

Engaging Literary Appreciation and Comprehension via a Big Book

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Abstract

This study was motivated by the gains of integrating children's literature in the Malaysian KSSR (*Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Rendah/Integrated Syllabus for Primary Schools*) English syllabus. The present study looked into primary students' perceptions with regard to the usage of the Big Book as well as their comprehension level in terms of the plot development, setting, moral values and characters. Its respondents were 150 Year Four students from three primary schools in one of the rural districts in the Northern region of Malaysia. Its three main research instruments were namely a Big Book, a questionnaire as well as worksheets on plot development work, settings, moral values and main characters. The study revealed that 98.74% of the respondents had overwhelmingly conceded the value of the big book in supporting their comprehension of the story. All respondents had affirmed that they were heavily attracted by the illustrations as well as the colors used in the big book. All of the respondents could effectively grasp the exposition/beginning stage of the plot structure while 93 (62%) respondents had decent conception of the settings of the story. 113 (75%) respondents had sound understanding of the moral values described in the story. About 123 (82%) respondents could competently recognize the main characters. The results of the study had evidently reinforced the significant role of Big Books in enriching ESL learners' literary appreciation as well as reading comprehension.

Keywords: big book, children's literature, comprehension, young ESL learners

1. Introduction

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The sheer advantages of a literature-rich curriculum has initiated the embrace of literature component in Malaysian primary and secondary English Language syllabus. This endeavor's main objectives are to incite learners' passion and interest in reading as well as to strengthen their English proficiency. It is also envisaged that the literature component would inculcate learners' sense of enjoyment towards English literary texts that would later evoke their creativity and awareness towards society, principles, philosophies, practices and traditions (Ministry of Education, 2003). Since 2004, the literature component has been prolonged to primary schools in two reading programmes namely the Extensive Reading Programme (NILAM) and the Children's Contemporary Literature Program (CCL). The Extensive Reading Programme (NILAM) is a planned reading programme for Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 whereas the Contemporary Children's Literature (CCL) is meant for Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6. The Contemporary Children's Literature (CCL) exposes learners to short stories and poems and it lucidly anticipates a learner to read at least two literary texts throughout the academic year.

Despite the fact that literature component has long been part of Malaysian English Language curriculum (about 17 years approximately), the teaching and learning English literature still have some glitches. Factors like time, teachers' knowledge, interest and experience, students' interest and motivation, language competency and resources have been identified as key challenges in local literature classroom instruction (Kow, 2007). Sadly, some of these issues become more obvious when dealing with low proficiency students especially those in rural areas.

Language instructors' mundane teaching techniques in literature class have often failed to attract learners' attentiveness and fascination towards literary texts. The National Education Blueprint 2013-2025 has revealed that almost half of the local teachers have opted for lectures as a mode of instruction. In addition, repeated readings are frequently recognized an effectual teaching tool in inducting understanding and literary appreciation (Kow, 2006). Many, particularly among amateur and inexperienced instructors, are oblivious that this technique may "assassinate" a literary text (Kow, 2007). Based on Omar (2017), inadequate knowledge about instructional approaches that underpin the use of literature in English language teaching is one of the answers to this concern. Paran (2008) has reiterated that being less informed about effective teaching practices may significantly reduce the success rate of abetting learners' English proficiency and literary appreciation. Isa and Mahmud (2012) have affirmed that many language instructors are worried about not having sufficient time to encompass the entire English syllabus due to the presence of literature component. As such, it is not peculiar if these instructors resort to "chalk and talk" technique - a classical teaching style. Instructors dominate the teaching-learning process, leaving very limited chances for students' activities and involvements (Basree, 2009).

As for instructors who have a class of weak learners, their attention is mainly on coaching their learners to pass exams (Salina, Ramlee & Othman, 2012). According to Ismail, Aziz and Abdullah (2008), guidebooks, answer keys, notes and textbooks are widely used in class tutorials. As a result, there is an absence in creating a suitable platform for learners to discover their individual insights in artistic reading (Blachowicz & Ogle, 2017). Learners' lack of personal indulgence in literary texts would eventually encumber the pleasure of reading and writing (Sivasubramaniam, 2006).

A study by Radzuan, Malachi and Shireena (2010) has manifestly revealed that the presence of a literature module in the English Language curriculum is not welcomed by many learners. This is especially true with those who have poor English ability since they do not possess the necessary proficiencies to interpret and value fictional passages. In this manner, a lot of learners continually fail to have deeper understanding of author's intention (Omar, 2017). Other than that, learners can easily grow bored when reading literary texts that are culturally and contextually unfamiliar and they therefore are reluctant to engage meaningfully with such texts (Wigfield & Cambria, 2010). Radzuan, Malachi and Shireena (2010) have claimed that even without the literature component, these learners are already grappling learning the language. Besides that, many learners do not have any appeal and passion to read literary texts especially those written in English (Salina, Ramlee & Othman, 2012). Other factors like text difficulty, incompatibility between literary texts and learners' interest and cultural differences (Sidhu, 2003) also contribute significantly to this issue.

