

*Enriching the Voice of Non-Musical Students (Diploma in Theatre)
Through the Use of the Suzuki Method*

Junita Batubara, Universitas HKBP Nommensen, Malaysia
Sumathi Maniam, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Malaysia

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Abstract

An educator is responsible in transmitting knowledge, technology and values to the community through the process of teaching and learning. Credit hours are accumulated based on the current curriculum while transformation take place during lectures. *Teknik Nyanyian* or rather singing technique is one of the minor course available to the diplomas of the theatre course in UPSI. This course is vital in shaping the talent, mindset and the disposition of the students. Singing technique is a minor subject that is offered to the undergraduates of diploma in theatre in line with the education curriculum in UPSI. In order to produce accurate singing techniques, a singer needs to focus on breathing techniques, notation/melody, tempo, rhythm and articulation. Based on the data collected, the students have never been exposed to music notation and introduction to formation of sound / phrasing. 35 students were selected from the theatre department for the purpose of this study. Qualitative and quantitative methods were used to collect data in which the Suzuki method was used to teach singing technique. The findings of the study show that the Suzuki method was instrumental in teaching singing technique.

Keywords: *singing technique, Phrasing, Suzuki method, sound, melody*

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Introduction

Teaching and learning is fundamentally a process of conversion of science, technology and value systems that is passed on to a society of learners. The lecture hall becomes the medium whereby the transformation process takes place whereby a number of courses is organized within the curriculum. Students who learn in formal situations are mainly structured by the curriculum of the conservatoire and controlled by the teacher. Students plan their own learning in informal learning situations (Mark, Kors, Reanshaw, 2007: 21) As such, in order to make students independent learners, they are required to perform informal tasks in formal situations. As a whole, the formal and informal learning can be understood as a process whereby teachers (lecturers) and learners (students) are both actively participating in a positive environment.

According to Paparo (2016: 489), musical understanding is established through singing. Keeping this in mind, a singing technique course is included as one of the minor subjects for students of theater major at Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris. The development of talent, attitude, intelligence, and personality of learners is further advanced in hymn technique classes. Students of theater studies in semester two are students who take a technical course of singing where the student has never studied music theory or is less familiar with the notation. In singing, there are several things to note which are related to the technique of singing, namely: breathing, articulation, vibration, resonance, and intonation, where it also concerns the vocal technique. According to Rudy (2008: 46), 'forming vocal technique' is a basic technique in singing and when compared with a 'building technique' vocals are the foundation. To produce a good vocal technique then, a singer should pay attention to several techniques of mastery which includes: mastery of breathing techniques, the mastery of notation / melody, mastery of tempo, rhythm and mastery of articulation. This study is conducted using the Suzuki Method¹ (2008: 4).

Methodology

The Suzuki method is applied, whereby the students are taught to sing by recording the melody and rhythm of songs and then students are made to listen to the recordings repetitively through the *WhatsApp* application before they learn to sing. The students are required to memorize the melody and rhythm of songs as they are unfamiliar with music notations. The researcher applied qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze the data. Qualitative method is divided into three parts. Data collection (orientation level), Data Reduction and Data selection. In quantitative method, tabulation analysis was conducted. Data was arranged in a tabulation format in accordance to the importance of the data analyzed. The tabulation was a summarized version of the analyzed data (Aedi, 2010: 11). The tabulation analysis process was essential in ensuring the accuracy of the data collected. 35 students participated in the Singing Technique course whereby 21 were female and 14 were male of which almost all students have never learned the technique of singing directly. Questionnaires were distributed to the students and data was collected based on their answers. Data was collected through interviews with 5 students representatives and conclusions were drawn whereby it can be said that they are able to sing by often listening to songs on

¹ Suzuki Method is a method popularised by Shinichi Suzuki (a Japanese), a music educationist, violinist, who believed that musical talent is not inborn but instead it can be developed through practice.

you tube, radio, CD and cassette. Based on the questionnaires, the level of the students' understanding on the technique of singing can be observed. The researcher collected data through field notes and reflective journals as well as through observations, recordings and interviews.

