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### RESEARCH ARTICLE

#### INCREASING VOCABULARIES THROUGH JAZZ CHANTS FOR ESL YOUNG LEARNERS.

Perbindar Kaur a/p Pajan Singh<sup>1</sup> and Hermawati bt Hashim<sup>2</sup>.

1. Sek Keb Seri Kelebang , 32100 Chemor , Perak.
2. Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

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#### Abstract

Children develop their foundation of learning starting from preschool stage and continue to primary school. This paper investigates the effects of jazz chants approach to teach English Language to ten-year-old pupils who have low proficiency level in a primary school located at Chemor, Perak. They come from various backgrounds with abilities to use home languages and mother tongue. Their exposure to English Language is very limited. Due to this, the importance of this language is neglected as it is seen as impossible to master. So, to improve teacher support and student involvement, it is crucial to have suitable strategies in educational contexts that would be able to develop a positive attitude among the pupils and improve their academic performance in English Language. The objective of this paper is to propose language learning strategies for low performance ESL pupils. It will highlight a direction which might improve the second language learning pedagogy in classrooms. Data was collected through pre-test and post-test, and satisfaction questionnaire which were given to 30 Year 4 pupils (purposive sampling). Results attained from the pre-test and post-test showed that there was a positive increase in pupils' achievement. Based from the satisfaction questionnaire, the mean percentage for the Likert Scale data suggests that Jazz Chants satisfied pupils' language learning styles. They had fun learning experience as they progressed in their learning activities.

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#### Introduction:-

The learners in this study who are born in 2010 can be identified too as Generation Z. This statement is supported by Encarta World Dictionary. It is crucial to understand how these pupils think, what is their concern about and how they would like to be engaged. They are exposed to a variety of electronic medias with their six second patterns of imaging which then changes the brain to expect information to be delivered in short and rapid bursts. There is also consensus among educators that the attention span of this generation is much shorter compared to earlier generations. The average student's attention span is seven to ten minutes in the classroom but it is now eight seconds online and gets shorter as time progresses. It has been brought to attention that if youngsters are taught in languages which are different from their home language or mother tongue, they drop out from school, have low academic performance, and repeat classes due to a high failure rate. This condition persists in Nepal as stated by Yadava, 2007; Awasthi, 2004. as cited by Rai, et al., 2011. Having noted this scenario, teaching English Language needs

creativity whereby teachers need to use teaching techniques that enable pupils in understanding and learning the knowledge. Teachers must completely understand the characteristics of pupils as well as their favorable activities which interest them. As teachers who teach English in schools, extra energy needs to be put in preparation in lessons to ensure that their teaching is interesting to meet the demands of Generation Z pupils. Lessons need to be able to motivate pupils to be enthusiastic in learning. Teachers must instill self-efficacy in pupils. It reflects confidence in pupils to have the ability to be in charge over one's own learning behavior, motivation and social environment. According to Bandura 1977, 1986, 1997, it is stated that self-efficacy can be translated as an ability in a person to carry out certain behaviors which are crucial in constructing certain performances in achievements. The pupils who are ten years old, have specific learning needs. They learn best when they are involved well. At the same time, they feel valued when they have opportunity to experience and experiment for themselves. Therefore, planned tasks must be varied, short and interesting for them in learning English. For the ability to excel in English language, it is crucial for pupils to enrich their English vocabulary. So, English teachers need to observe that pupils have strong grasp of vocabularies in English. Various methods can be carried out in teaching vocabulary and for this study, Jazz Chants is selected to investigate its role in language learning. These Jazz Chants can be categorized into two main fields which is topic chants and grammar chants. Topic Jazz Chants focuses on various themes like animals, food and occupations whereas grammar structure Jazz Chants cover the arrears of grammatical in English texts such as nouns, verbs and other grammar items. In this research the selected theme is food. The objective of this study is to identify the extent the use of jazz chants is able to develop Year 4 pupils' ability to read words and phrases then followed by gradually to read sentences effectively.

#### **Research objective**

To describe the ability of Jazz Chants to help develop Year 4 pupils to recall and remember words with correct spelling.

#### **Research question**

To what extent are the Jazz Chants able to guide the teacher develop Year 4 pupils to recall and remember words with correct spelling.

