

## THE AESTHETIC STUDY OF A SONG'S LYRICS *THIS OLD MAN* AS THE MEDIUM OF EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN

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### ABSTRACT

This article explains how a song, through the aesthetical element that it has, can be applied in the school or at home as a medium of education that is interesting for children in the age of pre-school and kindergarteners. The song chosen by the author is the song with the title 'This Old Man'. Lyrics is a part of literary work in the form of poem that contains the elements that poem has which are: typography, theme, rhyme, dimension, figure of speech, diction, and imagery. Through the analysis of the song, it is found that this song has all the elements that a poem has. However, the author only pinpoints to the elements that related with the title of the article which are connected with education for children. These elements eases the students to learn counting, pronunciation (in English) while singing. The aim of the study is to deliver the information to the teachers specifically, and parents in general, that to educate the children through song can be an effective way to do because children prefer and curious about things that are interesting for them. The method for this study is using descriptive analysis method, by which the author has the understanding towards the target language, yet tend to focus on the generalisation from the corpus taken (literature/poem). The result of this study is the lyrics from This Old Man has typography, theme, rhyme, dimension, figure of speech, and imagery that can help the students to easily learn basic math (counting from 1 to 10), pronunciation, and singing.

**Key words:** *lyrics, this Old Man, children.*

### INTRODUCTION

Language is the main tool of communication. Through language, human can communicate and convey the things that want to deliver. This way of communication is conveyed through various verbal ways, either it is written or spoken (oral). Verbal language in the form of writings often identified with human creativity. Human develop their language skill through processing the words, sentences and the structure in order to convey their purpose in the form of short story, novel, poem,

including the lyrics of the song. Those forms of writings are called literary work.

Literature is a part of an artwork, therefore, a good literature is the one that has a high aesthetical value (Trianton, 2013). Literature has to be seen not solely as a representation of "forms", but to also be seen as an "activity" of the people in the cultural environment (Hartoko; 1984)

Culture as the result of behaviour or creativity of human beings, needs a medium for the purposes to be delivered. Culture medium can be in the form of language, things, colours, sounds, and actions which are

the symbols of culture (Herusatoto 2005; 78). Lyrics of the song is also a medium of culture since it contains the elements which can be acknowledged as a material—in this case is education.

Education for children is not only practiced at school, instead, it can be practiced and gotten in their daily basis such as: in family, society, observation, exploration, and many other interesting activities like playing and singing.

This article discusses the aesthetic value in the lyrics of the song *This Old Man*, which is a song that is made for persuading children to learn counting, pronunciation while singing using English.

The method used for this article is descriptive analysis method, where the author has the understanding towards the target language, yet still within the generalisation of the corpus chosen (literature/poem) (Chaedar; 2002).

The difference between poem and prose is that a poem has the particular language elements that prose does not have. In the poem, there are typography, theme, diction, rhyme, dimension, figure of speech, and imagery.

Children in their early age tend to have a huge curiosity about their surroundings, enthusiastic, active, like to imitate, and have a lot of imagination. They still have an excellent skill to memorize things. This is the most potential phase to get education, and the most crucial learning that should be given to them is language education—considering that they have an excellent and better memory compared to adult. Therefore, language education, besides their mother-tongue, is very important to be introduced ever since they are in their early age, hoping that they can easily memorize, imitate, and get used with it. Learning a language is impossible to be done if it is practiced in the daily basis.

Schwartz as cited by Juntika and Novitasari (2016) explains that there are two kinds of ways that pre-school children do when they are studying: 1) children know how to use their knowledge but they are not able to express it; 2) children can gain

knowledge from people around them. This research pinpoints the problem of the first feature, where the children know how to apply their knowledge yet they face difficulties to express it, especially in foreign language (English). Learning through reading a story, playing, and singing will be more interesting and fun for the students because they will be involved in the activities which are relevant with their own world.

## RISULTS AND DISCUSSION

Teks are the form of verbal communication that have shape and content (aspect of expression and aspect of content) (Yuwono and Christomy, 20014; 57). A text can be seen as 1) entity that contains language elements which to understand them, it should be done by concentrating on the principles of the language of the text; 2) as a part of culture that can not be separated from its cultural context and its spatiotemporal environment, which means that it has consider on the factors of inventor and the receiver of the text (Yuwono dan Christomy; 2004).