1.2 Research Questions

The mentioned challenges of teaching and learning English literature have inspired this study. The goal of this study is to discover answers to the subsequent questions:

RQ1: What are Year 4 students' perceptions regarding the use of a big book?

RQ2: What is Year 4 students' comprehension level of the plot structure of *The Jungle Book* after using the big book?

RQ3: What is Year 4 students' comprehension level of several settings depicted in *The Jungle Book* after using the big book?

RQ4: What is Year 4 students' comprehension level of the moral values portrayed in *The Jungle Book* after using the big book?

RQ5: What is Year 4 students' comprehension level of the main characters of *The Jungle Book* after using the Big Book?

1.3 Relevant Scholarship

Any literature that is enjoyed by youngsters is considered children's literature. It is to be envisioned, listened to or comprehended by children (Kow, 2002). In general, children's literature, relates to works authored and produced for children who are not yet keen in adult literature or who are deficient in the reading skills or developmental grasps (vital components to relish literary works). Kow (2002) offers a definition that is visualized in the following diagram.

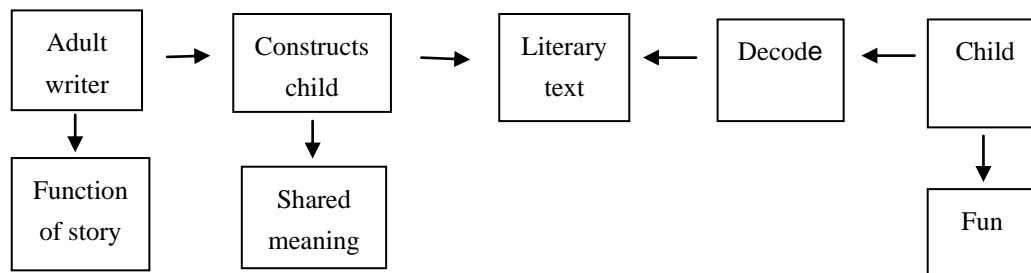


Figure 1. Children's Literature

Adapted from: Kow (2002, p.48)

Kow (2002) has affirmed that children's literature not only encourages fantasies and supports youngsters in dealing and coping with real life issues and experiences, but it also aids in the instillation of multiple social values that are socially accepted. Traditional literature, fantasy literature, picture books, poetry, realistic fiction and non-fiction are some genres of children's literature.

Picture books or also known as graphic novels refer to the organization of graphics or visuals that describe a story (Eisner, 1985). This sequential art may come in a form of comic strips, picture - narratives, illustrations and softcover humorous stories (Weiner, 2010). It has been documented that big books (that match the concept of graphic novels) have many benefits in language learning especially in ESL/EFL classroom. Santi, Asteria, Regina and Fergina (2016) have agreed about the suitability of big books as an effective pedagogical tool in teaching young learners.

Based on O'Malley et al. (1985) and Rubin (1987), these books are significant in strengthening learners' cognitive learning strategies since they aid skills like analysis, synthesis, problem solving, explaining, predicting, rationalizing, rehearsing, scrutinizing and memorizing. Rubin (1987) has further elaborated that graphic novels (big books) can reinforce learners' metacognitive strategies during activities that require preparation, prioritization, self-management and objectives establishment. As such, these books stimulate learners to be meticulous and thoughtful with the texts that they have seen in which critical thinking, creativity, intuitions and comprehension are fostered (Calo, 2010).

Pictures (that convey contextual clues) and straightforward sentence structures in graphic novels can greatly assist language learners' comprehension of a literary text (Eisner, 1985; Hassett & Schiebe, 2007; Krashen, 2004). According to Pennella (2009), pictorial contextual clues can aid learners to decipher unknown words. Through graphic novels (big books), extensive reading can be fostered (Goldsmith, 2005), reading skills can be heightened and sociocultural matters can be highlighted and addressed (Öz, & Efecioglu, 2015).

According to O'Connor, Barbar, Coville-Hall, and Susan, (2006), their huge size has actually made big books unique from conventional manuscripts. The outstanding size of big books catches not only learners' attention and interest but it permits clear visibility of the book content. The large font and drawings allow learners to concentrate on the book from afar (at least from 15 feet away).

