

# LEARNING MALAY WITH POEMS: FROM UNDERSTANDING STYLISTICS TO BLOGGING POETIC EXPRESSIONS

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## ABSTRACT

We provide a bifocal account on teaching techniques and learning achievements in suggesting that Malay poems, as a resource, are beneficial to foreign language pedagogy. The teaching focus was the Malay poetic-discursive strategies at the stylistic levels. By examining the structures of three poems, the pedagogy positions Malay poems as communicative assembles of Malay linguistic categories for conveying a series of messages. A learning focus is in place toward the production of a poem in the weblogs for developing the confidence to communicate in Malay. The learning results in three submissions from four tertiary learners who produce reflective poetic expressions with visual stimulations. Their creative outputs indicate that poetry offers a cathartic avenue for developing interpersonal intelligence. Writing about sibling relationship, inter-generation gap and conviction for success, the poem project perpetuates intrinsic values thus complementing the pragmatic reasons typically associated with foreign language education. In this respect, language pedagogy using Malay poems is a value-adding practice relevant in foreign language education.

**Keywords:** language pedagogy, Malay as a foreign language, poem-making, Singapore Malay poems, stylistics, value-added language teaching

## Introduction

Poems are essential for language learners to express feelings and invoke reflexive thinking. Triggering precious memories, a poem examined in the language class is an intangible treasure. Additionally, reciting a poem evokes a transcendental experience on the learner's part. A Malay language instructor may highlight the educational and entertaining values in the poems of the national laureate, Usman Awang. In turn, the imaginative power in the poems may inspire and motivate a Malay language learner. For example, a Malay language camp has incorporated

Usman Awang's (1986) *Hadiah Anakku* to encourage the learners to reflect in a critical mode. Exploiting the visual postcard technique that is instrumental to affective comprehension, the *re-search*, *re-discover* and *re-invent* strategies as proposed in Berry (2004) are useful toward a synthesis of ideas (Sew, 2009).

Many books on Malay pedagogy, however, exclude poems as a teaching material as there is little instruction on using poems in the Malay language classroom. *Pedagogi Bahasa Melayu (Pedagogy of Malay)*, for example, incorporates learning principles based on the views of J. A. Bruner, R. M. Gagne, B. F. Skinner, J. Piaget and D. P. Ausubel but makes no allowance for teaching Malay using poems (Talib, 2000). Despite the effort to include Malay *pantun* for teaching and learning in Ahmad (2001; 2002), there is no poem recommended for Malay language learning in her books. Similarly, the editors exclude Malay poems from *Modul Komunikasi Bahasa Melayu Antarabangsa* (Othman, Hashim, & Abdullah, 2015) whilst many nursery rhymes such as *Saya ada kuda* only require basic Malay efficiency. From the survey of current resources for Malay language learning, it seems that poems are irrelevant to the pedagogy of foreign Malay.

At tertiary level, poetry plays a significant role in language acquisition. Since 2010, the level 3 Malay module at National University of Singapore includes *Kuali Hitam* (A black wok), written by a national laureate, Zurinah Hassan, for learners to appreciate different conjugations of Malay verbs. Compelled to contemplate the mercurial nature of Malay verb configurations, learners reflect on the sacrifices made by their mothers through the analysis of phrasal compositions and content. Subsequently, a lecture on Malay poetry becomes a formal topic in the curriculum of Malay as a foreign language from 2014. In view of the lack of poetry-based pedagogy in the Malay language curriculum, the design of LAM 3202 in Semester 2 of 2013/14 incorporates two lectures, based on local Malay poems, into its curriculum. Each lecture foregrounds Malay grammar in selected Malay poems, therefore providing a linguistic-creative foundation toward a project of poem creation.

We underline the use of Malay poems as a resource in the language curriculum with three objectives. Firstly, a poem isolates the specific manner in which Malay nouns, verbs and adjectives coalesce into a series of poetic messages. Demonstrating that poetic style is syntactic constructions expels poetic alienation in foreign language education. The language learners are, thus, aware that writing and producing the digital content of a poem are relatable to everyday living. Among others, the learners notice that poems are primarily made of sentences arranged in stanzas for communicating a set of ideas similar to song renditions in popular culture (cf. Sew, 2015a). The pedagogical experience nudges the Malay learners to acquire the paradigmatic competence of styling ideas in a stanza beyond the syntagmatic competence of a sentence.

