

# Diamond Poems as Vocabulary Building Enablers for Malaysian ESL Primary School Students

Nur Asyikin Rusimin

Sekolah Kebangsaan Timbang Dayang, Kota Belud 89158, Malaysia

Hanita Hanim Ismail

Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi 43600, Malaysia

Corresponding Author Email: hanitahanim@ukm.edu.my

To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v14-i1/23733> DOI:10.6007/IJARPED/v14-i1/23733

*Published Online:* 08 January 2025

## Abstract

Malaysian ESL primary school students often struggle with vocabulary acquisition due to traditional, monotonous learning methods. This study explores the effectiveness of using diamond poems to improve vocabulary acquisition among these students by asking three key questions: (1) How do diamond poems impact vocabulary acquisition?, (2) How do students perceive this learning approach?, and (3) What challenges arise in its implementation? Utilizing a Sequential Explanatory Mixed Methods (SEM2) design, the study involved 10 primary students and one teacher from a school in Kota Belud, Sabah, Malaysia. Data collection was carried out through pre- and post-tests, document analysis, questionnaires, and classroom observations. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, paired t-tests, and thematic analysis. The findings revealed that the use of diamond poems led to significant improvements in students' vocabulary acquisition, with notable gains in vocabulary usage accuracy. Students reported high levels of engagement and enjoyment in learning through this method. However, the study also identified challenges, such as time constraints and resource limitations faced by teachers in implementing this approach. Overall, the study underscores the importance of innovative teaching strategies in ESL education, particularly the potential of diamond poems to create a more effective and enjoyable learning environment. The insights gained are valuable for policymakers, educators, parents, and students, advocating for the adoption of creative methods to enhance vocabulary learning and student engagement in ESL classrooms.

**Keywords:** Diamond Poems, Education, ESL Primary School Students, Mixed Methods, Vocabulary Acquisition

## Introduction

Vocabulary acquisition is fundamental to mastering any language, particularly in the context of English as a Second Language (ESL). Proficiency in vocabulary enables effective communication, comprehension, and critical thinking, forming the cornerstone of linguistic

competence. Globally, educational frameworks emphasize the importance of innovative teaching approaches that facilitate long-term vocabulary retention and deeper learning. Creative methods, particularly poetry, offer unique advantages by combining structure and rhythm to engage learners in meaningful and reflective interactions with language.

Organizations such as the International Literacy Association (ILA) and TESOL International Association highlight the role of creative pedagogies like poetry in enhancing language learning, especially among young learners (TESOL, 2021; ILA, 2019). Countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia integrate poetry into their language curricula, leveraging formats such as limericks, haikus, and diamond poems to foster vocabulary development (Tompkins, 2012). Research indicates that such creative tools enhance cognitive and linguistic skills by exposing learners to contextualized vocabulary, improving both understanding and retention (Gunning, 2018). For ESL learners, poetry provides an expressive and interactive platform that nurtures critical thinking and creativity, making it a valuable instructional tool.

In Malaysia, the National Education Philosophy (NEP) and the Standard-Based English Language Curriculum (SBELC) prioritize holistic education and effective language acquisition (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2017). However, the Malaysian education system continues to face challenges, including an overemphasis on standardized testing and a reliance on traditional teaching methods. These approaches often limit teachers' ability to incorporate dynamic, student-centered techniques into their classrooms. Furthermore, disparities between urban and rural schools exacerbate these challenges, with rural students often lacking access to skilled teachers and quality resources (Indiran et al., 2022).

Despite these obstacles, there is growing awareness of the need for innovative teaching methods that align with international best practices. Diamond poems, or diamante poems, represent one such promising approach. This seven-line poetic structure engages learners by encouraging them to arrange vocabulary in a visually and conceptually stimulating diamond shape. Such activities promote synthesis, analysis, and reflection, enabling learners to interact deeply with word meanings and relationships. In international contexts, diamond poems have demonstrated efficacy in enhancing vocabulary acquisition and fostering linguistic creativity among ESL students (Smith, 2018).

This study seeks to explore the potential of diamond poems within the Malaysian ESL context, addressing a critical gap in empirical research. The study is significant for several reasons. Firstly, it supports the NEP's objective of fostering holistic student development by promoting learner-centered methods that combine cognitive, linguistic, and emotional engagement. Secondly, it provides insights for educators and policymakers seeking to enhance the effectiveness of language teaching in Malaysia, particularly in rural settings where traditional methods dominate. Finally, the study contributes to global discussions on creative ESL teaching practices, offering a culturally relevant exploration of diamond poems as a tool for vocabulary acquisition.