#### **Literature Review**

A Jazz Chant is a rhythmic presentation of natural language. It is linking of the rhythms of natural spoken American English to the rhythms of traditional American jazz as stated Carolyn Graham. 2006. Jazz Chants are very easy and simple to follow. The teachers and pupils do not need to have musical background to carry out activity. Pupils need to work with the sound system of English, particularly for developing their listening skill to the intonation patterns, rhythm and correct stress of the language. According to Huber.1994 in Kung.2013, the use of Jazz Chants provides features of stress and intonation, so the involvement of relative levels of stress and pitch within syllables, words, phrases and longer stretches of speech can be produced more effectively. Chanting is an enjoyable positive activity with the usage of multiple repetition or words and phrases that can be carried out added by body movements without struggling with repetitive boring drills. Teachers need to be creative in selecting the suitable, exciting movements and presentation which are pupils friendly. It also aids memorization and reinforce grammar which will ensure that pupils stay motivated. According to Mata, Monteiro, and Peixoto 2012. negative attitude might affect students' motivation and engagement in academic work. Other than building positive environment directly pupils are able to practice the patterns of everyday conversation too. This proves the role English teachers is crucial to engage with pupils in attaining and enriching their vocabularies. To justify this point based on Steinberg, in Rahimpour. 2004, it is stated that there are three early meaningful speech stages of young learners who learn language which are naming and holophrastic, telegraphic and morphemic transformational. At every stage, young learners improve their vocabulary and language ability. They need somebody else to develop their vocabulary, in the stage of naming and holophrastic; they need their parents to teach them the name of something, such as the name of things in their surroundings. Then in the stage of telegraphic; they use a single word to express a thought for which adults usually use a whole sentence. When they are saying "doll" could mean: "I want my doll", "Here is my doll", "Where is my doll?" or "Hello doll". The next stage is morphemic-transformational; they need their parents and also teacher to teach them about how to arrange words into sentence and how to arrange sentences into paragraph. A good vocabulary range makes young learners enhance their reading comprehension and writing ability. Here it proves the importance of gaining a vast range of vocabularies in a child's life and the role of a teacher is vital. The most important moments to begin to master another language is as a child, as stated by Chaves (in Hamidi and Sarem 2012: 76). This reveals that acquiring a second or foreign language is best done when an individual is young and has not reached puberty. This will encourage the child to learn to speak it naturally. A learner who is a child can easily

receive new information because the learner is in the phase of learning. Studies have shown that learners' language learning apprehensions are born from within the learners themselves, school practices and also their social and cultural influences by putting them psychologically and linguistically secluded from the English language as stated by Rosemala Ismail. 2008; Noor Hashimah Abdul Aziz. 2007. It is also proven that the causes of the problem are encouraged by the education system in Malaysia which highly promotes the focus of national based assessment which then produces students who are unable to perform independently. This opinion is supported by Koo. 2008. Other than that, Naginder, 2006 adds on to mention that pupils prefer to take the role of empty vessels and assume in their minds that their educators are responsible to give them knowledge which they need to acquire in their life. Automatically this does not encourage independent language learning. Correspondingly, Ambigapathy, 2002. mentions that due to the focus on examinations in the school system, pupils fully rely on their educators in their learning journey. Lee King Siong, Hazita Azman & Koo Yew Lie, 2010; Koo, 2008. state that in higher learning institutions, importance is still placed on attaining excellent results in exams. The focus is still placed on memorizing and regurgitating. Here, it can be seen clearly that assessment of language learning strategies in teaching English language in this country needs to be reassessed. It can be suggested that out-of-classroom practices in learning can be incorporated into the learning as well as on sociocultural influences in English learning (Naginder, 2006; Marlyna Maros et al., 2007; Nor Hashimah Jalaludin et al., 2008; Razianna Abdul Rahman, 2005). Accordingly, Noorizah Mohd. Noor .2006 and Rosniah Mustaffa .2006 encourage the interpretation of pupils' reading and learning styles to nurture learning among pupils. This reflects clearly that English teachers should take proactive steps to select appropriate chants for their pupils.

