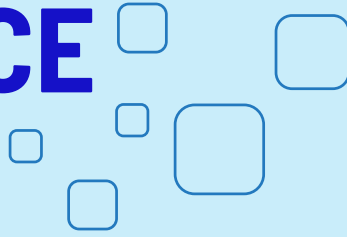




31st MELTA INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE 2023

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS



26-27 AUGUST 2023
UNIVERSITI MALAYA





**Proceedings of
31st MELTA International
Conference
2023**



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NEEDS ANALYSIS OF TECHNICAL TERTIARY LEVEL STUDENTS: AN INVESTIGATION OF THE COMMUNICATIVE NEEDS IN A PROFESSIONAL ENGLISH COMMUNICATION COURSE

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Abstract

Professional Communication courses are introduced in tertiary institutions to prepare students with authentic and more practical contexts for the workplace. Since the course is a relatively new course, not much information is provided on the students' needs, particularly with consideration of technical students. Therefore, present study probes on technical students' communicative needs in a Professional English course. It is found that listening skill is rated as the most important skill out of the four whereas speaking is deemed as the least important skill. Interestingly, in speaking tasks related to job application, the students rated the tasks as highly important, but speaking tasks that include communication with colleagues are rated the lowest. As for the preferred learning strategies, majority of the participants prefer learning English by searching for the vocabulary using the dictionary. All in all, the present study was able to suggest the students' perceptions towards different language tasks and its importance. This information is crucial when designing classroom tasks, materials, and assessments.

Keywords: Needs Analysis, English for Professional Communication, learning strategies, teaching, and learning.

Background of Study

With the ubiquitous growth in demands of language classroom today, people have different reasons to learn a new language. Some might enrol in a Japanese class to find a better employment in Japan, whilst some might need to complete a few prerequisite English courses at university to get a degree. In a book chapter, Long (2005) describes various motivations in learning language which contribute to the success of language acquisition. He also mentions the importance of creating a needs analysis in any language programs or curriculum that will lead to the design of tasks, topics covered, classroom activities and even assessments. Iwai et al. (1999) defines needs analysis as the process of inquiring details about the students before designing any language program or activity to lay foundation to the program. Similarly, West (1994) concurs that needs analysis is seen as the critical first step in any language program so that each individual need can be met. Therefore, present study investigates the communicative needs of students who are enrolled in an English Professional course to serve as basis for teaching materials and methods for the course.

Statement of Problem

In a contemporary syllabus, many tertiary institutions have started introducing more specific and authentic courses like English for Professional Communication. These courses are introduced under the premise that linguistic skills, notably, English Professional skills are seen as equally important in determining the success at workplace (Missingham, 2006). English Professional courses have been embedded in foreign countries for some period, but just quite recently only these courses are offered in Malaysian tertiary institutions. Therefore, there is a gap of literature that recorded on the needs analysis in English for Professional Communication course, particularly in the context of technical university. This information is crucial to ensure that the linguistic knowledge and skills are being used to tally to the work demands (Artemeva et al., 1999). Not only that a study by Shrestha (2016) reported the high importance for language instructors to get as much information as possible for the students in English for Professional Communication class. Thus, the main objective of this research is to fill in the research gap of inquiring information on English for Professional Communication learners in the context of technical university.

Significance of Study

The findings of this study could contribute as repertoire for the instructors who teach Professional English courses or any equivalent courses to know more about the students' perceptions on the

learning and importance of different language skills in workplace. The findings can suggest what the students want to learn and what they deem as important. This information is crucial when designing the course materials and assessments as it is also directly linked to students' motivation in the class. Future studies and policies can also consider the findings from this study when designing the course syllabus, materials, and designs. Not only that, on a microlevel, the instructors may use the details to create more fun and engaging learning experience for the students at the same time, ergo improving the students' proficiency in English.

Research Questions

Following are the research questions for this study:

1. Out of the four language skills, which skill is perceived as important among the students who enrolled in English for Professional Communication course?
2. What are the learning strategies that the students who enrolled in English for Professional Communication like to use when studying English?

Method

This study employs quantitative method using survey questions adopted from Spence and Liu (2013) to inquire on the language skills together with Aiki (2021) to investigate on students' preferred learning strategies. The survey was administered to students who are enrolled in English for Professional Communication at a technical university in the first week of the semester. Data was analysed and computed using IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Statistics 29.0 software. Cronbach Alpha was calculated to measure the reliability of the instrument and was recorded as 0.954. This suggests that the instrument used is highly reliable.

Findings and Discussion

For the first research question, the finding found that listening skills are perceived as the most important skill for the students to perform at workplace ($M= 4.643$; $SD=0.368$). This finding is also supported using statistical tools and found significant difference between all four skills. The students believe that the listening tasks such as understanding meetings and listening in seminars/conferences are important. Out of the four skills, speaking skill is seen as the least important skill ($M= 4.280$; $SD=0.707$). Interestingly, the speaking tasks that are deemed important are related to job application such as going for job interview ($M= 4.786$; $SD= 0.412$). Whereas the speaking tasks that are related to colleagues are seen as less important. For example, having social conversation with colleagues ($M= 3.8000$; $SD= 0.909$) and talking about work-related topics with colleagues ($M=3.990$; $SD= 0.915$). The finding is found consistent with previous study which found that Zeleke et al. (2023) who found that technical students rated highly in listening tasks.

As for the second research question, the participants were asked to rate 11 different learning strategies adapted from Aiki (2021). The results indicated that the participants prefer to learn new words by searching for the meaning using dictionary or online sources ($M= 4.563$; $SD= 0.669$). Another learning strategy that the participants like to use is to watch visual sources such as YouTube ($M= 4.464$; $SD= 0.710$). This research also found an interesting finding which reveals that the participants do not particularly enjoy using language games such as mobile games to learn language ($M=3.964$; $SD= 0.915$). Previous studies found that teaching explicit methods in vocabulary teaching helps to improve students' learning (Tahir et al., 2020; Alamari & Rogers, 2018). By knowing this information, the instructors can utilise this learning strategy by providing some time for the students to use the dictionary or online sources to find meanings during the class. This may help the students to gain confidence and also perform in the classroom.

Limitations

There are a few limitations in this study. The first limitation is that this study includes only 112 undergraduate students in a technical university at the East Coast of Malaysia. Therefore, the results may not be able to be generalised to all technical universities. Not only that, this study is also limited to the students' perception as the learners towards different English language skills. Future studies may consider the perceptions and opinions of the instructors or industries/employers on the language skills that they deem as important.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the present study was able to collect several information on the students' perception towards different language tasks in different skills that they perceive as important. This helps instructors to create classroom materials and activities that match the students' interests. Not only that, instructors can also encourage the students by providing them with understanding on certain language tasks that they perhaps do not think as important. This study also managed to investigate students' preferred learning strategies which could also be adapted in the classroom. Overall, the study has managed to reach its objectives and instructors who teach similar courses as Professional Communication can greatly benefit from the present study.

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EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF PEER FEEDBACK ROLES ON PEER ASSESSMENT ACCURACY IN ESL ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING

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Abstract

Evaluative judgment is vital for assessing one's own work and that of others, not just in students' current courses but throughout their lives. However, current assessment and feedback practices face criticism for being unidirectional and overly focused on content, while rendering students' passive recipients. Little attention has been given to the impact of different roles, like feedback providers and receivers on L2 learners' evaluative judgment in English argumentative writing. This mixed-methods study analysed the rating behaviour of 24 Malaysian undergraduate students during five weeks of peer feedback and assessment training. It aimed to compare how different types of raters (feedback providers, receivers, and outsiders) influenced the accuracy of peer assessment on multiple writing tasks, considering various writing domains. Using the Rasch Partial Credit Model (PCM), this study aims to enhance our understanding of peer assessment accuracy, compensate for the lack of timely teacher feedback, and stimulate learners' evaluative judgment.

Keywords: Evaluative judgement, peer feedback, peer assessment, rater accuracy, Rasch measurement

Background of Study

Evaluative judgement, the ability to assess one's work and others' (Tai et al., 2018), is crucial for students in their academic and professional journeys (Boud & Soler, 2016). However, current assessment and feedback practices have faced criticism for being one-sided, overly focused on content and tasks, and passively involving students (Carless et al., 2011). These practices hinder evaluative judgement development, leading to graduates heavily reliant on external evaluations and struggling to discern criteria for different contexts. This study proposes reevaluating and redesigning assessment-related activities, especially peer feedback and peer assessment. Peer assessment primarily focuses on assigning grades and involves a quantitative evaluation of peers' work. On the other hand, peer feedback is an ungraded process that predominantly revolves around providing qualitative comments and suggestions. While peer feedback's relationship with writing performance has been widely studied, the impact of different roles (feedback providers and receivers) in peer feedback on learners' evaluative judgement about argumentative writing has received little attention. Similarly, peer assessment accuracy in higher education is studied for various reasons, such as internalising grading criteria and building confidence in using scoring rubrics. Inaccurate peer assessment ratings may result from ineffective practices and student bias (Han & Zhao, 2021).

Statement of Problem

The problem at hand is the limited research on the impact of different roles, such as feedback providers and receivers, on evaluative judgement among second language (L2) learners, specifically concerning the accuracy of peer assessment in English argumentative writing. Previous studies analysing rater behaviour mainly relied on inter-rater reliability estimates, like Pearson's r , which have limitations. According to Han and Zhao (2021), the inter-rater reliability coefficient between raters A and B is not unique to any specific rater; on the contrary, the Rasch modelling approach has several advantages compared to the correlational analytic approach, including its ability to compute individual-level statistics for each element of each assessment facet, to generate direct measures of rating accuracy, and to accommodate sparse data designs (i.e. missing data). Additionally, prior research failed to explore raters' perceptions of the difficulties in accurately scoring essays during peer assessment. Moreover, existing studies were confined to one-time assessments, offering only a snapshot of scale utility and rater behaviour without capturing stability or developmental trends.

Significance of Study

This study's significance lies in addressing the gaps in research by investigating the impact of different

rater roles (feedback providers, receivers and outsiders) on the accuracy of peer assessment in English argumentative writing. The study aimed to compare the influence of these different roles on peer assessment accuracy, considering various writing domains such as Relevance and Adequacy of Content (RAC), Compositional Organisation (CO), Cohesion (C), Vocabulary (V), and Grammar (G). The research outcomes intend to provide valuable insights for educators, curriculum designers, and policymakers, enabling them to design evidence-based instructional interventions that cultivate evaluative judgment and foster lifelong learning capabilities among students.

Research Questions

1. How do different types of peer feedback roles influence the accuracy of peer assessment?
2. Which analytical assessment domains demonstrate a higher likelihood of accurate peer assessment?
3. To what extent is the quality of argumentative writing essays related to their difficulty/likelihood of being peer rated accurately?

Method

A quasi-experimental design was used to test the impact of different feedback roles on the accuracy of peer assessment of 24 Malaysian undergraduates from a local higher education institution, assigning them into three groups (feedback providers, receivers, and outsiders). Open-ended surveys were embedded before and after the longitudinal intervention to enable researchers to understand the participants' subjective experiences of the interventions. In addition, during the five-week intervention, participants were asked to fulfil the reflection after each round of peer assessment to provide insight into the outcomes valued by themselves.

Quantitative analysis employed the Rasch Partial Credit Model (PCM) to assess the accuracy of peer assessment, while qualitative insights were obtained through thematic analysis. The quantitative findings aimed to test relevant theories within the context of hybrid peer feedback and peer assessment settings, while the qualitative data was expected to reveal new insights and avenues for future research, particularly related to evaluative judgement.

Findings and Discussion

By combining both quantitative and qualitative data, this study revealed intriguing insights into the impact of different feedback roles on the accuracy of peer assessment in English argumentative writing. The findings indicate that feedback receivers tended to provide the most accurate scores, closely followed by feedback providers. Moreover, the Malaysian students participating in the study displayed a heightened awareness and recognition of the significance of Relevance and Adequacy of Content (RAC) in their argumentative essay writing. In contrast, there was a noticeable lack of accurate understanding and application of the criteria associated with Compositional Organisation (CO) and Cohesion (C). As a result, these domains received the least accurate scores during peer assessment. Furthermore, the study discovered a positive correlation between the writing quality of essays and the accuracy of peer ratings. Essays with better writing quality were more likely to receive more accurate scores from peer raters, while poorly written essays tended to be less accurately rated. This correlation underscores that peer assessors were more likely to overestimate rather than underestimate, indicating this cohort of L2 learners may give higher ratings due to their cultural backgrounds.

Limitations

The limitation of this study lies in its inability to generalise the findings regarding which type of peer feedback roles would provide more accurate peer ratings on English argumentative essays. This limitation arises from the relatively small number of participants involved in the study and the impact of individual factors such as language proficiency and evaluative judgement on the accuracy of peer assessment. Future studies with a larger and more diverse sample size may provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between feedback roles and peer assessment accuracy in English argumentative writing.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research contributes valuable insights into the dynamics of peer assessment accuracy, emphasising the role of different feedback roles and highlighting specific areas where learners may benefit from targeted support to improve their evaluative judgement. This study also highlights the importance of incorporating pedagogical innovations like peer feedback and peer assessment into higher education curricula to foster students' evaluative judgement. Blaming students for underperformance without providing them with opportunities to develop this essential skill is unfair. By empowering students with the ability to evaluate their own work and that of others, they can become more independent learners capable of making informed decisions throughout their academic and professional journey. Integrating these practices into the curriculum can lead to more meaningful learning experiences and better equip students for future challenges in English language education.

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CHALLENGES FACED BY MARGINAL FEMALE TEACHERS OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract

Teachers face many challenges in this digital era, such as the spread of behavioral and academic problems that threaten the educational system in most of the schools. These problems have a direct influence on the teaching and learning process. The presentation reflects on the challenges and problems faced by marginal female teachers at secondary schools in the Parsa district. This paper is based on explanatory sequential mixed research. The sample size of the research was 150 female secondary teachers from community schools and 4 female English experts too. A survey questionnaire and interview schedule were used as tools for collecting the data. The presentation emphasizes the findings of the survey mainly focusing on marginal female teachers of English for their effort to work better, and lack of professional development opportunities. As opined by the experts there are lack of a safe environment and psychological support from the school principal.

Keywords: Challenges, Marginal, Female, Secondary, teachers

Background of study

English language teaching is a difficult mission in countries that regard English as a foreign language like Nepal where the teaching of English has grown quickly in recent years. This rapid increase combined with the great diversity of English language learners represent a challenge to English language teachers, especially the female teachers in this country.

Female teachers should be alert to new changes around the world. Likewise, they need to remain continuously abreast of the latest theories, research, and other additions to the pool of knowledge. It has been observed that female teachers who are not competently sound one up to date are unable to handle the diverse changes and variations in their society, country, and humanity at large (Fitter and Horner, 2009). The professional development of female teachers has not been given appropriate attention in Pakistan. As a result, they may be less able to solve students' academic and societal issues. Additionally, it is possible that students graduating from government's school have weaker communication skills and find it hard to deal with the problems of life. (Elyas & Al Grigri, 2014).

The same situation is seen in Tarai where female teacher's professional development has not been emphasized. Consequently, they cannot deal with all sorts of classroom problems.

Statement of Problem

English teaching is genially issues for female teachers in Nepal, especially in Tarai region. It is burning thread of Tarai region that majority of female teachers have no digital skills, deprive of equal opportunity which directly affects teaching and learning activities. There is no sign of professional development of female teachers. Therefore, the researcher carried out study to explore such more challenges and problems. Moreover, nobody has yet done study up on that issue so to draw attention of all stakeholders, it is essential to raise awareness about these issues in Tarai.

Significance of study

The findings of this study are beneficial to subject experts, curriculum designer's, textbook writers, language trainers and to all who are deeply interested in second language teaching and learning. More specifically, the study is significant to those people who want to know about challenges and problems that are faced by marginal female English teachers. It raises the status of marginal female English teachers of Tarai. It helps policy makers to formulate policy about marginal female teachers. It shows a clear scenario of marginal female teachers due to which upcoming female teacher because of consensus.

Research questions

The followings are research questions:

1. What are the challenges and problems of marginal female English teachers?
2. Which challenges & problems are affected more seriously in Tarai region of Nepal?

Methodology

This paper is based on explanatory sequential mixed research. The sample size of the research was 150 female secondary teachers from community schools besides those four female English experts too. A survey questionnaire and interview schedule were used as tools for collecting the data. There were five main segments in the questionnaire and used Likert scale to collect data. Survey instrument mainly focusing on marginal female teachers of English for their effort to work better and lack of professional development opportunities. Likewise, interviews were taken from experts to identify problems faced by marginal female teachers.

Results and discussions

Data collection processes were conducted to ensure that informants expressed their viewpoints freely and thoroughly. Data were analyzed by using a numerical system and textual method in which the interviews were transcribed.

Table 1.0 Responses of community school female teachers

Questions	Total	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Total
Question 1	100	54%	46%	0%	0%	100
Question 2	100	59%	41%	0%	0%	100
Question 3	100	42%	39%	0%	19%	100
Question 4	100	58%	42%	0%	0%	100
Question 5	100	39%	33%	0%	28%	100

Table 1 shows marginal female teachers' views about challenges and problems of secondary school marginal female teachers. 54% strongly agree and 46% of the learners agreed that professional development activities have not been conducted. It means marginal female teachers do not get more training, seminars, conference. 59% of female teachers strongly agreed and 41% of learners agreed that they have an overload of classes in comparison to men. It seems that marginal female teachers have to take more classes. 42% of female teachers strongly agree that their work performances are not observed by senior men. Next, 19% of females disagreed that there is a lack of active administrators and 58% strongly agreed that they do not have coordination and co – operation among their faculty members. In addition, 39% female teachers strongly agreed and 33% agreed that they could not complete the textbook syllabus on time. However, 28% of female teachers disagreed with the statement.

Limitation of the study

The study will have the following limitations:

1. The study will be limited only to the marginal female teachers at secondary school.
2. Under challenges only five types of challenges will be regarded as research factors.
3. It is limited to questionnaires and interviews.
4. The study is limited to the result obtained from 150 female teachers and four experts.
5. The study is limited to two community schools of Parsa districts.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that marginal female teachers do not have enough opportunities because they do not have digital knowledge, support from families so they cannot take class timely, frequently absent, less concentration, lack of well monitoring in which their performance have not been observed. As a result, they are under emotional and psychological pressure. Female teachers do not feel secure in the school environment, and they rarely meet deadlines. Thus, it seems that concerning people should provide opportunities to ensure productivity and innovation in their teaching duties. From above it is seen that the professional development dimension plays a key role to affect English language teaching and learning. If concerned people solve these problems and challenges, then only there is a sign of

hope for the marginal female English teachers.

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PROJECT GAME ON: PUTTING GAMIFICATION THEORY INTO PRACTICE

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Abstract

Trainers in any field, including education, are regularly urged to ensure that their trainees are equipped for the challenges of a VUCA world. Towards this end, training programmes need to keep abreast of current developments. Among these is gamification, which has been adopted in diverse fields from marketing to organizational productivity. To date, studies on the use of gamification in education have supported its efficacy and continued application. This study thus addresses how pre-service trainee teachers translated the ‘theory’ of gamification into practice under authentic circumstances. The context of the research is a ten-month project from initial exposure to the theory to the development of specific materials and activities and finally actual implementation. The study had the dual aims of examining how pre-service trainee teachers apply gamification theory in English Language teaching, as well as how project-based learning could benefit the trainees in terms of soft skills, but only the findings for the first aspect are presented in this paper. A case study design was applied, where the ‘case’ was the project itself rather than any specific individuals involved in the project. Data was obtained from multiple sources (survey, focus group interviews, observations, and documents). Findings indicate that utilising the project as a framework scaffolded the trainees’ implementation of gamification theory by clarifying goals, structuring activities, and facilitating focused support and advice from mentors. This suggests that project-based learning may act as a catalyst for trainees to turn theory into practice.

Keywords: Gamification, Project-Based Learning, pre-service teacher training

Introduction

“Stop playing games and start getting serious with your studies!”

This once-ubiquitous refrain from teachers and parents is now no longer as common with the advent of gamification in education. The application of gamification for teaching and learning is perceived by many to be at the leading edge of learner-centred education, addressing contemporary needs and interests. As such, exposure to gamification for education can be considered an essential part of a future-oriented teacher education programme. Towards this end, the current study examines how project-based learning can scaffold trainee teachers’ application of gamification for education in an authentic setting.

Project-Based Learning (PBL) has a distinguished pedigree, having been applied for a myriad of content at all levels of education. In the context of this study, the form of PBL that was implemented is not as an instructional approach per se, in the sense that there was no standardised and predetermined knowledge or content being delivered. In this respect, the study has similarities with the work of Camarinha-Matos et al. (2020). Nevertheless, because PBL invariably results in a final product (Isa & Abdullah, 2013), the ‘product’ from this project can be understood as a set of materials or activities which applied gamification in practical ways for English Language learning at primary level.

Project ‘Game On!’ which is the basis of this study ran for ten months in 2022, involving student teams consisting of trainee teachers from the bachelor’s degree in teaching programme (Program Ijazah Sarjana Muda Perguruan / PISMP) specialising in the Teaching of English as a Second Language (TESL) offered at an institute of teacher education. Students worked in teams with an assigned mentor (lecturer). Table 1.0 below provides a summary of the main stages in the project.

Table 1.0 Activities in Project ‘Game On!’

Activity	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November
1 Input on applying gamification in English Language Teaching	■									
2 Student teams come up with ideas for materials or activities to apply gamification		■	■							
3 Teams present their proposals in a seminar				■						
4 Teams refine their initial ideas under the guidance of mentoring lecturers					■	■				
5 Teams prepare the relevant materials or activities for implementation					■	■				
6 Materials and activities are used in actual teaching and learning							■	■		
7 Data collection on the use of materials and activities							■	■		
8 Data analysis and preparation of the final report								■	■	
9 Presentation of reports in a conference										■
10 Written reports submitted										■

Related Literature

The term ‘gamification’ with the most commonly applied definition of “the use of game design elements in non-game contexts” first proposed by Deterding et al. (2011, p. 1) has been applied in diverse fields. In education, a more specific theory has emerged—Gamification Learning theory (GLT), defined by Zaric et. al. as “using game attribute categories outside the context of a game to affect learning-related behaviours or attitudes” (2021, p. 71) based on Landers’ original conceptualisation (2014). Instructional approaches based on gamification have been reported to have positive outcomes in nearly all instances, albeit to varying degrees of significance, based on various reviews of relevant studies (Ertan & Kocadere, 2022; Jaffar, 2019; Sailer & Homner, 2020; Yacob et al., 2022). PBL is likewise of good repute in past research, with reference to similar reviews (Brown, 2019; Kokotsaki et al., 2016; Thomas, 2000). However, studies examining both gamification and PBL are uncommon, with the two most similar being Hero & Lindfors (2019) and Mee Mee et al. (2020); most likely because gamification theory itself is not a typical syllabus content in teacher-training.

At this juncture, it should be emphasised that the project ‘Game On!’ was not designed to deliver the “content” of gamification but as a means of scaffolding the implementation of gamification by trainees. This is in line with the conceptualisation of PBL as a general principle or philosophy by Korkmaz & Kalayci (2021), who propose that PBL should underlie all the components of the curriculum, not just content delivery. Similarly, Ntombela (2015) points out how the multifaceted nature of PBL meshes impeccably with the principles and practices of 21st century learning.

Methodology

The research methodology used may be categorised as a descriptive case study as described by Yin (2018), where the ‘case’ in question is the entire project and the research objective is to examine in some detail how the trainee teachers implemented teaching and learning based on gamification theory in the context of the project. The study had two research questions as listed below. However, it should be noted that this paper only presents the findings for the first research question.

1. How do pre-service trainee teachers apply gamification theory in English Language teaching in the context of a project?
2. How does project-based learning benefit teacher trainees in terms of soft skills?

Qualitative data was collected from multiple sources, as summarised in Table 2.0 below, and content analysis was then carried out to address the research questions. All procedures were in line with good practices in qualitative research as detailed in Cohen et al. (2018).

Table 2.0 Data collection methods

Data collection	Notes	Timeframe
Survey	Completed by 66 trainee teachers	End of project
Interview	66 trainee teachers; four semi-structure group interviews were conducted due to time constraints	End of project
Observation	Mentor lecturers carried out semi-structured observation of trainee teachers during their practicum	During the project
Document analysis	Documents examined were lesson plans and final reports	During the project and end of project

Findings and Discussion

The findings for the various data collection methods will not be presented separately; the discussion will instead address the findings for the first research question that have been extracted from all data sources. The main finding was that the 'Game on!' project created a conducive ecosystem for the trainees' implementation of gamification theory in three main aspects: clarifying goals, structuring activities, and facilitating focused support from mentors.