Secondly, the poems reflect the creativity of local Malays at the turn of Singapore's independence. Learners obtain an understanding of the social issues, which shape the beliefs and values of the local Malay community. Appreciating the beliefs and values underpinning the Malay psyche is equitable to acquiring the target culture of foreign language. According to Hammer and Schmitt (2015), authentic culture-focused task is instrumental for the learners explore cultural and linguistic components. A language instructor may exploit poems as resources for

examining the collective values of Malays at tertiary level. We suggest that Malay poem is ideal to integrate language learning with cultural reflexivity in the Malay language classroom beyond linguistic intelligence.

Thirdly, a learner-poet from a poem-based pedagogy may aspire to communicate feelings and thoughts through poetry. For the learner, there is a possibility of developing a creative itch to revise his poem. In Thumboo's words, the urge to revise is always there. It is a creative itch (Webster, 2012, p. 27). Well aware about the task of producing a poem, the learners examine the poetic design of the resource with the pragmatic lenses toward deep learning. Indeed, a hands-on project of poem triggers the learning radar to examine the constructs of sociocultural expressions closely as it is necessary to know enough about the genre in order to create one. The following section contains a literature review on the use of poetry as learning materials.

### **Literature Review**

According to Rahman (2011), Malay poems offer a fine literary vehicle for cultivating the love for Malay language. The author's main discussion, however, is concerned with unpacking the meanings of the vocabulary in selected Malay poems and *pantun*. Samsina's (Rahman, 2011) discussion encapsulates an argument for illustrating the power of Malay language as a vehicle of knowledge towards a Malay nation. There is little discussion on the methodology, which a Malay language instructor could adopt to incorporate Malay poems for pedagogy purposes. A reflexive understanding is derivable from Samsina's work is that an instructor should include a wide range of poems as learning materials to avoid a didactic advocacy of certain ideology that professes a particular theme.

In line with the technology landscape, Dollah, Ismail and Mahmud (2010) report a top-down effort to develop modern Malay poems aimed at the interactive preferences of Generation Y toward a thriving cyberspace. In the pilot project for a secondary school in Melaka, Malay instructors and students studied selected Malay poems at the lower secondary level via digital technology. The effort spent in digitalising poetry sees Malay poem assuming an important role in Malay language teaching. While 77.3% of the instructors surveyed strongly agreed that the use of technology to teach poems is able to achieve the objectives, however 63.8% of the students strongly agreed with their instructors. There is no report on any creative outcome following the use of technology in learning Malay poems on the learners' part. Consequently, the objective of cultivating creative and critical thinking by means of learning Malay poems remains invalidated. This work brings to light the germinating efforts of the Malaysian educational system in the incorporation of *Macromedia Dreamweaver MX* as a digital medium for teaching and learning Malay poetry.

Another work on Malay language pedagogy contains a list of poems selected for teaching Malay in Brunei. The book-length material contains a series of Malay poems recommended as materials for teaching verbal prefixes, adjectives, synonyms, abbreviations, negating words and coordinating affixes (Makmun, 2008). Inferring from the suggestions made in the material for learning Malay as a first

language, we may claim that Malay poems are authentic scripts for providing morphological and syntactic inputs in the language pedagogy of Malay as a foreign language. However, the guide stops short of highlighting poem recital as a learning outcome with no hands-on outcome.

Based on her first-hand experience of teaching Malay to foreign diplomats, Omar (2004) reminds the readers that the foreign language classroom is a situation disparate from the actual linguistic environment. Since the language learning experience is different in many ways from actual language use, a language instructor may explore all the possible pedagogical strategies in the arts of language teaching. Exposing young adult learners to Malay by means of modern Malay poems, thus, offers an authentic learning experience. This is because modern Malay poems reflect the collective thoughts, feelings and aspirations of the Malays (Asmad, 1990). Furthermore, by analysing the content of Malay poems, language learners derive valuable Malay perspectives on various social issues. Usman Awang, who was a police, for example, channeled his social concerns into his poems. Such learning complements intellectual development in higher education that prioritises the performative culture of measurement and testing.

Nevertheless, this vision of learning seems increasingly out of step with a higher education system characterised by ... increasing student-to-staff ratios, and the progressive encroachment of externally imposed performativity targets. ... In short, the idea of a university that allows students to pursue an intellectual odyssey through diverse and esoteric domains of knowledge might not fit neatly into a non-liberal performativity culture that puts premium on “measurer able outputs” (Francis, 2013, p. 113).

Testing may indeed have a side effect on teaching and learning in the current landscape of education. The “measurable output” of formal testing is anathema to personal and identity development. In lieu of formal testing, the use of assessment offers a vast advantage. Gardner (2006) states that assessment is a useful tool for gathering information about the skills and potentials of the learners as well as a means for providing useful feedback to the learning individuals. In contrast to formal testing, Malay poem-making as an assessment is rewarding for recording the progress of language learning. The creative space inbuilt in poem-making offers the language learners the chance to explore an issue close to heart. Research shows that intrinsic and integrative motivations are valid reasons to partake foreign language learning (cf. Aladdin, 2017). Appreciating the intrinsic values of language learning bodes well with the poem-making project that offers a space for the inner voice to be heard. Arguably, developing poetic ideas is a language enterprise that enhances one’s intrapersonal intelligence and communicative competence through a thought-provoking exercise of introspection.

