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# WEST MALAYSIA AND EAST MALAYSIA STUDENTS LEARNING PATTERNS IN PERFORMING A NARRATIVE PLAY

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### Abstract

Students in University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) come from different backgrounds. Almost half of the class in all Drama and Theatre Program cohort come from West Malaysia. In this research, students will perform a narrative play in class. In performing a stage play, some differences and similarities have been done by students from West and East Malaysia. Researcher identifies some elements such as the usage of music and styles done by the students in performing their play. Therefore, this writing is an analysis of some chosen students. This research aims to identify and analyse students' interpretation of a stage play on an enactment. A class of an acting class is chosen for this research. This class is a multicultural class. In the research, there are similarities and differences done by of both groups. This consists their understanding and culture to perform a play. The result shows differences of the students' learning patterns and their interpretations for a narrative play. Some patterns are universally used when the early stage of the process and it changes over time. The findings are discussed based on students' understanding of the text and their performance on stage. This research may be possible upcoming research on multicultural group performance in Malaysia

**Keywords:** Acting; interpretation; West Malaysia; East Malaysia; multicultural; narrative; learning process

### Introduction

Making theatre as a learning process happens when students learn a stage play and then perform it on stage. This creative teaching activity has to be done correctly, and it is explained through the rehearsal process. The application of creative teaching is to explore students roots and cultures. Many scholars mostly favour this creative teaching. They believe that this process is a core element of education (Saebø, McCammon, & O'Farrell, 2007). When they read a play, they learn to analyse a script as students in UNIMAS come from different backgrounds and cultures. Their learning patterns may be similar. However, the final result of performance could be different. This is due to their daily practices and beliefs. For instance, some people believe that popular culture is a good subject matter in order to make engagement. This practice happens in most local television programs such as *Raja Lawak*, *Juara Lagu* and more. This technique is also done by a group of students in the performance. This empirical research is possible to be creative teaching finding for the future. The students' tendency to showing their styles on stage based on their culture is one important element in order to study their custom and ways of learning.

Analysis and study are done in this research in order to learn the study patterns and the students' proposed discovery based on West Malaysia and East Malaysia group of students. From this finding, we will learn both groups styles on stage. This research aims to identify and to analyse students' interpretation of a stage play on an enactment. This aim also consists of subjects' exploration of ideas and learning processes. Students were given a short play for them to study. *Kuda Hitam* is the title of the play. *Kuda Hitam* is a story of a father and his kid discussing folklore on their way home. During the journey, his father talks to his son about a story of a Rain Kid and his pony. He loves his pony and always plays with it. The pony always helps him in doing daily tasks such as searching for food and hunting. One day, Kid has to leave his pony for his home. The journey has an obstacle when bad people try to harm Rainy Kid. Luckily, the pony comes back to save him.

Creative teaching has been explored by many scholars in previous years to develop students' learning process (Saebø, McCammon, & O'Farrell, 2007). This is due to the changing of time and needs by the world when more teachers are turning to this approach. Learning other culture is one of the good goals to gain more ideas of people and to connect more with people (Belliveau, 2007). By this statement, we learned that by learning people's approaches, we would know more about them. Their cultures, identities and behaviours can be studied, and from the approach, we will learn about differences among people in the different geographical area.

Multicultural discussion happens in acting rehearsal when the story is used as a tool (Bernal, 2007). This discussion will lead to a good performance done by the students on the final show. In a show by Peter Brook, *The Conference of The Birds*, the multicultural group of performers have devised the play based on their understanding and need to show their culture on stage. This may be applied to most multicultural production. In the performance, all performers show their bit of recognisable cultures visually and verbally. By doing it, the production seemed to be an elaborate production with a structured play.

The mobility of students around the world is growing fast (Regelski, 1983). This leads to another question of how mobility affects a group of students to study. The learning process and choices of things have to be done correctly in order to get a better result. This cross-cultural may breach many beliefs and customs. However, it will not always be the case when people are studying to deal with each other (Regelski, 1983). Based on the studies, one can learn that each group will show their characters and cultures after a series of rehearsals and learning.

### Methods

Twenty-eight (28) students from Acting Styles and Technique class of 2018 have participated for the action research. Twelve students are from West Malaysia. The students are given a play entitled *Kuda Hitam* for them to act in week 10 of class. In order to perform a five-minute script of *Kuda Hitam*, each student is given three phases of making an enactment. Firstly, they are given the text to be analysed based on their prior knowledge of any script analysis studies. Then, they