Goals

The project had a well-defined final goal (product) although trainees were given considerable leeway to interpret this goal. Trainees admitted to "feeling blur" when this final product was first presented but grew less uncertain as their mentor lecturers guided them towards clarifying their specific product. Having an actual product also provided a tangible conclusion upon completion, which for many trainees, generated psychological benefits in the form of closure and achievement, along with confidence that they would be able to put other theories into practice in future.

Activities

Trainee teachers reported being initially overwhelmed by the scope of the project, but the structured nature of the project provided a framework for their efforts, in effect enabling them to "take things one step at a time" as expressed by one trainee. Whilst a general timeline was given with a sequence of activities, teams were able to set their own pace with guidance from their mentors. This flexibility reduced stress from unattained deadlines while supporting realistic time management. Even so, time constraint (likewise reported in Hussein, 2021 and Mee Mee et al., 2020) was a common challenge reported, with many trainees expressing dissatisfaction with this aspect of their implementation.

Support

Support and advice have been identified as key factors in running PBL (Hussein, 2021) and this was indeed the case in project 'Game On!'. The project's well-defined goal and schedule enabled systematic planning and monitoring of progress, while focusing the support from the mentors in terms of providing feedback and other forms of scaffolding. This promoted on-time and on-target support instead of 'helicopter' mentoring (Buria, 2011) that is less likely to develop autonomy.

Conclusion

As an instructional approach or strategy, PBL is primarily characterised by learner-centredness and principles of constructivism, wherein learners engage in an extended process of learning in which they build their understanding of particular content in an authentic context (Kokotsaki et al., 2016; Ntombela, 2015). This 'understanding' can include application when theory (knowledge) is put into practice, as demonstrated in the 'Game On!' project, and even stimulate innovation and creativity, as in the study by Hero & Lindfors (2019). Where it is acknowledged that the findings of this small-scale study are not highly generalisable, the evidence suggests that PBL may act as a catalyst for trainees to turn theory into practice. This supports the further application of PBL for other theories and approaches in education to generate more empirical evidence to support or disprove this premise.

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THE INFLUENCE OF SECOND LANGUAGE WRITING ANXIETY ON POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS' GRADUATION ON TIME: A MULTIPLE-CASE STUDY

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Abstract

Second language (L2) postgraduate students often find the dissertation writing process arduous that some experience second language writing anxiety (SLWA) and its influence on writing performance appears stronger in L2 settings. To have a clearer insight into the phenomenon, this study aimed to explore how SLWA influences dissertation writing. This investigation involved four postgraduate students and data was collected via in-depth interview, audio journals, and personal document analysis. The thematic analysis revealed that SLWA i) influences emotional state by triggering other emotions, ii) triggers emotion regulation, iii) initiates debilitating psychological loop which impedes writing progress, and iv) initiates facilitative psychological loop which maintains writing progress. In essence, the participants' graduation on time seems to be influenced by their avoidance or approach behaviours in dissertation writing. Hence, it is recommended that educators discourage students' perception of writing inability, suggest specific solutions for writing issues, and avoid manipulating anxiety to provoke performance.

Keywords: Second language writing anxiety, dissertation writing, graduation on time, multiple-case study, postgraduate students

Background of Study

Despite the increasing enrolment rates, the delayed graduation trend among Malaysian postgraduate students continues to persist (Sidhu et al., 2021). Dissertation writing as one of the main challenges (Mohd Isa et al., 2018), can be linguistically and academically demanding, as well as anxiety-provoking for students as their academic success depends on their academic writing skills (French, 2018) and language proficiency (Phakiti et al., 2013). In fact, it has been associated with the highest level of SLWA (Huwari et al., 2011). However, students with good writing skills and good command of the language have also been observed to experience SLWA (Genç et al., 2019). It seems that how students perceive their competence is more important than their actual competence since they tend to appraise negative outcomes when lacking self-beliefs which could cause SLWA and influence effort expenditure (Aytaç-Demirçivi, 2020). Likewise, facing writing struggles could influence their writing progress since experiencing excessive distress influences their persistence in completing their study (Devos et al., 2017). Past studies have reported negative correlation between SLWA and writing performance (Saedpanah et al., 2020; Jin et al., 2021). Hence, SLWA can be the consequence and the cause of poor writing performance that could influence students' writing progress.

Statement of Problem

Apprehensive students tend to produce low quality writing with grammatical and typographical mistakes and their ideas are often underdeveloped and disorganized (Sabariah Abd Rahim et al., 2016; Kabigting et al., 2020). However, little information is available on the underlying mechanisms that link SLWA to writing performance and the connection appears stronger in an L2 setting (Teimouri et al., 2019). Although SLWA has been correlated with confidence (Woodrow, 2011), self-efficacy (Rasuan et al., 2021), motivation (Erkan et al., 2011), and writing abilities (Cocuk et al., 2016), apprehensive students can also be found among proficient users and skilled writers of English (Genç et al., 2019; Rohmah et al., 2021). It seems that SLWA can be the consequence or the cause of poor writing performance. Additionally, Rungruangthum (2011) reported mismatched findings generated from semi-structured interview and Cheng's Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory. Since Cheng's (2004) definition of the cognitive component of SLWA focuses on the negative ideations resulted from anxiety, the instrument does not address the subjective feeling of anxiety (Koksal et al., 1990) and thus, may not be able to provide an accurate description of student's SLWA experience. In brief, there is a need to explore how and why SLWA could influence writing performance.

Significance of Study

In terms of pedagogical implications on L2 academic writing, the curriculum can educate the students on the cognitive processes that could influence their affect and vice versa so that they are familiar with the emotional and intellectual cues that inform them when they are ready to write, to stop, to continue or to do other things in between. Since SLWA may impede student's writing progress, educators should refrain from using anxiety to provoke writing performance and discourage students' perception of own writing inability by identifying their writing competence, recognizing improvement, identifying writing issues and suggesting specific solutions to resolve them. Moreover, dissertation writing is already designed to encourage optimal experience as it requires the learning of skills, setting up goals, receiving feedback, and providing control. Hence, supervisors can help students to break down the ultimate goal of dissertation writing into several obtainable goals that match their current skills.

Research Questions

This study attempts to answer the following question:

How does second language writing anxiety influence the second language postgraduate students' written output?

Method

Four participants were chosen in two-stage purposeful sampling process to ensure representativeness of the cases (Merriam et al., 2016). Within 24 weeks of data collection, the participants underwent seven interview sessions where they reflected on their SLWA and dissertation writing experience. Since SLWA could fluctuate (Jin et al., 2021), the participants were instructed to record their SLWA experience and writing progress in audio journals as their claims may contradict their behaviours. Likewise, they were also asked to share personal documents (e.g., research proposals, chapters, completed dissertations, etc.) for analysis. In brief, the verbal and the textual data form data triangulation which offer compelling insights into the cases.

Implementing cyclical data analysis method, the first round of data collection and analysis established the initial propositions to develop a more focused data collection and further refine the propositions (Mackey et al., 2016). The data underwent three re-coding cycles to ensure consistency (Mackey et al., 2016). Finally, the patterns in within- and cross-case analysis were examined for abstraction (Stake, 1995). Moreover, strategies were implemented to enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, including conducting member-checking, providing rich and thick descriptions, and ensuring maximum variation and adequate engagement in data collection (Merriam et al., 2016).

Findings and Discussion

The thematic analysis revealed that SLWA influences emotional state by triggering other emotions such as anger, joy, sadness, shame, fear, and disgust. As utilitarian emotions, with most having high intensity emergency reactions, these emotions initiate regulation process (Scherer, 2005). However, two participants avoid writing or practise resignation as a coping strategy. They could misattribute the avoidant actions as what prevented the negative outcome. As a result, their responses become habitual avoidance and is no longer goal oriented. In contrast, the other two evoke personal and writing goals which appear to enhance motivated behaviours and reduce SLWA. Similar facilitating effects have been reported in past studies where students reported having the urge to study and focus more on writing (Miri et al., 2018; Genç et al., 2019). Hence, SLWA could initiate either debilitating or facilitative psychological loop, influencing dissertation writing progress.

In the past, some studies have reported anxiety as facilitating since it motivates and emotionally prepares students to take actions (Rasuan et al., 2021). But anxiety should be conceptualized as only debilitating (Horwitz, 2010) since it is the student's emotion regulation that restores their emotional states and thus, initiates approach behaviours.

Limitations

Involving more participants may further enhance transferability as more readers will be able to apply the findings to their contexts (Merriam et al., 2016). Additionally, adding supervisors' voices could also offer additional and compelling insights to the participants' stories as they present different views on the

participants' SLWA experience and dissertation writing process. Nonetheless, the research was able to provide in-depth descriptions of the participants' SLWA in dissertation writing. Hence, for future empirical efforts, a longitudinal study can be considered as a potential research design.

Conclusion

In conclusion, SLWA initiates and sustains debilitating or facilitative psychological loop, influencing apprehensive students' progress in dissertation writing. Ergo, their avoidance or approach behaviours could influence their graduation on time. Moving forward, future research may be interested to explore the affective processes in L2 academic writing, effective and less effective strategies for emotion regulation, and self-regulatory skills in L2 dissertation writing. In terms of the research design, both trait- and state-like properties of SLWA need to be considered when deciding the data collection methods.

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UTILISING THE USAGE OF CRITICAL AND CREATIVITY THINKING TO ACCOMPLISH GRAMMAR AND VOCABULARY MECHANISMS IN NARRATIVE WRITING SKILLS

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Abstract

Majority of students face a major problem in writing skill when compared with the other three skills. Henceforth, this study focuses to assess the usefulness of integrating the usage of critical and creativity thinking-based activities among Malaysian upper secondary students in developing their grammar and vocabulary features to enable them to write a good piece of narrative essay. The participants of this research encompassed 17 Form 4 students from a school in Penang, Malaysia. Data were accumulated qualitatively by conducting pre-test and post-test, and also collected qualitatively through participant observation and document analysis. The findings indicate that relevant grammar and vocabulary activities which incorporate critical and creative thinking received positive responses from the participants. The integration of proper grammar and vocabulary through critical and creative thinking-based activities by using technology platforms is useful in teaching narrative writing skills.

Keywords: Critical thinking, creativity thinking, grammar, vocabulary, narrative writing skills

Background of Study

In Malaysia, policymakers and stakeholders make necessary changes in language curriculum from time to time to enable students to improve their language proficiency effectively as many students in Malaysia find English language is difficult to be mastered (Nawawi, Zuhami, Sabu, Mahamud, & Nasir, 2021).

Nonetheless, when compared with the other three skills of reading, speaking, and listening, Malaysian students continue to struggle with writing (Siddek & Ismail, 2021). Thus, students need to polish their writing skills to enable them to get good grades in the English Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) Writing Paper.

In this current study, the researcher focuses on narrative essays even though there are many types of writing skills that are available for upper secondary level students. Narrative writing is about writing a story or sharing about one's own experiences. Narrative essay is explored in the present study because students are still unable to write a good piece of narrative essay by using proper grammar and vocabulary elements (Muliani, Norahmi, & Asi, 2019). Consequently, critical and creativity thinking-based activities are constructed to improve the students' grammar and vocabulary components as these two features are pertinent for them to write a good narrative essay in the future.

Statement of Problem

For writing narrative essays, students should not replicate the same grammar components and vocabulary words. The repetition will make the storyline to be dull and less enthralling. When students are able to use their critical and creative thinking, it supports them to use various types of sentence structure expressively and avoid writing unpretentious stories.

Aside from that, students should be able to use appropriate grammar and vocabulary features in their narrative essays which enable the storyline to flow interestingly and smoothly which arouse the reader's attention. Grammar and vocabulary features are playing an imperative aspect. Therefore, students need to use their critical thinking and creativity thinking to apply the grammar and vocabulary features to write their storyline.

However, there is a gap because to date, there is little study that has been carried out in Malaysia in national secondary schools that stresses on the integration of the two skills which are critical and creativity thinking. As a result, the researcher aims to analyse the usefulness of critical and creativity thinking-based activities to develop students' grammar and vocabulary features in order for them to write a good piece of narrative essay in the future.

Significance of Study

First, the researcher found that in many ways, technology components have profoundly changed the

education system all over the world. For one, technology has significantly expanded access to the education system.

Second, this study recommends that in the future, policymakers and teachers would need to prepare proper materials or modules if they urge the use of technology tools to teach writing skills. It designates that without proper guiding materials for online platforms, it is difficult to conduct the teaching and learning sessions.

Lastly, utilising technology platforms and creating materials for online platforms itself are not sufficient enough. Nonetheless, by using technology platforms to nurture writing skills, students should be given a great opportunity to incorporate communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity thinking. It could enable them to progress well in their writing skills by using the main 4C's of 21st century learning skills.

Research Questions

In this study, critical and creativity thinking-based activities are constructed to improve the students' grammar and vocabulary components as these two features are pertinent for them to write a good narrative essay in the future. As a result, two research questions articulated in the study are:

1. Is there any significant effect of using critical and creativity thinking-based activities in improving grammar and vocabulary elements to write a narrative essay?
2. How does the 4C's to WRITE module enable students to complete their activities to improve narrative writing skills by using an online learning platform?

Method

The researcher used an embedded data collecting approach, in which the researcher used a mixed-method research design to collect data. The data for this quantitative study were collected by conducting the pre-test and post-test. The quantitative approach allowed basic statistics, such as percentages, mean, standard deviation, and variance to be employed to describe the research outcomes. The qualitative data were collected through document analysis also by employing a checklist.

This study was conducted for five weeks. In Week 1, a pre-test was done with the participants in the classroom. Then, the treatment was carried out from Week 2 to Week 4. The researcher had used the 4C's to WRITE module which had been created specifically for this study to develop the students' ability for writing their narrative essays, as well as the Google Classroom platform as treatment. Finally, a post-test was conducted with the participants in Week 5.

Findings and Discussion

To answer the first research question, the participants' narrative pre-test essays were related with the post-test scores. The results revealed that the participants improved in their narrative writing because there is a difference between the pre-test scores (9.706) and post-test scores (15.71) which is 6.00. This finding is similar to Cosgun and Atay's (2021) study which indicated that using proper activities would enable students to use their critical and creative thinking, as well as it would help them to improve their writing skills.

To answer the second research question, it revealed that the activities from the 4C's to WRITE module enhanced students to improve in grammar and vocabulary features. Nuridayanti, Aqila and Nurhajati (2022) claimed that using the main 4C's of 21st century learning skills in teaching and learning writing skills is significant among students.

The outcomes from the document analysis indicated that there was an improvement in narrative writing essays. The results disclosed that the participants were able to use their critical and creative thinking to use the elements of past tense, past continuous tense, and past perfect tenses to construct their ideas accordingly. Additionally, they were able to use both critical and creativity thinking, as well as vocabulary words to let the story line flow appropriately.

Limitations

The researcher only conducted a small-scale study with 17 students from a secondary school at Butterworth in Penang, Malaysia. Besides that, the treatment was to identify the effectiveness of critical and creativity-based activities in improving grammar and vocabulary features which were related to writing narrative essays. Therefore, the researcher was only able to teach some parts of grammar and

vocabulary features among the students. Furthermore, the researcher focused on narrative writing skills out of other types of writing skills from the Form 4 writing syllabus.

Conclusion

In this era, new teaching, and learning methods among upper secondary students in Malaysian National Secondary schools are needed to foster their grammar and vocabulary components. This study is significant because it is hoped to convince policymakers and teachers in Malaysia that in the future, they must familiarise their teaching and learning materials to the current situation by utilising technological platforms to teach various sorts of writing skills.

The new teaching and learning approach has been highlighted in Malaysia by adding the 21st century learning abilities. Therefore, it is fundamental to include the main 21st century learning skills in teaching language skills to ESL learners in Malaysia. In this study, two main skills of the 21st century learning skills which were critical thinking and creativity thinking were included to develop ESL learners' grammar and vocabulary components to enable them to write their narrative essays appropriately.

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INTERACTING WITH AN ONLINE AI CHATBOT TO STIMULATE CRITICAL THINKING ABOUT ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING TOPICS

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Abstract

After engagement in dialogic argumentation involving exposure to information from multiple angles on an issue, learners tend to produce more insightful, structurally and elementally complex, multi-dimensional argumentative discourse (Iordanou, 2022; Hemberger et al., 2017). Considering that an online AI chatbot could be prompted to produce the same conditions, this study was undertaken to investigate potential benefits of the efficiency and intensity that AI could add to dialogic argumentation for educational purposes. Analysis based on argumentation frameworks (Toulmin, 1958/2003; Hemberger et al., 2017) found that a number of the first year EFL university students in Japan who participated exhibited, in subsequent handwritten essays, signs of progressed critical thinking directly influenced by AI chatbot interaction. However, other participants exhibited negligible or counterproductive results. The potential value of the AI prompting method employed in this study is evident, yet further development in methods of learner guidance and scaffolding is also clearly necessary.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Critical Thinking, Dialogic Argumentation, Argumentative Writing

Background of the Study

Studies on dialogic argumentation (Iordanou, 2022; Hemberger et al., 2017) have shown enhanced critical thinking under the conditions of being exposed to information from multiple angles on an issue while in the context of dialogic interaction with others. In written output produced following interactive discussions under these conditions, learners tend to produce more insightful, structurally and elementally complex, multi-dimensional argumentative discourse. Removal of either of the exposure to information or the dialogic interaction conditions has limited such performance consistently in a series of relevant studies (Iordanou, 2022). This portrays the socio-cognitive view on the effects of interactive scaffolding: development occurs within the process of social interaction (Poehner & Lantolf, 2005). The aim of this study was to investigate if an AI chatbot could be used tactically to produce the same conditions.

Statement of Problem

There are no studies to date that deal particularly with the potential for AI interaction to enhance human critical thinking in the context of argumentative discourse composition. Technical studies have observed the ability of AI to assess and generate debate content (Bolton et al., 2020; Betz, 2022; Durmus et al., 2019), and educational applications have been found to augment human thinking (García-Martínez et al., 2023; Vasconcelos & dos Santos, 2023), including to enhance creativity during the process of writing stories (Lubart et al., 2021, p. 7), and enhance vocabulary and syntax in children's storytelling (Park et al., 2019). In professional contexts, AI has assisted humans in problem solving or idea generation (Bouschery et al., 2023) and supported analysts' decision making based on massive database evidence of conflicting factors in global sustainable development issues (How et al., 2020). Argumentative discourse, as it is a written rendition of one's critical thinking about an issue, provides a means of measuring developments in human thought that is unique to methods employed in heretofore studies. On this basis, investigation of AI augmentation of human thinking from a "cognitive transformation" (Carter & Nielsen, 2017, Two models of computation, para. 3) perspective can be progressed.

Significance of Study

Argumentation is one aspect of learning across a wide range of disciplines and practices that requires the development of critical thinking skills to be understood, produced in linguistic form, and improved through educational processes. "Critical thinking as argumentation" (Davies, 2015, p. 49), one of various types or modes of critical thinking, is identifiable in terms of Chance's (1986) definition of it as "the ability to analyze facts, generate and organize ideas, defend opinions, make comparisons, draw inferences,

evaluate arguments and solve problems” (p. 6). As critical thinking is considered a key 21st century skill, fundamental to higher education and the workplace (Iordanou, 2022), investigation of the development of argumentative skills in this age of intense technological advancement is valuable. What students and professionals, including language learners, need is communicative and cognitive skills sufficient to participate in our global society that is facing intense and complex social and environmental challenges.

Research Question

In what ways, if at all, can tactical interaction with an online AI chatbot stimulate or progress learner’s critical thinking about the issues that they write essays on and their own arguments?

Method

As a form of process writing, a class of 22 first year EFL university students at a university in Japan wrote two 250+ word essays in English, the second being on the same topic with the same argument, but with the expectation of it being more developed and argumentatively effective than the first. Between the two essays, teacher feedback was given, and an “Argument Development Task”, involving AI chatbot interaction, was implemented.

For this task, students were given a prompt text designed to cause the chatbot to evaluate their argument and reasoning, critically pointing out gaps in reasoning, alternate perspectives, and additional information or concepts in terms of the topical issue. Students input their argument summaries with the prompt into Bing AI Chat, which utilizes ChatGPT and Bing search engine technology in combination (Ribas, 2023), then noted anything they deemed useful from the feedback. They were also directed to choose a keyword from Bing feedback and ask it a relevant follow-up question, noting any useful feedback content. All content of the two handwritten essays on paper and the shared digital “Argument Development Task” document became data for this study.

To assess the post AI-interaction essays for any developments in critical thinking, the elemental complexity and quality of the discourse according to Toulmin’s (1958/2003) framework was analyzed. Along with this, the model devised by Hemberger et al. (2017), which attributes varying cognitive demand to the ways that one expresses their argument as it relates and measures up to potential opposing claims and evidence, was adapted to analyze the students’ critical consideration of the validity, strength, and limitations of their own proposals. Changes in the content of the second essay as compared to the first signified positive effects of AI interaction if 1) content from the AI feedback was used or paraphrased and 2) the use of that content constituted the incorporation of elements of argument or levels of implied critical thinking that were not included in the first essay. Added elements and aspects to the written discourse indicates development in a learner’s judgment of what needs to be considered about the issue and expressed in writing to improve the argument.

Findings

The following developments in some of the learners’ second essays could be directly attributed to the influence of the Bing feedback:

- consideration of a rebuttal in reaction to the counterargument.
- warrants added to initially unsupported claims.
- shift and intensify focus on a different aspect of the issue more pertinent to justifying the claim.
- refinement of the argument in consideration of limiting factors.
- adoption of lexical items that facilitate expression of the refined argument.
- express more cognitively demanding stances that acknowledge strengths of the opposition or weaknesses of one’s own position.

The following forms of insufficient or problematic use of the Bing feedback were evident in some of the learners’ second essays:

- influence or application of Bing nonexistent, trivial, or ineffective.
- disregard of a clear indication of counterargument, flaw, or incongruence in AI’s reaction to the student’s argument
- adoption only of self-supporting content when an opposing view is also clear in the feedback.
- incorporation of Bing content is attempted, but it is irrelevant or counterproductive.

Preliminary explicit teaching of the function and value of acknowledging the opposition in argumentative discourse may have an impact on how students make use of Bing feedback. The concept of counterarguments was not emphasized strongly in the coursework leading up to the essay assignment as the participants needed to first master the basic concept of forming and supporting an argument. On the other hand, students exhibiting positive results did so without explicit instruction of these concepts, which makes the influences of AI interaction on their thinking and writing more significant.

Limitations

The discourse analysis that these results derive from is at an intermediate stage. A more thorough, technical discourse analysis is possible.

Conclusion

The potential value of the AI prompting method employed in this study is evident, yet the need for further development in methods of learner guidance and scaffolding is also clear.

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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOOGLE TRANSLATOR IN UNDERSTANDING TEXT WRITTEN IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE AMONG HEARING-IMPAIRED STUDENTS OF POLITEKNIK IBRAHIM SULTAN, JOHOR

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Abstract

The main objective of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of Google Translator for hearing-impaired students in the attempt of understanding a text written in English language. The respondents of the study were Politeknik Ibrahim Sultan students who have some difficulties in hearing or zero hearing. The respondents were undergoing Certificate in Hotel and Catering Skills program. There were three groups of respondents involved, with a total of 19 respondents. Each group of respondents was given a text on instruction. The instruction was for the respondents to build a shape using 'Lego' bricks. Pre- and post-test were carried out. Only the semester three respondents were given guidance and practices in understanding written instructions after the pre-test. The pre-test showed that none of the semester three respondents could carry out the task with the aid of Google Translator. Meanwhile, the semester two and semester one respondents were able to carry it out with the aid of Google Translator except for two respondents respectively. As for the findings of the post-test, all the semester three respondents were able to carry out the task, while not all the semester two and semester one respondents could carry out the task. During the post-test, respondents were not allowed to use Google Translator at all. Thus, the findings suggest a significant correlation between the reading comprehension abilities of hearing-impaired individuals and their auditory and cognitive capabilities.

Keywords: Hearing impaired, Google Translator, sign language, certificate students, English language and written text.

Introduction

Google Translator is a free online machine translation tool that effectively breaks language barriers and empowers users to read articles written in various languages. This online mechanism facilitates individuals understanding of words or phrases written in other than one's mother tongue. In contrast to the past reliance on conventional dictionaries or bilingual references, this tool expedites the translation process, saving the time-consuming aspect of searching for translations. As a matter of fact, Lam (2021) emphasized the positive feedback from his research respondents, acknowledging Google Translator as a convenient and valuable learning tool.

This study aimed to assess the efficacy of Google Translator for hearing-impaired students at Politeknik Ibrahim Sultan (PIS) in comprehending English text. Similar to their non-hearing-impaired counterparts, these students often encounter challenges when dealing with English-language written text. It has been observed that students with weaker English language skills often rely on those who possess stronger language skills for assistance. Nevertheless, a minority of students appear to turn to Google Translator for support. Thus, this study intended to determine the extent to which all hearing-impaired students could effectively utilize Google Translator.

