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Abdul Walid Ali, Muhammad Qawiem Hamizan

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Analysis on Performing Theatrical Performance Matinya Seorang Pahlawan (1992) For Non - Malay Speakers in London

Abdul Walid Ali, Muhammad Qawiem Hamizan

Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, Kota Samarahan, Sarawak

Email: abdulwalidali@gmail.com

Abstract

Matinya Seorang Pahlawan (1992) was one of Malay language theatrical performances that has been performed overseas for non-Malay speakers in SOAS, London. Therefore, surtitles has been introduced in theatre world to overcome the language barrier issue. However, the production has not using surtitles on stage due to some reasons and budgeted constraint was one of them. This may be difficult for the viewers since foreign performances are alien for the audience members who do not speak the language and do not understand the culture. The research analyses factors and effects on avoiding surtitles on the production. A number of people that involved in the production – theatre makers and viewers were interviewed and documentations and writings about the production are also reviewed in order to get a deeper result on the research. This qualitative research used triangular method to identify and conclude either the production has achieved its main goal to promote Malay language and culture to the world or otherwise.

Keywords: language, Theatre Language, Malay World, Surtitles, Usman Awang

Introduction

Primarily, a theatre performance has its own specific audience member that share a common language since dramatist is an “ideal speaker-listener” which is a “completely homogeneous speech-community, who knows its language perfectly” (Carlson, 2006). It is not only limited to the text’s language literally since they share a similar stage language. “Stage language” is a “scientific language” (Carlson, 2006). Gestures have their own meanings based on the dramatist’s intentions; communications among audience and performers are semiotics that covers a codified communication system – a language of gesture and spectacles. Codes in stage languages will be different for different culture viewers.

This has made a theatre performance is culturally and linguistically specific due to the theatre quality that only made possible for a live event. An audience member might struggle to understand the show if they are not speaking the performance’s language. However, the language misunderstanding will