Strickland, (1990) and Slaughter, (1983) have asserted that the foreseeable and planned language, drawings, along with the plot in big books, enable young learners to comprehend the narrative. It is during this phase that these learners create connections between the print and the illustrations in order to grasp the storyline. In a study by Nalantha, Artini and Mahayanti, (2018), big books have manifestly increased learners' reading comprehension. Their experimental research has verified that instructions via big books have improved reading comprehension skills of third graders. Similarly, Mahayanti and Asrina (2017) have also revealed the influence of big books on reading comprehension. The increased comprehension abilities would surely assist learners in other learning disciplines that mostly demand good reading skills.

Big books that can commonly promote a dynamic communication between a teacher and her students (Roslina, 2017) can positively influence learners' motivation, interest and participation. The vibrant illustrations along with the teacher's lively narration could spark joy, excitement and fun in the learning process. Big books which share the graphic novels' characteristics are rich with drawings and simple sentences can easily pique learners' attention and curiosity that motivate them to engage in a learning task with greater zeal (Öz & Efecioglu, 2015). Active learners' engagement in shared reading stimulates active exchange of ideas in class discussions where learners are more at ease in throwing personal views about the gist of narrative (Yacoob, 2008).

2. Method

2.1 Respondents

The present study had chosen 150 Year Four students from three primary schools located in one of the rural districts in the Northern region of Malaysia. All respondents were 8 years old and they were in the second phase of the Standard Curriculum for Malaysian Primary Schools (KSSR). The total number of the respondents comprised of 50 students who were randomly selected in each of the school. Malay Language was the respondents' native language while English Language was learnt as a second language.

2.2 Research Instruments

2.2.1 Big Book

The big book used in the present study was a large-size version of Rudyard Kipling's graphic novel entitled *The Jungle Book*. This novel was chosen because it was an obligatory story used in the KSSR (Standard Curriculum for Malaysian Primary Schools) Year 4 English literature components. Graphic novels refer to the combination of words and illustrations that form a story. Graphic novels are one of the effective pedagogical tools that can help to improve ESL or EFL students' language skills since their dialogues assist students to read and understand short and simple texts while their illustrations provide relevant contextual clues that can fascinate students' senses (Eisner, 1985).

The present study closely referred to Quileste's (2015) guidelines that mainly emphasized on larger graphics, print and size. The larger size as well as clarity of the print and visuals would make certain that all students are able to see and focus on the volume from a range of at least 50 meters. The size of this volume was 74x84cm and the size of the print was 2.54cm high. It came along with a custom-made book stand - the book was placed on this stand throughout the storytelling session. The picture-text ratio was 70% pictures and 30% texts and it was written using Zaner-Bloser method (manuscript without slant) in a chronological-sequential order. Predictable and patterned language (Strickland, 1990; Slaughter, 1983) was used in the book to assist students' understanding of the story. Dialogues were isolated from main paragraphs and consistent indentation was exercised. In order to ensure high durability, each page of the book had a wipe-cleaned surface.

2.2.2 Questionnaire

A questionnaire to assess learners' perceptions regarding the use of the big book in their lesson was employed. The questionnaire consisted of 12 items and five-Likert scales were used to collect the data. Items 1, 2 and 12 required the respondents to express their opinions about their preference concerning the use of the big book in the classroom. Items 3, 4, 5 and 6 obliged the respondents to give their feedback on the drawings, colors and wording used in the big book. Items 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 expected the respondents to postulate their views about their comprehension level of the plot, characters, setting and moral values of the story.

The five-Likert scales were illustrated in the form of emoticons. Emoticons were used to assist these young respondents' understanding of the given scales. Each emoticon represented a feeling (strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree and strongly agree). Below were the emoticons employed in the five-Likert scales.



Figure 1. Different types of emotions conveyed by emoticons

The questionnaire had undergone a pilot test and the result of its reliability was .82. Thus, it could be concluded that this questionnaire was reliable in collecting the data of the actual study.

2.2.3 Worksheet on Plot Development

This worksheet was developed to examine the respondents' understanding of the story's plot. This worksheet comprised of five items in which the respondents were compelled to pair each event according to the stages in the plot (Beginning, rising action, climax, falling action and ending). For each event, the respondents were to encircle the correct label to indicate its occurrence in the story. The labels were assigned according to the following stages:

Beginning	Rising Action	Climax	Falling Action	Ending
B	RA	C	FA	E

Figure 2. Labels indicating the Stages in the Story's Plot

2.2.4 Worksheet on Settings

This worksheet was meant to examine the respondents' understanding of several settings depicted in the story. This worksheet entailed five items and each item comprised of an explicit dialogue that was uttered by a character in a specific place in the story. The respondents were expected to match each dialogue with a picture that demonstrated a particular place in the story.