Given that these students have completed a 12-year education that encompassed learning both Malay and English languages, it was initially assumed that their proficiency in Malay language would enable them to use Google Translator as a tool when attempting to understand English text. This notion is particularly relevant as Google Translator cannot assist in translating text into sign language.

The primary objectives of this study were to address the following research questions:

1. Does Google Translator assist hearing-impaired students in comprehending English-language texts?
2. To what extent does linguistic incompetency hinder the use of Google Translator for hearing-impaired students?

By investigating these questions, this study aimed to shed light on the potential benefits and limitations of Google Translator in supporting hearing-impaired individuals in accessing and comprehending

English-language content. The findings from this research could have implications for improving accessibility and educational opportunities for this specific group of students.

Method

This study employed a quasi-experimental design, incorporating pre-test and post-test research methodologies. The respondents consisted of 19 hearing-impaired students enrolled in the Certificate of Hotel Catering Skills program. Among the respondents, there were 6 students from semester one, 6 from semester two and 7 from semester three. The hearing impairment of the respondents ranged from zero to partially impaired.

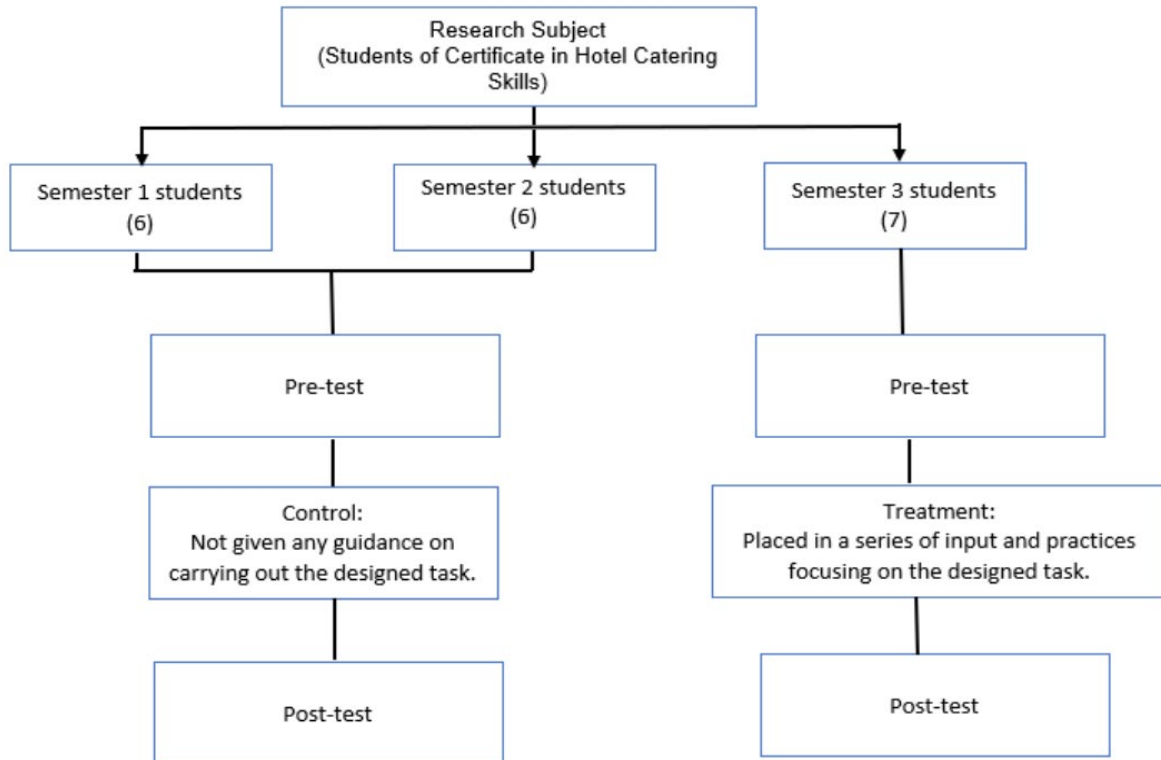


Figure 1 Research Framework

The pre-test and post-test utilized an instructional text that instructed the respondents to construct a shape using 'Lego' bricks, with three bricks available for each colour (red, yellow, green and blue). The respondents were allotted one hour to accomplish the task.

The instructional text was divided into two parts. The first part provided a clear indication of the required number and colour of bricks for the task. The second part outlined the step-by-step actions to be taken.

Two groups of respondents were established for the study: the control group and the treatment group. The treatment group consisted of semester 3 respondents who received a series of inputs and practices after completing the pre-test. These interventions aimed to enhance their understanding of both the text's content and their ability to execute the task accurately. The intervention spanned four weeks.

On the other hand, the control group comprised respondents from semesters two and one. Four weeks after the treatment group had undergone the intervention, all respondents, including both treatment and control groups, sat for the post-test. The post-test was conducted on different days and times for each group.

In both the pre-test and post-test, the completed works were evaluated based on the shapes produced by the respondents. The researcher assessed the proximity of the shapes to the actual shape, identifying the steps where respondents encountered comprehension difficulties.

During the pre-test, the respondents were allowed to use Google Translator to aid their understanding. However, in the post-test, no respondents were permitted to use the translation tool.

Findings

The results of the study were unexpected and diverged from the researcher’s initial impression. Initially, the researcher believed that Google Translator (GT) would prove to be a valuable tool for the respondents in understanding English texts and enable them to complete the task effectively. However, contrary to this expectation, GT did not prove to be equally helpful for every respondent. Some participants faced difficulties while using GT during the task.

RESPONDENT	REG. NUMBER	CRITERIA OF ASSESSMENT (PRE-TEST)						CRITERIA OF ASSESSMENT (POST-TEST)			
		QUANTITY	COLOUR	SEQUENCE	SHAPE	WRONG WORD/PHRASE	CORRECT WORD/PHRASE	QUANTITY	COLOUR	SEQUENCE	SHAPE
1	09KHK21F1002	X	/	X	X	ONE, ON TOP OF	LONGER SIDE, FACING, ON TOP OF, BLUE, YELLOW, GREEN, RED	/	/	/	/
2	09KHK21F1003	X	/	/	X	ONE, ON TOP OF	LONGER SIDE, FA	/	/	/	/
3	09KHK21F1004	X	/	X	X	ONE, BLUE, GREEN, YELLOW, RED	LONGER SIDE, FACING, ON TOP OF (but dubious),	/	/	/	/
4	09KHK21F1006							/	/	/	/
5	09KHK21F1007	X	/	X	X	ONE, BLUE, YELLOW, GREEN, RED	LONGER SIDE, FACING, ON TOP OF,	/	/	/	/
6	09KHK21F1009	X	/	X	X	ONE, BLUE, YELLOW, GREEN, RED	LONGER SIDE, FACING, ON TOP OF,	/	/	/	/
7	09KHK21F1010	/	/	/	/			/	/	/	/

Figure 2 Findings for Semester 3 respondents' pre-test and post-test

In Figure 2, the results of the pre-test reveal that out of the total respondents, only one participant successfully completed the task, while five respondents encountered difficulties and were unable to complete it. Additionally, one respondent did not attempt the pre-test due to being absent.

However, the post-test yielded more promising outcomes, as all respondents were able to successfully complete the task.

This indicates a notable improvement in the respondents’ performance after the intervention. The findings demonstrate a positive impact of the study’s intervention on the respondents’ ability to carry out the task successfully.

RESPONDENT	REG. NUMBER	CRITERIA OF ASSESSMENT (PRE-TEST)						CRITERIA OF ASSESSMENT (POST-TEST)			
		QUANTITY	COLOUR	SEQUENCE	SHAPE	WRONG WORD/PHRASE	CORRECT WORD/PHRASE	QUANTITY	COLOUR	SEQUENCE	SHAPE
1	09KHK21F2001	/	/	/	/			/	/	/	/
2	09KHK21F2004	/	/	/	/			/	/	/	/
3	09KHK21F2002	/	/	/	/			/	/	not arranged as expected... green, red, yellow and blue	expected shape
4	09KHK21F2003	/	/	/	/			/	/	/	/
5	09KHK21F2005	/	/	but the colour brick was arranged in reversed.	/	on top of		4 bricks used	one of each	(from bottom) red, green, yellow and blue	expected shape
6	09KHK21F2801	/	/	/	/			/	/	/	/

Figure 3 Findings for Semester 2 respondents' pre-test and post-test.

In Figure 3, it is evident that most respondents demonstrated successful task completion in both the pre-test and post-test assessments. However, during the pre-test, one respondent experienced difficulty and was unable to complete the task, and this number decreased to two respondents who faced challenges during the post-test.

RESPONDENT	REG. NUMBER	CRITERIA OF ASSESSMENT (PRE-TEST)						CRITERIA OF ASSESSMENT (POST-TEST)				
		QUANTITY	COLOUR	SEQUENCE	SHAPE	WRONG WORD/PHRASE	CORRECT WORD/PHRASE	QUANTITY	COLOUR	SEQUENCE	SHAPE	
1	09khhk2f1002	6 bricks being used	the expected colours are there	bottom red, green, red, yellow and blue	taller			10 BRICKS USED	2 red, 3 yellow, 3 blue, 2 green	two build up the first one, 4 bricks (blue right at the bottom, then yellow, green and red. The second build up started from the bottom with green, yellow, red, blue, yellow and blue)	two build ups	the first one, blue and yellow correct. In fact, the long sided facing the student.
2	09KHK22F1001	/	/	/	/			/	/	/	/	
3	09KHK22F1006	/	/	/	/			12 bricks used	two green, two red & two blue	correct sequence but there are three build up	three build ups. Shape correct.	THE LONG SIDE FACING THE STUDENT - CORRECT
4	09KHK22F1005	/	/	/	/			7 BRICKS	2 GREEN, 2 RED, 2 YELLOW, 1 BLUE	WRONGLY DONE - BOTTOM UP	TALLER	
5	09KHK22F1004	6 bricks being used	the expected colours are there	bottom blue, yellow, blue, red, yellow, green, red	taller			7 BRICKS	2 BLUE, 2 YELLOW, 2 RED, 1 GREEN	ONLY THE FIRST TWO, FROM THE BOTTOM, ARE SEQUENCED CORRECTLY.	CORRECT SHAPE BUT OF COURSE TALLER.	THE LONG SIDE FACING THE STUDENTS
6	09KHK22F1003	/	/	/	/			/	/	/	/	

Figure 4 Findings for Semester 1 respondents' pre-test and post-test

In Figure 4, the results for the semester one respondents demonstrate that four out of the total respondents were able to successfully complete the task. However, it should be noted that two respondents encountered difficulties while attempting the task.

The post-test results present a concerning outcome, with only two out of six respondents successfully completing the task, while the remaining four respondents failed.

There is notable inconsistency between the finding of the pre-test and post-test among the respondents. It is understandable that the semester three respondents showed improvement during the post-test, indicating the effectiveness of the intervention. However, the contrasting results between the semester one and two respondents lead to a different conclusion.

Discussion

This study aimed to assess the effectiveness of Google Translator (GT) in aiding hearing-impaired respondents to understand English texts. During the investigation, a pre-test was conducted with a control group of 12 respondents, and the results revealed that 9 out of the 12 respondents were able to understand the text and successfully complete the task with the assistance of GT.

However, a noteworthy observation emerged during the post-test when GT usage was restricted. In this scenario, only half of the respondents (6 out of 12) were able to carry out the task successfully without the aid of GT. This suggests that GT played a crucial role in assisting the respondents' comprehension during the pre-test, and its absence in the post-test had a significant impact on their task performance.

Upon examining the completed work of the respondents during the pre-test, several observations came to light. Firstly, one respondent encountered difficulties with the phrase 'on top of', resulting in the coloured bricks being stacked in the opposite direction. Additionally, two other respondents managed to form the correct shape but used an incorrect number of bricks compared to

what was expected according to the given text.

During the post-test, a significant decline in task success was evident, with half of the respondents failing to complete it successfully. Among them, four respondents had errors in both the number and colour of bricks used, while the remaining two respondents made mistakes solely with the order of the coloured bricks.

Interestingly, one respondent continued to face challenges with the phrase 'on top of' as observed in both the pre-test and post-test. The results suggest that the success of hearing-impaired respondents in carrying out the task using GT can be attributed mainly to their prior knowledge of Malay language, or any language as the translated-referenced language, encompassing syntax, grammar, and word comprehension. This aligns with Hittleman's findings (1978, cited in Patricia R. Bockmiller, 1981) that successful reading among hearing-impaired individuals hinges on their linguistic competence in the language of the written text. Consequently, the effectiveness of GT is dependent on the respondents' proficiency in understanding words, grammar, and syntax of the language being referred to for the translation.

This observation is particularly evident in the treatment group, where only one respondent managed to successfully complete the task while the other six respondents failed, with one being absent during the assessment. However, after four weeks of input and practice, all the respondents demonstrated an improvement, successfully carrying out the task.

In support of these findings, Kelly, Albertini, and Shannon (2001) emphasized in their study that merely knowing the meaning of words or possessing some knowledge of grammar and syntax is insufficient for ensuring successful reading comprehension. They stressed the importance of having a comprehensive understanding of the overall meaning of the entire passage.

Conclusion

This study highlights that GT is not universally effective as a learning tool for all hearing-impaired students. Its usefulness largely depends on the hearing-impaired students' language background. Specifically, hearing-impaired students who possess language competency in languages other than sign language, such as Malay language in the context of this study, are more likely to find GT beneficial. However, for those without proficiency in such languages, GT may not be a useful tool for comprehending English texts.

The findings underscore the importance of considering individual language competencies and linguistic backgrounds when implementing GT as a support tool for hearing-impaired students. It emphasizes the need for tailored approaches that consider the unique language skills of each student to optimize the effectiveness of assistive technologies like GT in enhancing language comprehension. By recognizing and addressing the diversity of language competencies among hearing-impaired students, educators and practitioners can provide more targeted and effective support to facilitate their learning experience.

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USING '1 VERSUS 1+1' TABLE TO IMPROVE THE USE OF SUBJECT-VERB-AGREEMENT (SIMPLE PRESENT TENSE) AMONG YEAR 5 PUPILS

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Abstract

Subject-Verb-Agreement can be seen as completion to all of the grammar aspects and also in all the skills in English language learning. There is a need for the teachers to adopt and adapt new approach in teaching English to make the pupils have understanding about Subject-Verb-Agreement as well as it helps teachers in Continuing Professional Development (CPD). This research aimed to investigate the use of a '1 versus 1+1' table to improve the use of 's' for Subject-Verb-Agreement (Simple Present Tense) among year 5 Budi pupils. A total of 20 participants from year 5 Budi in Sekolah Kebangsaan Bandar Utama Damansara, Petaling Jaya, Selangor were selected for the intervention of the '1 versus 1+1' table. Data were collected using pre-intervention and post-intervention tests, observations, and interviews. The findings showed that the use of '1 versus 1+1 table' increased the use of 's' for Subject-Verb-Agreement (Simple Present Tense) for the pupils participating in the study, as there was an improvement in the results of the post-test. The mean for the pre-test was 5.42 while the mean for the post-test was 11.15. This demonstrates an improvement of 5.73 on the test scores after the intervention was conducted. The results of this study show that using a '1 versus 1+1' table improves students' use of 's' in Subject-Verb-Agreement (Simple Present Tense).

Keywords: verb, simple present tense, '1 versus 1+1 table'

Background of Study

Grammar is the rules in a language where the form of words is changed and also combining the words into sentences which has a goal to deliver meanings of a message (Mahda. et al, 2016). Grammar is incorporated into the four language skills that are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. According to Kocaman and Cansiz (2012), grammar is the centre of language use where the sentence is accepted as the description of the how the learner forms the sentences. BaSaeed (2013) stated that pupils were confused about the grammar rules, and they faced difficulties to use correct grammar in their writing, reading and speaking. Subject-Verb-Agreement is one of the important elements that incorporates grammar which helps the pupils to meet the objectives of the designated curriculum. Subject-Verb Agreement denotes that subjects and verbs must agree in person and number. Recognising a singular or plural subject is easy but recognising a singular verb and plural verb is a bit tricky. In Present Tense, plural verbs are not formed by adding "s" but the plural nouns will contain the suffix "s". Subject-Verb-Agreement can be seen as a completion to all of the grammar aspects and also in all the skills in English language learning. The objective of the research is to study the use of the '1 versus 1+1' table in teaching Subject-Verb-Agreement in Simple Present Tense through the '1 versus 1+1' table.

Straus (2014) mentioned that subject-verb agreement is a singular verb that is put after 10 a singular subject and a plural verb is put after a plural subject. Moreover, Orlove (2004) states that subject-verb agreement is a singular subject that is followed by a singular verb and a plural subject that is followed by a plural verb. From all definitions above, the researcher can conclude that the change of verb form in the sentence depends on the subject.

Problem Statement

English language learning has well-formed speech habits in the native language which are totally different in form, meaning and distribution. The researcher pursued the study on subject-verb agreement in Simple Present Tense because pupils in Malaysia are the second language learners of English and not native speakers. The use of Subject-Verb-Agreement becomes the main problem encountered by pupils in the primary ESL classrooms. This problem occurs in both speaking and writing in English language. These mistakes might bring negative impacts on the pupils where they will have low self-esteem in speaking and cannot perform well in writing. Subject-Verb-Agreement is the main element in sentence constructions. Subject-Verb-Agreement is tested during the examinations in Malaysia especially in the writing part. If the pupils make mistakes with the Subject-Verb-Agreement, it will affect their scores and academic performances.

Method

Population and sample

The participants of the study were from 5 Budi in Sekolah Kebangsaan Bandar Utama Damansara, Petaling Jaya, Selangor. There were 20 pupils in the class. The pupils in Year 5 Budi had average proficiency in English language.

Instrument and data collection

In conducting this study, the instruments used were pre-intervention and post-intervention test, observation and also interview to collect data.

Pre-intervention and post-intervention test

The results obtained from the test was recorded and analysed in order to compare the difference between the result before and after the '1 versus 1+1' table was implemented.

<p>singular 1</p> <p>He She It</p>	<p>verb + 's' verb + 'es' verb + 'ies'</p>
<p>plural 1 + 1</p> <p>We They I You</p> <p style="color: red;">} special</p>	<p>verb</p>

1 versus 1+1' table

Observation

Observation was used to record the behaviour of the participants during the intervention and post-intervention test. The direct observation is conducted by watching the pupils' interaction and behaviour of the pupils. Meanwhile indirect observation was observing pupils' work (worksheet and test paper).

Interview

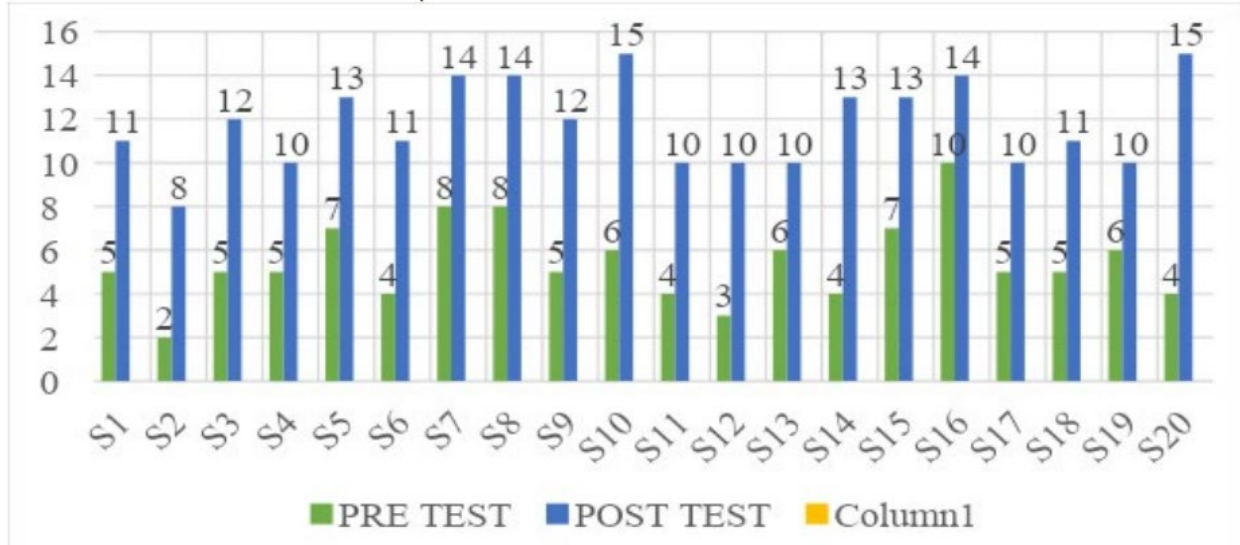
An interview before and after the pre and post intervention test was done. A semi-structured format of interview was done among the participant. It was also a focused group interview so that the pupils were able to participate well during the interview.

Findings and Discussion

Pre-intervention and post-intervention test

The pre-intervention test and post-intervention test were used to see the differences between marks before and after the implementation of the '1 versus 1+1' table as shown in Table 1. The data collected from the pre-intervention test and post-intervention test in Table 1 showed that there was an increase in the marks obtained between the pre-intervention test and post-intervention test. The mean for the pre-intervention test was 5.42 while the mean for the post-intervention test was 11.15. This demonstrates an improvement of 5.73 on the test scores after the intervention was conducted.

Table 1: Pre-intervention test and post-intervention test result



Observation

Observation was conducted during the implementation of intervention and post-intervention test. During the intervention lesson, all the 20 participants participated actively during the practice and production stage. During the practice stage, Student 10 (S10) corrected other students when they made mistakes with the simple present tense. S10 was able to identify the mistakes made by S8 and explained the possible cause of the mistakes. S10 was confident enough to correct his friend's answer using the '1 versus 1+1' table. At the production stage, all participants wrote numbers above the nouns in their worksheet. During the post-intervention test, all the participants drew the '1 versus 1+1' table and wrote numbers above the nouns on their test paper.

Interview

An interview with the participants was conducted at the beginning and end of the implementation of '1 versus 1+1' table. Semi-structured type interview was used so that it could help the participants in answering the question without any difficulties. During the interview session, all the participants are asked regarding their opinion on how they obtained a good grade in their post-intervention test. (TABLE 1) When the participants were asked about their preference for the '1 versus 1+1' table, all the participants agreed that they liked to use the '1 versus 1+1' table. All the participants preferred to use the '1 versus 1+1' table because they were able to use the correct form of simple present tenses. The participants knew when to add 's' to the verb.

Research question 1: Does '1 versus 1+1' table help to improve the use of Subject-Verb-Agreement in Simple Present Tense among Year 5 Budi pupils?

Through the results of the tests, it could be seen clearly that all participants learnt to use the correct verb to the subject through '1 versus 1+1' table. The mean for the pre-test was 5.42 while the mean for the post-test was 11.15. This demonstrates an improvement of 5.73 on the test scores after the intervention was conducted. This indicates that the intervention carried out has benefited the pupils and helped them to improve Subject-Verb-Agreement in Simple Present Tense usage. There was 5.73 increase in mean which shows the '1 versus 1+1' table has influenced the participants to use correct Subject-Verb-Agreement for Simple Present Tense.

Research question 2: How does the '1 versus 1+1' table help in the teaching Subject-Verb-Agreement in Simple Present Tense among Year 5 Budi pupils?

From the interview and observation, the '1 versus 1+1' table helped to explain about the rules of Subject-Verb-Agreement in Simple Present Tense better. It showed that, this intervention helped in the teaching and the participants had a clear understanding about Subject-Verb-Agreement in Simple Present Tense. This '1 versus 1+1' table helped to achieve the objectives stated.

Limitations

Even though it was proved that this '1 versus 1+1' table was able to improve use of Subject-Verb-Agreement in Simple Present Tense among the pupils of Year 5 Budi, it still has some limitations which

can be improved and adjusted. Teachers should add more questions in the worksheets given to the pupils. As mentioned by Brown (2006), he states that learners should be exposed to language slightly higher than their level, but they still can understand most of it and able to progress. So, the pupils should be tested with lots of question that are more challenging for them.

Teachers can also use songs to teach the pupils rules. Songs can become one of the most enjoyable ways to practice and develop language skills. Bourke (2006) stated that any syllabus designed for teaching English for young learners mostly contains songs, chants, and rhymes. Pupils can link songs to their musical intelligence which can help the pupils to remember the rules.

Besides that, the '1 versus 1+1' table can be used to teach other tenses for example, Present Continuous Tense, Present Perfect Tense and Past Continuous Tense. The teachers have to adapt and modify the table to teach other tenses. It is because the pupils are being tested for other tenses in their exam.

Conclusion

To conclude, it is hoped that these initiatives can help to improve pupils' understanding, skills and interest of the participation in learning regarding the Subject-Verb-Agreement. With the recommendations above, this research should be more comprehensive, and the result gained in future will be more precise, accurate and reliable.

Teachers need to adopt and adapt new approach in teaching English to make the pupils have understanding about Subject-Verb-Agreement as well as it helps teachers in Continuing Professional Development (CPD). It will be helpful for teachers to achieve the learning objectives in grammar as it is taught implicit in Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR).