Despite the theoretical and practical support for creative vocabulary-building methods, empirical research on diamond poems specifically within the Malaysian ESL context remains limited. This study, therefore, seeks to fill this gap by examining the effect of diamond poems

on vocabulary acquisition among primary school students in Malaysia. It aims to address the following research questions: (1) How do diamond poems influence vocabulary building among ESL primary school students? (2) What are students' perceptions of using diamond poems for vocabulary learning? (3) What are the challenges of implementing diamond poems in Malaysian classrooms? By addressing these questions, the study not only aligns with national educational goals but also offers practical solutions for improving language teaching and learning. In doing so, it underscores the utility and relevance of creative teaching strategies in building essential language skills for the 21st century.

## **Literature Review**

### *Vocabulary Building*

Vocabulary acquisition is a crucial component of language learning, underpinning the development of essential skills like reading, writing, speaking, and listening (Rahman & Tan, 2022). Chai and Yunus (2020) have emphasized the importance of effective vocabulary instruction, particularly in primary education contexts where students build the foundation for their language proficiency. Effective approaches go beyond mere word definition memorization, requiring active engagement with vocabulary in meaningful contexts (Hiebert, 2020). Diamond poems offer ESL students a creative and interactive approach to exploring vocabulary. The structured format of diamond poems encourages students to select contrasting words, prompting them to consider the nuances of language and relationships between words (Visualizing Vocabulary, 2023). This process involves higher-order thinking skills like synthesis and evaluation, leading to a deeper understanding of vocabulary concepts (Sari, 2020).

Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) provides a valuable framework for understanding language learning and acquisition, highlighting the potential for language growth when students receive support within their ZPD. This theory emphasizes the need for targeted instructional strategies that connect learners' current abilities with their potential for increased language proficiency (The Zone of Proximal Development in Teaching English and Multilingual Learners, 2022). Social interaction is key to this process, as guidance and support from others play a vital role in cognitive development (Ying et al., 2023). By scaffolding instruction according to a learner's ZPD, educators can customize their teaching methods to address individual needs, ensuring tasks are both challenging and attainable (Zhou, 2021). Nicholas et al. (2021) and Azi (2020) suggest that integrating learners' ZPD into language learning environments enhances vocabulary acquisition and the understanding of language structures, promoting engagement and meaningful progress. This approach is crucial for developing linguistic competence, especially in vocabulary learning (Tang, 2020).

Research on the effectiveness of poetry-based activities for vocabulary development has yielded promising findings, although studies specifically targeting diamond poems are scarce. For instance, Mart (2021) conducted an intervention study with ESL learners that revealed significant improvements in vocabulary knowledge among students participating in poetry activities compared to those receiving traditional instruction. Similarly, Imron and Hantari (2021) evaluated the impact of incorporating poetry, including diamond poems, into the curriculum, observing sustained vocabulary gains over time and highlighting poetry's potential as an effective educational tool.

However, some researchers have critiqued the structured format of diamond poems. Smith (2020) argued that while they can be beneficial, they may restrict creative expression and hinder the natural development of language skills. Smith recommended that diamond poems be used in conjunction with more open-ended activities to create a balanced approach to vocabulary development. Despite this critique, Streim (2022) found that when diamond poems are integrated into a broader curriculum, they can enhance student engagement and motivation to learn new vocabulary. Streim's research suggested that the visual and structural elements of diamond poems cater to various learning styles, making them a versatile classroom tool. They advocate for incorporating diamond poems within a diverse range of poetic activities to address different student needs and preferences. Effective vocabulary instruction goes beyond simply memorizing word definitions; it requires active engagement with words in meaningful contexts (Nugrono & Sulaiman, 2024). Diamond poems provide a unique opportunity for ESL students to interact with vocabulary creatively and interactively. By selecting contrasting words, students are encouraged to explore the nuances of language and examine word relationships (Yasin & Mohamad, 2024). Additionally, crafting a diamond poem involves higher-order thinking skills, such as synthesis and evaluation, which promotes a deeper understanding of vocabulary concepts (Fisal & Said, 2023).

### *Research Gaps*

The existing literature on using poetry, including diamond poems, to foster vocabulary development in ESL settings provides a robust foundation. However, there is a need for more empirical research specifically examining the impact of diamond poems on vocabulary acquisition among primary school students in Malaysia. While prior studies have highlighted the potential of poetry-based activities, additional investigations are necessary to understand the nuances of effectively integrating diamond poems into ESL classrooms to maximize vocabulary learning outcomes.

Despite the growing interest in poetry-based approaches to vocabulary development, research specifically focused on the impact of diamond poems in ESL contexts remains limited. Existing studies have demonstrated the benefits of poetry in general, but there is a lack of comprehensive research on the unique contributions of diamond poems to vocabulary acquisition among primary school students. Furthermore, while some critics have suggested potential limitations of diamond poems, there is limited empirical evidence exploring how these limitations might be mitigated or whether they are outweighed by the benefits. This study aims to address these research gaps by investigating the effectiveness of diamond poems in promoting vocabulary development in Malaysian ESL classrooms and exploring both the advantages and challenges associated with their use.