2.2.5 Worksheet on Moral Values

This worksheet was aimed to investigate the respondents' understanding of the moral values portrayed in the story. This worksheet listed six possible moral values of the story. The respondents were expected to select the relevant moral values that they understood from the story.

2.2.6 Worksheet on Main Characters

This worksheet was made up of two sections. Section A was developed to examine the respondents' understanding of the main characters of the story. In this section, the respondents were to match each main character with his/its name. Section B was developed to examine the respondents' understanding of the characters' personalities. In this section, the respondents were to match each character with his/its personality.

2.3 Research Procedure

The study was conducted in a normal instructional time. It was divided into several stages namely Stage 1: Storytelling Session, Stage 2: Students' perceptions regarding the use of the Big Book Assessment, Stage 3: Plot Structure Comprehension Assessment, Stage 4: Setting Comprehension Assessment Stage 5: Moral Values Comprehension Assessment, Stage 6: Main Characters' Comprehension Assessment.

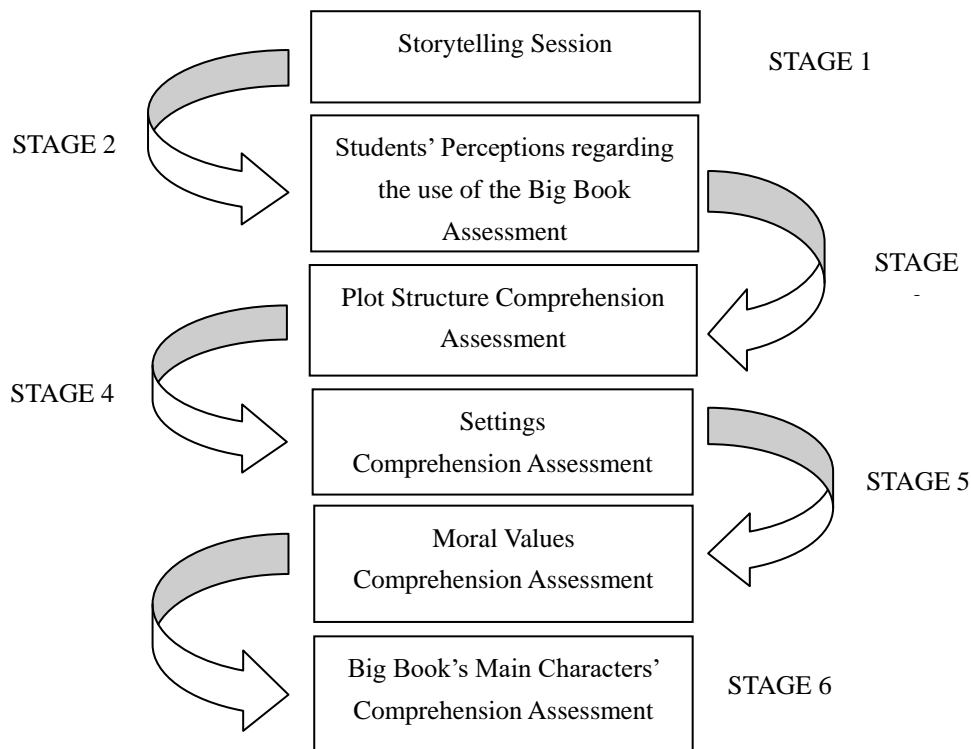


Figure 3. Research Procedure

Stage 1: Storytelling Session

The rationale of this activity is to humanize learning. This storytelling session serves as a platform for students to make connections with characters, and to view and understand the real world from others' standpoints. The major objective of this session was to tap students' emotions in a fun and entertaining way.

In the storytelling session, a Big Book entitled "The Jungle Book" was narrated by the researcher. In order to ensure optimum results and positive feedbacks, aspects like maintaining eye contact, using vivid language, using movements and dramatic pauses as well as changing voices with different characters were seriously taken into consideration.

Stage 2: Students' Perceptions regarding the use of the Big Book Assessment

In the following lesson, a questionnaire was distributed to each student. A short briefing was conducted beforehand to inform the main objective of the questionnaire. Since the respondents were mainly young learners, the researcher thoughtfully went through each test item with the class and ample time was granted to answer each of the items. Translation of the test items (from English Language to Malay Language) was put into practice whenever it was necessary.

Stage 3: Plot Structure Comprehension Assessment

On the third class meeting, before the data collection, the class was exposed to a short lesson on a plot of a fiction namely its definition, purpose and elements. The class was later asked to respond to the worksheet on plot structure of *The Jungle Book*. Regular assistance and monitoring were conducted throughout this stage.