### Malay Poetry as Lesson

In the curriculum design of LAM 3202 Malay 4, three local Malay poems provide the reference to understand the interconnectivity of Malay vocabulary in expressing meanings. Table 1 shows the schedule of the three Malay poems as learning materials.

Table 1

*The schedule of Singapore Malay poems used in the poem-based pedagogy*

Singapore Malay poems	Poet	Schedule	Sample
<i>Nanyian Alam</i> (Nature singing)	A Samat Ali	Lecture 7 (week 7)	Appendix 1
<i>Orang Politik</i> (Politicians)	Juffri Supaat	Lecture 9 (week 9)	Appendix 2
<i>Pujangga</i> (Scholars)	Mohamed Hizamuddin bin Mohamed Yusof	Tutorial 7 (week 10)	Appendix 3

Crosscutting all types of Malay poems in foreign language pedagogy, stylistic analysis is the underlying *modus operandi* in a language classroom (Leech & Short, 2007). As a prelude to the poetry lessons, we adopt the notion of stylistics in Abbas (1995), which is an elegant combination of various linguistic elements in presenting a theme. In examining the stylistics of Malay poems, the learners survey the thematic ideas and the linguistic elements incorporated in presenting the subject matters. The activity of the poem-based pedagogy avails the learners to practise listening and reading. Several questions raised in the lecture discussions lead to the learners associating certain key words as the thematic anchors in each poem. These ideas are instrumental for merging functional appreciation with structural understanding of the Malay poems.

#### **Syntactic Lesson in Malay Poems**

*Nyanyian Alam* is the first poem adopted in the language lesson (see Ali, 2005). The poet is a member of *Asas '50*, a literary society professing a modernist philosophy for independence, justice, and freedom in the 1950s. The perusal of the poem provides learners with a background on issues of exploitative behavior with regard to nature. The instructions prompt the learners to think about the disruptions of human values as reflected in the behavioral changes of the local fauna as described in the poem. The message drives home the point that individual materialistic pursuits may become the attrition against social harmony.

The learners, who possess the knowledge of *pantun*, study disparate syllabic counts in each sentence of *Nyanyian Alam*. This analysis creates a cognitive link between the poem and a *pantun* in terms typological similarity. The cross-genre syllabic comparison indicates a parallel in composition between *Nyanyian Alam* and the four-line Malay *pantun*. The analysis initiates an understanding of structural correlation between *Nyanyian Alam* and the Malay quartet. This suggests that the

poem in question follows the schemata of the traditional Malay poetry. Whilst the first three stanzas of the poem has four lines with a word count between 3 and 4 words per line, the fourth stanza has two lines with three words. An outline of the syntactic schematics in *Nyanyian Alam* is available in Table 2 (cf. Appendix 1 for the original resource).

Table 2  
A syntactic schema in a poem-based pedagogy

<i>Nyanyian Alam</i>				
<b>First Stanza</b>		<b>Second Stanza</b>		<b>Remarks</b>
Line one	N +.....+ NN	Line one	N +.....+ NN	NN = compound noun
Line two	N +.....N	Line two	Neg +.....+ N	Neg = a noun negator i.e. <i>bukan</i>
Line three	N +.....+ NN	Line three	N +... NN	
Line four	N[clitic] +....N	Line four	N[clitic] +....N	An example of Malay clitic = [-nya]
<b>Third Stanza</b>		<b>Fourth Stanza</b>		
Line one	N +.....N	Line one	N +.....N	
Line two	N + Neg + N	Line two	N +.....N	
Line three	N ...+.....N			
Line four	Neg + ... + V	←		The only line that does not end with a noun

In terms of distribution of word categories, *Nyanyian Alam* consistently fronts each line with a noun. This scrutiny on poetic syntax scores a pedagogical directive not least our review traces no concrete technique adopted for guiding the learners to approach a Malay poem. We suggest that a poem-based pedagogy benefits from understanding the syntactic schematics in the poem that underpins a conceptual framework. The learners notice the pattern and inventory in the design of the linguistic frame that profiles the meanings of *Nyanyian Alam* (cf. Harrison, 2014). The outline in Table 2 fleshes out the internal features that identify the linguistic intelligence of the poem. As such, the learners acquire a basic poetic competence in terms of paradigmatic constructions, which is the first step toward creating a poem.