In order to learn a language, it is usually learned by firstly listening, followed by speaking and then progressing to learning to read, and finally to write. In this case, learners should be equipped with receptive language skills first before productive language skills. They gained access to language input through receptive skills which were listening and reading. Based on the information stated above, I intend to carry out a study about improving my pupils' vocabulary mastery on the topic of food based on their national curriculum year 4 textbook through Jazz Chants.

### **Methods of investigation**

The selected methods comprise of the selected research subjects, role of the researcher, research data, instruments used to collect data and data analysis procedures.

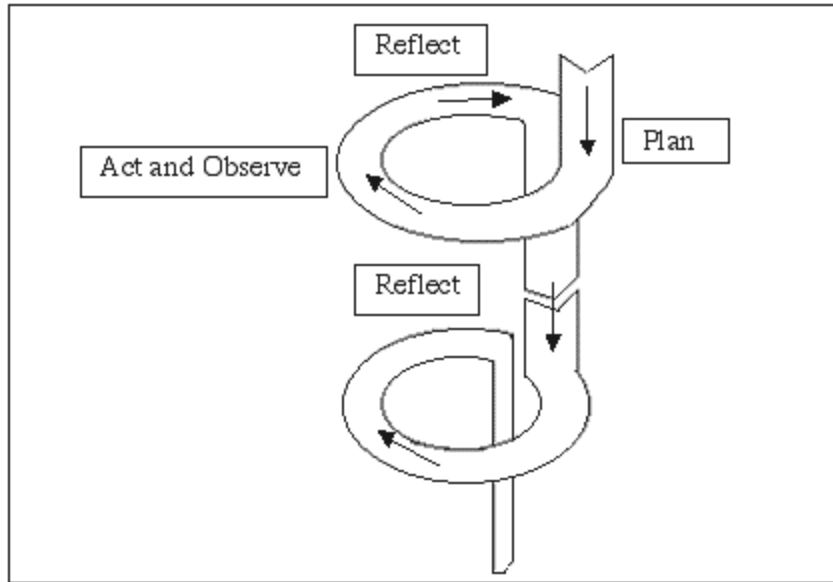
### **The selected research subjects and role of researcher**

The researcher of this study was the teacher, myself, who carried out the research. Thus, was directly involved in undertaking the research. The target participants were her class pupils consisting of 20 Malay boys and 10 Malay girls. These pupils were from families who were not fluent in English Language and some of them had the influence of grandparents' mother tongue. They had low proficiency level in the English Level which affected their listening speaking, reading and writing abilities. The researcher concluded from observations during discussions in classroom activities with these pupils, that they lacked the grasp of vocabularies in their learning skill. As the usage of the language was minimal, pupils lacked practice to encourage them to use the learned words after each lesson. As a result, the researcher chose to inculcate Jazz Chants in order to encourage pupils to recall and remember words clearly after lessons.

### **Research data**

The researcher needs to collect pupils' mastery of correct spellings of food vocabulary and their motivation toward learning. One of the reason for selecting this topic was because there were cases where pupils failed to always recall the correct spelling of words due to the influence of Bahasa Malaysia which had words that had similar pronunciation, for example donut (Bahasa Malaysia) dan doughnut (English). The researcher applied qualitative and quantitative data collection in this research.

This research was designed to follow the Cyclical model, as described by McTaggart et al. (1982).



#### **Cyclical model, as described by McTaggart et al. (1982),**

The first step that was undertaken was to carry out a pretest, to understand the pupils' mastery in the vocabulary, focusing on correct spelling. Learners were asked to write words to match given pictures. Evaluations are carried out.

Then by referring to the cyclical model, the researcher attempts to plan and introduce the Jazz Chant activity to pupils. After the activity is carried out, the researcher observes the pupils' achievements and evaluates them. Questionnaires were distributed. Next, pupils are given a post test to see their progress in their spelling.

#### **Qualitative Data**

Burns. 2010, stated that data which are analyzed without the application of numbers are called qualitative data. Here, the qualitative data is based on the students' motivation during the lessons in the classroom, learning and teaching situation and responses of the pupils during lessons. Observation sheets were used to observe pupils' responses during the lessons of teaching and learning. Questionnaires were used to investigate pupils' opinion and motivation level to improve their mastery of learning words through the use of Jazz Chants.