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INVESTIGATING MALAYSIAN INDIGENOUS LEARNERS' LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES IN MALAYSIAN ESL CLASSROOMS.

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Abstract

As language learning strategies on indigenous learners are still scarce in Malaysia, a linguistic predicament is apparent where English language is acquired as a third or foreign language compared to their mainstream peers. This study aimed to investigate the English language learning strategies among Indigenous learners from the Temuan sub-ethnic in a district of a state in Malaysia. A set of Strategy Inventory Language Learning (SILL) questionnaire adapted from Oxford (1990) and Gani, Khairisman & Samad (2018) was utilised to collect quantitative data from 32 indigenous pupils. Descriptive analysis was made by providing mean, percentage, and frequency. Findings show that indigenous learners have a moderate level of usage in language learning strategies. The use of indirect strategies of "affective and social strategies" was found to be habitual and more engaged than "direct strategies". An integration of communicative approaches and fun learning are recommended to accommodate better language acquisition.

Keywords: Language learning strategies, indigenous learners, English language learning, fun learning, language acquisition.

Background of Study

The English language is vital within the educational context of Malaysian everyday classrooms as both languages are essential in the Malaysian education field as transcribed in the MBMMBI policy. Nevertheless, the academic expectation of both languages is chidingly divergent to the linguistic context of the indigenous demographics whereby these languages are not their mother tongue (L1), hence the Malay language is learned as their second language (L2) and the English language as their third or foreign language instead (Adnan & Saad 2010). As these indigenous learners are enrolled in mainstream schooling with mainstream language learning expectations (Renganathan & Kral, 2018; Renganathan 2016), identifying indigenous learners' language learning strategies are crucial in accommodating to effective language acquisition (Hashim, Yunus & Hashim, 2018), findings from this study could be principal constituents to the validation of language competencies and wherewith learners' acquisition of a second or foreign language (Zakaria, Zakaria & Azmi, 2018).

Statement of Problem

Due to geographical constraints, this study only employs purposive sampling of Temuan sub-ethnic of the indigenous proto-Malay group population from one school in a rural school in the Jelebu district in Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia. The indigenous learners in this study have their own mother tongue; the Temuan language. Even so, the Malay language is the medium of instruction as all the staffs and teachers are non-indigenous who could not converse in the research sample's L1. The Malay language is the learners' L2 and English language certainly became their third or foreign language due to minimal exposure towards the language as the input was only from their English language lessons. Nevertheless, the syllabus provided for these indigenous learners is designed to benefit learners who learn the English language as L2 like the mainstream learners. The research gap of exploring the English language learning strategies among the Malaysian indigenous demographics is yet to be narrowed down as no studies like this have been done before. This study aimed at exploring the density of employing language learning strategies in learning the English language among the indigenous learners while investigating the proximities of preference among indigenous learners in employing such strategies.

Significance of Study

As this study is the first study in Malaysia that investigates the language learning strategies of Malaysian indigenous learners in learning the English language, the findings in this study are unique and highly

substantial in assisting the target population of the study, which is the Malaysian indigenous learners across Malaysia in learning the English language. This study not only provides suggested parameters that are paramount in catalysing a better acquisition rate of the English language, but also has the potential to inform teachers on how best to teach any languages to the indigenous Malaysian. The findings in this study are therefore has the potential to be a pivotal input towards improving teaching practices and providing a pragmatic pedagogical map for language teachers in Malaysian rural outposts while simultaneously empowers the Malaysian indigenous communities in utilising effective learning strategies towards a farther horizon in academic performance.

Research Questions

1. To investigate the level of usage of language learning strategies in learning the English language among indigenous learners
2. To investigate the preferred language learning strategies by indigenous learners in learning the English language.

Method

A sum of 32 learners with Temuan Indigenous background was selected as the sample whereby these respondents have a different level of proficiency, aptitude, and attitude towards the English language. The questionnaire utilised for this study is adapted from Oxford (1990) and Gani, Khairisman & Samad (2018). Whereby local adaptations of rephrasing and distinctive choices of words to suit the level of comprehension of Primary schoolchildren and the socio-cultural context of indigenous learners based on literature review and a pilot study.

The data obtained from the study is analysed using descriptive analysis by providing mean, mode, percentages of responses for each strategy, and an additional measurement of their level of usage derived from the mean of each strategy for overall comparative purposes. Variations of individual items can be described as positive, negative, or mixed via examining the percentage of responses and report their usage either high, medium, or low (Green and Oxford 1995).

The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) was developed by Oxford (1990) whereby learning strategies were compartmentalised into two categories: direct strategies where memory, cognitive and compensation strategies were devised and secondly the indirect strategies, where metacognitive, affective, and social strategies reside.

Table 1.0 Mean Scores and Level of Usage According to Categories and Strategies

Strategy Category	Strategies	Mean	Level of Usage	Rank
Direct	Memory	2	Low	6
	Cognitive	2.625	Medium	3
	Compensation	2.425	Low	5
Indirect	Metacognitive	2.581	Medium	4
	Affective	3.144	Medium	1
	Social	3.025	Medium	2
Overall		2.633		

As shown in Table 1, the overall use was $M=2.633$, a moderate level of usage is accentuated based on the indicator provided for this study. A medium level of frequencies utilised by the respondents was remarked from the overall mean; this betokens that the practice of strategising in learning the English language among most of the Indigenous learners are not yet a prevalent practice and therefore still at its infancy. Indirect strategies are shown by the data to be the most prevalent category of language learning strategies among the respondents with all the three strategies under the indirect category were found to be utilised more frequently than the ones in the direct category.

Findings and Discussion

Patterns of moderate-intensity and below-average use of language learning strategies in the data indicate a growing need for learning-to-learn activities in providing these indigenous learners better approaches in learning the English language. Nevertheless, educating the indigenous learners in utilising these strategies should simultaneously come with knowledge of strategic applications which would compel teachers in adapting learning expectations. This could be a tangible guide to focus on achieving the desired proficiency level (Thu, 2009) especially in the process of lesson planning whereby teachers must adapt their teaching approaches and activities to fit students' preferred strategies to ensure better language learning processes take place. Similarly, teaching materials could also be adapted to fit their preferences to stimulate a meaningful learning experience.

Although all six language learning strategies in this study indicates average intensity, the dominance of Affective and Social strategies is apparent. The categorisation by Oxford (1990) reveals that the indigenous learners are inclined towards using Indirect strategies which corresponds with past studies on the social nature of indigenous learners, signifying a more communicative approach in language learning is needed to develop better language acquisition. In addition, elements of 'fun learning' can cultivate a climate of positive emotions that corresponds with the data on affective strategies as past studies supports that such integration effectively increases their enthusiasm, interest, and participation in pertinent levels.

Conclusion and Limitations

As the suggested parameters of communicative approaches and fun learning in addition to teaching "learning-to-learn" strategies are paramount in catalysing a better acquisition rate of the English language among indigenous Malaysian learners, the exploration in this study is concurrently hoped to be a pivotal signal towards providing a pragmatic pedagogical map for the indigenous learners.

Future data collection could involve in-depth questionnaires utilising a Davis's (1989) Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) inventory as technology has nowadays become part of the teachers' teaching practices and the learner's daily habits at home albeit in slight proportions. This will enable a thorough understanding of how learners view and interact with technology as a part of their educational experiences. Additionally, diagnostics of the learners' familiarity with technology and technological tools need to be made, as these elements may have a big impact on how they perceive their experiences.

In terms of sampling, having a sample size of more than 50 participants can ensure statistical strength and complements more data and insights to the findings in the current cycle as the use of purposive sampling to specifically target Indigenous learners is essential to gaining ethnographic insights into the target population's unique indigenous knowledges & learning perspectives. Alternately, using controlled and experimental groups can enable for more empirical data to add to current findings. A future cycle of this study might elucidate the intricate connection between language learning strategies and learning outcomes among distinct learner demographics by taking these recommendations into perspective.

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ENCOURAGING CIVIC AWARENESS THROUGH PROJECT-BASED LEARNING IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Abstract

In Malaysia, after an electoral reform in 2019, 18-year-olds are now eligible to vote. However, low civic awareness is common among Malaysian secondary school students which is reflected in the survey taken by Form 3 and Form 4 students in SMK Bongawan. This will pose a problem for them once they become eligible to vote. In order to tackle civic apathy among secondary school students, the teacher has designed a civic awareness project-based learning which integrates English language learning for a Form 3 and a Form 4 class, in which they were given autonomy to choose the community issues they wanted to solve whilst incorporating argumentative writing skills and practice using cohesive devices by producing a mini policy proposal. The students learned about teamwork, being aware of the right to voice out to their constituency representatives or higher authorities regarding community problems, gaining new insights and awareness on community issues, and the importance of community engagement.

Keywords: Civic awareness, project-based learning, writing

Background of Study

In Malaysia, after an electoral reform in 2019, 18-year-olds are now eligible to vote (Tan & Goh, 2020). This constitutional amendment prompted the Malaysian Ministry of Education to make an important civic and citizenship education announcement. They emphasized integrating civic education into core subjects such as History, Moral Education, Islamic Education, English, and Bahasa Melayu (*Surat siaran Bilangan 7 Tahun 2019*).

Despite this initiative, many secondary school students in Malaysia still exhibit civic apathy. It is crucial to address this issue and ensure that students become informed citizens once they are eligible to vote. To achieve this, teachers should play a leading role in integrating civic and citizenship education into English lessons.

One effective approach to accomplish this is through project-based learning (PBL). PBL offers an experiential learning environment that enables students to develop a sense of awareness regarding community issues. This mindset will be beneficial when it comes time to participate in elections.

Statement of Problem

Education plays a vital role in preparing students not only for their future careers but also as responsible citizens in the present (Zemelman, 2016). However, low civic awareness is prevalent among Malaysian secondary school students (Osman & Abu, 2018). This is supported by the results of a survey conducted among Form 3 and Form 4 students in SMK Bongawan. The survey revealed that a mere 9% of students displayed interest in civic awareness and engagement. Furthermore, when asked about community issues they would like to solve, most of them expressed apathy.

This lack of civic awareness will pose a problem when these students eventually become eligible to vote. As future voters, they need to be aware of community issues because it is their constituency representatives whom they will be voting for (Ismail & Ho, 2020). It is therefore imperative to address this issue and foster civic engagement among students to ensure an informed electorate in the future.

Significance of Study

As civic and citizenship education is encouraged to be integrated into English language learning in accordance with the directive issued by MOE, this study will serve as a guide for English teachers to implement a project-based approach to inculcating civic awareness among secondary school students. In addition, it helps students to write argumentative essays with the proper usage of cohesive devices.

Research Questions

Does the civic awareness project-based based approach develop students' sense of civic awareness?

Method

Firstly, the students were briefed on the purpose of the project and the duration of the project. At the same time, the students were divided into groups of 5 to 6 members.

The teacher gave a driving question to the students which was the basis of the project. The question given was 'What are the community issues you want to solve?' Students were also given a handout as a step-by-step guide for them to solve community problems which included a template for them to write their essays. The step-by-step guide also included a template that included cohesive devices and linking words.

The first step is for them to research the issue. They did this by observation, interviewing, and internet search. This will be followed by having the students describe the problem, propose a solution, present the facts, and conclude.

In the end, reflection questions were asked to four of the students about the project that has been implemented.

Findings and Discussion

The effectiveness of this project is measured through the writing that has been produced by each group. They can use 'cohesive devices' in their writing effectively by referring to the template. This project serves to introduce them the cohesive devices and linking words, however, continuous practice might be needed especially for low proficient students. In addition, the effectiveness of this project is also measured through a reflection session that has been carried out with four students at the end of the project implementation. The students reflected on teamwork, being aware of the right to voice out to their constituency representatives or higher authorities regarding community problems, gaining new insights and awareness on community issues, and the importance of community engagement.

For the write-up, the low-proficient students were resourceful enough to use any applications or tools to aid them in producing the 'proposal'. Since I did this project with two groups of students with different levels of English proficiency, for the project presentation, the low-proficient group only presented their project in front of me. This was to consider their level of speaking confidence. As for the highly abled students, I invited the Principal, the Senior Assistant of Curriculum Affairs, and the Head of the English Panel as the audience for the students to present in front of.

Limitations

This project was only conducted with two classes. The result does not represent all secondary school students in Malaysia. Apart from that, this project was implemented in a suburban school. Other types of demographics might reveal a different result stemming from the reflection questions posed to the students.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the project managed to have different proficiency levels of students to be able to produce a 'proposal' by incorporating cohesive devices and linking words as well as simultaneously encouraging civic engagement. Students demonstrated strong teamwork, understood their right to speak up to authorities, learned new perspectives on local issues, and understood the value of community involvement. Overall, this project utilized project-based learning to successfully incorporate civic education into English lessons, enabling students to become knowledgeable and involved citizens as they get closer to the voting age, as well as serving as a steppingstone for them to write argumentative essays.

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THE ROLE OF EMOTIONS OF EFL LEARNERS IN LEARNING ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS

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Abstract

Emotions play a crucial role in how and why students learn. Language learning is not only a cognitive process but an emotional process. Recently, there has been a growing interest in gaining a better understanding of the hearts and brains of second language (L2) learners and teachers. This study aims to explore the emotions of a multiple case study of EFL learners in a higher vocational college in China, the reasons for these emotions, and the impact they can have on teaching and learning. Various qualitative methods will be employed, including a written task of English learning histories, semi-structured interviews, and classroom observations for one semester. Coding will be guided by the research questions and data driven in NVivo using semantic analysis. The study will hold significance in multiple ways, for it will shed some light on emotions in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) for improving pedagogical practices, students' achievement, and well-being.

Keywords: Emotions; EFL learners; English language learning experiences; role

Background of Study

Emotions and learning are inseparable. Emotions play a crucial role in language learning. Cognitive factors have been a major concern in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) for a long time. However, emotions, which have been perceived as an irrational factor in second language (L2) research, have received much less attention except the study on the effects of negative emotion--anxiety (Xu, 2023). According to MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012), with the rapid development of Positive Psychology (PP) in general psychology and its diverse applications, there has been a new trend emerging since the introduction of PP to SLA research, which has caused a "positive turn". What this means is that now, positive emotions are also being studied in L2 education. In recent years, there has been a significant increase in scholarly investigations focused on emotions and SLA (Dewaele, 2019; Dewaele, Jiang & Li, 2018; Prior, 2019; White, 2018), especially a growing interest in the number of positive emotion studies in the past decade. However, so far, relatively fewer Chinese researchers have adopted a positive psychology (PP) perspective to study L2 emotions (Dewaele & Li, 2020; Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Li, 2018; Li, Jiang, & Dewaele, 2018).

Statement of Problem

Prior (2016) pointed out that previous studies mainly focused on "problem" negative emotions in SLA. However, positive emotions are still under-researched (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Li & Wei, 2022; Su, 2022). There is a need to do a holistic study to investigate the participants' negative and positive emotions in learning English language skills (Dewaele & Li, 2020; Li, Jiang, & Dewaele, 2018; Pavelescu & Petrić, 2018; Prior, 2019).

As emphasized by Oxford (2016), studies focusing on positive emotions in language learning tended to lack contextualized perspective, which is concord with Dewaele and Li (2020) and Prior (2019). Furthermore, as proposed by Li (2021), future research focusing on higher vocational college students, who have been seldom examined in research on L2 learning, has the potential to address the issue of uneven distribution of research participants in emotion studies in China.

According to Dewaele (2019), Dewaele and Li (2020), and Li (2018), the existing literature mostly adopted quantitative or mixed methods. However, due to the relatively few purely qualitative studies on emotions in SLA, there is a need for qualitative research designs to get insights from the participants' perspectives.

Significance of Study

The study is significant in multiple ways. First, the findings will help higher vocational college EFL learners with intermediate or low English proficiency in China, with interventions aimed at increasing positive emotions and reducing or preventing negative emotions.

Second, this study will provide some insights for Chinese higher vocational college English teachers to be aware of the importance of emotions in SLA and investigate the diversified emotions EFL learners experience from different regions.

Third, there is a new topic to incorporate studies on emotion into the English teacher's training programs. This study will offer some suggestions to enhance L2 teachers' social-emotional skills and utilize them to interpret students' emotions through investigations.

Finally, the findings on antecedents and effects of emotions will support and broaden the control-value theory in higher vocational colleges in China and offer some practical pedagogical implications in English learning and teaching.

Research Questions

The present study aims to address the following four research questions:

1. What are the participants' emotions in learning English language skills in a higher vocational college in China?
2. What are the reasons for the participants' negative and positive emotions in learning English language skills?
3. How do participants cope with negative emotions in learning English language skills?
4. How do participants enhance positive emotions in learning English language skills?

Method

Based on the research conducted by Pavelescu and Petrić (2018), the methodological approach in this study will also be a multiple case study. Diverse qualitative methods will be used over one semester, including a written task in the form of language learning histories, semi-structured interviews conducted thrice, and classroom observations. English Language learning histories will be employed in the study, so that a deeper understanding and richer insights will be obtained into the participants' English learning experiences, including "past emotions and memories of these emotions" (Swain, Kinnear, & Steinman, 2011, p. 82) from past to present.

The first interview will be about their English language learning history, emotions, and feelings toward learning English language skills. The second and third interviews will mainly concentrate on classroom observations. The observations will mainly focus on the ways in which participants engage during their English lessons and how they interact with their teachers and peers. Coding will be guided by the research questions, and it will be data driven. Emotions will be identified based on their salience in the participants' reports on their English language learning experiences (Pavelescu & Petrić, 2018). Coding will be done in NVivo with semantic analysis.

Findings and Discussion

Su (2022) highlighted that it was crucial for foreign language practitioners and scholars to take notice of the lack of enjoyment and high levels of anxiety Chinese intermediate and low English proficiency EFL learners experienced. For the intermediate and low English proficiency Chinese undergraduate EFL learners, it was found that the participants have moderate levels of foreign language enjoyment (FLE) and foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA) (Su, 2022).

The participants of this study will be a multiple case study of non-English major freshmen at Yiwu Industrial & Commercial College in China. Wen and Zhang (2021) suggested that students in higher vocational education often possess a weak foundation in English, and their motivation to learn the language is insufficient. The present study hopes to testify whether the findings are consistent with similar studies of other participants with intermediate and low English proficiency in the context of China or other countries. It would also have significant implications for providing empirical data for identifying the emotions Chinese higher vocational college EFL learners experience and examining the antecedents and outcomes of both negative and positive emotions, aiming to intervene negative emotions and trigger more positive emotions in learning English language skills.

Limitations

One of the limitations is the limited number of participants in this study. The findings and results cannot be generalized, due to the uneven distribution of teaching resources and English teachers in China (Wen, 2012). Furthermore, whether in a face-to-face or online environment, the emotional states of learners and teachers can influence one another. English teachers' emotions are a worthy topic for future research (Richards, 2022).

Third, this study only employs qualitative methods conducted in one semester. MacIntyre (2016) has emphasized the need for greater methodological variety in the exploration of emotions in SLA, such as mixed methods, and longitudinal qualitative interviews.

Conclusion

This study is an ongoing project in the context of Yiwu Industrial & Commercial College in Zhejiang Province in China. There have been some research studies conducted on the emotions experienced by Chinese EFL learners (Li, 2018; Jiang & Dewaele, 2019; Dewaele & Li, 2020; Li, 2020; Li & Wei, 2023). The primary focus is to identify emotions experienced by EFL learners from the participants' perspective, explore the reasons, and how participants cope with negative emotions and, also how they enhance positive emotions. The findings will not only benefit EFL learners and teachers but also contribute to the support and expansion of the control-value theory within the Chinese intermediate and low proficiency levels of EFL learners. The implications of the study will be valuable for educators, scholars and administrative institutions in pedagogical practice and research to better understand EFL learners' emotions and explore possible interventions in English Language Education.

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MALAYSIAN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS' DIGITAL PEDAGOGY PRACTICES, ACTIVITIES, AND COMPETENCE AT A TEACHING UNIVERSITY VS RESEARCH UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

At Malaysian universities, English language teachers teach English courses in online, blended, and hybrid classes at many faculties, to undergraduates from different academic backgrounds and proficiency levels. University English language teachers need digital pedagogy competence for current and future teaching practices, but there is little data on digital pedagogy competence at Malaysian universities. This study investigates English language teachers' digital pedagogy practices, activities, and competence at a Teaching University vs a Research University. Using a mixed-method sequential explanatory design, data was collected from fifty-five English language teachers via a survey questionnaire, and six teachers from the survey were interviewed. Preliminary findings show that teachers at the Teaching University and Research University face similar challenges and have similar teaching practices in online, blended, and hybrid classes. However, teachers at the Teaching University have higher digital competence scores and design more interactive learning activities for online, blended, and hybrid classes. The findings indicate a need for Malaysian university English language teachers to share and learn from one another in Communities of Practice, to improve digital pedagogy competence and the design of online learning activities in online, blended, and hybrid classes at universities.

Keywords: Digital pedagogy, University English language teachers, Mixed Method Sequential Explanatory

Background of Study

Since there has been an increase in the request for previously face-to-face university courses to be continued to be taught online, most universities are implementing blended or hybrid pedagogical models (Cavinato et al., 2021; Li et al., 2022; Raes et al., 2020). In Malaysia, universities are currently implementing hybrid and blended classes for local and international learners (Ibrahim & Ismail, 2021; Nordin et al., 2021; Razali et al., 2022). In this context, university English language teachers need to facilitate higher levels of digital pedagogy competence, as teaching language proficiency online requires specific digital pedagogy competence skillsets such as selecting the right digital resources, focusing on the teaching and learning process, empowering learners, and conducting online assessments (Forminyk, 2020; Mavridi, 2022).

Statement of Problem

The research gap identified is that no studies so far have investigated all three constructs of digital pedagogy as conceptualised in literature. The concept of digital pedagogy at university as captured in literature are (1) digital pedagogy practices, (2) design of learning activities, and (3) digital pedagogy competence (Vaataja 2021; Zhang and Yu, 2021). Moreover, Lohr et al. (2022) and Crawford et al. (2021) also suggest a lack of systematic research on higher education teachers' initiation of online learning activities. Furthermore, Malaysian higher education researchers have yet to investigate university teachers' digital pedagogy competence levels and analyse teachers' strengths and weaknesses in teaching online, blended and hybrid classes.

Significance of Study

In pursuit of high-quality online teaching and learning for the benefit of university teachers and learners, it is hoped that the results of this study will be able to create awareness among Malaysian university teachers to take on a digital pedagogy pivot and balance out the design of passive, active, constructive, and interactive activities. A combination of these cognitive, affective, and social learning activities contributes to higher learning outcomes (Chi, 2018; Sailer, 2021; Lohr, 2022).

Research Questions

1. What are the digital pedagogy practices and challenges of Malaysian university English language teachers - particularly in technology, pedagogy, and content?
2. What types of learning activities are designed by Malaysian university English language teachers –particularly interactive, constructive, active, or passive?
3. What are the digital pedagogy competence levels of Malaysian university English language teachers (A1 to C2) – particularly in digital teaching resources, teaching and learning processes; learner empowerment; and assessment?

Method

The research strategy for this mixed-method sequential explanatory study is the use of a survey, followed by in-depth interviews. The advantage of a descriptive survey is that it “gathers information necessary for action” and “it tells us how many proportions of the members of a population have a certain opinion or characteristic or how often certain events occur together.” (Oppenheim, 1992, p12). The benefit of follow-up in-depth interviews in mixed method explanatory design is to learn about “the processes that people experience, why they responded as they did, the context in which they responded, and their deeper thoughts and behaviours that govern those responses.” (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2018, p78). In this study, data was collected using an online questionnaire with 55 respondents and an interview protocol with six participants. The data was analysed with descriptive statistics, followed by thematic analysis, then converged, and triangulated.

Findings and Discussion

University English language teachers at the Teaching University reported that learners’ problematic internet and incompatible devices disrupt their online classes. Their biggest challenge was not knowing if learners were participating, and they were concerned with learners’ engagement. Similarly, at the Research University, challenges with learners’ slow internet and incompatible technological devices resulted in over-reliance on Whatsapp and Telegram for classes. A few experienced teachers stated that learners should be responsible for finding fast internet access and compatible devices to attend web online classes, engage with learning content on learning management systems, engage with other learners, and complete evaluations.

Many teachers at the Research University still struggle to design interactive learning activities but have no trouble designing passive, active and constructive activities. The teachers interviewed conducted mini lessons interlaced with learning activities in their live synchronous classes. In comparison, teachers at the Teaching University could design passive, active, constructive, and interactive activities, with only a minority of teachers conducting passive activities. The younger teacher preferred 4-hour workshop-style class sessions to focus more on interactions among and between teacher and learners.