### Sound Lesson in Malay Poems

In the second poem, *Orang Politik*, the learners' attention concentrates on the rhyming patterns in the selected stanzas. The recurrent rhyme patterns reverberate a type of symbolic reference. As a pioneer, Wilkinson (1936) studied the recurrent sounds in Malay lexicon, which he identified as symbolic denotative qualities in Malay. Additionally, Tham (1977) informed that rhyming is an inherent component in Malay meaning. Introducing sound symbolism in poem-based pedagogy excites

the learners because they find the collaborative syllabic resonance in the poem an interesting learning experience. The icon-sound connection evokes a sense of consistency for providing poetic comprehension against the semantic arbitrariness (cf. Sew, 2015b). Aesthetics in grammar is concerned with linguistic constructions that link the grammar elements with euphony (Williams, 2014, p. 4). By appreciating the aesthetics of grammar, the learners notice the shift from referential to non-referential meanings in *Orang Politik*.

Table 3 zooms into the aesthetical analysis in *Orang Politik*. In the first stanza, the final words end with the high vowel /i/. The second stanza, on the other hand, contains an ultimate syllable showing identical phonemic segments of the front unrounded vowel preceding a voiceless velar plosive stop to generate a series of /-ak/ sound.

Table 3  
*Symbolic recurrent rhyme in a Malay poem*

<b>Orang Politik (see Supaat, 2005)</b>	
<b>First stanza</b>	<b>Second stanza</b>
<i>Boleh menyanyi</i>	<i>Boleh gelak</i>
<i>Boleh mengaji</i>	<i>Boleh sorak</i>
<i>Boleh menari</i>	<i>Boleh borak</i>
<i>Boleh berjanji</i>	<i>Boleh salak</i>
<i>Berapa banyakkah yang ditepati?</i>	<i>Sampai serak.</i>

The lesson on the aesthetics of grammar is important for anchoring attention to the genre. By exploiting the interplay of the syllabic structures, *Orang Politik* alludes to the behaviors of human characters in politics. The musical effect in the poem are traceable in the recital of the language instructor who stylises the pronunciations of the [i]-verbs. Honouring teaching as showing in the poem-based pedagogy, the learners see and hear a verbal performance displaying the excitement of a mass campaign. Kinesthetically, the pronunciations of the symbolic words in the stanzas strengthen the auditory effect alluding to politicking. The idiomatic sound-iconic phenomenon, when made visible to learners, turns into a poetic discovery (cf. Sew, 2013; Sew, 2015c).

### **Vocabulary Lesson in Malay Poems**

Words in a poem denote a series of potential associative designations, thus generating layers of references. Our human mind is equipped with the cognitive capacity to reference the meanings in the poems (Gibbs, 1994). In the poem-based pedagogy, the learners make interpretations of the message based on the selected key words. Through the elaboration of keywords, the learners develop a rich tapestry of meaning relevant to the interpretation of the poem. Both general and specific meanings in each word represent the objective and subjective references, respectively, in the paradigmatic constructions of a stanza. Table 4 contains a rich

understanding of the keywords identified in the poem *Pujangga* (refer to Yusof, 2005 & see Appendix 3 for the original resource).

Table 4  
*Malay meanings derivable from a poem*

Stimulation of poetic resource	General meaning	English gloss	Contextual meaning	English Gloss
Pujangga	orang terpelajar	scholar	<i>guru</i>	instructor
Mencemburui	beriri hati	be jealous with	<i>membenci</i>	hate
Beralun	bergetar	vibrate	<i>bergema</i>	echoing
Perjuangan	pertempuran	crusade	<i>pertahanan</i>	defense
Dicalit	disapu	brushed	<i>dilukis</i>	painted
Tersisip	terselit	inserted	<i>terpacak</i>	anchored
Tersemat	terkait	hooked	<i>tertanam</i>	planted
Memamah	memakan	gnawing	<i>menghilangkan</i>	wears off
Mengorak	menyusun	to arrange	<i>menggerakkan</i>	to initiate
Bertempiar	berselerak	scattered	<i>bertemperas</i>	helter skelter

The word *pujangga*, either denotes a specific type (e.g., *orang terpelajar* or scholar), or a token of representation (e.g., *guru* or instructor) in a rich context of reference. This is a typical example of varying levels of abstraction in vocabulary acquisition. In language learning research, each token of meaning is stored separately in the language memory to form the basis of type-token acquisition of nouns (Beckner et al. 2009; Ellis, 2002). From the usage-based viewpoint, the type-token meaning development is possible via profiling and realignment in (Langacker, 2016; Sew, 2007). The understanding of a verb meaning is insufficient without the phrasal import as its domain of interpretation. A typical Malay verb transforms into a network of meaning in alignment with the profiling of the verbal volition (Sew, 2016a). Similarly, the English verb *jump* may profile a transitive or intransitive construction (cf. Bartlett 2014, p. 46, *Tom jumped when the television exploded vs. The horse jumped the fence with ease*).