#### **Quantitative Data**

Phillips and Carr. 2010, stated that numerical data that are collected in a research was called as quantitative data. Hence the data can be collected from pre-test and post-test score. It has the ability to measure pupils' levels before and after treatments. The objective of pre test and post test results are to be compared to find out if there are any improvements in the pupils' vocabulary learning achievements.

#### **Instruments used to collect data**

##### **Questionnaire**

The instrument used in this study include a Language Strategy Use Questionnaire adapted from Language Strategy Use Inventory by Cohen, Oxford and Chi (2002). The adapted version of Language Strategy Use Questionnaire consists of 15 statements concerning as acquisition of vocabulary skills. The pretest questionnaire was given before Jazz Chants were introduced and the same questionnaire was handed out as a post test instrument. A 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 is used in this questionnaire. The 5-point Likert scale is (1) Not true, (2) Usually not true, (3) Sometimes true, (4) Usually true and (5) Always true. The data was coded and analyzed using statistic calculators. A comparison was made between both sets of responses to gauge the effectiveness of Jazz Chants.

##### **Pre and post test**

Based on the Year 4 textbook, 30 words were selected in the pretest and posttest. These words were nouns related to food and some have almost similar pronunciations in English and Malay.

### Data analysis procedure

#### Questionnaire

For each statement in the questionnaire, pupils could select one of five choices presented on the Likert scale to express their motivation to learn new English words and the effectiveness of Jazz Chants. Interpretation of mean score was used to determine the frequency of language learning strategies. The pupils' responses were categorized into three categories, which were high, moderate and low frequency use of language strategy. Table 1 showed the frequency ratings for strategy use. These ratings were adapted from Oxford (1990).

**Table 1:-**Frequency Readings for Strategy Use

Frequency of use	Responses	Mean scores
High	Always true of me	4.50 – 5.00
	Usually true of me	3.50 – 4.49
Moderate/medium	Sometimes true of me	2.50 – 3.49
Low	Usually not true of me	1.50 – 2.49
	Never true of me	1.00 – 1.49

#### Pre and post test

For each of the 30 questions in the worksheet, marks are rewarded to pupils according to the rubric below:

Correct Spelling – 1 mark is rewarded

Incorrect Spelling – 0 mark is rewarded

The total score is then calculated according to the formula below to represent the overall performance of the pupil in the tests:

$$\frac{\text{Number of Marks Awarded}}{30} \times 100$$

#### Conclusion:-

Studies that have been conducted to investigate strategies to improve the learning of English in Malaysia has been largely made up of learning and teaching in the classroom. It is proposed that more studies be conducted to investigate English learners' linguistics repertoire beyond the classroom in order to better understand the role that English literacy plays to them.

Most of the researches reviewed in this paper follows an autonomous model (Street, 1984). It is perceived that in learning experiences, the most solid cognitive skills can be interchangeable in any given situation. This study suggests also the focus on the process of attaining language learning as to instill communication in a community. Questionnaires and surveys as research instruments can be used. It is proposed that studies should observe literacy learning in English as a comprehensive process that is applicable to current needs by using qualitative methods instead of quantitative methods. This can be done by creating a research design that produce empirical findings which are contextualized and localized based on the usage of the language.

The Jazz Chant method holistically includes the method of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). It uses real life scenarios that make communication necessary. The teacher proposes a scenario that pupils have the potential to face in real life thus pupils feel more motivated to have the desire to communicate in meaningful ways and topics.

#### Recommendations

There is an acute need for teachers to make a shift in their teaching and use learning strategies as they evolve with the changes in time. It has to be stressed here that they must expect changes which occur always and teachers must be on standby mode looking ahead discovering new techniques in the strategies. It can be suggested that as teachers use Jazz Chants to increase pupils' vocabulary skills, then pupils can be guided to confidently focus on reading skills. As pupils progress, techniques can be assimilated with writing vocabularies using various channels. Here, Coggle, an interactive platform can be suggested to attract pupils to practice their spelling vocabularies and teachers can integrate Coggle to help pupils to recall and remember.

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