Here are the criteria that have to be fulfilled in order to make a text becomes fruitful for the children:

- 1) Informative
- 2) Educative
- 3) Represents the kid's expression; and
- 4) Gives the positive influences to the children (Doyin; 2014)

*This Old Man* is a kid song that is often played or taught in kindergarten or preschool (playgroup

Here is the song *This Old Man*:

*This old man, he played **one**, (A)*  
*He played knick-knack on my **thumb**; (A)*  
*With a knick-knack, **paddywhack** (B)*  
*Give a dog a **bone**, (C)*  
*This old man came rolling **home**. (C)*

*This old man, he played **two**, (A)*  
*He played knick-knack on my **shoe**; (A)*  
*With a knick-knack, **paddywhack** (B)*  
*Give a dog a **bone**, (C)*  
*This old man came rolling **home**. (C)*

*This old man, he played **three**, (A)  
He played knick-knack on my **knee**; (A)  
With a knick-knack, **paddywhack** (B)  
Give a dog a **bone**, (C)  
This old man came rolling **home**. (C)*

*This old man, he played **four**, (A)  
He played knick-knack on my **door**; (A)  
With a knick-knack, **paddywhack** (B)  
Give a dog a **bone**, (C)  
This old man came rolling **home**. (C)*

*This old man, he played **five**, (A)  
He played knick-knack on my **hive**; (A)  
With a knick-knack, **paddywhack** (B)  
Give a dog a **bone**, (C)  
This old man came rolling **home**. (C)*

*This old man, he played **six**, (A)  
He played knick-knack on my **sticks**; (A)  
With a knick-knack, **paddywhack** (B)  
Give a dog a **bone**, (C)  
This old man came rolling **home**. (C)*

*This old man, he played **seven**, (A)  
He played knick-knack up in **heaven**; (A)  
With a knick-knack, **paddywhack** (B)  
Give a dog a **bone**, (C)  
This old man came rolling **home**. (C)*

*This old man, he played **eight**, (A)  
He played knick-knack on my **gate**; (A)  
With a knick-knack, **paddywhack** (B)  
Give a dog a **bone**, (C)  
This old man came rolling **home**. (C)*

*This old man, he played **nine**, (A)  
He played knick-knack on my **spine**; (A)  
With a knick-knack, **paddywhack** (B)  
Give a dog a **bone**, (C)  
This old man came rolling **home**. (C)*

*This old man, he played **ten**, (A)  
He played knick-knack once **again**; (A)  
With a knick-knack, **paddywhack** (B)  
Give a dog a **bone**, (C)  
This old man came rolling **home**. (C)*

In accordance with the previous explanation, the lyrics in This Old Man is a form of entity that contains language elements and thus a part of the culture. Language used in the song is English, and the representation of the culture is shown through the word 'knick-knack' and 'paddy whack'. Both of them are the keywords to points a culture in Europe, which refers to the history of England colonization toward Ireland. During those days, Irish people, who were starving, they sell household stuff 'knick-knack' door to door in England. The majority of them were extruded so that they would go away from the houses they approached. Sometimes, they were also banging their goods with spoon or other stuff (with a certain tempo and rhythm; paddy whack), in order to be heard by the people so that the people would throw their money on them. However, the English people that saw Irish people would rather to throw a bone to a dog 'give a dog a bone' to mock at them.

Lyrics without the music is only a literary work in the form of text. This can be considered as poem as well because it consists of the elements that poem has. The meaning of poem in KBBi is a literary work that is structured with rhythm, dimension, rhyme, and the formation of line and stanza. Moreover, poem also has intrinsic and extrinsic elements. The intrinsic elements consists of: typography, theme, rhyme, diction, dimension, figure of speech, tone, and imagery. Whereas the extrinsic element consists of: geography, values, and social elements. This article will discuss the song This Old Man a medium to educate the children by including the relevant intrinsic and extrinsic elements.

### **Intrinsic Element Typography**

Typography is defined as a form of writing of a poem. Typography is not restricted with any particular rule. A poet is free to create a poem with their own style of typography. Certainly, typography also influences on the development of the meaning

or the purposes of the poem itself. The elements that are studied from the typography a poem is how to write the title, lines, the arrangement of the stanza, the structure of the sentences, the capitalization, alignment of the writings (align left, right, centre or creating its own picture) and punctuation.

In the lyrics The Old Man, the typography element shown are the capitalization in the initial words and the complete punctuation, shown as follow:

*This old man, he played one,  
He played knick-knack on my thumb;  
With a knick-knack, paddywhack  
Give a dog a bone,  
This old man came rolling home.*

The complete capitalization and punctuation make The Old Man lyrics as if it is a prose. This is to ease the readers (especially children) to understand the content of the lyrics without paraphrasing it first (explain in a full sentence by adding the punctuation, conjunction, and translating the concrete words).

This Old Man consists of ten stanzas and 50 lines, in which in every third line has refrain or repetition. These 10 stanzas represent the count from 1 to 10 that suitable with one of the purposes which is teaching children how to count.