Equally important is the understanding of polysemy in Malay verbs that requires the constant reiteration on bi-directionality as the typical verb semantics: *jalan* is a road, or walk; *kata* is say or a word; and *batuk* is a cough or cough in terms of denotation. As an extrapolating practice, the learners think about a person who leaves a lasting impression in their life as the subject matter. The cognitive exercise develops the thinking of the theme that the learners describe with several Malay phrases. From the sentence constructions exercise, the learners produce references of personal interpretation based on one's actual interactive experience. The second exercise is a mental scaffold invoking intrapersonal awakening that penetrates the learners' inner self (Lazear, 1999). By rousing the feelings and emotions of the learners with their significant others, the exercises pave the way to develop interpersonal intelligence toward poem-making.



There are two kinds of interpersonal intelligence, namely, the ego-centric intelligence (Gardner, 2006) and the relational intelligence (Kincheloe, 2004). The former is an isolated internal dimension of selfhood capable of influencing people to act in certain ways hence it is a selfish intelligence. In contrast, “the self operates at the center of the universe...toward personal isolation and alienation. Selfhood in this framework comes first; relationship is a relatively insignificant dimension of the abstract individual” (Kincheloe, 2004, p. 140). The alternative version situates the selfhood in a constant relation with life as part of complex systems. In the language pedagogy, the learners also understand that the self is never complete but changes indefinitely as it interacts with different dimensions of the human macrocosm.

### **Assessing Malay Poem-making**

The four Malay learners produce three Malay components as part of the continual assessment. Using weblog as the platform of submission they blog a Malay poem, an audio or video recital of the poem, and a reflection on the reasons for writing the poem. Table 5 contains three samples of submission.

Table 5  
*The poetic Malay project the tertiary learners partake*

<b>Title</b>	Oh Adik Saya
<b>Two stanzas</b>	<p><i>...enam tangan bertepuk tangan dahulu kuku dan jari bersama-sama kayu kertas dengan gam lama sebahagian besar dalam hidup saya kami sentiasa bersama-sama</i></p> <p><i>boleh berdiri Boleh menari Boleh berkongsi Boleh menyanyi Boleh mengaji...</i></p>
<b>Visual</b>	<a href="http://youtu.be/enyVAHM7kmo">http://youtu.be/enyVAHM7kmo</a>
<b>An excerpt of the reflection</b>	<p><i>Pada tahun 2008, saya sedang belajar di Menengah empat...Guru saya memberitahu saya untuk melakukan projek Geografi dan saya terpaksa menaip empat muka surat karangan... Saya menaip karangan dalam “MS Word Document”. Saudara saya memberitahu saya untuk simpan dokumen. Saya tidak mengambil berat.Saya terlupa untuk menyimpan dokumen itu. Tiba-tiba komputer ditutup dengan sendiri dan semua kerja saya telah hilang...Mereka bertanya kepada saya apa yang berlaku... Mereka berkata mereka akan membantu saya. Saya tidak mempunyai keyakinan bahawa mereka boleh membantu... Saya berkata “tidak perlu”.</i></p> <p><i>Walau bagaimanapun, mereka memulakan semula komputer dan cuba untuk memulihkan dokumen itu. Mereka cuba untuk masa yang lama.</i></p>