## **Methodology**

### *Research Design*

This study employs a Sequential Explanatory Mixed Methods (SEM2) design, combining quantitative and qualitative data to assess the impact of diamond poems on vocabulary learning (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The design begins with quantitative data collection through pre- and post-tests and a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire. The subsequent phase involves qualitative data collection using open-ended questionnaires, document analysis, and classroom observations to contextualize the quantitative findings. SEM2 is particularly

effective for educational research, offering both breadth and depth by quantifying outcomes and exploring underlying experiences (Warfa, 2016).

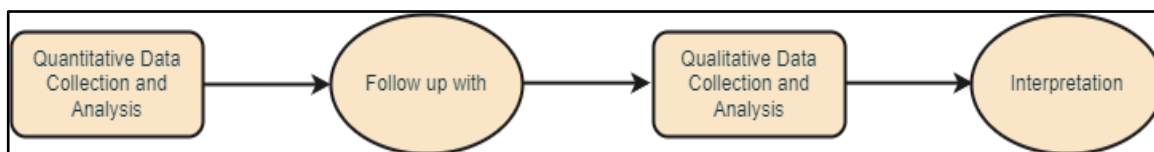


Figure 1.0 Sequential Explanatory Mixed Methods Design

### Participants

The study involves 10 conveniently selected primary school students aged 10 from a school in Kota Belud, along with one teacher. The small sample size is justified by the study's pilot nature, which aims to identify trends and gather preliminary data without the need for extensive recruitment (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016).

### Research Instruments

#### (a) Pre-and Post-tests

The pre- and post-tests were created for this study to evaluate students' vocabulary acquisition. Each test included 15 questions: 5 multiple-choice, 5 fill-in-the-blanks, and 5 brief response items. The vocabulary was based on words taught through diamond poems during the intervention, ensuring age-appropriateness and alignment with the ESL curriculum. A panel of experts in ESL education reviewed the tests to validate their content. Experts were chosen for their experience in language teaching, curriculum development, and assessment design. They used a checklist to assess the tests for relevance to curriculum standards, vocabulary level, and clarity. The tests' internal consistency was measured with Cronbach's alpha, targeting a minimum of 0.7 for acceptable reliability. Table 1.0 outlines the criteria for selecting expert reviewers, which included at least 5 years of primary ESL teaching experience, involvement in curriculum development, assessment design experience, and a Master's degree in a relevant field.

Table 1.0

#### Criteria for Selection of Expert Reviewers

Criteria	Description
Experience in ESL Education	Minimum of 5 years of teaching experience in ESL at the primary level.
Curriculum Development	Involvement in designing or reviewing ESL curriculum materials.
Assessment Design Expertise	Experience in creating or evaluating language assessments.
Academic Qualification	Hold at least a Master's degree in TESL, Applied Linguistics, or a related field.

*(b) Document Analysis*

Document analysis evaluates students' writings, including diamond poems and other assignments, to assess vocabulary acquisition. A set of 20 new vocabulary words is introduced to align with students' language proficiency and curriculum objectives. The analysis uses an analytical rubric based on Chamot and O'Malley's approach, assessing vocabulary use, contextual accuracy, diversity, and creativity. The rubric provides quantitative scores and qualitative insights through narrative descriptions and thematic analysis. This mixed-methods approach offers a comprehensive assessment of how well students have grasped and retained new vocabulary, capturing both objective measurements and detailed contextual understanding.

*(c) Questionnaire*

To understand students' and teachers' perspectives on using diamond poems for vocabulary learning, a 7-item student questionnaire with a 5-point Likert scale was developed. The questions were based on the study's objectives and insights from literature on ESL vocabulary acquisition and engagement. Items like "I find diamond poems helpful for learning new vocabulary" were designed to assess both effectiveness and engagement.

The questionnaire's content validity was established through expert review by an experienced ESL educator, ensuring age-appropriate and aligned questions. It was also piloted with students to refine any unclear items. Reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, aiming for 0.7 or higher. The teacher survey included two open-ended questions: "How effective are diamond poems in improving students' vocabulary?" and "What challenges have you encountered in implementing them?" These questions were based on literature themes and validated through expert review.

*(d) Classroom Observation*

The researchers used a non-participant observation method to watch classroom activities without teaching. They developed a structured checklist based on established frameworks to monitor student behavior, focusing on five areas: student engagement, peer interaction, comprehension issues, teacher-student interactions, and logistical challenges. The checklist items were adapted from common educational tools and tailored for using diamond poems in vocabulary learning. This method complemented the surveys, offering insights into classroom dynamics and the effectiveness of diamond poems. By recording observations systematically, the researchers analyzed behavior patterns and interactions grounded in real classroom experiences.