Most university English language teachers at the Research University are at Digital Competence for Educators (DigComEdu) level B1 (66.7%), followed by fewer at B2 (32.4%) and only one teacher at C1 (Redecker, 2017). In comparison, most teachers at the Teaching University are predominantly at level B1 (52.9%), followed by B2 (35.2%), and a few teachers at C1 (11.8%). Teachers at both universities are excellent with digital teaching resources, online teaching and learning and assessment. However, teachers need to improve in empowering learners, particularly in personalisation and differentiated instruction.

Teachers can nudge learners to get in touch with other learners to form online support, study, or collaborative groups and online communities based on learners’ internet, technological access, and preferences (Personalisation) and allow learners to complete learning activities at different speeds, learning pathways and difficulty levels (Differentiation).

Limitations

One limitation of this study is its small population of 55 university English language teachers. It is limited to university English language teachers teaching at two Malaysian public research universities in the Klang Valley area. Klang Valley’s geographical location includes parts of Selangor, and Kuala Lumpur states known as Central Malaysia. The study was conducted at a Research University and a Teaching University. Thus, results could not be generalised to include all university English language teachers teaching within Central Malaysia.

Conclusion

The findings indicate a need for Malaysian university English language teachers to share and learn from one another in Communities of Practice, to improve digital pedagogy competence and the design of online learning activities in online, blended, and hybrid classes at universities. Communities of Practice (CoP) improve teaching and learning in higher education as they can emerge in instructional methods, conference presentations, journal articles, or educational policies (Wenger, 1998; Hofer et al., 2022). Teaching practice changes with time. This can be the result of CoP participants being aware of gradual and collective changes in problems, problem-solving resources, and contexts, which require the community to keep up with the current developments. University English language teachers at the research university have slightly lower digital pedagogy competence scores compared to teachers at the Teaching University and are less able to design interactive activities. This may also be because research universities focus less on teaching and more on research. Hence, university English language teachers at research universities could form communities of practice with teachers at teaching universities to develop a shared repertoire of resources: experiences, stories, tools, and ways of addressing recurring problems—in short, a shared practice.

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ILLUMINATING THE TEACHER'S VOICE: UNDERSTANDING PERSPECTIVES ON MULTILITERACIES PEDAGOGY IN MALAYSIAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

This paper presents initial findings from an ongoing research project investigating the perspectives and literacy teaching practices of English teachers in Malaysian public universities. Utilising the principles of multiliteracies pedagogy as an analytical framework, the study explores the participants' understandings of literacy and their integration of the Multimodal Schema (MS) and Pedagogical Knowledge Processes (PKPS) in their teaching practices. The preliminary findings revealed that the participants showed strong awareness of the role of technology and diversity in contemporary communication contexts despite adhering to more traditional understandings of literacy as reading and writing abilities. There also appeared to be variations in the participants' emphasis on specific modes within the MS and PKPS. These findings call for targeted efforts to promote effective multiliteracies integration and advance literacy instruction in Malaysian tertiary education settings.

Keywords: Multiliteracies pedagogy, English teachers, Literacy Teaching, Malaysian universities

Background of Study

The communication environment of today has witnessed significant shifts driven by continuous technological advancements that impact on various aspects of people's daily interactions. Emphasising the urgency of equipping students with literacy skills to navigate today's diverse and globalised environments, the New London Group (1996) proposed the multiliteracies pedagogy to address these paradigm shifts. For over two decades since its introduction, multiliteracies pedagogy has garnered significant research interest in various educational contexts given its relevance in addressing the impacts of technology on literacy practices and teaching (Lim, Chia, & Nguyen, 2022). Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, educational institutions across the world experienced a momentous shift, transitioning from the traditional physical mode to online, blended, or hybrid modes of teaching (Govender & Rajkumar, 2021). As teachers adapt to new learning contexts, it becomes imperative to examine their instructional strategies and approaches to literacy teaching in the rapidly evolving educational landscape. Therefore, this study embarks on an exploration of Malaysian public university English teachers' perspectives and practices in literacy instruction by employing the multiliteracies framework as an analytical lens.

Statement of Problem

Amidst the trends of globalisation, the educational sector in Malaysia has also been spurred to leverage new technological innovations to enhance student learning and produce highly skilled graduates (Bujang, Selamat, Krejcar, Maresova, & Nguyen, 2020; Mazlan, Fadzilah, & Ibrahim, 2019). Notably, within Malaysia's literacy education, much scholarly interest has been drawn towards investigating the impacts of multiliteracies pedagogy, showcasing its benefits in promoting improved student learning and writing creativity (Ganapathy & Seetharam, 2016; Pandian & Baboo, 2015). In view of the transformative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which have significantly reshaped the teaching and learning environments in higher education, it is imperative to investigate teachers' viewpoints and integration of multiliteracies in their pedagogical practices. This study seeks to address this critical aspect by offering insights on literacy instruction within Malaysian public universities.

Significance of Study

This study holds significant implications for literacy education in Malaysia, particularly within the tertiary education sector. The study findings elucidate the teachers' perspectives on literacy and literacy teaching to identify the forms of support needed in their instructional approaches, including the

strengthening of teacher professional development programs to guide their implementation of multimodal and multiliteracies approaches. In so doing, this study not only enhances the understanding of multiliteracies in the Malaysian context but also enriches the current body of literature on this subject to bridge the gap between multiliteracies-based theories and practices.

Research Questions

Two research questions guide this study:

1. How do Malaysian public university English teachers understand the notion of literacy?
2. Does the literacy instruction of Malaysian public university English teachers reflect the principles of multiliteracies?

Method

Employing a quantitative research approach, this study utilised a cross-sectional survey questionnaire to address the stipulated research objectives. Specifically, the questionnaire investigated the participants' understandings of literacy, the perceived significance of the Multimodal Schema (MS), as well as their engagement with the Pedagogical Knowledge Processes (PKPS) (Cloonan, Kalantzis, & Cope, 2010). A total of 60 English teachers from Malaysian public universities participated in the study, with a substantial majority of 93.3% currently teaching students from Bachelor's Degree programs, and a noteworthy proportion of 41.7%, 28.3%, and 28.3% teaching Diploma, Masters by Research, and PhD by research students, respectively. Following the online distribution of the questionnaire, the collected data underwent meticulous coding and was subsequently imported and analysed using the *Statistical Package for Social Sciences Software* (SPSS) version 27 in accordance with the research objectives.

Findings and Discussion

Three salient themes emerged from the data analysed thus far. Firstly, while the participants acknowledged the importance of educating students about the influence of technology and diversity on contemporary communication contexts, their understandings of literacy leaned towards traditional conceptions. Secondly, the participants placed somewhat stronger emphasis on the written, oral, and gestural modes, as depicted in Figure 1. Thirdly, it appeared that certain PKPS components, namely 'Experiencing the known' and 'Conceptualise with theory', were more frequently practised by the participants compared to other components. This observation suggests unequal emphasis on different PKPS components within the participants' teaching practices, thus implying that their literacy instruction may only partially reflect the core principles of multiliteracies. While past research in other educational settings has demonstrated teachers embracing broader notions of literacy (Ajayi, 2011; Yi & Angay-Crowder, 2016; Lim et al., 2020), this inclination was not extensively evident within this present study. Additionally, given the observed uneven emphasis on PKPS components in the participants' teaching, it can be inferred that there is still room for enhancing teacher engagement with multiliteracies pedagogy in Malaysian public universities.

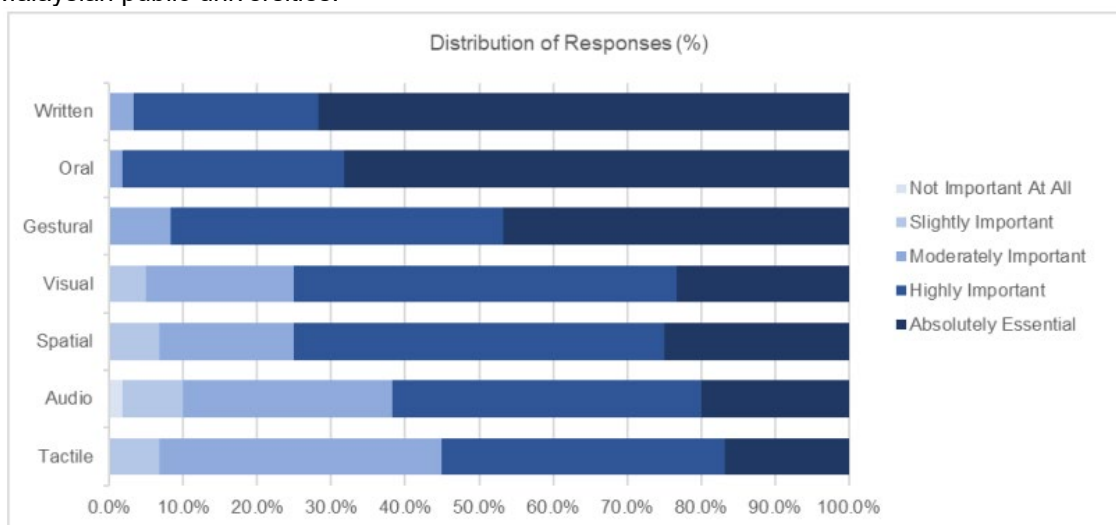


Figure 1: Participants' Views of the Importance of Each Mode in the MS

Limitations

Acknowledging the significant implications drawn from the findings of this study, it is essential to address certain limitations stemming from constraints in time and resources. These limitations may have a degree of influence on the depth of exploration into certain aspects as the current research primarily focused on English teachers in Malaysian public universities, potentially limiting the generalisability of research findings to other contexts. Furthermore, the cross-sectional survey approach may yield limited insights into the longitudinal aspects of teachers' literacy instructional approaches. As such, future research may benefit from involving teacher participants from other tertiary institutions in Malaysia and adopt complementary research approaches and instruments to derive broader implications of multiliteracies pedagogy.

Conclusion

This paper sheds light on preliminary findings from an on-going research project focusing on the perspectives and instructional practices of Malaysian public university English teachers by employing the multiliteracies framework as an analytical lens. Overall, the study has revealed that participants held traditional understandings of literacy as reading and writing abilities despite showing awareness of the influence of technology and diversity in people's daily communication and interactions. Furthermore, the participants' emphasis on modes and components within the MS and PKPS suggests that there is potential for further development in their literacy teaching approaches to fully integrate multiliteracies principles. Importantly, the findings of this study underscore the need for further research and targeted efforts to enhance literacy curricula in the tertiary education sector in the Malaysian context.

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CONDITIONS FOR AND AGAINST TRANSLANGUAGING AND MULTILINGUAL PEDAGOGIES (TMP) IN THE MALAYSIAN ESL CLASSROOM: A TEACHER TOOLKIT

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Abstract

Few guidelines help teachers determine if Translanguaging and multilingual pedagogies (TMP) are relevant in the SLA/ESL classroom. This study employed a two-phase data collection process to delineate the critical factors of utilising TMP and their weightage across various demographic and pedagogical considerations. In phase one, 33 teachers participated in a comparative case study (CCS). Teachers described their preferences for/against utilising TMP in their classrooms via classroom observations and interviews. Emerging from the findings are six conditions when deliberating using TMP. These findings indicated that TMP must transcend individual factors to encompass collective and environmental considerations. The second phase investigated whether these six conditions are perceived as equally important. Using a six-item questionnaire, respondents (n =58) ranked each condition by priority. Friedman's non-parametric multivariate by rank analysis determined that these conditions have significantly different degrees of importance. Together, they help teachers self-assess the relevance of TMP in their immediate teaching context.

Keywords: Teacher toolkit, translanguaging and multilingual pedagogies (TMP), conditions, factors

Background of the Study

Being responsive to the student's linguistic needs is increasingly vital, so including real-life experience and cultural factors in the Malaysian ESL classroom is strongly recommended (Nambiar et al., 2020). However, Tan (2016) was cautious about how nativised English has penetrated classroom pedagogy, potentially preventing learners from attaining a better proficiency in globalised English. So, differentiating ELT approaches is critical in counterbalancing using TMP and immersive pedagogies in the Malaysian ESL classroom.

Statement of Problem

Pandian (2016) proposed the need for a comprehensive yet flexible instructional framework, a vital objective of this study. Recently, the relevance and application of TMP in the ESL classroom have been encouraging. Firstly, it propagates the act of personalising, localising, and anchoring language learning in the local context that learners are familiar with (Zhu & Li, 2020) instead of treating the L2 as a medium for foreign culture. Secondly, it promotes using L1 as a learning resource (Rajendram, 2022). Lastly, it realigns SLA towards an additive stance (May, 2014).

Nevertheless, realigning language teachers' teaching practice that embraces TMP in a way that respects the learners' language learning experience is critical. This study investigated a synthesised pedagogical language framework (Figure 1) to enhance ELT in Malaysian in socio-culturally and socio-linguistically respectful ways. Termed the ADUMA pedagogical language framework, it contains three different linguistic theories. Firstly, UBL explains how languages are schematised and routinised. Secondly, DVL accounts for the ever-changing nature of languages through contact and communicative functions. Lastly, ABMP demonstrates how comprehension and conceptualisation in one language can transfer into another.

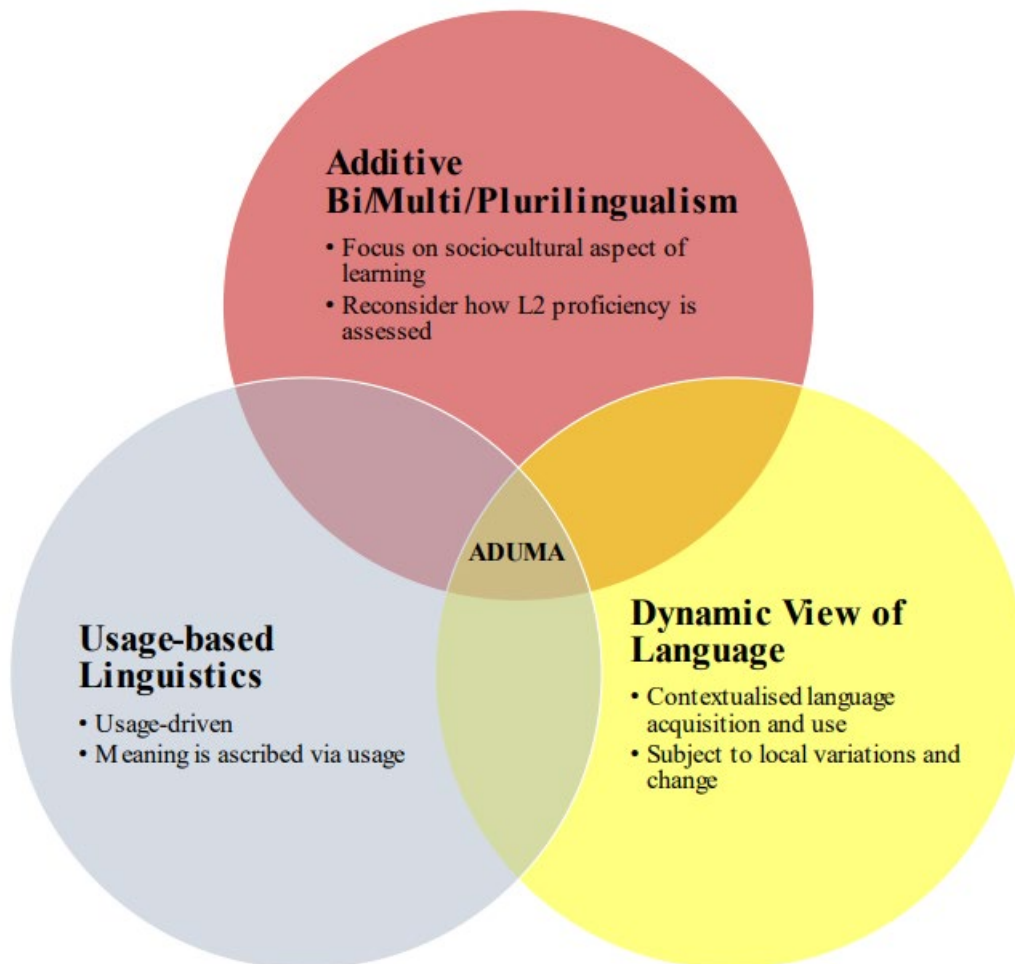


Figure 1 Proposed ADUMA Pedagogical Language Framework

Significance of Study

The proposed pedagogical framework explains how languages were acquired, maintained, and evolve with a TMP orientation. However, further investigation into its compatibility and feasibility in the Malaysian ESL classroom is necessary. This study delineates the critical factors of utilising TMP and the weightage of each factor across a spectrum of demographic and pedagogical considerations. Once identified, these factors may function as a profiling system for teachers to self-assess the relevance and need for TMP in their immediate teaching contexts. However, many related studies are experimental and theoretical, mostly confined to laboratory investigations or classroom research in institutions of higher learning. Moreover, studies conducted in primary or secondary language classrooms were predominantly descriptive.

Research Question

Under what conditions is TMP in a Malaysian ESL classroom feasible and practical, and what guided principles may it require for effective implementation?

Method

This study employs a comparative case study (CCS) paradigm with a two-phase data collection process. In the first phase, 33 teachers participated in a case study, where they described their preferences for and against using TMP in their classrooms. Primarily, the teachers were asked to consider what factors they consider when deliberating the use of TMP in their teaching practice. Their responses were triangulated and complemented with classroom observations, interviews, and focus group sessions. Findings emerging from this data collection identified six critical conditions for TMP.

In the second phase, teachers (n =58) were asked to rank these six conditions by priority via a six-item questionnaire. The questionnaire was randomly administered to all Malaysian primary and secondary English language teachers via Google Forms. Friedman's non-parametric multivariate by rank analysis determined whether these conditions were ascribed significantly different degrees of importance.

Findings and Discussion

In phase one, the following coding framework emerged (Figure 2). It outlines six critical conditions when teachers deliberate using TMP in their classrooms. Table 1 depicts their key operational definitions.

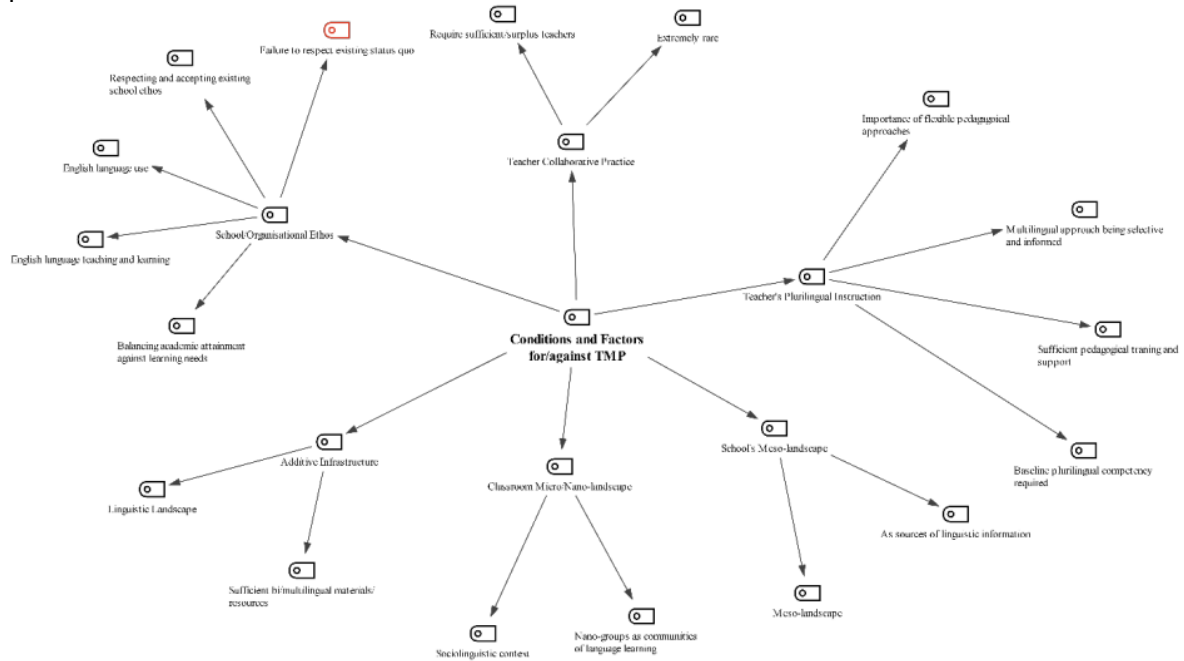


Figure 2 Coding Framework Emerging

Table 1.0 Definitions of the Six Key Conditions for TMP

Conditions	Definition
Teacher multilingual instruction	Ability to provide multilingual instruction
Classroom nano-communities of practice	The sociolinguistic description of the classroom and its sub-communities
School meso-landscape	The physical description of the surrounding learning environment
Multilingual resources and infrastructure	The complementary materials, aids, and tools to facilitate TMP
School ethos	The inhibited activities or behaviours that a school may embody as an organisation
Teacher's collaborative pedagogical practice	Collaborative lesson planning, delivery, and reflection

In phase two, these six critical conditions were translated into an online survey via Google Forms, where primary and secondary English language teachers in Malaysia were randomly invited to complete the questionnaire. The respondents ranked the six conditions for ADUMA according to priority (*Note.* 1 = Least important; 6 = Most important). The conditions and the corresponding questionnaire item are listed in Table 2. Using SPSS, the mean ranking and its corresponding interpretation, coefficient, and weightage for each item were tabulated (Table 3). Friedman's Test determined that these six conditions were ranked with significantly different degrees of importance (Table 4). This result suggests that each respondent operates in unique teaching contexts, for which the ascribed ranking for these conditions

was significantly different, thus making them significantly viable criteria for/against TMP. Table 5 demonstrates how the ADUMA Polygon is operationalised.

Table 2.0 Conditions for TMP and Their Item

Conditions	Item
Teacher multilingual instruction	My proficiency in other languages, whether students' native language or not, determines if I want to teach English using other languages.
Classroom nano-communities of practice	The language proficiency of my students, English and non-English included, determines if I teach English using other languages.
School meso-landscape	The location of my school, whether situated in English-rich or English-scarce environment, determines whether I teach English using other languages.
Multilingual resources and infrastructure	The resources available for English language teaching, whether monolingual or multilingual, determine if I teach English using other languages.
School ethos	The English language panel/department official directive, whether fully immersive or not, determines whether I teach English using other languages.
Teacher's collaborative pedagogical practice	Peer support from others, whether English language teachers or not, determines whether I teach English using other languages.

Table 3.0 Mean Rank and Weightage of Conditions for TMP

Conditions	Mean Rank	Interpretation	Coefficient	Weightage
Multilingual resources and infrastructure	4.33	Most important	0.206	6
Teacher multilingual instruction	3.97	Extremely important	0.189	5
Classroom nano-communities of practice	3.48	Very important	0.166	4
Teacher collaborative pedagogical practice	3.18	Somewhat important	0.151	3
School meso-landscape	3.03	Quite important	0.144	2
School ethos	3.01	Least important	0.143	1

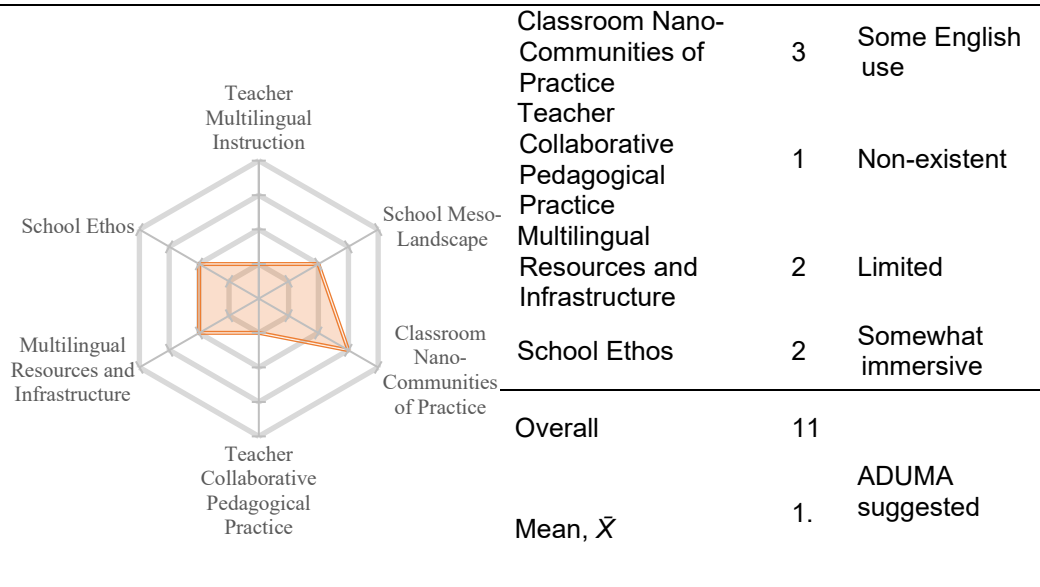
Table 4.0 Friedman's non-Parametric Multivariate by Rank Analysis

Test Statistics ^a	
N	58
Chi-Square	24.236
df	5
Asymp. Sig.	<.001

a. Friedman Test

Table 5.0 Example Application of the ADUMA Polygon

Case	Factor	Descriptor	
Teacher A ₁ S ₀	Teacher Multilingual Instruction	1	Not competent
	School Meso-Landscape	2	Some English language use



Limitations

One significant shortcoming of this study is its small sample size. Engaging more respondents may identify additional conditions for/against TMP. Also, Friedman's Test does not provide means to eliminate or segregate statistically insignificant variables, so statistically robust measures, such as Exploratory/Confirmatory Factor Analysis, might help determine the significance of these conditions more effectively.