*This old man, he played two,  
He played knick-knack on my shoe;  
With a knick-knack, paddywhack  
Give a dog a bone,  
This old man came rolling home.*  
**(1 stanza, 5 lines)**

*This old man, he played three,  
He played knick-knack on my knee;  
With a knick-knack, paddywhack  
Give a dog a bone,  
This old man came rolling home.*  
**(1 stanza, 5 lines)**

## Theme

Theme is the element that is not only occurs in poem but also in any kind of scientific writings or literary works.

The Old Man lyrics has theme of education which is to engage with the children to learn how to count from 1 to 10 in English by singing.

## Rhyme

Rhyme is a sound or tone (vocal letter) that is repeated in every line or in the end of the sentence in each line that adjacent to one another. Rhyme is symbolized with capital letters to find the similarities and the differences. It can be seen from the This Old Man lyrics that it has five rhyming lines AABCC in each stanza (as shown in the parenthesis in each end of every line). This is called as sequenced rhymes. The purpose of this rhyme is to give the guidance for the children to memorize the last vocal letters in every number. For example, 'one' is paired with 'thumb'. Both of them have the same sound (wʌn, θʌm; in phonetics transcriptions). This is also shown in the number 'two' and 'shoe' (tu:, syu:), and so forth.

Rhyme can not be separated with diction or the word choices. In a poem or song, a word is chosen to be adjusted with the sound of the preceding word to create rhyme.

## Diction and Imagery

Diction is the choice of words. The words used can be taken from the synonym, brief explanation of a word, or the words with the similar sound.

The words like *thumb, shoe, knee, door, hive, sticks, heaven, gate, and again* are chosen because of their similar sound with *one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, and ten*.

In addition, diction is taken from the similarity of the sound or vocal. By these dictions, children can easily memorize and picture an image of the objects in the song which can help them to memorize the order of the numbers in each stanza. For instance, a teacher asks the students to make a word

order based on the rhyming song; *one-thumb, two-shoe, three-knee, four-door, five-hive, six-sticks, seven-heaven, eight-gate, nine-spine, and ten-again.*

### Dimension

Dimension is the similar sound that occur within each line in the poem. This Old Man has one dimension which is represented by the refrain in every stanza, which is in the third line of every stanza. *With a **knick-knack, paddywhack.***

### Extrinsic Element Education Value

As it has been mentioned previously that the lyrics in This Old Man can be used as the medium to learn how to count from 1 to 10 in English for children on the preschool and kindergarten age (3 to 5 years old). Typography, theme, rhyme, dimension, diction, and imagery that are contained in the lyrics are enough to represent the purpose and the aim of the creation of this song. Despite the history behind the song and the sarcastic words choice that are implicitly conveyed in the lyrics, This Old Man is still one of the popular songs that is taught to children in preschool or kindergarten.

If it is referring the criteria of the text for children, This Old Man has fulfilled all of them shown as follow:

#### 1) Informative

The content of the song has the value which is counting. Certainly, this song gives the information for the kids about learning about counting from 1 to 10.

Moreover, it also gives the information about the correct and proper pronunciation in English, especially from the rhyme and the dimension.

- a. *One - thumb* [wʌn - θʌm]
- b. *Two - shoe* [tu: - syu:]
- c. *Three - knee* [θri: - ni:]
- d. *Four - door* [fɔ: - dɔ:]
- e. *Five - hive* [faiv - haiv]
- f. *Six - sticks* [siks - stiks]
- g. *Seven - heaven* [sevən - hevən]

- h. *Eight - gate* [eit - geit]
- i. *Nine - spine* [nain - spain]
- j. *Ten - again* [ten - egen]
- k. *Knack - whack* [næk - wæk]
- l. *Bone - home* [bəʊn - həʊm]

#### 2) Educative

With the information provided, it also automatically delivers the particular education value for children, especially in mathematics (counting), language (pronunciation), and identification of the things around them. Moreover, seen through the activity done by the children, they can also learn to identify and vocalize the correct tone and tempo. It is indirectly helping the kids to learn three different things at once, which are counting, pronunciation, and identifying the things around them, and the art of music.

#### 3) Represents the kid's expression

The lyrics of the song is very cheerful as shown by the vocabulary chosen that are most-likely familiar in children's ears. Therefore, it represents the expression of the children. Although they might have not understood the name of the things mentioned, but the teachers can make a learning tool or model using pictures or drawings, which are attractive for children's eyes, to connect it with the lyrics.

#### 4) Gives the positive influences to the children

Educative information and interesting way of learning certainly can give positive influence to the children.

### **This Old Man as the Medium to Learn Counting**

The designation of the numbers in the lyrics in orderly shows that this song is made for teaching the numbers 1 to 10 to the children. Counting using a song as the medium can be more effective and fun for children in comparison with only mentioning the numbers as it is. By using song, the learning will be a lot more fun and not boring which the children can apply it in their daily

activities. This application will help the children familiarised and easily memorize the sound and the numbers orderly besides using only their fingers to count.