Stage 4: Settings Comprehension Assessment

Copies of worksheet on settings were distributed to the class. The researcher carefully read out the instruction as well as the test items. When it was necessary, Malay Language was used to clarify meanings of words or sentences.

Stage 5: Moral Values Comprehension Assessment

On the next class meeting, teaching of various types of moral values was conducted before the actual data collection. The class was then requested to respond to the worksheet on moral values illustrated in *The Jungle Book*. Constant monitoring and support were given during the assessment.

Stage 6: Main Characters' Comprehension Assessment

A lesson on characterization was conducted before the actual data collection. After the lesson, the class was then asked to answer to the worksheet on main characters of *The Jungle Book*. The class was reminded that they were to respond to Section A and Section B of the worksheet.

2.3.4 Data Analysis

Frequency distribution was used to calculate the percentage and the cumulative percentage of the collected data. Benchmarking was also used to interpret the data. All the data collected were presented in frequency

3. Results

3.1 Research Question 1: What Are Year 4 Students' Perceptions Regarding the Use of a Big Book?

98.74% of the respondents had profoundly acknowledged the effectiveness of the big book in supporting their comprehension, however, another 1.26% seemed to be uncertain. 97.83% of the respondents strongly agreed with the act of displaying the big book to the class while another 2.17% expressed their sheer agreement. 99% of the respondents was highly keen on the idea of constant practice of a big book in a storytelling session whereas only 1% objected.

Table 1. Respondents' Perceptions towards the Big Book

Features in Big Book	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Big book's role in aiding respondents' comprehension	0	0	1.26%	0	98.74%
Big book's presentation in the class	0	0	0	2.17%	97.83%
Big book's continuous practice in a storytelling session	0	0	0	1%	99%
Big book's illustrations and colors	0	0	0	0	100%
Big book's role in exposing respondents to settings	0	0	0	3.11%	95.63%
Big book's drawings of characters	0	0	0	21.38%	78.62%
Big book's wordings visibility and clarity	0	0	0	29.88%	70.12%
Teacher's act of reading wordings while looking at drawings on printed pages	0	0	0	3.08%	96.92%
Big book's role in increasing respondents' awareness of moral values	0	18.15%	0	81.85%	0
Big book's role in encouraging retelling activity	0	9.9%	12.19%	77.91%	0

All respondents strongly asserted that they really enjoyed the attractive illustrations as well as the colors used in the big book. In terms of the exposure to various settings in *The Jungle Book*, majority of the respondents (95.63%) strongly agreed that the illustrations used in the big book had aided their understanding of various settings in the graphic novel. Another 3.11% of them agreed that the scenic drawings had provided some information about various types of settings in the story. 78.62% of the respondents strongly confirmed while another 21.38% modestly asserted that the sketches of the characters in *The Jungle Book* had greatly helped them to understand the characters' personalities and feelings.

The present study revealed a mixture of views among the respondents in terms of the visibility and clarity of the wordings in the big book. About 70.12% of the respondents claimed that they could really see the wordings in the big book while another 29.88% plainly confirmed that they did not have any problem seeing the wordings in the big book. The act of the teacher reading the wordings while looking at the drawings on the printed pages was well-received by 96.92% respondents while the remaining 3.08% displayed their simple consent.

The present study discovered that 81.85% of the respondents assented that the usage of the big book in the storytelling session had made them more mindful of the moral values in *The Jungle Book*. However, 18.15% disagreed that usage of the big book could make them more sensible of the moral values in the story. 77.91% of the respondents acceded that they were able to retell *The Jungle Book* to their friends after the big book storytelling session. About 12.19% remained neutral while 9.9% disagreed that they could reiterate the whole story after the session.

3.2 Research Question 2: What Is Year 4 Students' Comprehension Level of the Plot Structure of *The Jungle Book* after Using the Big Book?

All of the respondents could successfully comprehend the exposition/beginning stage of the plot structure of *The Jungle Book*. Similarly, all of the respondents managed to understand the falling action and the resolution/ending stages. However, only 117 (78%) of the respondents could comprehend the rising action and the climax stages. The remaining of 33 (22%) of the respondents failed to understand these stages.