**Data Collection Procedure**

The study begins with a pre-test of 15 questions to assess baseline vocabulary knowledge, given to 10 students in a 30-minute session. For four weeks, diamond poem activities are integrated into the ESL curriculum, with students learning 20 new vocabulary words during twice-weekly sessions. A post-test, identical to the pre-test, measures vocabulary acquisition after the intervention. A 7-question Likert scale questionnaire evaluates students' perceptions of the effectiveness and enjoyment of diamond poems, ensuring content validity through expert review and reliability assessed via Cronbach's alpha.

Weekly, students' writings, including diamond poems and assignments, are collected and analyzed quantitatively with an analytical rubric that rates vocabulary use for frequency, accuracy, diversity, and creativity. This analysis compares initial and later writings to track vocabulary acquisition. Qualitative insights come from document analysis and open-ended teacher surveys that identify implementation challenges and thematic patterns in vocabulary use and contextual accuracy. Weekly classroom observations focus on student engagement, peer interaction, comprehension issues, teacher support, and logistical challenges, using an observation checklist for systematic data collection.

The study employs methodological triangulation by combining data from document analysis, surveys, and observations to enhance credibility and trustworthiness. A reflective journal documents the research process to further ensure data rigor.

### **Data Analysis Procedure**

Quantitative data from pre- and post-tests, Likert scale questionnaires, and document analysis will be analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, median, mode, standard deviation, range) to summarize vocabulary performance. A paired t-test in SPSS will compare pre- and post-test scores to detect significant changes, using a p-value threshold of  $<0.05$ . Effect size (Cohen's  $d$ ) will measure the intervention's impact. Likert scale responses will be summarized by mean scores to assess students' perceptions of diamond poems. Document analysis will use an analytical rubric to rate vocabulary use in student writings based on frequency, accuracy, diversity, and creativity, with scores statistically analyzed to evaluate vocabulary progress.

Qualitative data from document analysis, open-ended survey responses, and classroom observations will undergo thematic analysis. This process includes familiarizing with the data, generating initial codes related to key concepts (e.g., vocabulary usage, engagement, challenges), and organizing these codes into themes. Themes will be reviewed and refined to ensure they accurately reflect the data and provide a coherent narrative linked to the research questions.

### **Findings and Discussion**

#### *Impacts of Diamond Poems on Vocabulary Building*

The quantitative results from the pre- and post-tests show a significant improvement in vocabulary knowledge among students who participated in the Diamond Poems intervention. Initially, students had an average vocabulary score of 45, with a standard deviation of 10, indicating moderate proficiency and notable variation. After the intervention, the average score rose to 75, with a standard deviation of 12. This increase reflects substantial vocabulary acquisition, suggesting the intervention positively influenced students' learning. The paired t-test results ( $t(9) = 8.75$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) confirm the statistical significance of these improvements, with a high t-value and low p-value indicating that the changes are unlikely due to random chance. Additionally, the effect size calculated using Cohen's  $d$  was 2.5, considered large, highlighting the significant impact of the Diamond Poems intervention on vocabulary learning. This effect size supports previous research that emphasizes the effectiveness of creative and interactive activities, like poetry, in enhancing vocabulary acquisition (Mart, 2021; Imron & Hantari, 2021). Table 1 summarizes the pre- and post-test results evaluating the impact of the Diamond Poems intervention on vocabulary acquisition.

Table 1  
*Pre- and Post-Test Results*

Test	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Minimum Score	Maximum Score
Pre-test	45	10	30	60
Post-test	75	12	55	90

A thorough analysis of students' written work revealed notable improvements in vocabulary usage and contextual accuracy. Before the intervention, students averaged 5 new vocabulary words per essay, with a contextual accuracy rate of 70%. After the intervention, these numbers improved significantly, with students using an average of 12 new vocabulary words per essay and achieving a contextual accuracy of 90%. This increase reflects not only more frequent vocabulary use but also an improved ability to apply new words correctly in context. These results support Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) theory, which emphasizes the importance of scaffolded learning activities like Diamond Poems in promoting cognitive development and vocabulary acquisition (Cong-Lem & Daneshfar, 2024). The rise in both frequency and accuracy of vocabulary usage highlights the effectiveness of structured, interactive activities in enhancing student learning. Table 2 provides evidence of the positive impact of the Diamond Poems intervention on students' writing and vocabulary skills.