Conclusions

The ADUMA Polygon is theorised as a visualised profiling mechanism to help teachers determine or revise their ELT approach in schools. Teachers can utilise the polygon individually or with their peers/supervisors. Negotiating with peers when using the polygon can help reduce bias and subjectivity.

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A STUDY ON THE CORRELATION BETWEEN ENGLISH LEARNING STYLES AND LEARNING STRATEGIES OF JUNIOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract

This study is on the Correlation between English Learning Styles and Learning Strategies of Junior Middle School Students. Research show that learning style and learning strategy are two very important factors that affect English learning, and their mutual influence plays a role in language learning. Based on Reid's theory of perceptual learning styles and Oxford's theory of language learning strategies, this study uses the questionnaire of perceptual learning styles and language learning strategies to investigate 93 students from two classes of the second grade of a key middle school in Changchun, and interviews 12 of them. This paper explores the correlation between English learning styles and English learning strategies of junior high school students by using quantitative and qualitative methods. The results are as follows: (1) The general characteristics of junior high school students' English learning styles are that they have a variety of secondary learning styles, and only the visual style is their main learning style. (2) Junior high school students are not good at using English learning strategies, their utilization rate is low, and they lack frequently used learning strategies. (3) There are certain correlations between English learning styles and learning strategies of junior high school students, and they are all positive, but most of them are low. According to the results of the study, some suggestions are put forward for teachers and students.

Keywords: Learning styles and learning strategies

Literature Review

The concept of learning style encompasses the cognitive, information processing, and behavioral aspects of learners, which are characterized by habitual, distinctive, steady, overall, natural, and individual patterns. Learning styles encompass many categories, theoretical foundations, and formation patterns. One of the learning styles that emerges is the perceptual learning style, which is essentially grounded in the process of information processing. Reid (2002) classified students into six distinct categories based on their sensory channel preferences, namely visual, auditory, tactile, kinesthetic, cooperative, and independent. Visual input is often regarded as the most efficacious method of facilitating visual learning. The auditory learner has a preference for aural stimuli, while the tactile learner seeks personal engagement with sensory information. Kinesthetic learners, on the other hand, demonstrate a preference for physical participation and input. Cooperative learners thrive in environments that encourage debate and collaboration, while independent learners excel in situations that foster autonomous thinking and problem-solving. The author's categorization of perceptual learning style aligns with the criteria outlined in the updated curricular standard. The approach is grounded on the preferred learning style of individuals and encompasses the three key attributes of students: positivity, engagement, and efficacy. This particular style categorization is seen advantageous for educators to effectively manage and analyse, hence this research study has chosen to utilize it.

There exist divergent interpretations of language acquisition methodologies among scholars both domestically and internationally. This study aims to provide a definition of English learning strategies, which encompass the many behaviors, techniques, and stages employed in order to achieve efficient English language acquisition. The classification of learning techniques from many viewpoints contributes to their inherent diversity. According to Oxford (1990), the concept may be categorized via two distinct strategies: direct and indirect. The aforementioned may be classified into three distinct areas, namely memory, cognition, and compensating techniques. The latter category can be further subdivided into metacognitive, emotional, and social strategies. The categorization of his learning processes has a higher level of specificity, lucidity, and hierarchical structure. The diagnostic table has gained significant recognition in academic circles. Consequently, the taxonomy developed by Oxford and the language learning strategy inventory devised by the same author are employed in the present research.

Numerous independent investigations have been conducted both domestically and internationally on the subject of learning style and strategy. However, there exists a paucity of research exploring the interrelationship between these two constructs. In a comparative analysis conducted by

Oxford and Erman (1995) on international studies, it was observed that individuals exhibited a preference for perceived style and strategy. A notable association exists. Cohen (1998) [4] highlighted the interconnectedness of learning methods and styles, emphasizing that the former cannot be dissociate from the latter. Furthermore, Wen Qiufang (2004) said that learning strategies are significantly impacted and constrained by learning styles. According to the study conducted by Wakamoto in 2000, there was a favorable correlation seen between extroversion and both functional operation and social emotional approach. According to the findings of Carson and Longhini (2002), learning styles have a significant role in determining strategies. It was observed that while learning styles tend to remain relatively consistent, strategies can vary and change over time.

The link between the two has been examined by domestic researchers, including Zheng Liping, Li Yan, Guo Zhengfeng, and others. The study conducted by Zheng Liping in 2006 on the identification of field independence and dependent determinism has been found to influence students' selection of learning methodologies. According to Li Yan (2009) the findings suggest that the students under investigation have not yet developed a dominant learning style. However, it was seen that students tend to choose a learning style that is characterized by thorough organization, intuition, and visual elements. On the other hand, learning styles associated with introversion and auditory preferences were not found to be favored by the students. Furthermore, it was observed that college students exhibited a high mean value in their use of metacognitive strategies. Additionally, the remaining five strategies, namely memory, cognition, emotion, compensation, and social strategies, were found to be employed at a moderate frequency. Within this group, there is a notable prevalence of emotional, social, and compensating methods, whereas the utilization of cognitive strategies remains relatively limited, as does the employment of memory techniques. Ultimately, a relationship exists between an individual's preferred learning style and their approach to employing learning strategies. In their study, Guo Zhengfeng and Fan Yixue (2013) examined the usage patterns and correlations of "them" among middle school pupils. The findings of the study indicated that students often employed compensatory strategies, cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, and social strategies, whereas the utilization of emotion strategy was comparatively lower.

The majority of research conducted on learning styles and learning methods mostly focuses on college students, with limited inclusion of junior high school students and the examination of the correlation between English learning styles and English learning techniques. The study methodology only employs a singular approach of conducting a questionnaire survey. Junior high school serves as the foundational level for English language acquisition. Enhancing students' English learning efficiency and establishing a solid basis for future language acquisition may be achieved by comprehending students' individual learning styles and facilitating the utilization of language learning techniques that align with their respective types. Hence, it is imperative to select junior high school students as the focal point of investigation, employing a comprehensive approach that combines the use of questionnaires and interviews. By examining their individual differences, a more profound understanding can be gained, enabling a more comprehensive exploration and analysis of the correlation between English learning styles and learning strategies.

Research Questions

This study raises three questions:

1. What is the general situation of junior high school students' English learning styles?
2. How about their use of English learning strategies?
3. What is the relationship between learning styles and learning strategies?

Method

In this study, 99 children from two second-grade regular classrooms at a prominent middle school in Changchun—50 from the eighth class and 49 from the twenty-third class—were chosen as the study's research subjects. The research tools were the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) produced by Oxford in 1990 and the Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire (PLSPQ) created by Reid in 1984. The exam was administered to the entire class as a unit. 99 surveys were distributed, and 95 of them—95 of which were valid—were retrieved, for a recovery rate of almost 96%. After that, 12 students were chosen at random to participate in semi-structured interviews. The data was then analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation analysis using Excel and SPSS, and the interview results of 12 students were studied and analyzed in detail.

Results and Discussion

The present state of English learning styles among junior middle school pupils

This study primarily employs descriptive statistical techniques to analyze the data collected from a questionnaire on perceptual learning styles. The mean and standard deviation of the six independent variables is calculated, allowing for an examination of the preferred and least preferred English perceptual learning styles among junior high school students, as well as an overall assessment of the situation. The tabulated data presents the precise statistical outcomes.

Table 1.0 Descriptive Statistics of Perceptual Learning Styles of Junior Middle School Students

Style Type	Number of Subjects	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Standard	Deviation Order
Visual type	93	20	50	38.05	6.20	1
Auditory type	93	18	50	37.90	6.42	2
Tactile type	93	26	50	36.86	4.73	3
Independent type	93	24	50	35.63	5.41	4
Kinesthetic type	93	24	48	35.53	5.40	5
Cooperative type	93	22	50	33.71	5.19	6

Table 1 presents an overview of the distribution of perceptual learning styles in English among junior high school students who participated in the survey conducted for this study. Based on the statistical table provided by Reid, it can be observed that the predominant learning style falls within the range of 38-50 points, while the secondary learning style is represented by scores ranging from 25-37 points. Additionally, learning styles that are deemed inconsequential are characterized by scores falling within the range of 0-24 points. The findings of this study revealed that junior high school students exhibited a diverse range of secondary learning styles. Notably, the predominant learning style among most junior high school students was visual, which aligns with previous research conducted by Reid (1987), Melton (1990), and Wang Chuming (1992). The study's findings indicate that Chinese learners exhibit a diverse range of predominant learning styles. The observed variations in outcomes might perhaps be attributed to the demographic distinction between the surveyed cohorts, since the participants in the study encompass college students exclusively, whereas junior high school students are comparatively younger, and their learning preferences are still undergoing development. The acquisition of English proficiency is a multifaceted endeavor encompassing the mastery of listening, speaking, reading, writing, translation, and other essential skills. This process necessitates learners' ability to effectively engage multiple senses, thereby necessitating the adoption of diverse learning methods and strategies. Consequently, learners should strive to cultivate a repertoire of learning styles to facilitate optimal English language acquisition.

Based on the data presented in the table, it can be observed that the visual learning style exhibits the highest average value of 38.05, suggesting its prominence as the most prevalent learning style among junior high school students. Additionally, the auditory learning style demonstrates a relatively high average value of 37.90, indicating its popularity among students. The tactile learning style, with a mean value of 36.86, is observed to be preferred to a lesser extent compared to the visual and auditory styles. The students who exhibited an autonomous learning style (mean = 35.63) and kinesthetic learning style (mean = 35.53) expressed a lower level of satisfaction. Conversely, students who had a cooperative learning style...The learning technique with the lowest preference was the mean of 33.71. This discovery aligns with the findings of Reid (1987), indicating that kids who have English as a second language mostly exhibit visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile learning styles. Individual learning styles are also prevalent among these students, whereas cooperative learning styles are the least commonly observed. The findings reported in this study demonstrate a strong correlation between the outcomes and the conventional teacher-centered instructional approach. In our country, the pedagogy of English instruction has traditionally relied on the teacher's exposition for a considerable duration. The conventional approach to education, which involves students engaging in active listening, engaging in post-class activity review, and afterwards undergoing diverse assessments, yields individuals with enhanced visual, auditory, and tactile learning preferences, while their kinesthetic and cooperative learning preferences tend to be comparatively lower.

Based on the examination of standard deviation data, it can be shown that the lowest difference is associated with the tactile type (4.73), while the highest difference is observed in the auditory type (6.42). Additionally, the visual type (6.20) also exhibits a somewhat bigger difference. The research exhibiting a larger standard deviation indicates a greater degree of variability in the distribution of learners across these two learning styles. The statistics also revealed that there was minimal variation

in the standard deviation among cooperative (5.19), kinesthetic (5.40), and autonomous (5.41) learners. In other words, individuals tend to exhibit greater consistency in their choices for perceptual learning techniques.

English Learning Strategies Used by Junior Middle School Students

This part mainly uses the data collected from the language learning strategy questionnaire to explore the English learning strategies of junior high school students and to see how they use them. The statistical results are shown in the following table:

Table 2.0 Descriptive Statistics of English Learning Strategies of Junior Middle School Students

Strategy Type	Number of Subjects	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Standard	Deviation Order
Compensation strategy	93	2.00	8.83	3.82	.89	1
Cognitive strategy	93	1.79	4.93	3.39	.69	2
Social Strategy	93	1.50	5.00	3.21	.78	3
Metacognitive strategy	93	1.11	4.67	3.17	.79	4
Memory strategy	93	1.44	5.00	3.10	.74	5
Emotional strategy	93	1.00	6.17	2.90	.92	6

Table 2 presents an overview of the English learning techniques employed by junior high school pupils, as examined in the current study. The table presents a ranking of mean values in descending order. The highest mean value is seen for compensatory strategies (3.82), followed by cognitive strategies (3.39), social strategies (3.21), metacognitive strategies (3.17), memory techniques (3.10), and emotional strategies (2.90). Based on the methodology outlined in the Oxford Learning Strategy Questionnaire, the mean frequency of strategy utilization consistently falls within the range of 4.5 to 5.0, indicating a high level of regularity. Instances of frequent strategy employment are often characterized by values ranging from 3.5 to 4.4. On occasion, strategies are employed with a moderate frequency, as shown by values between 2.5 and 3.4. Rare occurrences of strategy utilization are represented by values ranging from 1.5 to 2.4. Finally, strategies that are never employed fall within the range of 1.0 to 1.4. The table reveals a dearth of tactics employed by the subjects, with a notable absence of regularly utilized English learning strategies. The mean value of compensation techniques is 3.82, falling within the range of 3.5 to 4.4. The data reveals that compensation techniques are the most frequently employed among various types of tactics, suggesting that junior high school students have a greater tendency to utilize such strategies in the context of English language acquisition. This study includes findings from Bremmer (1999), Ding Zhiwei (2012), Guo Zhengfeng and Fan Yixue (2013), among others. The prevalence of employing compensation strategies among junior high school students can be attributed to their limited proficiency in English, inadequate development of a comprehensive English knowledge framework, and frequent encounters with learning challenges. Consequently, these students frequently resort to compensation strategies such as educated guessing, association, inference, and note-taking as means to address difficulties encountered during English language learning. The examined middle school kids (S7, S8, S12) also reported that they frequently employed compensatory tactics, such as seeking information from peers, conducting online searches, creating visual representations, and so on.

Based on the data shown in the table, it can be observed that, except for the compensation approach, the average values for the remaining five learning techniques fall within the range of 2.5 to 3.4. This finding suggests that students exhibit infrequent utilization of methods in the context of English language acquisition and have little proficiency in employing these strategies. According to the findings of Guo Zhengfeng and Fan Yixue's (2013) study of 100 junior high school students, the mean score for emotional techniques was 2.90, indicating a relatively low frequency of utilization. The findings of this study indicate that adolescents in junior high school have little proficiency in regulating their emotional responses. When encountering challenges in the process of learning English, individuals sometimes find it susceptible to losing confidence and therefore abandoning their efforts. Individuals often struggle with effectively managing and alleviating anxiety and stress associated with the learning process via self-motivation. In certain cases, individuals may even experience feelings of boredom or depression. There exist several factors contributing to this circumstance. It is imperative for parents, teachers, and schools to ascertain the underlying causes and provide assistance to individuals, enabling them to acquire emotional tools that facilitate timely adjustment, so mitigating the potential for significant bad outcomes.

Correlation between English Learning Styles and Learning Strategies of Junior Middle School Students
 Pearson correlation coefficient is used to analyze the overall correlation between English learning styles and learning strategies of junior high school students. The statistical results are shown in the following table:

Table 3.0 Pearson Correlation Analysis of English Learning Styles and Learning Strategies of Junior Middle School Student

		Memory strategy	Cognitive strategy	Compensation strategy	Metacognitive strategy	Emotional strategy	Social Strategy
Visual type	Pearson correlation	.355**	.272**	.139	.291**	.185	.234*
	Significance (two-tailed)	.000	.008	.185	.005	.075	.024
	Number of cases	93	93	93	93	93	93
Auditory type	Pearson correlation	.267**	.202	.151	.250*	.155	.197
	Significance (two-tailed)	.010	.052	.148	.016	.137	.058
	Number of cases	93	93	93	93	93	93
Tactile type	Pearson correlation	.469**	.173	.331**	.393**	.321**	.262*
	Significance (two-tailed)	.000	.098	.001	.000	.002	.011
	Number of cases	93	93	93	93	93	93
Kinesthetic type	Pearson correlation	.364**	.187	.344**	.296**	.266**	.329**
	Significance (two-tailed)	.000	.073	.001	.004	.010	.001
	Number of cases	93	93	93	93	93	93
Cooperative type	Pearson correlation	.431**	.176	.370**	.253*	.351**	.185
	Significance (two-tailed)	.000	.091	.000	.015	.001	.076
	Number of cases	93	93	93	93	93	93
Independent type	Pearson correlation	.389**	.291**	.344**	.400**	.384**	.324**
	Significance (two-tailed)	.000	.005	.001	.000	.000	.002
	Number of cases	93	93	93	93	93	93

At the 0.01 level (two-tailed), the correlation is significant. **

At the 0.05 level (two-tailed), the correlation is significant. *

In the study, the correlation coefficient R is bounded by -1 and 1, indicating that the magnitude of R corresponds to the strength of the connection. According to Qin Xiaoqing (2003:238) [10], a statistically significant correlation coefficient is seen when the P value associated with the correlation coefficient is below 0.05. In statistical analysis, a P value below 0.05 is commonly regarded as reaching the threshold of statistical significance. In such cases, the absolute value of the correlation coefficient is typically observed to be less than 0.20, which is considered to represent the lowest level of correlation and is

often disregarded. Correlation coefficients falling within the range of ± 0.20 to ± 0.40 are generally classified as indicating a low level of correlation. Correlation coefficients ranging from ± 0.40 to ± 0.90 are considered to be indicative of significant correlations. It is worth noting that correlation coefficients exceeding an absolute value of 0.90 are rare and represent the highest level of correlation. In accordance with the established criteria, we shall undertake a comprehensive analysis and discourse on the relationship between English learning styles and English learning methodologies among junior high school students.

Based on the correlation coefficient presented in Table 3, a significant relationship is seen between the variables of English learning styles and learning techniques among the junior high school students who participated in this study. There exists a favorable correlation between six distinct perceptual learning styles, including visual learning style and auditory learning style, and six specific learning methods, such as memory strategy and cognitive strategy. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the majority of these studies have a low level of association. The precise pertinent circumstances are outlined as follows: The correlation coefficient ($R = 0.469$) suggests a strong association between the tactile type and the utilization of memory methods, indicating that students with a tactile learning preference are more inclined to employ memory strategies. Additionally, cooperative learners also shown a willingness to employ memory strategies ($R = 0.431$), ranking second only to tactile learners. Independent learners have a preference for employing metacognitive methods, and there exists a strong positive connection between these two variables ($R = 0.400$). Moreover, all three sets of correlation coefficients mentioned above surpass the threshold of 0.40, indicating a noteworthy level of correlation. The study found significant correlation coefficients between cognitive strategies and tactile ($R = 0.173$), kinesthetic ($R = 0.187$), and cooperative ($R = 0.176$) strategies. Additionally, affective strategies were found to be correlated with visual ($R = 0.185$) and auditory ($R = 0.155$) strategies. Furthermore, cognitive strategies were found to be related to sensory strategies (R), and the social strategy was found to be associated with auditory style ($R = 0.197$) and cooperative style ($R = 0.185$). The aforementioned findings indicate a little correlation between these particular learning styles and the associated techniques, suggesting that the latter might be disregarded. The correlation coefficients among the other groupings of variables ranged from 0.2 to 0.4, suggesting a weak link.

The table presented provides evidence of a notable positive correlation between the six learning styles and memory strategies. This finding aligns with the research conducted by Gao Wei (2009) [11], which examined the relationship between perceptual learning styles and language learning strategies among senior high school students. The observed correlation coefficients (R values) ranging from 0.267 to 0.469 are statistically significant at a level of 0.01. The findings indicate that kids in junior high school, regardless of their learning styles, tend to employ memory methods to some degree. Out of the 12 students that were questioned by the author, a total of 8 students (specifically, S1, S3, S4, S5, S7, S8, S11, and S12) all made reference of this particular point. One possible explanation for this phenomenon might be attributed to the lack of a conducive English-speaking environment for Chinese students. Additionally, the longstanding emphasis on rote memory in English education, along with the common practice of professors dictating words and assigning text recitation, may contribute to this outcome. Hence, it is common for students with diverse learning preferences to employ various memory techniques, including the use of flashcards, repeated listening, repeated writing, reading aloud, and creating mind maps, among others, as means to enhance their English language acquisition. The table presented reveals that the correlation coefficient between memory strategies and both cooperative learning style and tactile learning style exceeds 0.40. This suggests that individuals who adopt these two learning styles tend to employ memory strategies more frequently during the learning process. Notably, the correlation coefficient between memory strategies and tactile learning style is the highest ($R = 0.469$), which aligns with the findings of Gao Wei's research ($R = 0.461$). During the interview with S3, a student who exhibits a tactile learning style, she indicated her utilization of several memory methods in the context of English language acquisition. Specifically, she highlighted employing techniques such as writing and sketching to enhance her memory retention.

Based on the data presented in the table, there is a noteworthy positive correlation observed between the six learning styles and metacognitive strategies. The correlation coefficient (R value) falls within the range of 0.250 to 0.400, which is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This finding aligns with the research conducted by Wu Lilin et al. (2009) [12], which investigated the relationship between learning styles and vocabulary learning strategies among science and engineering students. The remaining five learning styles have a favorable correlation with metacognitive methods. The findings indicate that students across various learning styles exhibit a tendency to employ metacognitive methods to varying degrees. In contemporary times, a significant number of kids in junior high school possess a heightened awareness regarding the organization and administration of their English language acquisition. There exists a notable positive correlation between the independent learning style

and the utilization of metacognitive techniques, with a correlation coefficient of .400. Additionally, the tactile learning style also exhibits a strong positive correlation with the employment of metacognitive strategies. During the interview, four participants expressed their intention to strategize their approach to learning the English language. As an illustration, one of the students, referred to as S9, expressed their intention to create a comprehensive timetable in order to effectively organize their academic pursuits both prior to the commencement and midway through each semester. One approach is to strategize the allocation of time for completing a workbook by determining the number of days required or the number of pages to be written every day. The student with a self-directed learning approach, referred to as S11, expressed their intention to utilize their weekend to strategically allocate time for various activities. They plan to determine specific time slots for different tasks, such as writing, and establish clear objectives. By breaking down their goals into manageable increments, they aim to avoid task non-completion or succumbing to procrastination. The aforementioned findings indicate that a subset of junior high school children possess a discernible level of consciousness about the management and organization of their English language acquisition. Moreover, these students exhibit a higher degree of engagement and proactivity in their learning endeavors compared to their counterparts in elementary school.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be inferred that the aforementioned points collectively support the notion that... This study aims to examine the English learning styles and tactics of 99 students from a junior middle school in Changchun via the utilization of written questionnaires and oral interviews. This research presents three inquiries: (1) What is the prevailing state of English learning approaches among junior high school students? (2) What is the extent of their utilization of English learning strategies? (3) The inquiry pertains to the correlation between learning styles and learning tactics. Based on the results of the statistical study, the following conclusions can be drawn.

(1) Junior high school students are characterized by a variety of secondary learning styles, visual style is the only major style among the six styles (above 38 points), and the other five styles are secondary. The types of vision, hearing, touch, independence, kinesthesia and cooperation are arranged from high to low.

2) The use of English learning strategies of junior middle school students: Junior middle school students are not good at English learning strategies, their utilization rate is low, and they lack the learning strategies they often use. The frequency of use was compensation > cognition > social > metacognition > memory > affective strategies. The most frequently used strategy of junior high school students is only compensation strategy, the other five strategies are used less frequently, and the most disliked strategy is affective strategy.

(3) The correlation analysis shows that there is a positive correlation between English learning styles and English learning strategies of junior high school students, but most of the correlations are low. Tactile and cooperative learning styles are significantly correlated with memory strategies, while independent learning style is significantly correlated with metacognitive strategies, both of which are higher than 0.40. The correlation coefficients below 0.20 are: cognitive strategies and tactile, kinesthetic and cooperative; affective strategies and visual, auditory; social strategies and auditory, cooperative. There is almost no relationship between these learning styles and strategies, which can be ignored. The correlation coefficients between the other groups of variables were between 0.2 and 0.4, and the correlation was low. From the correlation analysis, it is found that there is a correlation between English learning styles and learning strategies of junior high school students. Learning style determines strategy, so teachers should not only teach according to the overall learning style of the whole class, but also understand how to match the two. On the one hand, we can find and use adaptive learning strategies according to different learning styles. On the other hand, we should guide them to expand their learning styles and use a variety of learning strategies so that students can learn English efficiently. For junior high school students, they should grasp their personal learning styles and corresponding learning strategies in the process of learning, and constantly improve their self-confidence and ability in language learning.