### ***This Old Man as a Medium of Pronunciation Learning***

The pronunciation in foreign language is actually can affect the positioning of the tongue (the tip and the uvula), the pressure of the lips, and the shape of the oral cavity. Consonants are mostly hard to pronounce and most-likely to happen to adult. For example the letter P in English is different with the pronunciation of P in Indonesian. P in English is pronounced as [pi:]. The colon, in the phonetic transcription, indicates long sound. Moreover, the sound [pi:] in English has the bursting sensation in the tip of the lips.

In the *This Old Man* lyrics, there are several vocals and consonants that are foreign to pronounce since the pronunciation do not occur in Indonesian. The words are:

a. *This* [ðɪs] : This symbol [ð] is pronounced as *th* voiced (there is no example in Indonesian) and the symbol [ɪ] is pronounced like the letter E in Indonesia (the example of the pronunciation in Indonesian can be found in the word *ego*)

b. *Old* [əʊld], *bone* [bəʊn], *home* [həʊm]: this symbol [əʊ] is pronounced as *ou* (no example in Indonesian words).

c. *Man* [mæn], *Knack* [næk], *whack* [wæk]: This symbol [æ] is pronounced half 'a' and half 'e' (in Indonesian pronunciation). It can be slightly pronounced as E with longer pronunciation (for example is in the E of the word *geng*). The way to pronounce it is by widen the oral cavity, shaping the lips like pronouncing the oval A, with the tongue position of pronouncing E (Indonesian reference in the pronunciation of *geng*).

d. *Thumb* [θʌm], *three* [θri]: This symbol [θ] is the opposite symbol of pronunciation of the symbol [ð], it is pronounced slightly and creates a voiceless sound (no example in the Indonesian pronunciation). The difference of the pronunciation is in the positioning of the tip

of tongue. It is placed in the between the upper and bottom front teeth. The stress for the pronouncing the voiced 'th' is way intense than the voiceless 'th'.

e. *Four* [fɔ:], *door* [dɔ:] : This symbol [ɔ] is pronounced as O in the word '*orang*'. And the colon following it indicates that it has to be pronounced a little bit longer.

f. *Seven* [sevən], *heaven* [hevən] : This symbol [ə] is pronounced as E as same as in the word '*dengan*'.

It is certainly not easy to teach the sounds in English to the children, even for adult they still find it difficult to pronounce those sounds. Nonetheless, there is nothing wrong for teaching the pronunciation in English to children since in early age in order to make them familiar with the pronunciation.

### ***This Old Man as the Medium to Learn Singing***

Singing is a very common activity done by the people. It can be just humming, doing their hobby, or becoming a profession. This is because singing only needs three basic organs of the body which are ears, brain, and vocal chords. Ears work is receiving the sound, brain processes and translates the data, and the vocal chords for voicing out the sound. If one of the organs can no work properly, then singing will be difficult and can not be done properly as well. For instance, for people with a hard time hearing, it is hard for them to catch and receive the sound outside, which resulted to the hard time processing for the brain to translates and process the sound. As well as ears, if brain does not work properly, the ears can receive the sound but the brain can not properly process the sound as it should be. Because if this, the vocal chords will not able to produce and imitate the sound. And if the vocal chords does not work properly, it will not produce or imitate the sound caught by ears although the brain has processed and translates it very well. Therefore, it can be concluded that most of the people who have ears, brain and vocal chords that work properly might likely be able to sing.

Likewise, the children in the early age that are still sensitive with their surroundings by seeing and listening, what they see and hear tend to be imitated by them. Teaching singing is not an easy task to do in comparison with teaching musical instrument, because sound is an abstract thing, in which the form of it can not be seen through naked eyes. Therefore, determination and patience are a must to have for a teacher to teach the students singing.

The song This Old Man is a pretty simple song that its tone can easily be practiced and understood by the children (easy listening). Moreover, it is a lot better if the song is taught in a group of children who sing together with the a little bit of dancing movements or drawings.

## CONCLUSION

Lyrics of the song is part of literary work in the form of melodic poem. Therefore, the lyrics of the song can be analysed a certain way similar as analysing a poem. Generally, poem consists of intrinsic and extrinsic elements which are: 1) typography; 2) theme; 3) rhyme; 4) dimension; 5) dictions; 6) figure of speech; 7) imagery; 8) the element of its value; and 9) social element.

The lyrics of the song This Old Man has all of the mentioned elements prior that suitable to be used as the medium of learning counting, pronunciation of foreign language, and singing.

In their early age, children are still joyful and active to look for and gain something new from their surroundings. They are in the phase of imitating, fantasizing, and memorizing easily. Educating them through the song is a fun medium for children to learn. This kind of learning can be applied anywhere, either in the school or at home.

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