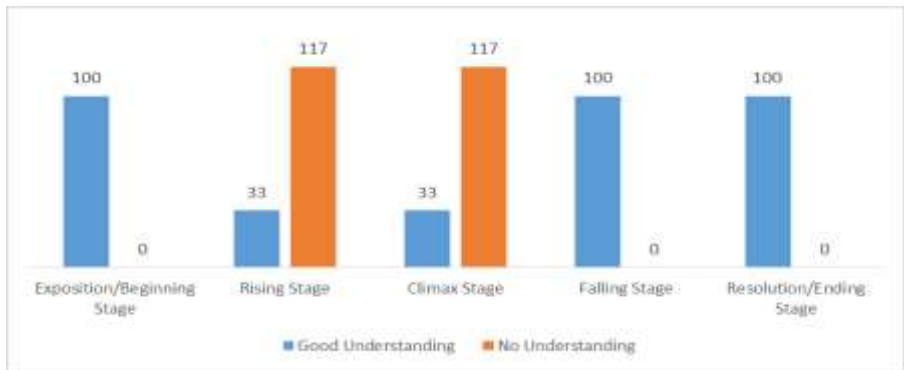


Figure 4. Respondents' Comprehension of Plot Structure

3.3 Research Question 3: What Is Year 4 Students' Comprehension Level of Several Settings Depicted in *The Jungle Book* after Using the Big Book?

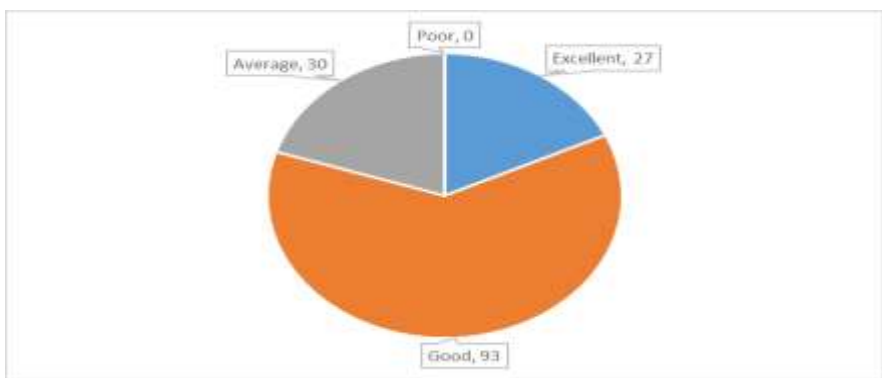


Figure 5. Respondents' Comprehension of Setting

The present study revealed that 93 (62%) responde had good understanding of the settings of the story. Another 30 (20%) respondents had average understanding whereas the remaining 27 (18%) respondents managed to understand the settings excellently. None of the respondents had poor understanding of the settings of the story.

3.4 Research Question 4: What Is Year 4 Students' Comprehension Level of the Moral Values Portrayed in *The Jungle Book* after Using the Big Book?

113 (75%) respondents had good comprehension of the moral values described in *The Jungle Book*. About 7 (5%) respondents had average comprehension while 30 (20%) of the remaining had excellent understanding of the moral values.

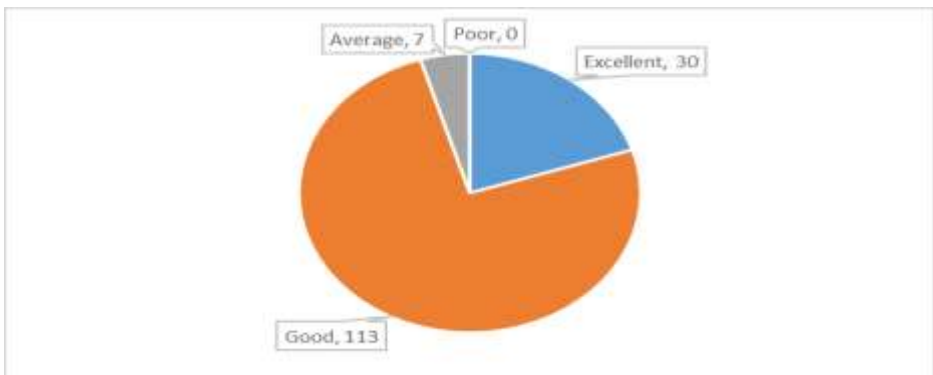


Figure 6. Respondents' Comprehension of Moral Values

3.2.5 Research Question 5: What Is Year 4 Students’ Comprehension Level of the Main Characters of The Jungle Book after Using the Big Book?