Table 2  
*Document Analysis Findings*

Aspect	Pre-Intervention	Post-Intervention
Frequency of Vocabulary	5 words per essay	12 words per essay
Contextual Accuracy	70%	90%
Diversity of Usage	Low	High
Creativity and Expression	Basic	Advanced

The significant improvements observed in both the test scores and the quality of student writing align well with existing research that supports the effectiveness of creative activities for vocabulary development (Mart, 2021; Imron & Hantari, 2021). The results validate the utility of Diamond Poems as a tool for enhancing vocabulary acquisition. However, it is also important to consider Smith's (2020) critique regarding the potential limitations of structured



activities. While Diamond Poems demonstrated clear benefits, their structured nature might restrict students' opportunities for spontaneous creative expression. This limitation highlights the need for a balanced approach that incorporates both structured and open-ended activities to maximize the benefits of vocabulary instruction. Integrating opportunities for free-form creativity alongside structured exercises could provide a more holistic approach to vocabulary learning, optimizing both engagement and the depth of understanding.

#### *Students' Perceptions of Diamond Poems as a Teaching Tool*

The evaluation of students' perceptions of Diamond Poems utilized a Likert scale questionnaire, yielding very positive responses. The data revealed mean scores between 4.3 and 4.7, indicating strong approval from students regarding different aspects of the activity. Notably, students felt that Diamond Poems significantly enhanced their vocabulary learning, with a mean score of 4.5 for the statement, "Diamond Poems have helped me learn new vocabulary" (Item no. 1). This high rating suggests that students recognized the effectiveness of this creative approach.

Students also expressed enjoyment in participating in Diamond Poems activities, scoring 4.6 for "I enjoy writing Diamond Poems in class" (Item no. 2). This enjoyment likely boosted their engagement and motivation. Additionally, a mean score of 4.4 for "I feel more confident using new vocabulary after writing Diamond Poems" (Item no. 3) indicates that students felt more assured in their vocabulary use due to the intervention.

The creativity fostered by Diamond Poems was particularly well-received, with a mean score of 4.7 for "Diamond Poems allow me to be creative with my writing" (Item no. 4), underscoring the importance of creative expression in their learning. The statement "Writing Diamond Poems makes learning vocabulary more interesting" (Item no. 5) received a mean score of 4.6, reinforcing the idea that the activity made vocabulary acquisition engaging and enjoyable. The mean score of 4.3 for the ease of writing Diamond Poems suggests that students found the task accessible. Finally, a mean score of 4.5 for "I participate more in class when we do Diamond Poems activities" (Item no. 7) indicates increased classroom participation, likely driven by the engaging nature of the activity. Table 3 summarizes the results from the Likert scale questionnaire assessing students' perceptions of Diamond Poems.

Table 3

#### *Findings from the Questionnaire*

Items	Mean	
1	Diamond Poems have helped me learn new vocabulary.	4.5
2	I enjoy writing Diamond Poems in class.	4.6
3	I feel more confident using new vocabulary after writing Diamond Poems.	4.4
4	Diamond Poems allow me to be creative with my writing.	4.7
5	Writing Diamond Poems makes learning vocabulary more interesting.	4.6
6	I find it easy to write Diamond Poems.	4.3
7	I participate more in class when we do Diamond Poems activities.	4.5

Qualitative feedback from students reinforced the quantitative data, with comments emphasizing the engaging and stimulating aspects of Diamond Poems. Students valued the combination of structure and creativity, which made vocabulary learning enjoyable and effective. This feedback supports the high ratings for creativity and enjoyment, highlighting that structured, creative activities can boost motivation and engagement in the classroom (Werner, 2020). The positive responses from students align with the significant improvements seen in vocabulary test scores, emphasizing the effectiveness of Diamond Poems as a teaching tool. The high ratings for creativity, enjoyment, and perceived learning benefits indicate that students found the activity both engaging and valuable for their vocabulary development.

However, it's important to recognize the potential limitations of structured activities. While Diamond Poems encourage creativity and engagement, it's crucial to balance this with opportunities for spontaneous expression to support overall creative development. Including such opportunities could enhance the effectiveness of Diamond Poems by allowing students to explore vocabulary in more diverse and flexible ways. This balanced approach will help maximize the benefits of the activity while addressing any constraints related to its structured nature.

#### *Potential Challenges in Implementing Diamond Poems*

The implementation of Diamond Poems in the classroom faced several logistical challenges, according to teachers. Key issues included time constraints and limited resources. Teachers reported that incorporating Diamond Poems into the existing curriculum required more time than was available, with an average preparation time of 1.5 hours per activity, compared to the allocated 1 hour. There was also a shortage of necessary materials, such as writing tools and visual aids; for example, 60% of teachers indicated they lacked enough visual aids to effectively support the activity, which affected the overall execution of the intervention.

