

Color Usage Study in Poco Piano Book for Beginner Young Children

Sanctus Gregorian H.*, Rita Milyartini

Music Education Department
Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia
Bandung, Indonesia

*sanctusgregorian@gmail.com, ritamilyartini@upi.edu

Abstract—Color usage in music is not a new thing. In the context of children music book, color can improve interest, memory, and efficiency in the learning process. The utilization of color in books can be applied on the material of music symbol introduction which is the basis in learning process. The aim of this research is to describe the color usage in the book entitled “Poco Piano for Young Children 1”. The method used in this research was content analysis analyzing the color usage in the book entitled “Poco Piano for Young Children 1”. The data analysis technique used in this research was flow model of analysis consisting of description, reduction, categorization, presentation, and conclusion drawing. The book selection was based on the semi-structured interview and literature study selection. The result of the research showed that the role of color in the book entitled Poco Piano for Young Children 1 will helped students memorizing repertoire, studying notation, and understanding piano playing technique. The third function will have helped students and teachers in the learning process.

Keywords: color usage, Poco Piano for Young Children 1, beginner level students

I. INTRODUCTION

Material or learning source is one of the various components in learning. Learning material is one of the requirements to make the learning activities run effectively and efficiently [1]. One of the learning material forms is textbook. Textbook functions as students’ source of learning material in their learning process. Piano lesson is one of the lesson requiring book as the learning material. Through book, piano lesson can be introduced to a student so that its benefit of improving one’s confidence can be felt by the student [2]. The selection of the book or learning material on piano lesson is the most important aspect, particularly for the student who will study piano [3].

Book as a learning material source also requires supports from other education components, for instance teachers. In piano lesson for instance, the teacher has to be able to adjust the book material and the learning material with the age and student group in achieving the learning goals and objectives [4]. Piano teachers have to stimulate the students to be able to have full involvement in the learning process, for instance by referring to professional literatures which can be the source of intrinsic motivation [5]. This professional literature must also

be able to accommodate the students’ need so that they can manage a good mentality, find fun in learning, and experience the sense of musical aesthetics in order to be able to enjoy learning piano wholeheartedly [6].

The challenge on the relationship between teacher and book is how to convey a quite complicated material to the student. For instance, when a teacher introduces the initial learning material about introduction of musical notation and other musical symbols in a music book. Music teachers often face difficulties in teaching the material of reading conventional notation symbols in beginner level which will take much time in memorization and it will obstruct the learning on the initial stage [7]. The material of notation introduction is a significant problem in the school education curriculum [8]. The problem will be more complex when teaching students in initial stage. The limited mindset and memory of the students are the challenge of a music teacher, moreover on the introduction of musical symbol theory. Therefore, a book which can support the teacher in solving the problem is required.

Book as a teaching source must be able to present the discussion of musical symbol theory through a good and interesting visualization. The role of visualization in music has shown a positive result. Moreover, the usage of visualization can help students memorizing repertoire although they still need other aspects such as audio and kinesthetic aspect [9]. Color can be used as a visual attraction in the discussion of a music theory book. Color and shape are the basic character of human. Therefore, its usage in conveying the material of musical symbol theory can stimulate the instruction to be faster, more efficient, and more intuitive [10]. Based on the aforementioned statements, it can be concluded that the usage of color, particularly on the piano textbook for beginner level students, is an appropriate and efficient step to understand musical notation and other musical symbols.

The previous statements made the researcher interested in studying the usage of color in one of the piano textbooks involving colors in its presentation. The book was written by Ying Ying Ng and Margaret O’sullivan Farrell entitled Poco Piano for Young Children 1. This book was selected because it involved colors on its learning process. The focus of this research was studying the usage of colors in conveying the textbook entitled Poco Piano for Young Children 1. The researcher expected that this study would be a reference for

book writers in developing piano learning material and for all parties interested in the method of color usage in a lesson.

II. METHOD

The method of this research is content analysis that functioning in analyzing the use of color in the book entitled *Poco Piano for Young Children 1*. The data analysis technique used in this research was flow model of analysis including description, reduction, categorization, presentation, and conclusion. This book was obtained based on the result of the semi-structured interview with the music teachers in Jakarta, in which the book was selected by comparing the books from the result of the interview. Consequently, the researcher selected the book entitled *Poco Piano for Young Children 1* by Ying Ying Ng and Margaret O'sullivan Farrell published in 2013, by considering the result of the interview and comparing the other piano books [11].