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REENVISIONING DIGITAL COMPETENCY TRAINING FOR ESL PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS THROUGH EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

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Abstract

Recent literature emphasizes the importance of teachers possessing technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK) to meet the requirements of Digital Learning. This study examines the impact of Digital Competency Training (DCT) on the development of Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) in 93 pre-service ESL teachers. The DCT project involved weekly 3-hour sessions with eight workshop modules and two assessments, aiming to enhance participants' digital skills and TPACK through experiential learning. Data were collected using qualitative focus group discussions and an evaluation of digital outputs, alongside a quantitative TPACK competency self-evaluation instrument. Preliminary findings indicate that DCT positively influenced participants, increasing their awareness and proficiency in utilizing digital skills and tools. The study highlights the effectiveness of DCT in enhancing pre-service teachers' TPACK, emphasizing the importance of technology integration in teacher education programs to prepare educators for digital learning environments.

Keywords: TPACK, ESL pre-service teachers, digital competency

Background of Study

With a commitment to fostering effective learning, educators diligently strive to craft the most conducive and enriching learning environment. Recent studies show language educators experimenting with strategies and technology to equip students, especially pre-service teachers, with technological knowledge and skills for future use (Said et al., 2021; Singh & Kasim, 2019). Additionally, ESL pre-service teachers must design innovative lessons and update their technological knowledge to adopt and adapt educational technology in their teaching (Huang, 2021). In the TESL program, Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework is currently used to integrate technology into the academic courses offered. In the "ICT for English Language Teaching Course", students are introduced to various digital tools and platforms that can enhance language learning and teaching. They learn how to effectively integrate these technologies into their future classrooms to create engaging and interactive language lessons. Moreover, the course emphasizes the importance of staying up to date with the latest advancements in educational technology, ensuring that pre-service teachers can adapt and utilize emerging tools to meet the evolving needs of their students. By incorporating TPACK into the TESL program, educators aim to foster a generation of tech-savvy teachers who can confidently navigate the digital landscape and elevate the language learning experience for their future students.

Statement of Problem

Despite recent advancements in integrating technology into language education, there exists a research gap concerning the efficacy of such efforts in equipping ESL pre-service teachers with the necessary digital skills and Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) for future use. While studies show language educators experimenting with strategies and technology to empower students, particularly pre-service teachers, with technological knowledge, there is limited research on the long-term impact of such interventions as the Digital Competency Training (DCT) project. Although the DCT project appears to be a transformative initiative designed to enhance the participants' teaching capabilities through experiential learning, a comprehensive evaluation of its effectiveness and sustainability in preparing tech-savvy teachers remains to be explored. To address this gap, further research is needed to investigate the lasting effects of DCT on pre-service ESL teachers' TPACK development and their ability to effectively integrate technology into their language teaching practices. This research could provide valuable insights for teacher education programs, guiding them towards more effective approaches in nurturing digitally adept educators capable of navigating the evolving landscape of language learning technologies.

Significance of Study

The significance of this study lies in its exploration of Digital Competency Training (DCT), on the development of Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) in pre-service ESL teachers. By investigating the effectiveness of DCT, this research contributes valuable insights to the field of teacher education, shedding light on the essential role of experiential learning in enhancing participants' digital skills and TPACK. The comprehensive approach, incorporating qualitative focus group discussions, evaluation of digital outputs, and quantitative TPACK competency self-evaluation, ensures a thorough assessment of the program's outcomes. The preliminary findings demonstrating the positive influence of DCT on participants' awareness and proficiency in utilizing digital tools emphasize the significance of integrating technology in language education. This study underscores the importance of equipping future educators with the necessary digital competencies, as they prepare to navigate the dynamic landscape of digital learning environments, thus fostering the growth of a tech-savvy generation of teachers.

Research Questions

1. How do ESL pre-service teachers perceive their TPACK?
2. How does DCT develop students' TPACK?

Method

To evaluate the effect of Digital Competency Training (DCT) on 93 ESL pre-service teachers' TPACK, this study combined a few instruments. Focused and in-depth focus group conversations were conducted to collect qualitative data, revealing insights into participants' opinions and experiences with the DCT program. A detailed analysis of the digital outputs created during the training sessions provided qualitative information on the participants' use of newly learned digital skills and knowledge in real-world situations. A TPACK competency self-evaluation tool (Schmid et al., 2021) was used to collect quantitative data in addition to the qualitative data before and after the 10-week DCT program. Using this measure, it was possible to quantify how the participants' self-perceived TPACK competencies changed during the course of the program. A thorough assessment of the efficiency of DCT in developing pre-service teachers' digital abilities and TPACK will be provided by the combination of qualitative focus group discussions, evaluations of digital output, and quantitative TPACK self-evaluation.

Findings and Discussion

How do ESL pre-service teachers perceive their TPACK?

Items / (n=93)	Before DCT Mean/SD		After DCT Mean/SD	
Content Knowledge (CK)	4.01	0.89	4.11	0.86
Technological Knowledge (TK)	3.85	0.62	4.23	0.91
Pedagogical Knowledge (PK)	3.68	0.72	3.70	0.65
Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK)	3.88	0.89	3.94	1.12
Technological Content Knowledge (TCK)	3.59	0.56	3.89	1.32
Technological Pedagogical Knowledge (TPK)	3.27	0.99	3.56	0.62
TPACK	3.56	0.76	4.31	1.43

The study assessed the impact of Digital Competency Training (DCT) on 93 participants' knowledge levels in various areas. Before DCT, participants had a mean Content Knowledge (CK) score of 4.01, Technological Knowledge (TK) score of 3.85, Pedagogical Knowledge (PK) score of 3.68, Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) score of 3.88, Technological Content Knowledge (TCK) score of 3.59, Technological Pedagogical Knowledge (TPK) score of 3.27, and overall Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) score of 3.56. After DCT, participants' mean scores improved, with CK increasing to 4.11, TK to 4.23, PK to 3.70, PCK to 3.94, TCK to 3.89, TPK to 3.56, and TPACK to 4.31. These findings suggest that DCT positively impacted participants' knowledge levels across different dimensions, particularly in TPACK, indicating the effectiveness of the training program in enhancing their competencies in the integration of technology in teaching (Said, 2021).

How does DCT develop students' TPACK?

The thematic analysis of the focus group discussion on effectiveness of DCT and assessment of digital output revealed several significant insights. 5 important themes and sub-themes emerged. Participants highlighted the benefits of ICT, including access to engaging resources, interactive learning experiences, and the use of digital tools to cater to diverse learners. Duolingo emerged as a valuable language learning app. Challenges in technology adoption and the need to explore new features were acknowledged. Integrating technology in teaching was seen as transformative, fostering digital literacy. Participants expressed increased confidence in using technology for instruction. Additionally, TikTok was recognized as an enjoyable tool for language learning. 186 digital outputs showcased students' ability in producing high-quality videos translating high understanding of subject-matter. These findings emphasize the significance of effectively integrating technology to enhance language education and adapt to the needs of learners.

Limitations

Several limitations were identified in this study. Firstly, the use of self-reported data through the TPACK competency self-evaluation instrument could introduce biases or social desirability effects, potentially affecting result accuracy. Secondly, the reliance on focus group discussions and self-reported data might lead to recall bias, as participants may not accurately remember or report certain experiences. Moreover, despite efforts to maintain objectivity, researcher bias might have influenced the data collection and analysis process, potentially impacting study outcomes. Lastly, the study's short-term focus primarily on the immediate impact of the DCT program leaves room for future research to explore longer-term effects on participants' Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) development.

Conclusion

The findings of this study suggest that the Digital Competency Training (DCT) program positively influenced pre-service ESL teachers' awareness and proficiency in utilizing digital skills and tools, enhancing their Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK). However, limitations related to self-reported data, recall bias, and researcher bias should be considered when interpreting the results. Moreover, the study's short-term focus highlights the need for future research to examine the longer-term impact of DCT on participants' TPACK development. To address these limitations and build on the study's insights, future research should consider using a larger and more diverse sample, incorporating objective measures of TPACK, and extending the study's duration to assess the sustainability of the program's effects. Additionally, a controlled experimental design with a comparative group can help isolate the specific impact of DCT. Furthermore, exploring how TPACK influences actual teaching practices and student learning outcomes can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the program's effectiveness in preparing tech-savvy educators for digital learning environments.

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A SYNTHESIS REVIEW OF MINDSETS AND LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Abstract

Mindsets, also termed as lay/implicit theories, refer to beliefs about whether a person's characteristics, such as personality and intellectual abilities, are mutable (i.e., a growth mindset/incremental theory) or immutable (i.e., a fixed mindset/entity theory). Due to the increased research on mindsets in second language acquisition (SLA), the researcher would like to explore and present a preliminary study investigation of the various research on mindsets influencing second language learning in a systematic manner. Previous research had focused on learning outcomes; consequently, it is necessary to investigate a direct relationship between mindsets and learning to find out how mindsets affect classroom behaviours. Furthermore, research has rarely investigated how individually held mindsets may influence the ways in which people interact with each other. This underlines the importance of researchers in second language acquisition (SLA) to address how mindsets play a role in motivational processes for language learning.

Keywords: Growth mindset, fixed mindset, and language learning.

Background of Study

"Mindset" is an important element in the psychological concept that has had a wide influence on motivation research in the past thirty years, as well as on the recent reform of educational practices (Dweck, 1999). Dweck (2015) further suggests that people have beliefs or lay theories that frame how they perceive and explain their social world. Such mindsets can be broadly categorized as an entity theory, whereby personal qualities are viewed as fixed, or as an incremental theory, whereby personal qualities are construed as malleable. These beliefs lead people to think, feel, and act differently. Mindsets refer to lay people's beliefs about whether human attributes (e.g., intelligence, personality, language aptitude) are essential, pre-determined traits (fixed mindsets) or malleable propensities can be cultivated (growth mindsets) (Lou and Noels, 2019).

Learners' mindsets have received much attention in psychology and education research, but only recently have foreign/second language acquisition (SLA) researchers begun to study these beliefs, as research has consistently reported that when a person holds a growth mindset, they tend to show more resilience in the face of setbacks and engage in more problem-solving behaviors. Such a tendency results in more engagement with given tasks and, ultimately, better learning outcomes.

Statement of Problem

Lou & Noels, (2017a, 2017b, 2019) have developed and validated the Language Mindsets Inventory (LMI) with learners of a variety of foreign languages and second language (L2) learners, to present the underlying theoretical framework of learners endorsing different degrees of entity and incremental/decremental theories regarding general-language-intelligence, second language-aptitude, and age-sensitivity beliefs (critical or sensitive period hypothesis). These different beliefs can be further reduced into two hierarchical structures reflecting fixed and growth mindsets (Lou & Noels, 2017). Lou & Noels (2016, 2019a) have also conceptualized the Language-Mindset Meaning System (LMMS) framework, in language motivation, *effort beliefs*, *attributions*, *achievement goals*, *failure/mistake mindset*, *self-regulatory tendency*, *competence-based emotional tendency*. However, Collett and Berg (2019) who had carried out research to validate this language mindset inventory, suggested that the LMI has yet to be tested or validated and carefully tested in a variety of contexts prior to its wider implementation. In view of this and other related findings, this study is set to address the gap by explaining mindsets and language learning, and also, their effects on assessment. Yan, et. al. (2021) highlights the potential synergy between formative assessment and growth mindset in enhancing academic achievement as well as the importance of cultural contexts in understanding their roles in student learning.

Significance of Study

This study hopes to contribute to advancing English Language Education as some people ascribe successful language learning to an innate aptitude that cannot be further developed, at least after a certain young age (i.e., an entity mindset), while other people believe that language learning ability can be improved (i.e., an incremental mindset). This preliminary study can present a brief overview of mindsets and language learning.

Research Questions

This study aims to evaluate the different factors that can influence growth mindsets and improve the overall language acquisition in second language learners with the research questions being,

1. What types of main research had been carried out recently regarding mindsets and language learning?
2. What are the main findings from this research and their impact on further research on mindset and second language learning?

Method

A growth mindset as conceived by Stanford psychologist Carol Dweck and colleagues, is the belief that a person's capacities and talents can be improved over time, based on 30 years of research on students' attitudes about failure. For this study, thus, the inclusion criteria will be the main articles or input about second/foreign language learners, communication, and on mindsets, namely, the three aspects of language mindsets, and the role of language mindsets on language learning motivation (goal setting, efforts beliefs, and intention to study), as well as responses to challenging situations in which the L2 is used, with regards to Dweck's growth mindset concept. Most of the articles are obtained from studies in second language learning, linguistic psychology and language pedagogy. The main research chosen would be from the perspective of teacher trainees, and foreign/second language learners, and perceptions of educators, together with potential synergy between formative assessment and growth mindset in enhancing academic achievement as well as the importance of cultural contexts in understanding their roles in student learning. Zarrinabadi & Lou (2022) provide an illustration of the breadth and variability of research on mindsets in language learning and teaching and the need for greater theoretical and conceptual clarity and integration in the field.

Findings and Discussion

Haukås & Mercer (2022) conducted a qualitative study using an innovative research methodology to explore the mindset orientations of pre-service language teachers using 3 stages study. From the analysis of the data, there are several issues with important implications in terms of the complexity of mindset conceptualisations and several methodological concerns. Lou, & Noels (2018, 2019a) claim that existing studies of mindsets in language education can identify research gaps, by addressing five questions:

- (1) What are people's mindsets about language learning ability?
- (2) How are mindsets linked to other motivational factors?
- (3) How do contexts influence language mindsets?
- (4) Do growth-mindset interventions contribute to more adaptive learning, and if so, how?
- (5) How can educators support students' growth mindset?

Lou & Noels (2019b) also find that incremental (vs. entity) beliefs may lead to more adaptive outcomes not only in the classroom but also sociocultural context, and that language-based rejection sensitivity (RS) is detrimental to intergroup relations and cultural adjustment among migrant, similarly to Lou & Noels (2018b) claim that western and heritage cultural internalizations predict EFL students' language motivation and confidence in using English.

Limitations

As research on language mindsets in SLA is still in its early stages, more research is needed to understand the content and construct of language mindsets, their influences, and the dynamic

processes growth mindsets (Lou & Noels, 2019a). For example, Yin, et. al. (2022) who examine the relationship between self-determination and growth mindset, found 444 EFL China tertiary students displayed moderately positive perceptions of growth mindset with no significant differences in English language proficiency, however, Barry & Wang (2020) suggest that growth mindset was a stronger predictor of self-regulated learning (SRL) than self-efficacy and intrinsic value in their research.

Conclusion

Growth mindsets are often seen as the “grit” that one has when learning a second language. As Lou & Noels (2019a) claim that future research can be done on whether, why, how, when, for whom, and to what extent mindsets impact different educationally relevant outcomes, including persistence, resilience, and achievement. Understanding these complex questions are important for informing effective education and advancing motivation research in SLA. As Sato (2021) suggests that while growth-mindset positively contributes to problem solving, the individually-held beliefs do not necessarily translate to social contexts such as peer interaction in the classroom. Future research should also consider the complexities that can arise from differences across contexts and students with customized interventions for specific groups, issues, and contexts in SLA.

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CINEMATIC SPEAKING VIDEO: TECHNOLOGY-ENHANCED TBLT TO PROMOTE EFL STUDENTS' COMMUNICATIVE PERFORMANCE WITH AUTHENTIC ONLINE AUDIENCE

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Abstract

One of pedagogical approaches that can help students focus on language use for communication purposes is Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). As technology has become an important element in educational settings, technology-mediated tasks can offer new opportunities for learning the foreign language and for developing communicative performance. This study investigates the use of cinematic speaking video uploaded on YouTube in a combination of technology enhanced-TBLT. Using quantitative study design, this study describes EFL students' process in creating cinematic speaking video and measures the effectiveness of the videos in improving the students' communicative performance. Tests and questionnaire were used to collect data. This study revealed that cinematic speaking video improved students' communicative performance. It gave students opportunity to have authentic online audience and real-life communication on YouTube platform. The synergy between the task and technology promotes mutual benefits: the task can be enhanced by the affordances of the web 2.0 technologies and technology can be uniquely useful for language learning. Based on the result of the study, a further investigation on the students' perceptions toward the use of tasks and digital learning platform with authentic online audience is highly advised.

Keywords: Communicative performance, EFL students, speaking video, task-based language teaching, technology.

Background of Study

Recently, task-based language teaching (TBLT) has been conceptualized on a continuum from communicative activities that can accompany more traditional form-focused approaches (Ellis, 2009) to more authentic everyday life activities that reflect real-world activities and interactions (Long, 2016). Much of the research from the technology enhanced-ELT tasks approach uses tasks such as information gap tasks, narration tasks, agreement tasks, that can be more or less authentic and/or relevant for the learners. Regardless of the definition or version of TBLT, several common criteria define a task. A task should focus on meaning (rather than linguistic forms) and should be outcome-based; that is to say, there should be a reason to use the language beyond the activity itself.

Since nowadays' people lifestyles depend on social media, audience feedback and online participation (Veletsianos, 2018), this study focused on other language aspects including learners' confidence in their language knowledge and skills, communicative opportunities, and communicative performance (Yashima, 2002). Even though many learners have the linguistic knowledge and opportunities to use the target language for communicative purposes, having a spontaneous and sustained communication in foreign language is more challenging. Many learners prefer to avoid these opportunities (MacIntyre et al., 2001) for reasons including embarrassment, anxiety, and lack of confidence in language skills (Gonzalez-Lloret & Ortega, 2014). Highlighting to explore the potential of using social media tools for language learning and literacy. We utilize YouTube as one of the most popular social media in ELT. Chtouki et al. (2012) presented the results of a study done on the use of YouTube videos to enhance students' learning. YouTube videos have positive impacts on students' learning performance.

Statement of Problem

Studies which focused on investigating the effects that integrating authentic audience for real-life task-based purposes in a computer-mediated communication (CMC)-infused curriculum, have on FL learners' motivation and perceptions on EFL speaking are still lacking (Chapelle, 2005). Even though research in FL speaking has shown that FL learners who develop an awareness of audience can improve their communicative skill and become more confident in their speaking abilities (Choi, 2008), the audience is usually the instructor and students' peers, and the purpose is commonly dictated by the

teacher in an academic EFL setting.

For those reasons, it is crucial to conduct this study, considering that ELT area which focus on preparing students to have real audience and face online interactions is scarce (Veletsianos, 2018). Moreover, this area of study has not been found yet in Indonesian context. Given the knowledge gaps, the present study was design to describe and investigate whether technology enhanced-speaking tasks can promote EFL students' communicative performance with online audience.

Significance of Study

The findings of this study are expected to provide scientific evidence on the impacts of technology enhanced-ELT speaking tasks on students' preparation and performance with authentic online audience. Theoretically, this study can add further supportive evidence to the literature that acknowledges the fundamental role of technology enhanced-ELT task with online audience.

Practically, the results of the study will give benefits to the speaking instructor or those who are interested in teaching speaking. This study prepares students to have real audience and face online interaction. Thus, the teachers will be able to use the best strategy in teaching speaking to improve students' speaking skill in digital context.

Research questions

The present study tries to investigate the impacts of technology enhanced-ELT task on students' communicative preparation and performance, and with authentic online audience. Based on the purpose, the research questions are formulated as follows:

1. How do the EFL students prepare their communicative performance in technology enhanced-speaking task with online audience?
2. How do the EFL students perform the technology enhanced-speaking task with online audience?

Method

Using descriptive quantitative study design, we recruited forty participants (22 females and 18 males) in the fourth semester from the English Education Study Program in one university in Malang, Indonesia. At the time this study was carried out, they were attending a course on Public speaking. Prior to attending the course, these participants had very little experience in Public English communication, especially with authentic online audience. Thus, the course was designed to enable them to express thoughts and ideas through their communicative performance with online audience on YouTube. We employed a Research and Development (R & D) study to answer the first research question and one group pretest-posttest experimental design to elaborate the second one.

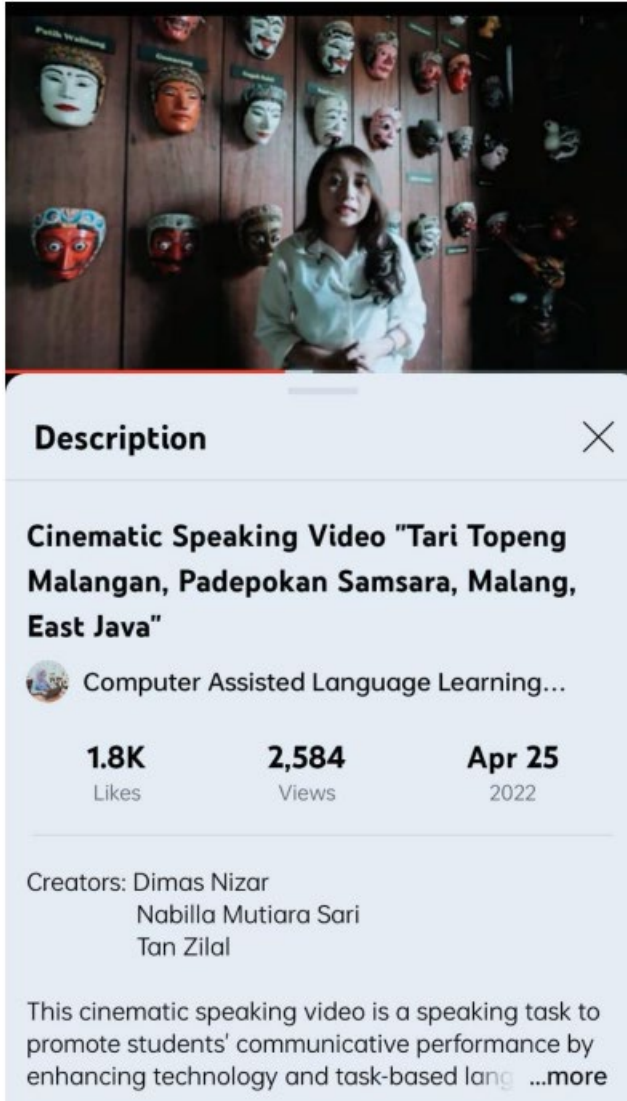
Findings and Discussion

Public speaking task by using cinematic video uploaded on YouTube is a great combination of technology-TBLT. In term of technology-TBLT design, we concluded the students' activities into three stages: pre-speaking task stage, during-speaking task stage, and post-speaking task stage. Pre-speaking task stage was the first and primary stage of the teaching procedure, the aim of which was to activate the students' background knowledge, arouse their interest to the speaking theme, develop expectations about the topic, generate vocabulary and related language, and set up a purpose for them to speak up. It was intended to provide students with opportunities to activate their own existing schematic speaking knowledge. This stage served as the preparation stage.

During-speaking task stage was designed and assigned students with speaking tasks with cinematic speaking video activities to make students speak English fluently and accurately. Tasks were designed to arouse students' communicative performance such as pronunciation, fluency, accuracy, and speaking for thorough comprehension. Post-speaking activities were principally designed for students to practice communicative output. The tasks at this stage were designed to offer students communicative opportunities to use the language points to communicate and extend the content to the real-life situation. The students were assigned to report their cinematic speaking video by uploading and sharing their video on You Tube, and in this point, students have their online audience.

The content of cinematic speaking videos was evaluated by the experts (two lecturers of English study program and a lecturer of visual communication design), and a practitioner of cinematography. Since we need more suggestions and evaluations, feedback from the experts and

practitioner of were essentially needed. From the feedback, we would know which part of the students' cinematic speaking videos that needed to be improved before the videos were published and shared on YouTube. Below are some students' cinematic speaking videos that have been uploaded on YouTube. Totally, the cinematic speaking videos have been watched by more than two thousand viewers and got hundreds of likes.



<https://youtu.be/clrpKcmdlc>



https://youtu.be/Hh_cwk0Xf1E

The effectiveness test was used to measure the effect of cinematic speaking video on students' communicative performance. The results of the t-test show that $t = 19.318$ and $p = 0.000$ (Table 1). It indicates that the effect was significant. Therefore, it can be concluded that the use of cinematic speaking video improved the students' communicative performance.

Table 1.0 Paired samples tests on students' communicative performance in general
Paired differences

	Mean	Std. deviation	Std. error mean	95% Confidence interval of the difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
Posttest – Pretest	28.42683	13.32503	1.47150	25.49900	31.35466	19.318	41	.000

Cinematic speaking videos that have been uploaded on YouTube shape students to examine and evaluate their own speaking performance. As a result, students can have a thorough understanding of their speaking performance and improve the performance since they are solely responsible for whether or not their performance achieves or fails to meet a specified degree of speaking achievement. YouTube sharing indeed triggers students' confidence and hard work since they knew that their performance will be watched by authentic online audience, and it becomes an important point for students to deliver better English-speaking performance (Widiastuti et al, 2022).

Limitation

The reality that their performance was published on YouTube and watched by authentic online audience motivated them to work harder and to perform their best. Nevertheless, the result of the study highly recommends a further investigation on the students' perceptions toward the use of tasks and digital learning platform with online audience.

Conclusion

This study has reported the use of cinematic speaking video with authentic online audience as a public speaking task affects the students' communicative performance, and the students have positive learning experiences. As the findings showed, cinematic speaking video with online audience on YouTube used in Public speaking class enhanced the students' independency, self-reflection, and creativity in learning, develops the students' communicative performance, and created a meaningful interaction for the students through YouTube publication and sharing.