	<p><i>Selepas beberapa lama, mereka mendapati ...dokumen itu telah disimpan secara automatik oleh komputer. Saya begitu gembira dan mengucapkan terima kasih kepada saudara-saudara saya. Saya tidak fikir bahawa saudara-saudara saya boleh menyelesaikan masalah ini dengan mudah. Seperti "<b>Buah Bacang Buruk Kulitnya</b>", saya menyedari bahawa kita tidak harus memandang rendah sesiapa Walaupun ini adalah satu perkara yang kecil, kesilapan ini boleh dielakkan .</i></p>
<b>Source</b>	<a href="http://www.pavitrakanaiahmalay.wordpress.com/">http://www.pavitrakanaiahmalay.wordpress.com/</a>
<b>Title</b>	Sebuah Radio
<b>Two Stanzas</b>	<p>...Sebuah radio coklat gelap tak dapat menahan hakisan masa muzik menjadi hanya bunyi kepada saya tapi nenek masih peminat setia</p> <p>Sebuah radio coklat gelap akhirnya berhenti menyanyi ruang tamu dengan pintas [sic] menjadi suram hatiku terharu dengan kenangan...</p>
<b>Visual</b>	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=66SCRh8dtHk&amp;feature=player_embedded">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=66SCRh8dtHk&amp;feature=player_embedded</a>
<b>An excerpt of the reflection</b>	<p><i>...Nenek saya juga akan menyanyi bersama-sama dengan lagu-lagu yang merdu yang dimainkan dari radio ini semasa menyediakan makan tengah hari dan makan malam...Bila saya memasuki masa remaja. Saya rasa bahawa muzik yang dimainkan melalui radio ini ialah bingit dan saya rasa ketinggalan zaman di kalangan rakan-rakan kerana mereka mendengar lagu-lagu pop Inggeris. Hasilnya, saya berhenti mengiringi nenek saya yang masih peminat yang setia Rediffusion. Hari itu yang radio coklat gelap yang lama berhenti bermain ialah hari bila nenek saya meninggal dunia. Kebisuan yang memenuhi ruang tamu mengingatkan saya tentang nenek saya yang tidak lagi di samping saya...</i></p>
<b>Source</b>	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=66SCRh8dtHk&amp;feature=player_embedded">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=66SCRh8dtHk&amp;feature=player_embedded</a>
<b>Title</b>	Nekad
<b>Two stanzas</b>	<p>...Mulakan langkah Jika nekad nak berubah Jangan mengalah Semuanya atas diri yang tabah</p> <p>Anda mampu mengubah keadaan Hanya dengan beberapa tindakan Tidak perlukan wang jutaan Boleh mengubah kehidupan.</p>
<b>Visual</b>	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CJsekQc_2I&amp;feature=player_embedded">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CJsekQc_2I&amp;feature=player_embedded</a>

	<u>ded</u>
<b>An excerpt of the reflection</b>	<p><i>Sajak ini tentang bagaimana kita tidak perlu mengambil sikap yang pasif terhadap kehidupan. Kita perlu pendekatan kehidupan dengan berani dan proaktif, selalu ditentukan menjadikan kehidupan kita lebih baik. Sajak ini juga menerangkan bahawa ia tidak susah perubahan kehidupan kita kerana kita hanya perlu penentuan.</i></p> <p><i>Pada masa dahulu, saya mempercayai dalam nasib dan saya selalu akan menunggu perkara yang berlaku. Tetapi, tidak lama lagi, saya menyedari bahawa saya tidak akan mendapat apa-apa dengan hanya menunggu. Kemudian, saya berubah pendekatan saya terhadap kehidupan dan saya berkeja rajin-rajin untuk kehidupan yang lebih baik. Sejak hari itu, saya selalu diambil nasib saya di dalam tangan saya sendiri. Nasib saya dipustukan oleh saya sendiri, bukan orang yang lain.</i></p>
<b>Source</b>	<a href="http://a0072395y.wordpress.com/">http://a0072395y.wordpress.com/</a>

The first poem, *Oh Adik Saya*, narrates a personal experience of family relationship. The powerful rhythms presented in the final segment of an embedded video clip symbolises close ties between the learner and her siblings. It is apt to use a backdrop of thunderous Indian music to represent a stronger bondage than ever before between an elder sister and her two younger brothers who had rediscovered her computer file. In the reflection, the learning-poet describes her gratitude that turns into a commitment toward an enduring kinship. This is a clear case of the weblog accentuating the qualities of a poem through rhythmic intelligence and familiar visuals. Linking a self-made video clip, stored in *YouTube*, into the weblog to attain multimodal intelligence is indeed a smart exploit of small tech to attain learning (Sew, 2010). As a unifying tool in the poem-based pedagogy, weblogging fossilises personal commemoration of an event, people or conviction in awe (Sew, 2017).

The second poem, *Sebuah Radio*, uses the PowerPoint to support an audio clip consisting of two segments. The first is the rendition of the poem through a DJ role-play. The second is an interview of the DJ with another learner role-playing a guest in the studio. In explaining that the poem contains memories of her loving grandmother, the guest-poem recounts against the background music of *Bahagiamu Deritaku*, sung by Hafiz, a popular Malay singer. A surrealistic melancholy manifests itself in the soft-spoken voice of the learner. The teenager's initial perception of her grandmother as being old-fashioned has led to her displaying recalcitrant behaviours. This intergenerational rift results in a dawning sense of regret that comes across in the recital. The creative presentation adopted in role-playing, the stylistics, and the musical remix from a shared stimulation in the lecture. More interestingly, the learning reflects interpersonal intelligence that is relational in two ways, namely, the DJ-guest interview and the content-song remix.