The first step of analysis process was describing the advantages of using color in the book, starting from the front matter, the text body, and the closing. The data were then reduced and categorized into three parts, those were related to the color function to help students memorize repertoire, to facilitate students learning notations, and to help students understand piano playing technique. The data were presented in a description which then the use of color in the book entitled *Poco Piano for Young Children 1* were concluded.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The book structure generally consisted of three parts; those were the front matter, the text body, and the closing. This study would discuss the use of color throughout the book structure – the front matter, the text body, and the closing. The following were the results of the study:

A. Front Matter

Various colors were used in this book for the presentation. On the opening page, colors were used to present the information about the advantages of the book in form of animation. Helping the readers' understanding, the animation was supported with simple words –see figure 1. All advantages of the book were related to the use of color which would be discussed in the next sub-chapter.

The implementation of the advantageous point of the book about 'New Concepts are in Color' was in the color which could be found in the table of contents. In the table of content, color concept was used to type the lesson titles in the book. There were eight colors used to type 19 lesson titles, so there were the same colors used for different titles –see figure 2. However, the same-colored lesson titles did not represent related material. Using a variety of colors surely would interest children. This statement was in line with theory stating that piano textbooks must be able to interest children by pictures, photos, and interesting colors [3].



Fig. 1. The animation of the book excellence.

Fig. 2. The use of color in the table of content.

B. Text Body

In the text body, the advantages of the book would be classified based on Yi-Ting and Ming's theories in which colors played a role to help students memorize repertoire and to facilitate students learning notations in musical symbols [7]. However, this research also revealed another role of color, which was helping students understand piano playing techniques. Therefore, the roles of the colors would be classified based on the three theories. The details were presented as follows:

1) *Helping students memorize repertoire:* The advantages of 'New Concepts are in Color' which was applied in the table of content was related to the text body. The color used to type the lesson title in the table of content was the same with the color used for page border, song title, explanation box, and sticker box in the page of text body, as long as it was still in the same lesson material. The color would only change if the lesson material also changed.

The example of the implementation was that on figure 2, there were crotchet materials, minim, 2/4 time, A and E in page 12 that were written in dark blue. The color was followed by page frame (figure 3), description box (figure 3), song title (figure 4), and sticker box (figure 5). The system of memorizing repertoire obtained by the use of color was in line with the demands of Linxi that piano learning book must be systematical, detail, and accurate [3]. This would help teacher or student as repertoire memorizer because of the same color in playing the next songs. It indicated that the song was in the same material.

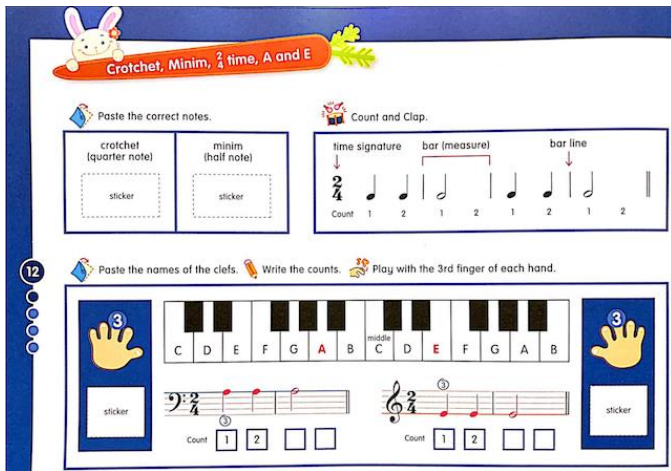


Fig. 3. Color on the page border and explanation box.

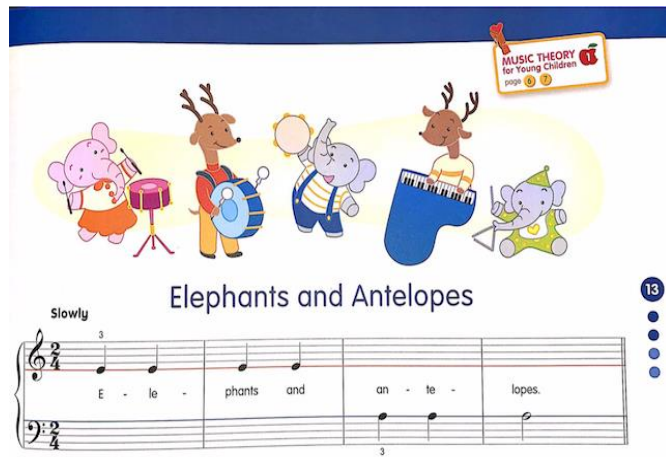


Fig. 4. Color on page border and song title.