Feedback from teachers and classroom observations highlighted the practical challenges of using Diamond Poems. While teachers acknowledged the benefits for vocabulary learning, they noted the significant preparation and support required. One teacher remarked, "The structured nature of Diamond Poems requires a lot of upfront preparation. Without adequate resources, it's challenging to implement effectively." This aligns with Smith's (2020) critique of structured activities, which can be resource-intensive and demand substantial instructional support. Classroom observations revealed that students were highly engaged during Diamond Poem activities, but logistical issues like time management were apparent. About 50% of observed classes exceeded the planned time for these activities by an average of 20 minutes, indicating difficulties in fitting them into the regular schedule. Additionally, 40% of teachers reported that insufficient materials, such as reference guides and writing aids, hindered the intervention's effectiveness.

The integration of quantitative and qualitative data shows that while Diamond Poems offer significant educational benefits, practical challenges exist in their implementation. Teachers' concerns about time management and resource needs reflect a broader issue noted in the literature, suggesting that structured activities often require careful planning and additional support for effective classroom integration (Smith, 2020). To address these challenges, educators may need further training on implementing structured activities and access to more comprehensive resources. This could involve developing ready-made templates,

providing visual aids, and allowing more time for preparation and execution. By tackling these logistical issues, the implementation of Diamond Poems can be improved to better support vocabulary learning and maximize the benefits of the intervention.

### **Conclusion**

This study examined the use of Diamond Poems in ESL primary school classrooms, focusing on three main research questions: their effect on vocabulary development, students' perceptions of the method, and possible implementation challenges. The findings showed that Diamond Poems significantly improved vocabulary acquisition, with a noticeable increase in vocabulary scores—mean post-test scores rose to 75 from a pre-test average of 45. Document analysis further indicated that students used vocabulary more frequently and accurately, demonstrating greater creativity and expression in their writing. These outcomes align with Vygotsky's ZPD theory, which highlights the role of scaffolded learning. Students reported positive experiences with Diamond Poems, appreciating the creative aspects and feeling more confident in their vocabulary use. Questionnaire responses showed high engagement and motivation, with ratings between 4.3 and 4.7 out of 5, indicating that blending structured activities with creative elements can enhance vocabulary learning. The study also identified practical challenges, including the need for extra time and resources and difficulties in explaining poem structure. Despite these issues, students showed high enthusiasm and participation, suggesting that with improved preparation and support, Diamond Poems can be effectively integrated into the curriculum.

The findings of the study align with Vygotsky's ZPD theory, highlighting the significance of targeted instructional strategies that connect current abilities to potential growth (Zhao, 2023). The structured approach of Diamond Poems encourages higher-order thinking, facilitating deeper vocabulary learning (Nicholas et al., 2021). Additionally, incorporating Diamond Poems into a broader curriculum that features open-ended activities can create a balanced vocabulary learning experience, promoting both creative expression and natural language development (Smith, 2020; Streim, 2022).

In conclusion, this study provides strong evidence that Diamond Poems are an effective tool for building vocabulary in ESL primary school classrooms. The significant gains in vocabulary scores, positive student feedback, and practical insights from teachers illustrate the educational advantages and enjoyable experiences this method offers. While the structured format of Diamond Poems supports meaningful learning, integrating them with other open-ended activities can yield a more balanced and comprehensive vocabulary acquisition approach. These findings highlight the potential of Diamond Poems to enhance vocabulary learning, suggesting that with sufficient resources and support, their implementation can greatly benefit ESL education.