Conclusions/Findings

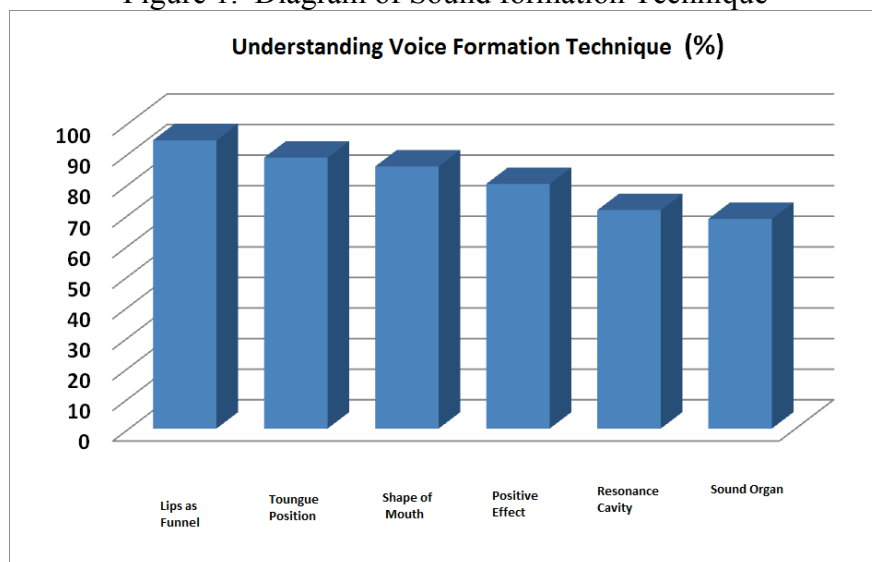
Sound/Phrasing formations

Sound/Phrasing is a set of beheading sentence correctly and properly, so that it is easy to be understood and suitable with the rule of the song provided. The study would look into the formation of sound/phrasing, where the breathing consists of 8 parts which are divided as follows in the table and diagram below.

Table 1. Sound/Phrasing formations

NO	Sound/Phrasing formation	PERCENTAGE
1	Sound organs that have close contact with sound production: vocal cords, lungs, abdominal muscles, resonant cavities	69
2	Resonant cavities consist of chest cavity, throat cavity, nasal cavity, oral cavity, head cavity,	71
3	The mouth is open to a width of three fingers by pulling down the lower jaw,	86
4	lips function as loudspeaker,	94
5	tongue position, is not in a curved position and does not stretch beyond the teeth	86
6	Positive impact with the formation of the sound and I am happy to do it.	80

Figure 1. Diagram of Sound formation Technique



The study conducted examines the percentage of students' understanding of body posture in singing technique from highest to lowest value whereby it is deduced that 94% of students agree that lips function as loudspeaker, while 89% understand the position of tongue, curved position and does not stretch beyond the teeth. 86% of

students realize that the mouth can be opened about 3 inches in width by pulling the lower jaw. 80% of the students claim that they are happy to sing due to the positive effect of the sound. Students understand that the resonant cavity consists of chest cavity, throat cavity, nose, mouth cavity, head cavity at 71%. The least percentage is scored on the understanding that sound organs that have close contact with sound production: vocal cords, lungs, abdominal muscles, resonance cavity is at 69%. The analysis of these results show that students' understanding of sound organs (1) is still less due to the need for adequate teaching time to study the anatomy of the human sound so that there is a balance between theory and practice.

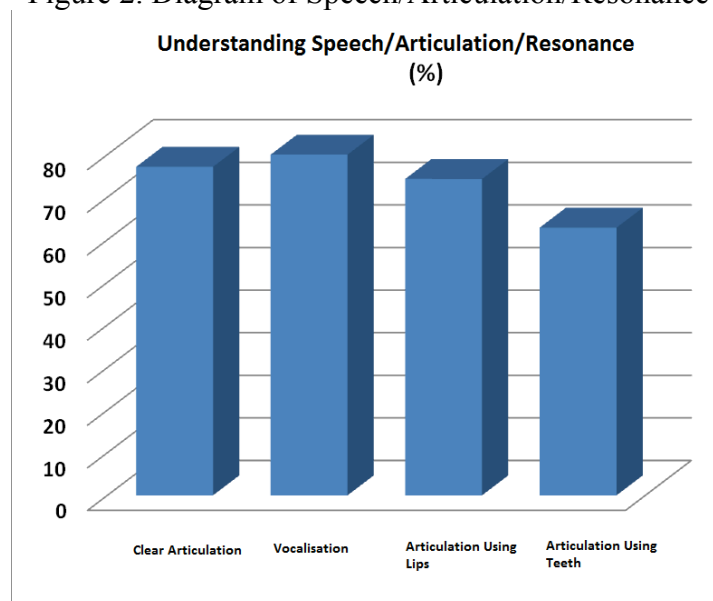
Resonance & Articulation / Pronunciation

Students' understanding on Resonance & Articulation / Pronunciation, which is divided into four parts: 1) Good and clear speech, will give a clear understanding of every word that is sung, 2) Vowel vocal A, U, E, O is one of the techniques of resonance, 3) The word *ma-mi-mo-mo* is the practice of letters for the lips, 4) The word *na-ne-ni-no* is a practice exercise for the teeth. Presentation of students who expressly agree and agree with the understanding of sound / phrasing formation following the application of the Suzuki method can be seen in the table and diagram below.