The third poem, *Nekad*, in comparison to *Oh Adik Saya!* and *Sebuah Radio*, is straightforward and bland as its recital does not contain any background music. The mere recording of the Malay pronunciation, though a less interesting presentation,

invokes a determined message. The learning-poet professes that active pursuit of one's goal does not require too much money but rather inertia is the major obstacle marring the power of self-actualisation. The learner's effort in providing the full utterance of Malay words in the poem contains the message that if there is a will there will be a way. There is, however, room for improvement in that the rendition could benefit from an assertive style to augment its conviction. The interpersonal intelligence presented in the poem is ego-centric. This poetic message is in alignment with the identity of the learner, a young Finance major securing a job offer from an International Banking Cooperation before the final semester of his honours year.

### Discussion

This poem-based pedagogy is useful for learners to acquire a genuine creation as a skill. The first step toward creation is ownership as proposed in McLean and Rowsell (2015, p. 116):

By either using digital support or connecting the task using the language or discourse of the digital practice to scaffold their understanding, students were better able to take ownership of their learning. We acknowledge that technology can advance student learning if and when used strategically.

We suggest that the tangible original outputs are a testimony to deep learning as the learners demonstrate sensitivities in a foreign language. It is in such creative encounters with a foreign language that the confidence of a language learner emerges (Hughes, 2015). The poem submissions show a mastery of vocabulary use, not least the writing reflects the confidence of learners expressing their inner thoughts using Malay phrases. The first submission contains poetic structures similar with the one that the learner had acquired from the language class. Particularly interesting is the phonetic effect of repeating [i] in the second stanza invoking a resounding sense of camaraderie and belonging among the siblings. The sentential patterns represent the ideal schema of the deep narrative structure for expressing desire, hope, or sorrow (Lakoff, 2008). The [i]-rhyming Malay words invoked in the second stanza are *berdiri* (standing), *menari* (dancing), *berkongsi* (sharing), *menyanyi* (singing), and *mengaji* (studying). Following the striking resemblance of the rhyming patterns with those in *Orang Politik*, the poet introduces the word *berkongsi* to denote a novel reference of willingness to share among siblings. The expansion in the vocabulary is laudable as an original and authentic effort.

The second submission captures and represents the learners' memories of her late grandmother, a loyal fan of *Rediffusion*, the defunct private radio channel in Singapore (Liew & Chan, 2013). An autobiographical self emerges from memories of one's grandmother. It is important to recognise one's heritage against the current lifestyle that treasures apps, online shopping, fast food, vending machines, and mobile games. We need to commemorate our social memories to forge a solid heritage of personal well-being and communal existence (Ding, 2015) to counter a mechanistic lifestyle that shifts from everyday human interactivity. Historical

consciousness comes across clearly in the poem, thus the project “places objects, events, beliefs, and people in a broader temporal framework thereby reframing the autobiographical self” (Mansilla & Gardner, 2007, p. 57). The poem reflects a development of confidence to share personal stories, that is, “the reflective capacity to understand ourselves as knowers and feelers” (Mansilla & Gardner, 2007, p. 58).

As an emotive expressive, the third submission contains syntactic patterns arranged and categorised in stanzas expressing a personal faith. Every stanza fleshes out a self-challenging intention. Each line in the poem connects to an emotive discharge. In this respect, writing and reciting one’s poem for a foreign language assessment is a learning effort fostering emotional sensitivity. Referring to Mahatma Gandhi as the classic example, Piechowski (1997) suggests that individuals with emotional sensitivity, among others, have the tendency to act in accordance with the highest principles of fairness and compassion. Emotional sensitivity or the lack of it is a common theme implicit in Malay novels through the technique of gossiping over a traumatic event (Sew, 2016b).

True to the spirit of non-representational theory (Thrift, 2000), and the formation of sensuous self (Vannini, Waskul & Gottschalk, 2012), ego-centeredness as well as environment-related self are possible formative developments toward an interpersonal intelligence. Interpersonal intelligence may exhibit inward-looking capabilities in the development of inner resilience as demonstrated in *Nekad*, or cooperative and collaborative sensitivities with others in life as demonstrated in *Oh Adik Saya!* and *Sebuah Radio*. These learners hailing from the Business School, Chemistry, Mathematics, and Southeast Asian Studies have found the avenue to express themselves in a foreign language. For a diverse group of learners, the digital project offers a momentary respite of internal reorganisation of self toward self-efficacy.