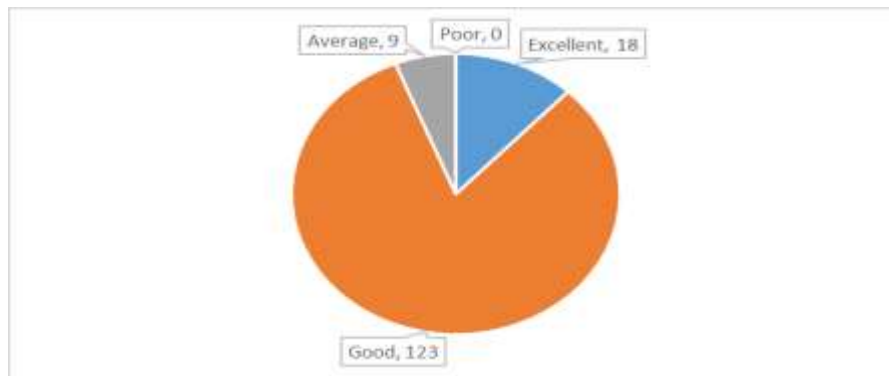


Figure 7. Respondents’ Comprehension of Main Characters (Section A)

In Section A, the results revealed that 18 (12%) respondents could identify the main characters excellently. About 123 (82%) respondents were good in this task whereas the performance of another 9 (6%) was at the average level. In Section B, 15 (10%) respondents could match the major characters with their personalities excellently. The performance of 114 (76%) respondents was good and the rest of them (21, 14%) performed averagely.

4. Discussion

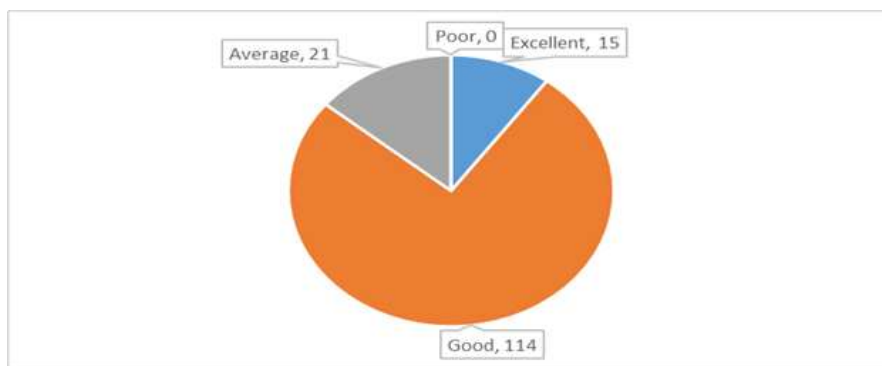


Figure 7. Respondents’ Comprehension of Main Characters (Section B)

4. Discussion

The present study disclosed that all respondents were contented to see the big book in the storytelling session. In addition, they claimed that they were very delighted with the usage of the big book in this session. These findings were in line with Nalantha, Artini and Mahayanti, (2018) who have also identified learners’ eagerness and cheerfulness when viewing a big book in their classroom.

These findings distinctly displayed that these young learners had reacted positively to language learning when they were exposed to vivid and visible learning aids. According to Krashen (2004), learning aids that are based on pictorial storylines can boost learners’ interest and independence. Holdaway (1979) has further explained that pictographic narratives are significant in uplifting learners’ motivation, enjoyment and participation. Since big books rely heavily on eye-catching graphics in narrating children’s short stories, they help to minimize young learners’ anxiety and low self-confidence in their second/foreign language learning (Andi, 2013; Lynch, 2008; Normaliza et. al, 2009).

This finding was in line with Morris et al. (2003) who have unveiled a similar finding with their 7-9 years old samples who have displayed optimistic feedbacks towards big books. Young learners frequently deem the act of sitting down and paying attention to a teacher’s narration as a very delightful and wonderful experience (Normaliza & Nik Ismail, 2010). This enjoyable, safe and relaxed learning surrounding entices attention, inquisitiveness, enthusiasm and active involvement (Brendon, 2012; Lynch, 2008; Nambiar, 2001). Big books’ vast print and

flamboyant graphics could directly promote some eagerness and pleasure towards reading activity.

Respondents in this study had expressed their fondness for the outsized typescript in the big book. They claimed that they could clearly view and read the typescript on each page of the book. According to Colville-hall and Connor, (2006) as this typescript is pointed out and read aloud, these learners can gradually establish connections between writing and reading. They too can experience reading each page from left to right. Young learners are prone to concentrate on details for instance where the text begins, left-to-right and top-to-bottom polarity, the reverse sweep to the left flank of the text, and word-by-word pairing, among other text-associated elements (Colville-Hall & Connor, 2006). Not only that, learners are able to distinguish and duplicate words and sentences in the book (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

Respondents' positive feedbacks on the big book had reinforced the relevance and suitability of big books as one of the pedagogical tools in teaching young learners (Santi, Asteria, Regina & Fergina, 2016). Furthermore, Indrasari, Novita & Megawati, (2018) have enlightened that big books foster enjoyable English teaching and learning ambience.