Table 2. Speech/Articulation/Resonance

NO	SPEECH/ARTICULATION/RESONANCE	PERCENTAGE
1.	Good and clear speech, will give a clear understanding of every word that is sung	77
2.	A, U, E, I, O vocal pronunciation as being one of the resonance techniques	80
3.	The words <i>ma-mi-mo-mo</i> practice exercise for lips	74
4.	The words <i>na-ne-ni- no-</i> is accepted as a practice exercise for teeth.	63

Figure 2. Diagram of Speech/Articulation/Resonance



Based on the answers to the questionnaires, it can be deduced that the percentage of students' understanding of speech / articulation / resonance in the singing technique from the highest to the lowest is 80% of students show an understanding of A, U, E, I, O vocal pronunciation as being one of the resonance techniques. 77% agree that good and clear speech, will give a clear understanding of every word that is sung. The words *ma-mi-mo-mo* is accepted by 74% as a practice exercise for lips. The words *na-ne-ni-no-* is accepted by 63% as a practice exercise for teeth. As for category number 4, the Suzuki method was implemented to the students but the students' understanding is still very poor in this part because the alphabetization method does not follow the procedure in the Malay language but rather follows the way in which the English version is *Malayised*. An example in the mention of the letter 'i' becomes 'ai', the letter 'a' becomes 'ei' so that when *na-ne-ni-no-na* is a stutter in the way it is pronounced.

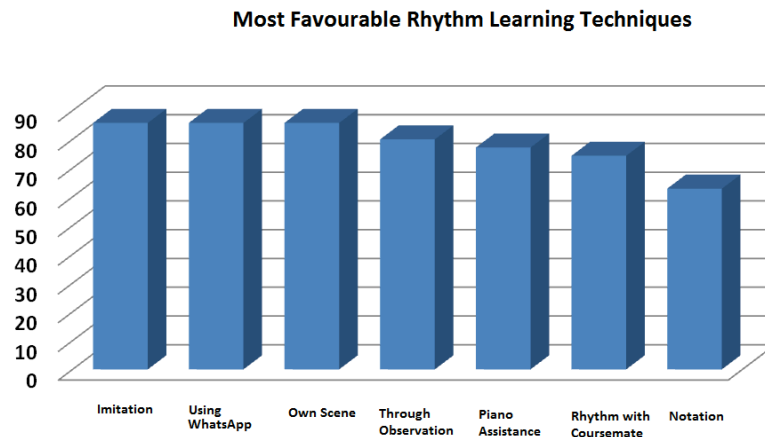
Rhythm

Furthermore the section is the teaching and learning process of singing technique by introducing rhythm. In this case, the questionnaire for the rhythm is divided into 7 parts, namely: 1) rhythm learning through notation reading, 2) learning through imitation teacher helps my learning, 3) Retail learning using piano instruments helps in my learning, 4) friends help me understand more quickly, 5) Observational retail learning helps me understand faster, 6) The use of communication through the *WhatsApp* group really helps me to listen to the sound of the rhythm, and 7) By doing the own scene and adjusting to the making rhythm I understand the technique of singing in the theater. Based on the data gathered from the students', 86% strongly agreed, on numbers 1, 2 and 3 while 80% of student agree that friends help them to understand better. The number of students who understand the rhythm after following the application of the Suzuki method can be seen in the table and diagram below.

Table 3. Teaching and Learning of Rhythm

NO	TEACHING AND LEARNING OF RHYTHM	PERCENTAGE
1.	Happy to learn rhythm through notation readings	86
2.	Learning through imitating teacher helps my learning	86
3.	Learning rhythm with the assistance of the piano	86
4.	Learning through imitating teacher helps in learning	86
5.	Learning rhythm with friends helps me to understand faster	80
6.	Learning through observation helps me to understand faster	77
7.	Learning through <i>WhatsApp</i> group communication helps me to understand rhythm	74
8.	Enacting own scene and adjusting rhythm enables me to understand rhythm	63

Figure 3. Diagram of Teaching and Learning of Rhythm



The percentage of students' understanding of teaching and learning of rhythm in singing technique from the highest to the lowest is 86% students are happy to learn rhythm through notations readings while learning rhythm with the assistance of the piano is at 86%. Learning through imitating teacher helps in their learning is also at 86 %. 80% of students believe that learning rhythm with friends helps them to understand faster. 77% of students prefer observational learning as it helps them to understand faster. 74% prefer the use of communication through *WhatsApp* group as it really helps them to listen to the sounds and only 63% agree that by enacting their own scene and adjusting to the rhythm makes them understand rhythm in singing technique in theater. In this case there are some students who are experimenting with creating their own scene and adjusting the scene based on the rules determined by the instructor. From the results of observations there are only a few students who prefer to learn in this way because the students are very creative in experimenting with new ideas that are tailored to the rhythm. Some students are less creative and prefer to only use short sentences and they take more than 3 hours of learning time. In addition most students just want to learn simple things. As a result their understanding of questionnaire number 7 is limited.