### Conclusion

Using poem to teach is an uncharted territory in the language pedagogy intended for acquiring Malay as a foreign language. We suggest that poems are a useful means to enhance Malay grammar learning in general and Malay writing skills in particular. Malay poetry provides the matrix for the acquisition of a sentential structure that begins and ends with the noun, *N...+ N*. Secondly, rhyming as an iconic meaning matrix offers a locus to acquire Malay words that share phonetic symbolism. In terms of intrapersonal intelligence, poem-making offers the potential to develop historical consciousness as well as ego-centric conviction, which are necessary for self-resilience. With an in-built technological edge to embed digital enhancements, the weblog offers a useful platform for multimodal presentation in a poem-based pedagogy. The digital platform enlivens the production of poems with the digital capacity to embed one’s recital hence reinvigorating the fact that a poem is incomplete sans recitation.

Any assumption that lessons using Malay poetry induce creativity is at best an idealistic belief. There is a lack of substantiation with regard to actual results, which is the limitation of this discussion. This Malay project shows reflective thinking as an outcome with learners producing a digital Malay poem from reading and

understanding selected Singapore Malay poems as learning resources. Such introspective enterprise is an extension of a so-called intellectually driven approach to teaching language and culture advocated by the Modern Language Association in 2007 (Zhang, 2013). In terms of language education, the use of Malay poems is relevant to encourage interactive learning toward an intrinsically motivating experience. Beyond a simplistic assumption of *I-teach-you-learn* equation, the competencies to think and write in a creative-critical mode in learning Malay as foreign language education validate the use of original Malay poems as conducive resources to acquire vocabulary, rhythmic remix, writing skills, recital skills and interpersonal intelligence. In support of this proposal, the teaching evaluation of the Malay module based on the learners' responses on 19 June 2014, contain many encouraging comments suggesting that Malay poems are a worthy language learning resource.

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**Appendix 1**

**NYANYIAN ALAM**

Aku nantikan nyanyian alam  
Rentak merdu mendendang kalbu  
Aku nantikan bunyi murai  
Kicaunya mengubat rindu.

Aku rindukan dunia aman  
Bukan peperangan membakar jiwa  
Aku rindukan langkah sopan  
Bukan gerak tapak si bongkak.

Nantiku hanya semalam  
Rinduku bukan kenyataan  
Dunia nyata penuh gelisah  
Tidak seindah yang disangka.

Penantianku suatu penyiksaan  
Rinduku suatu khayalan.

***A Samat Ali***

**Appendix 2**

<p><b>ORANG POLITIK</b></p> <p>Boleh menyanyi Boleh mengaji Boleh menari Boleh berjanji Berapa banyakkah yang ditepati?</p> <p>Orang politik Boleh gelak Boleh sorak Boleh borak Boleh salak Sampai serak.</p> <p>Orang politik Perlu jaga hati pengundi Perlu jaga hati kawasanundi Perlu jaga hati budi sendiri Berapa banyakkah yang hanya jaga periuk nasi sendiri?</p> <p>Orang politik Fikir masalah dunia Fikir masalah Negara Fikir masalah masyarakatnya Yang belum ditemui jalan penyelesaiannya.</p>	<p>Orang politik Boleh menghujah Boleh mencadang Boleh membangkang Tapi kalau ditentang Bolehkah dipandang?</p> <p>Orang politik Adakah Hajat kesampaian Maksud berketumpuan Niat berketempatan?</p> <p><b>Juffri Supaat</b></p>
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### **Appendix 3**

#### **PUJANGGA**

Pujangga  
Masa begitu mencemburui kita  
Dalam tidak sedar mahupun percaya  
Putaran saat ditenun dengan lancar  
Laksana mimpi semalam yang indah.

Pujangga  
Ku masih teringat kata-kata  
Yang beralun syahdu menusuk kalbu  
Dari nasihat hingga ke tunjuk ajar  
Yang pasti akan menerangi layar perjuanganku.

Pujangga  
Dari sehelai kain putih yang suci dari noda  
Kini kain itu berkilau warna dunia  
Semakin ditenun semakin lebar  
Dicalit corak sateria untuk meneruskan legenda.

Pujangga  
Semesta alam menyusun sembah  
Bersimpul kaki duduk beradab  
Menghadap syukur keris tersisip tegap  
Tatkala bara digenggam setia tersemat di dada.

Pujangga  
Tahun bersilih ganti malam bertukar pagi  
Arus masa memamah usia  
Kau tetap jitu mengorak langkah  
laitu mendidik bakal pengganti.

Pujangga  
Teruskan melimpahkan keringatmu  
Onak dan duri akan bertempiaran melulu  
Diambil alih lagu naf syahdu  
Legendamu tetap akan tersemat di langit biru.

***Mohamed Hizamuddin Bin Mohamed Yusof***