Fig. 5. Collection of stickers.

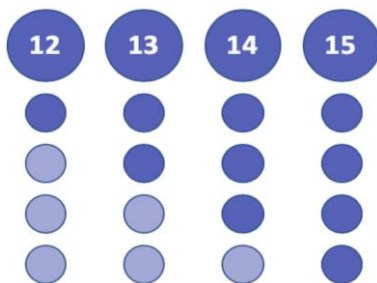


Fig. 6. Color gradation at dots.

The function of color in reinforcing repertoire memorization was also supported by the excellence of this book, the 'Filled Circular Dots'. The use of dots symbols under the page number (figure 3 and 4) by the color gradation indicated how far a material would be finished. For example, if there was a material discussed in page 12 – 15 (the material

was discussed in four pages), there would be four gradations indicating the plot of a material in each page. The difference of the gradation would indicate that the musical activity in the next page would be more complex, although it was still in the same material (figure 6). Besides, it would help students by giving guidance about how far the material would be finished.

2) *Facilitating students to learn notation:* The other excellent points of this book were also able to help students in learning notation. In this sub-chapter, there were certain choices of color with certain intention. The examples of the application were as follows:

- Notes with a pin, a note box with yellow background functioned to explain the history of some songs or some famous composer –see figure 7. The explanation of the history would motivate the students to get more involved in the instruction process because the students did not only study the notation, but also understand the meaning, history, and the composer of the songs. This activity was supported by the theory of Malgorzata stating that teacher must involve the students in the instruction process [5].
- Colored stave lines highlight new notes, is the use of red color to type the notation, symbol, and music term that were being learned –see figure 7. It would have turned to black again in the next page if it had been learned. Moreover, orange was used to mark the line included in the notation on G key staff and blue was used to the line included in the notation on F key staff. The color in these lines would be different to those not included in the notation of the song. Generally, since the songs in this book had only g1 – F in the range of tones, only the first and second line on G key staff and the fourth and fifth lines on F key staff were colored. These colors emphasized the new materials that students were learning, so that the students would be careful when playing notation or music symbol they just learned.



Fig. 7. Color for explaining box, new symbol, and staff.

3) *Helping students to understand the technique of playing piano:* In helping students to understand the technique of playing piano, there was 'Speech Bubble' which was a shape box that gave detailed description of a symbol in the technique

of playing piano, such as fermata, staccato, accent, and etc. – see figure 7. The implementation of the excellence of the book in using color would also appear in the form of exercises. One of the unique exercises was the activity of sticking a colored sticker which would be helpful to answer questions on the exercise related to piano technique material. For example, a material in which students were told to put a sticker of a hand picture, and there were also questions about coloring the number on finger that was being questioned (figure 8). This process would be able to measure students' understanding about the technique in using finger which was used in playing piano.

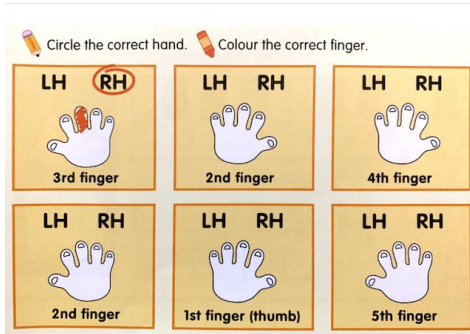


Fig. 8. Coloring the number on fingers.

C. Closing

In this section, there were some questions involving colored-sticker-patching activity. The question material tested was the material from the first meeting until the last meeting. Generally, the materials asked were about symbol and piano technique. Hence, it was concluded that the function of color in this section would help students in learning notation and in understanding the technique of playing piano.

IV. CONCLUSION

The book *Poco Piano for Young Children 1* had some superiorities related with the usage of color. These superiorities can be classified based on the function of color that is to memorize repertory, to ease students in learning notation, and

to help students in understanding the technique of playing piano. The three functions mentioned previously were also supported by harmonious and detailed material presentation. Thus, it would ease teachers and beginner level students in learning process.

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