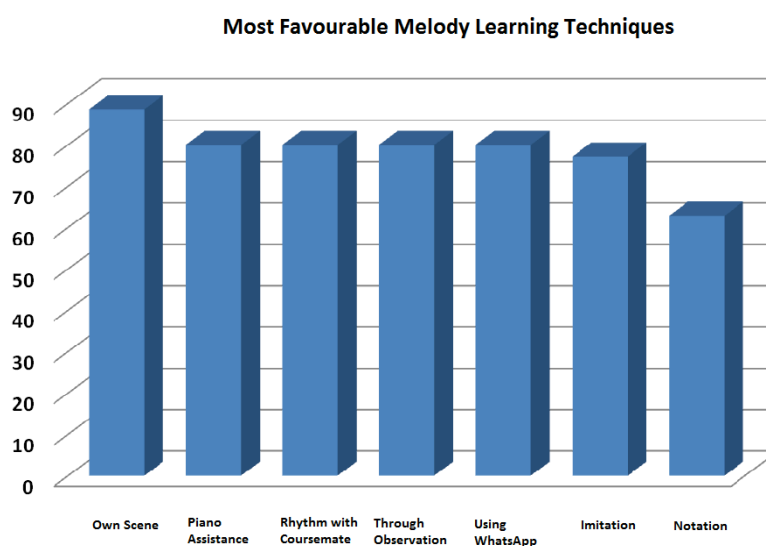
Melody

The sixth part is the melody, which consists of 7 parts: 1) The melodic learning through notation readings is fun; 2) Melody learning through teacher imitation helps in my learning, 3) Melody learning using piano helps in my learning, 4) learning melody with friends helps me to understand more quickly, 5) Learning melody through observation helps me understand faster, 6) The use of communication through *WhatsApp* group really helps me to listen to melodic sounds, and 7) By enacting the scenes themselves and adjusting with the melody makes me understand the singing techniques in the theater.

Table 4. Teaching and Learning of Melody

NO	TEACHING AND LEARNING OF MELODY	PERCENTAGE
1.	Melodic learning through notation readings is fun	89
2.	Melody learning through teacher imitation helps them	80
3.	Melody learning using piano instruments helps in my learning	80
4.	Learning melody with friends helps me to understand more quickly	80
5.	Learning melody through observation helps me understand faster	80
6.	The use of communication through <i>WhatsApp</i> group really helps me to listen to melodic sounds	77
7.	By enacting their own scene and adjusting to the melodies makes me understand the singing techniques in the theater	63

Figure 4. Diagram of Teaching and Learning of Melody



As observed in the table and diagram above, the percentage of students' understanding of teaching and learning of melody in singing technique from the highest to the lowest, 89% are happy with melodic learning through notation reading, while 80% feel that melody learning through teacher imitation helps them. 80% of the students also agree that melody learning with friends also helps them to understand faster. 80% say that melodic learning by observation helps them to understand faster. 77% feel that communication through *WhatsApp* group really helps them to listen to melody sounds and 63% believe that when they are given the liberty to perform their own scene and tune it with the melodies, it makes them understand the singing technique in theater. In this case there are some students who are doing experiments by creating their own scene and adjusting the scene with the melody determined by the instructor. From the observation, only a few students prefer this style of learning.

Conclusion

From the statistical data obtained, it can be concluded that the design of learning the technique of singing through the method of Suzuki with the use of *WhatsApp* as a learning medium is effective to be applied in lectures especially on the material introduction of breathing technique and posture. Learning through the use of *WhatsApp* for theater students who are not familiar with singing techniques is very helpful in doing repetition of material to be heard and practiced in accordance with the scene that comes from the students themselves.

Suggestions for Lecturers and Students

To optimize the practice of student song technique, it is advisable to increase the training given continuously according to the student ability to absorb the learning material. Students are advised to do the exercises with this instructional media so as to obtain optimal results in the development of singing songs in the world.

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Contact email: nitabtbara72@gmail.com & sumathiraj14@gmail.com