## References

- Abdullah, K. (2009). *Diamond Poems in Teaching Literature in Malay (Puisi Intan: Satu Kajian Tentang Penerapan Pengajaran Sastera Dalam Bahasa Melayu)*. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/296396334\\_Diamond\\_Poems\\_In\\_Teaching\\_Literature\\_in\\_Malay\\_Puisi\\_Intan\\_Satu\\_Kajian\\_Tentang\\_Penerapan\\_Pengajaran\\_Sastera\\_Dalam\\_Bahasa\\_Melayu\\_Kamsiah\\_Abdullah](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/296396334_Diamond_Poems_In_Teaching_Literature_in_Malay_Puisi_Intan_Satu_Kajian_Tentang_Penerapan_Pengajaran_Sastera_Dalam_Bahasa_Melayu_Kamsiah_Abdullah)
- Baldwin, E. (2020). *Diamante Poetry. Poem Analysis*. Retrieved from <https://poemanalysis.com/poetic-form/diamante-poem/>
- Bornstein, M. H., Jager, J., & Putnick, D. L. (2013). Sampling in developmental science: Situations, shortcomings, solutions, and standards. *Developmental Review, 33*(4), 357-370. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dr.2013.08.003>
- Chai, K. N., & Yunus, M. M. (2020, October 20). Primary Pupils' Challenges and Benefits of Game-Based Learning Strategies in Vocabulary Learning: A Literature Review. , *10*(10). <https://doi.org/10.6007/ijarbss/v10-i10/7907>
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research methods in education* (7th ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203720967>
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2017). *Research Methods in Education*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315456539>
- Cong-Lem, N., & Daneshfar, S. (2024). Generative AI and second/foreign language education from Vygotsky's cultural-historical perspective. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/382510242\\_Generative\\_AI\\_and\\_SecondForeign\\_Language\\_Education\\_from\\_Vygotsky's\\_Cultural-Historical\\_Perspective](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/382510242_Generative_AI_and_SecondForeign_Language_Education_from_Vygotsky's_Cultural-Historical_Perspective)
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications. [https://www.ucg.ac.me/skladiste/blog\\_609332/objava\\_105202/fajlovi/Creswell.pdf](https://www.ucg.ac.me/skladiste/blog_609332/objava_105202/fajlovi/Creswell.pdf)
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2018). *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications. [https://www.scirp.org/pdf/psych\\_2020031614393519.pdf](https://www.scirp.org/pdf/psych_2020031614393519.pdf)
- Dawes, E. T., Cunningham, K. E., Enriquez, G., & Cappiello, M. A. (2023). *Reading With Purpose: Selecting and Using Children's Literature for Inquiry and Engagement. Teachers College Press*. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/379726904\\_Review\\_of\\_Reading\\_With\\_Purpose\\_Selecting\\_and\\_Using\\_Children's\\_Literature\\_for\\_Inquiry\\_and\\_Engagement\\_Reading\\_With\\_Purpose\\_Selecting\\_and\\_Using\\_Children's\\_Literature\\_for\\_Inquiry\\_and\\_Engagement](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/379726904_Review_of_Reading_With_Purpose_Selecting_and_Using_Children's_Literature_for_Inquiry_and_Engagement_Reading_With_Purpose_Selecting_and_Using_Children's_Literature_for_Inquiry_and_Engagement)
- Etikan, I., Musa, S. A., & Alkassim, R. S. (2016). Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics, 5*(1), 1-4. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ajtas.20160501.11>
- Fatthurrahma, W. M., & Anas, N. (2023). The Influence of Pop Up Book Learning Media on Students' HOTS Ability in Natural Science Materials in MI. <https://doi.org/10.29303/jppipa.v9i6.3822>
- Folse, K. S. (2004). *Vocabulary Myths: Applying Second Language Research to Classroom Teaching*. University of Michigan Press. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/345850187\\_Vocabulary\\_Myths\\_Applying\\_Second\\_Language\\_Research\\_to\\_Classroom\\_Teaching](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/345850187_Vocabulary_Myths_Applying_Second_Language_Research_to_Classroom_Teaching)
- Fraenkel, J. R., Wallen, N. E., & Hyun, H. H. (2019). *How to design and evaluate research in education* (10th ed.). McGraw-Hill Education.

- [https://saochhengpheng.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/jack\\_fraenkel\\_norman\\_wallen\\_helen\\_hyun-how\\_to\\_design\\_and\\_evaluate\\_research\\_in\\_education\\_8th\\_edition\\_-mcgraw-hill\\_humanities\\_social\\_sciences\\_languages2011.pdf](https://saochhengpheng.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/jack_fraenkel_norman_wallen_helen_hyun-how_to_design_and_evaluate_research_in_education_8th_edition_-mcgraw-hill_humanities_social_sciences_languages2011.pdf)
- Gibson, R., & Ewing, R. (2020). *Transforming the curriculum through the arts*. Springer International Publishing. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/347860687\\_Transforming\\_the\\_Curriculum\\_Through\\_the\\_Arts](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/347860687_Transforming_the_Curriculum_Through_the_Arts)
- Gurjar, N. (2023). *Fluency and Comprehension. Methods of Teaching Early Literacy*. <https://scholarworks.uni.edu/facbook/521>
- Indiran, D., Ismail, H., & Rashid, R. (2022) Exploring Opportunities and Challenges of Using WhatsApp in Teaching Reading: A Malaysian Rural Primary School Context. *Creative Education*, 13, 1689-1709. <https://www.scirp.org/journal/paperinformation?paperid=117647>
- Khalilova, K. (2023). Academic vocabulary: How to teach and study it. *Modern Science and Research*, 2(9), 79-83. Retrieved from <https://inlibrary.uz/index.php/science-research/article/view/23902>
- Likert, R. (1932). A technique for the measurement of attitudes. *Archives of Psychology*, 22(140), 1-55. [https://legacy.voteview.com/pdf/Likert\\_1932.pdf](https://legacy.voteview.com/pdf/Likert_1932.pdf)
- Maspul, K. A. (2024). Nurturing Student Growth and Empowerment through a Poetry-Rich Classroom. *Eduscape: Journal of Education Insight*, 2(1), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.61978/eduscape.v2i1.130>
- May, D. (2021). Poems Structured by Mathematics. In: Sriraman, B. (eds) *Handbook of the Mathematics of the Arts and Sciences*. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-57072-3\\_113](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-57072-3_113)
- McMillan, J. H., & Schumacher, S. (2010). *Research in Education: Evidence-Based Inquiry*. Pearson. <https://dokumen.pub/research-in-education-evidence-based-inquiry-1292022671-9781292022673-3433673934.html>
- Mertens, D. M. (2015). *Research and Evaluation in Education and Psychology: Integrating Diversity With Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methods* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265086385\\_Research\\_and\\_Evaluation\\_in\\_Education\\_and\\_Psychology\\_Integrating\\_Diversity\\_With\\_Quantitative\\_Qualitative\\_and\\_Mixed\\_Methods](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265086385_Research_and_Evaluation_in_Education_and_Psychology_Integrating_Diversity_With_Quantitative_Qualitative_and_Mixed_Methods)
- Ministry of Education Malaysia. (2013). *Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 (Higher Education)*. Putrajaya: Ministry of Education Malaysia. <https://www.pmo.gov.my/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Malaysia-Education-Blueprint-2013-2025.pdf>
- Ministry of Education Malaysia. (2017). *Standard-Based English Language Curriculum for Primary Schools: Standard Curriculum and Evaluation Division*. Putrajaya: Ministry of Education Malaysia. <https://www.moe.gov.my/storage/files/shares/Dasar/PPPM/MEB%20Annual%20Report%202017.pdf>
- Nicholas, M., Veresov, N., & Clark, J. C. (2021). Guided reading—Working within a child's zone of proximal development. *Learning, Culture and Social Interaction*, 30, 100530. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lcsi.2021.100530>

- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods* (4th ed.). Sage Publications. <https://aulasvirtuales.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/qualitative-research-evaluation-methods-by-michael-patton.pdf>
- Pelu, H., & Pelu, S. (2022). The effectiveness of using poetry in teaching vocabulary to the second year students of SMP Negeri 5 Leihitu. <https://baruga.kemenag.go.id/index.php/baruga/article/view/49>
- Powell, N. (2021). The poetry of early childhood. [https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/494184/Powell\\_N\\_Theseus\\_Final\\_Poetry\\_Early\\_Childhood.pdf;jsessionid=E5FD43051FBDDDEE1070C5BC850CEC9C9?sequence=2](https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/494184/Powell_N_Theseus_Final_Poetry_Early_Childhood.pdf;jsessionid=E5FD43051FBDDDEE1070C5BC850CEC9C9?sequence=2)
- Pulimeno, M., Piscitelli, P., & Colazzo, S. (2020). Children's literature to promote students' global development and wellbeing. *Health Promotion Perspectives*, 10(1), 13. <https://doi.org/10.34172/hpp.2020.01>
- Read, J. (2000). *Assessing Vocabulary*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511733109>
- Richards, J. C., & Schmidt, R. (2010). *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* (4th ed.). Pearson Education. <https://www.aclweb.org/anthology/2020.law.syllabification.traditional/>
- Shulman, L. S. (1987). Knowledge and Teaching: Foundations of the New Reform. *Harvard Educational Review*, 57(1), 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.57.1.j463w79r56455411>
- Sia, S. F. (2021). A Study on the Effectiveness of Digital Tools in Enhancing Vocabulary Learning: Case Study in Rural Malaysia. *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies*, 9(2), 47-59. <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijels.v.9n.2p.47>
- Silverman, R. D., & Spector, J. A. (2018). *Teaching Reading to Students Who Are at Risk*. Routledge. <https://www.routledge.com/Teaching-Reading-to-Students-Who-Are-at-Risk/Silverman-Spector/p/book/9780367337609>
- Srisuk, R., & Srisuk, A. (2021). A Study of Primary School Students' Creative Writing Using Poems. *Asian Social Science and Humanities Journal*, 3(1), 29–41. <https://doi.org/10.11114/assh.v3i1.4475>
- Subahan, M. (2023). Transforming English Education in Malaysia: A Focus on the Power of Creativity. *Journal of Education and Human Development*, 12(3), 45–55. <https://doi.org/10.34141/jehd.v12i3.68>
- Tuan, L. T. (2018). Investigating the Use of Poems in Teaching English Vocabulary to Vietnamese Students. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 8(5), 580-586. <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0805.04>
- Weebly. (2014). *Diamond Poems*. Retrieved from <https://studymoose.com/diamond-poems-example>
- Wiersma, W. (2009). *Research Methods in Education: An Introduction*. Pearson Education. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237148319\\_Research\\_Methods\\_in\\_Education\\_An\\_Introduction](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237148319_Research_Methods_in_Education_An_Introduction)