriculum.

##### **Control group's interest to the teaching of Malay Language Comprehension:**

Students of the control group showed no significant interest differences before and after the conventional teaching. The findings indicated that students showed low scores in the item stating that the teaching was interesting, fun, focused, and satisfied in quiet condition. This finding is consistent with the opinion of Crawford & Strapping (1994) stated vocal music as the background while learning gives more positive impact than learning in a quiet environment.

Treatment group's interest to the teaching of Malay Language Comprehension after the background music treatment.

All in all, students of the control group showed interest in the Malay language subject after the treatment. The result of data analysis showed high score in questionnaire that shows the treatment have improved the driving force for passage reading and motivate students to get better results. This is a timely insight from Hilgard (2003) which states that interest is a source of motivation that drives someone to do what you want when you are free to choose.

Students from the treatment group showed more attention during science lessons. This finding is consistent with the opinion of Crow and Crow (1984) that interest shows ability to pay attention to a person, an object or activity or something that could

influence an experience that has been stimulated by the activity itself.

Students in the treatment group showed an increasing desire to answer questions and better mood to read passages. This finding is consistent with the opinion of Siti Rahayu Haditono (2007) who expressed that interest is influenced by intrinsic factor that is desirable act with passion, desire and sense of fun.

#### ***The effect of background music for the control group and treatment group:***

Students from treatment group showed more interest after receiving treatment background music. Teaching of Malay Language Comprehension with such treatments brings fun to the respondents to read. This is consistent with the opinion of Blair, Jones & Simpson (1991), which states that weak students need help to find material that is relatively easy and enjoyable reading skills in order to increase the reading rate.

According to Mirza Syafitri (2012), music can cause physiological reactions that can alter moods and emotions to get rid of stress. The findings showed that the treatment group students felt relax when the background music played while reading passages and answering comprehension questions. In addition, Campbell (1984) states that music can improve language skill, boost creativity and improve concentration and memory. The effects can be seen from the treatment group students who respond positively to the item that stated background music can help to remember what was being taught.

Students in the treatment group showed an increase in the concentration of attention during the background music was conducted compared with the control group students. This is consistent with the opinion of Savan (1998) that there is better behaviour and better concentration when the background music being played during science lessons.

Effect of background music is positive to the results of teaching and student learning outcomes. According to Elisabeth (2005), early success in language learning is strongly influenced by the ability of teachers to implement interesting and fun process of teaching and learning. The opinion is consistent with the findings of the study that indicated the teaching of Malay Language Comprehension with the help of background music is giving better results and more attractive as compared to other teaching methods.

#### ***Suggestion:***

Teachers should wisely choose and use equipment or teaching aids in order to stimulate and maintain student interest towards Malay Language. Electronic devices such as computers and the internet, radio, video and musical instruments should be used as appropriate teaching aid. With the advancement of technology and the internet these

days, teachers can choose any music or songs that are appropriate to the students' background and played them during the teaching session with radio, computer or smart phone easily.

Schools are suggested to play background music during a session in the early morning reading program before the lesson begins. According to Hansen & Bernstorf (2002) student's achievement increased after using background music in the reading program. With the existence of PA system, the school is suggested to install the appropriate background music during the Malay language examination so that students can answer comprehension questions in a calm and more focused environment to achieve higher performance.

Students are encouraged to listen to background music while preparing for exams especially for subjects which are less interested. Music can stimulate their brain and have positive impact in terms of psychology. Therefore, studying in an exciting and calm atmosphere can motivate students to be more interested and working in these subjects.

Parents are encouraged to choose appropriate music to help their children in learning. According to Crawford & Strapping (1994), vocal music as the background provides more positive effects as compared to instrumental music and silent condition. Parents can download and install the appropriate music while children are studying or doing work at home. Parents are also encouraged to let the children choose their favourite music to have a conducive learning.

Music publishers are proposed to provide products in the form of instrumental music or vocal music that fits various stages of child development. For example, for students in Year 1 may like cartoon vocal music while Year 6 students may prefer pop vocal music.

The Ministry of Education are proposed to provide courses for teachers on functions of music in education and how to apply music in their teaching and learning sessions. According to Azizi Yahaya & Chu (2010), teaching methods include demonstrations, practical, projects, stimulation, lectures, exercises and discussions. The teaching methods are less stimulating, especially for subjects that gain less interest by students. Therefore, it is proposed to introduce the effects of background music to the educators for the benefits of their students.

#### ***Conclusion:***

The study of gender differences in the effects of background music to the teaching of Malay language Comprehension should be intensified. According to (Dwyer 1974) female students are more positive and give more serious attention to school work than male students. Female also showed better reading interest (McKenna, 1997). Gender has different learning styles (Pico, Gatlin-Watts & Packer 1998).

Therefore, the level of interest in the teaching of Malay Language Comprehension with the background music is probably different between both sexes.

Students from different socio-economic level and family background may show differences in the effect of background music. According to Gina (in Zuki Yusoff, 2003), children with high socio-economic status are provided with facilities and comfortable learning environment. As for students from low socio-economic, they lack the opportunity to have instrumental music or vocals. Therefore, it is proposed to test the effectiveness of background music on learning for students from different socio-economic levels.

It is proposed to review the effectiveness of background music on a subject that is less attractive to students like mathematics. According to Lay Tay Eng (1993), most of the students who have low achievement in Mathematics are those who consider Mathematics is a difficult and complex subject. To improve this situation and increase student achievement in mathematics, this study proposes the use of music as a treatment agent.

Research on the type of music to be used as treatment agents should be further encouraged. Soft and slow music can enhance cognitive abilities or fast music otherwise would reduce the rate of cognitive ability. In addition, soft music plays positive role in the performance of reading comprehension, arithmetic and memory compared with a loud music. (Fernham & Strbac 2002).

To obtain more accurate results, the study should use a variety of methods or instruments of study such as interviews or direct observation to obtain information and gain further validity and reliability of the study.

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