This finding has markedly confirmed that these young learners relish shared reading where opportunities are given to share a big book with their others. According to Vocca et al. (2003) and Holdaway (1979), shared reading reflects personal and warm effects of lap-reading in a family where family members (usually involving adults and youngsters) take pleasure in the "read and share" moments. Through repeated shared readings, young learners are able to build their own compilation of familiar books that they can use to exercise personal reading as well as to improve their writing and vocabulary (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). When big books are used in a series of repeated shared readings, it is learnt that young learners' reading ability have significantly enriched (Rohaniawati, Ratnasih, Ruswandi & Fauziah, 2017). Shared reading through a big book has some positive effects on young learners' vocabulary knowledge (Indrasari, Novita & Megawati 2018). Young learners especially those who have inadequate vocabulary have benefited greatly from reading aloud of story books (Hargrave & Senechal. 2000).

The present study discovered that majority of the respondents preferred to pay attention to their instructor's reading whilst viewing at the drawings on the printed pages. This listening-while reading session, which is similar to repeated readings, precludes deficiency of motivation and enthusiasm when reading a same text repetitively (Rasinski, 1990). During this session, young learners have the chances to interact with a text that they may not be able to read on their own (Rasinski, 2004). In addition, a teacher's oral and expressive reading can serve as a representation of a good and eloquent model of reading to young children. According to Vacca et al (2003), listening to the teacher's reading aloud would draw young learners' attention to the importance of reading a text using verbal language. Moreover, these learners would be able to realize that the main goal for word recognition is to discern the messages carried by texts (Therrien, 2004). This is especially true for less fluent readers who greatly focus more on deciphering rather than meaning-making (Kuhn & Schwanenflugel, 2008).

The present study also exposed that the respondents had affirmed that the illustrations used in the big book had increased their understanding of the story in terms of its plot structure, setting, moral values and main characters. These findings agreed with the emergent literacy theory that highlights the substantial influence of social and cultural aspects as well as learners' connections and comprehension about a text (Morrow, 2001). This theory explains that literacy begins with listening to stories then writing experiences and later discerning descriptions and characterizations in actual contexts (Tompkins, 2001). Young readers learn to read by comprehending narratives from visuals and then discovering that the text conveys the real plotline. The ability to relate their own encounters to the plotline, along with their personal language to the text, imply that the narrative and the function of a text have now been grasped (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

5. Conclusion

Several understandings can be crafted from the review of the findings obtained. First of all, the results had stipulated some initial information about Year 4 students' perceptions regarding the use of big book in the storytelling session. The present study had found that majority of the students relished the usage of big book in the classroom. Many of them acquiesced that big book had strengthened their grasp of *The Jungle Book* in terms of its plot structure, setting, moral values and main characters. These findings had reflected potential values of these variables in understanding ESL learners' reading abilities. It is anticipated that educationalists would persevere in keeping posted and augmenting ESL learners' current reading proficiencies as well as enriching their literary appreciation. Besides the fact that literature has become one of the essential assessment components in Malaysian classrooms, literature in reality educates a whole person. By scrutinizing the values in the literary texts, educators are actually emboldening learners to expand their viewpoints. These values and perspectives are in point of fact related to the world outside the

classroom.

It is suggested that big books are exercised considerably in classrooms. Big books are recommended as they permit a whole class to read an enlarged form of reading text. The enlarged text allows young learners to look at and respond to the words and illustrations as the teacher orates out loud - an imperative resemblance to the shared reading. Big books are deemed to verge on family storybook readings (Strickland & Morrow, 1990). It is further recommended that shared storybook reading is practiced considerably in classrooms. Shared storybook reading is a language-based practice and it is crucial to create a compelling social dynamic that spurs young learners to participate with literary texts. A formidable method is by accentuating a two-way communication of shared storybook reading – by making sure that the adult (the teacher) and the child (the learner) evenly perform significant, uniform functions in the communication (Rabidoux & MacDonald, 2000). When young learners act as a team, they exhibit better self-adaptation and self-assurance in executing an undertaking. Based on Kaderavek & Sulzby, (1998), the act of a grownup reading books with youngsters reflects eminent stages of spoken and non-spoken management. To intensify a young learner's enthusiasm towards book-reading interactions, teachers should procure a widened stance of the shared-reading practice. Teachers should explicitly and implicitly hearten young learners to be more cooperative and enthusiastic in shared reading. For that reason, teachers ought to diminish the use of both spoken and non-spoken control strategies. Storytime ought to be enjoyable and encouraging event for young learners, where they can feel au fait (Justice & Kaderavek, 2002).

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