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'FUN WRITING OF I + 4 Cs @ IN4CONs USING TIK TOK APP'**Halytha Giok @ Lily Natasha Abdullah**

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lnbabee@gmail.com**Abstract**

This paper aims to investigate the positive impact of using the TikTok App as a means of fun writing presentations compared to the conventional way of work sending using exercise books. Initially, students were introduced to the I+4Cs@IN4CONs method (Introduction and 4Cs -Content1, Content2, Content3 and Conclusion), designed to assist students to write better 5-paragraph essays in their writing tasks. It is said that engaging students in a fun learning activity using TikTok as the medium of writing presentations could increase motivation, passion, and learning engagement. A group of Form 4 students were involved in this study and their writing performances were recorded based on the writing tasks submission, PBD performance and video presentation. Classwork essay submission through the exercise book and TikTok App were taken as the Pre-test and Post-Test comparison, together with Paper 2 PPT and PSPT marks to further strengthen the positive impact of TikTok app in providing fun writing. Based on the recorded writing tasks in class and exam performance, it was found that the TikTok app has provided fun as well as increased writing creativity and skills using I+4Cs@IN4CONs method. Additionally, the use of TikTok App was also found to improve students' oral presentation skills. Future studies could include the creation of a YouTube website for writing presentations to add varieties in classroom writing tasks.

Keywords: I+4Cs@IN4CONs Method, TikTok app, 5-paragraph essay, fun writing, fun learning, video presentation

Background of Study

Students' writing ability has shown great improvement since the introduction and use of **I+4Cs Method** in writing at least a 5-paragraph essay (LNA, 2020) based on the marks achieved in tests and exams. However, the number of writing tasks and group discussion response sending were a bit low and not achieving the 100% target. Therefore, it is undeniable that students might need something fun that could make them willingly write their tasks, a chance to show their creativity and thus attract their attention to write and be able to hand in their writing task on time. It is stated that learning should fuel curiosity, foster creativity and encourage us to become lifelong learners. The best way to achieve these intentions is to make learning fun! because when we enjoy and love what we do, it becomes a natural, spontaneous and organic activity. (Rodrigo, 2018). And so, driven by the current trend among teenagers nowadays, TikTok App is particularly chosen because 'users can create a variety of videos ranging from challenges, dance videos, magic tricks, and funny videos.'(Influencer Marketing Hub, 2022) In short, students were given a chance to have fun with the trending TikTok App but still focusing in fulfilling writing task given. In 200 words or less, set the background for your study. Describe the problem you are investigating and how this is an issue which warrants attention. Draw on current literature to support your claims. Content words in your title should be elaborated in this section.

Statement of Problem

Based on class tasks observation, it is noticed that writing using the conventional style i.e., using an essay book is rigid and not fun. Moreover, essay book writing would sometimes result in late sending and some purposely did not send their work. Furthermore, some missed the steps in I+4Cs@IN4CONs method writing and thus contributed to marks decreased in their Paper 2 exam overall. Other than that, students showed lack of interest in their writing activity and because of that the period of sending was long overdue and this contributed to the longer time of time spent to mark their writing tasks and class discussion about the topic given in the writing activity.

Significance of Study

Fun Writing of I+4Cs@IN4CONs using TikTok App has contributed to a few satisfying significances. Firstly, students have shown great improvement in their writing skills where percentage has increased not only in their marks and grades but also in the writing quality and quantity. Moreover, students have

shown positive impacts in their writing lesson presentation which is now more exciting because students were able to develop their own creativity and perform more enjoyable presentations using the app. Other than that, it added varieties in the teaching and learning in the class and an opportunity for the teacher and students to be more exposed to the use of digital media in the classroom situation. Most importantly, this fun writing has automatically enhanced fun learning in the classroom.

Research Questions

The study has arisen a few significant questions during the process.

1. Is it true that using the TikTok App could improve the students' essay writing performance?
2. Will TikTok be able to provide fun writing for students and thus able to help them to be more responsible in sending their writing task on time?
3. Is TikTok possible that providing more opportunities for presenting writing tasks using digital media like TikTok could boost students' confidence and creativity in their writing presentation?
4. Will TikTok make students more aware of the importance of using the I+4Cs@IN4CONs method which will help them write better essay?

Method

Data collection method is taken from the students' diagnostic and progress tests in their classroom writing task and tests, a few interviews were made throughout the studies and video presentation of their writing using the TikTok App and based on class observation during class hours. Intervention started by introduction of TikTok App and samples of video presentation and students were exposed to its features and choosing of templates to match their writing topics. When the students were familiar with the app, they were given a sample question related to SPM exam to answer by using the method within a specific time and once writing is done, they must upload their answer using any of the templates in the app. They were given a specific time to complete their answer. They shared their final writing task on their TikTok video on the class telegram wall group where later, all videos would be presented during a two-periods lesson using LCD projector for everyone to see and enjoy. At the end of the show, students were given a chance to give their comments and opinions and then chose the best 3 videos as winners based on likes in the class and in their FYP on TikTok.

Findings and Discussion

Based on the findings, a few remarkable changes have been distinctly discovered. Firstly, students were more than willing to send their writing tasks on time except for those with acceptable reasons like internet line problems or difficulties in downloading their choice of templates from the app so they asked for more time to finish their work. Other than that, essay writing using I+4Cs@IN4CONs is clearly followed as in sequence of **Introduction**, **Content 1**, **Content 2**, **Content 3**, and **Conclusion**. In addition, they have achieved higher marks in their class tasks and tests compared to the previous one (Refer **diagnostic and progress test**). Undeniably, class presentation has progressed to a more interactive, creative and entertaining writing presentation compared to the conventional way of sending essay writing tasks. Most importantly, class progressed as fun, interesting and with remarkable class engagement between teacher and students and students to students. This study is a proven example that in this fast growing of high dependent to digital media especially among teenagers, there is a need for teachers to be knowledgeable and better hands on to latest technology or gadgets available in the market to help transform class and lesson to be more exciting and enjoyable to provide a fun learning engagement in classroom situation.

Limitations

It is definite that the implementation of intervention using TikTok App in the class has transformed the class to be more exciting and fun, but a few important unavoidable matters need to be taken into consideration. First and foremost, some students until today have problems with their internet line because of a few reasons. One of the reasons is because of their residential location which is too far from the server which in this case prevented them from getting enough data to process their download and upload of work tasks and a few mentioned about basic phone top up which disallowed them from processing their sending of tasks on time.

Conclusion

In conclusion, based on the interviews and findings of this study, it is undeniable that students achieved the most benefit in the implementation of 'Fun Writing of I+4Cs@IN4CONs Using TikTok App' in class. It is stated in their comments and responses that using this app has provided them ample opportunities to explore their creativity and potential interest in surfing and creating their own video of writing presentations. In addition, it also prepares them to write better essays by using the method they must use to write. Moreover, the video presentation of their final writing in class and chances of being a winner has also contributed excitement and changed their negative perception about writing. In the future, setting up of own websites by students or by the teacher to upload sample essays or any writing tasks done might be put into consideration for future reference. It can be a live or on-going site for students and teachers to use from now and then not only within the classmates but also for the whole school and others with the link. Overall, it is hoped that implementation of fun writing in the classroom will also help to make students be more willing to write thus be aware of the importance of sharpening their writing and speaking skills.

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EXPLORING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LOCAL LANGUAGE AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Abstract

Language is the cornerstone of human communication, culture, and identity. This abstract delves into the significance of both local languages and the English language, highlighting their unique roles in shaping societies, promoting cultural diversity, and fostering global connectivity. As globalisation continues to impact the world, the coexistence of local languages and English becomes a subject of paramount importance. The paper first examines the profound value of local languages, emphasizing their pivotal role in preserving cultural heritage, knowledge, and traditional practices. Local languages are the carriers of indigenous knowledge and wisdom, passed down through generations, forming the foundation of communities' identities and social cohesion. They facilitate intergenerational communication and offer a sense of belonging, promoting cultural diversity and enriching the global human experience. Subsequently, the study investigates the global significance of the English language. As the most widely spoken lingua franca, English has become the primary language of international communication, commerce, and diplomacy. It plays a central role in fostering cross-border collaborations, enabling access to diverse knowledge repositories, and promoting global connectivity. English proficiency is often considered a prerequisite for professional success in an interconnected world, empowering individuals, and nations to participate in the global marketplace of ideas and opportunities. Furthermore, the paper addresses the potential challenges posed by the dominance of English, such as linguistic imperialism and the marginalization of local languages. While English undoubtedly facilitates international interactions, the relentless spread of the language can overshadow the richness and diversity of local languages and cultures. As a result, there is a growing need to strike a balance between the promotion of English as a global tool and the preservation of linguistic diversity and cultural heritage. Finally, the abstract proposes strategies for embracing the complementary roles of local languages and English, fostering a harmonious coexistence. It advocates for the integration of local languages into formal education system, allowing individuals to maintain their cultural roots while acquiring essential English language skills. Additionally, encouraging multilingualism and language preservation initiatives can help safeguard linguistic diversity and ensure the continuity of endangered languages.

Keywords: Multilingualism, imperialism, marginalization, endangered languages

Background of study

This research was led by Dr. Bhim Gautam, Professor Motikala Debba Shubba and co-worker Ambika Khadka Thapa, Sumina Shrestha. This research paper explored the Newar language and its historical connection, pre-unification Era of Nepal. Newar language one of the indigenous languages in Nepal has been prominent language. During Rana and Panchyat regimes use of Newar language in major parts of Nepal was prominent. In 1990 there was political change in Nepal which exposed the citizens of Nepal's major cities Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Patan to other languages. Likewise, socio-cultural contact was also one of the major causes of language shift in Newar community of Nepal. Due to the globalisation, this indigenous group of Nepal is in use of English language much more comparing to last decade.

Statement of Problem

In the context of globalisation, teaching English has been an integral part of education. As globalisation continues to impact the world, the coexistence of local languages and English becomes a subject of paramount importance. Youngsters of 21st era are inclined towards the English language due to different reasons. Therefore, the researcher carried out a study that explored the challenges and problems. Moreover, to draw attention of all stakeholders, it is essential to raise awareness about these issues at global level.

Research Questions

1. What are the domains of language used by Newar speaking people in Kathmandu valley?
2. What are the different attitudes of language use between and among the speakers of Newar?
3. What are the various causes and impacts of language shift from ideological perspectives?

Research Methodology

The total sample size of this research is 15 groups and 12 individuals. The tools used in this research were survey questionnaires, Focus Group Discussion (FGD), individual interview and observation. Likewise, interviews were taken by the expertise to identify cause of the language shift in Newars.

Significance of study

The findings of this study are beneficial to subject expertise, curriculum designers, language trainers and to all who are deeply interested in preservation of local language along with the importance of English language. More specifically, the study is significant to those people who are the teachers and learners of the multi-lingual, multi-ethnic community. They face challenges in daily basis to teach them English language which is widely spoken lingua franca and at the same time, it's important to make them feel proud about their indigenous/ local language.

Expected Output

This study will be significant for future researchers in sociolinguistic studies to see the relationship between the languages spoken in different areas. This will help to see the historical as well as social-psychological relations of the related languages. This research will also be helpful in defining and implementing the new federal language policies stated in the constitution of Nepal (2015).

Table 1.0 Timetable and work schedule

SN	Items	Work specification	Time	Remarks
1	Tools development	Piloting tools, orientation	October- November,2020	BLG & MKS
2	Data Collection/ Field work	Kathmandu, Patan Bhaktapur, Banepa, Dhulikhel	January-July, 2021	MKS & Students
3	Data Entry and verification	Coding, Patterning and thematizing qualitative data	August- October,2021	BLG, MKS & Students
4	Data Analysis		November- December,2021	BLG & MKS
5	Dissemination and finalizing the report	Polishing the report with feed back	January ,2022	BLG, MKS & Students
6	Report Submission		February,2022	BLG & MKS

Conclusion

This abstract shed light on the profound importance of both local languages and the English language in today's interconnected world. Recognizing the intrinsic value of local languages while acknowledging the practical significance of English is essential in nurturing a global society that celebrates diversity, promotes inclusivity, and enables meaningful cross-cultural exchanges. The harmonious coexistence of local languages and English can pave the way for a more enlightened and enriched global community.

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ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING WITH INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE IN JAPANESE HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

This study investigates English language teaching and generic skills incorporating intercultural competence in Japanese universities. First, the purposes of teaching English language in Japanese universities with intercultural competence are considered. Second, the current situation of general education and English language education in Japanese universities is introduced. Third, the relationship between English language teaching and intercultural competence is shown. Fourth, the English curriculum and the global course offered by the Platform for Regional Human Resource Development at our university are delivered. Finally, ways of incorporating intercultural competence in English education are considered. As a result, we need to contextualise and rewrite FREPA to Japan to incorporate FREPA to English language education in Japanese higher education.

Keywords: English language education, intercultural competence, higher education, Japan

Background of Study

Byram (1997) proposed a model of *intercultural communicative competence* (ICC) that consists of four competences: *linguistic*, *sociolinguistic*, *discourse*, and *intercultural* competences. He claims that in previous models of communicative competence, such as those proposed by Hymes (1972) or van Ek (1986), there is a “tendency to posit the native speaker communicating with other native speakers as the underlying phenomenon” (p. 10). According to Byram (1997), intercultural competence has four dimensions: *attitudes*, *knowledge*, *skills* (specifically, *interpreting and relating* skills and *discovery and interaction* skills) and *critical cultural awareness*. Nakayama and Kurihara (2015) mention that the ICC model is appropriate for Japanese learners of English because most of them study English as a foreign language and it is likely that they will speak English with interlocutors from a variety of (both native and non-native) cultural backgrounds (p. 39). They also mention that Japanese learners need to develop strong intercultural competence (IC) so that they do not become “linguistically schizophrenic” but instead grow as intercultural speakers who can negotiate between their own culture and those of others while acquiring a new language (p. 40).

Since the Common *European Framework of Reference (CEFR)* was published in 2001, it has been widely adopted by the language education system, in Europe and elsewhere. In addition, it describes the shift in the aims of language education in the global context. In Japan, we introduced CEFR to language education, including English language education. Most researchers have focused on the Common Reference Levels: self-assessment grid, which consists of levels such as A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2 and skills such as Listening, Reading, Spoken Interaction, Spoken Production and Writing. These are known as Can-Do Statements or Descriptors.

Recently, developing intercultural competence is also required to live in a multicultural society in VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity) era or post-COVID-19 era. The Japanese government expects university students to acquire these skills or competence. However, many universities in Japan tend to teach only academic English, focusing on skills such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking. To meet the demand of the Japanese government, we would like to consider the feasibility of introducing English language teaching to foster intercultural competence in Japanese higher education.

Statement of Problem

CEFR has played a very important role in language teaching and emphasises on the importance of acquiring intercultural competence (Council of Europe, 2001).

The learner of a second or foreign language and culture does not cease to be competent in his or her mother tongue and the associated culture. Nor is the new competence kept entirely separate from the old. The learner does not simply acquire two distinct, unrelated ways of acting and communicating. The language learner becomes plurilingual and develops interculturality (p. 43).

Although CEFR states that plurilingual and pluricultural competence play an important role in one's communicative competence, the components of this competence are not described in great detail. In 2012, the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) of the "didactic approaches that use teaching/learning" (Council of Europe, p. 6). However, there are not enough studies on the application or availability of FREPA to English language teaching in Japan.

Significance of Study

The study shows a way to introduce FREPA to English language teaching at Japanese universities. When the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) has introduced CEFR to *the Course of Study* (the national curriculum), publishers have revised English textbooks based on it. On the other hand, FREPA was published in 2012, and not only MEXT but also many researchers and educators did not have any conscious interest in it. Therefore, there are few papers on FREPA in Japan. Through showing the case study, we can generate interest in FREPA to researchers and educators and give them the opportunity to think about the importance of fostering intercultural competence through English language education in Japan.

Research Questions

1. What kinds of features do FREPA have?
2. Does FREPA comply with English education in Japanese universities?
3. What are ways to introduce FREPA to foster intercultural competence?

Method

Procedure adopted by this study was as follows: 1. The features of FREPA were shown. 2. the current situation of general education and English language education in Japanese universities was introduced. 3. the English curriculum and the global course offered by the Platform of Regional Human Resource Development at our university were delivered. 4. ways of incorporating intercultural competence in English education were considered.

Findings and Discussion

First, FREPA (Candelier et al., 2012) contains extensive lists of elements of intercultural communicative competence and also provides sample lessons or activities designed to improve language learners' ICC in a given culture. Descriptors in FREPA are categorised into three fields, Knowledge (K), Attitude (A), and Skill (S). Each field has three levels, such as Essential, Important, and Useful. There are 135 descriptors in FREPA and it consists of 65 descriptors on Knowledge, 15 descriptors on Attitude, and 57 descriptors on Skill. This framework is organised into two levels: the first category is called 'predicates', and each category of predicates is called 'objects.' Some examples are as follows:

- K8 Possesses knowledge about what cultures / how they work.
- K8.1 Knows that a culture is a grouping of practices / representations / values of all kinds shared (at least partially) by its members.
- K8.2 Knows that a number of cultures, more less different, exist.

Second, the current situation of general education and English language education in Japanese universities is that the academic ability of university students in Japan has dropped in quality. Recently, promoting and improving EGAP education and/or ESP education, remedial (or developmental) English instruction, and EMI or CLIL are also important. Third, in 2016 we have introduced a new English curriculum, which consists of reading, writing, speaking, and integrated skills (focusing on presentations) to our general education in our university. In addition, we also set a platform which aims to foster regional human resources and includes three courses: the research course, the career course, and the global course. Through the global course, we can foster students who have intercultural competence. However, this cannot meet our demands easily because there are any national or worldwide frameworks for incorporating or introducing intercultural competence in English education in Japan. Fourth, to solve the problem, we tried to introduce FREPA to one class in the global course as a personal experiment. As a result, we found that it is difficult for us to incorporate FREPA to our class because descriptors of FREPA are very abstract. To incorporate FREPA to our class, we need to contextualise FREPA to Japan. Then we need to rewrite descriptors to meet our educational demands.

Limitations

To incorporate FREPA to our classes, we need to contextualise it to Japan. We also need to rewrite the descriptors of FREPA to be useful to our classes. These are needed for cooperation between instructors and the course organiser.

Conclusion

It is crucial to incorporate FREPA to English language education in Japanese higher education. Because it would be a worldwide framework of reference for fostering intercultural competence. However, it is not suitable for the Japanese situation, so we need to contextualise FREPA to Japan and rewrite descriptors to suit the Japanese situation. This study potentially contributes to English language education not only in Japan but also in Asian countries.

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DEVELOPING PROFESSIONAL NETWORKING AT LOCAL CHAPTERS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

In today's dynamic professional landscape, the significance of networking cannot be overstated. To foster meaningful connections and create a sustainable support system for professionals, local chapters have emerged as crucial hubs. This paper aims to explore the development and enhancement of professional networking at local chapters for long-term sustainability. Drawing on a comprehensive literature review and empirical research, this study examines the key factors that contribute to the effectiveness of local chapters in facilitating professional networking. It investigates the role of local chapters in bridging the gap between online and offline networking, leveraging technology, and creating inclusive platforms to engage a diverse pool of professionals. The findings highlight the importance of strong leadership, innovative programming, and collaborative initiatives as essential components in building sustainable networking communities. By understanding the dynamics that govern successful local chapters, professionals and organizations can harness the power of networking to cultivate enduring professional relationships, promote knowledge exchange, and drive career growth. This research offers valuable insights for individuals and organizations seeking to establish and nurture sustainable networking practices at the local level.

Keywords: Professional Networking, Local Chapters, Sustainable Development, Professional Relationships, Community Engagement

Background of Study

In the rapidly evolving global economy, networking has emerged as a fundamental aspect of professional success and growth. As professionals seek to expand their horizons, share knowledge, and collaborate on new opportunities, local chapters have gained prominence as essential platforms for fostering sustainable professional networking. These local chapters, whether industry-specific associations, interest groups, or community organisations, play a vital role in cultivating a robust network of like-minded individuals who can contribute to the sustainable development of their respective industries and communities.

Furthermore, the inclusive nature of local chapters fosters a sense of belonging and collaboration among members. By encouraging participation from professionals across various career stages, industries, and backgrounds, these chapters create an environment conducive to learning, mentorship, and knowledge exchange.

This paper presentation aims to delve into the critical aspects that contribute to the development and sustenance of professional networking at local chapters. Through an in-depth analysis of successful case studies, surveys, and qualitative interviews, this study seeks to identify best practices, leadership strategies, and technological innovations that promote sustainable networking at the local level. By understanding the background and significance of developing professional networking at local chapters, this research endeavours to provide valuable insights for professionals, organisations, and policymakers in their quest for sustainable development and growth in the ever-competitive professional landscape.

Statement of Problems

While local chapters have shown immense potential in fostering professional networking for sustainable development, several challenges and issues hinder their effectiveness. This paper presentation aims to shed light on the following key problem areas:

1. **Limited Outreach and Inclusivity:** This limited outreach restricts the exchange of ideas and experiences, impeding the creation of a robust and inclusive networking community.
2. **Lack of Technological Integration:** A lack of technological integration may hinder their ability to host virtual events, webinars, and other online networking opportunities.
3. **Sustainability and Leadership Continuity:** The challenge lies in ensuring continuity, attracting committed leaders, and maintaining the momentum of the chapter's activities over time.

4. Ineffective Programming: This may result in disengagement and reduced participation, limiting the chapter's overall impact on professional development.
5. Measuring Impact and Success: The lack of clear metrics for success may hinder efforts to demonstrate the tangible benefits of these networking platforms to both individual professionals and organisations.

Through a comprehensive analysis of these challenges, this research aims to propose practical solutions and best practices that will enable local chapters to overcome these obstacles, creating stronger and more impactful networking communities for sustainable professional development.

Significance of study

The significance of this study on developing professional networking at local chapters for sustainable development lies in its potential to drive transformative change in the professional landscape.

By uncovering effective strategies for fostering professional networking at local chapters, this research offers valuable insights that can significantly boost career growth prospects for individuals. Strengthening local chapters as sustainable networking platforms can contribute to knowledge sharing, resource mobilisation, and collective efforts towards achieving sustainable development goals in various industries and communities. The findings of this study can inform decisions related to funding, infrastructure, and support for networking communities. This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on professional networking.

In conclusion, this study's significance lies in its potential to empower individuals, organisations, and policymakers with practical knowledge and strategies to develop thriving local chapters for sustainable professional networking, fostering growth, collaboration, and sustainable development in various sectors and communities.

Research Questions

1. What are the key factors that contribute to the success and sustainability of professional networking at local chapters?
2. What leadership qualities and strategies are most effective in ensuring the continuity and long-term sustainability of local chapters?

These research questions aim to explore various aspects of developing professional networking at local chapters and address the challenges and opportunities in creating sustainable networking platforms for professionals. By investigating these questions, the research can provide valuable insights and practical recommendations for individuals, organisations, and policymakers seeking to foster meaningful networking communities in pursuit of sustainable development in their respective fields and communities.

Data Collection Procedure

1. Surveys: Designed and distributed online surveys to members of various local chapters focusing on their networking experiences, preferences, and perceived impact.
2. Interviews: Conducted qualitative interviews with key stakeholders and explored their perspectives on the challenges and success factors in developing sustainable networking at local chapters.
3. Case Studies: Gathered information on their strategies, programming, leadership approach, and the outcomes of their networking initiatives.
4. Observations: Attended and observed networking events and activities organised by local chapters to gain firsthand insights into the dynamics of interactions, attendee engagement, and the overall networking environment.

Data Analysis Procedure

1. Quantitative Data Analysis: Analysed the survey responses using statistical tools to identify trends, patterns, and correlations related to the effectiveness of networking initiatives and their impact on career growth and sustainable development.
2. Qualitative Data Analysis: Transcribed and coded the interview data to extract key themes and insights related to challenges, success factors, and suggestions for improving professional networking at local chapters.
3. Comparative Analysis: Compared the case study data of successful local chapters to identify

common strategies and practices that contribute to their effectiveness in sustaining networking communities.

4. Thematic Analysis: Analysed the observational data from networking events to understand the dynamics of interactions, inclusivity, and engagement levels among participants.
5. Triangulation: Combined findings from surveys, interviews, case studies, and observations to strengthen the research's validity and ensure a comprehensive understanding of the topic.
6. Drawing Conclusions: Synthesised the data analysis to draw meaningful conclusions and develop actionable recommendations for individuals, local chapter leaders, and organisations aiming to enhance professional networking for sustainable development.

The data collection and analysis procedures outlined above would provide a robust and evidence-based foundation for the paper presentation, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of the challenges, opportunities, and best practices in developing sustainable professional networking at local chapters.

Findings and Discussions

The study on developing professional networking at local chapters for sustainable development yielded significant insights into the key factors that contribute to the effectiveness and longevity of networking communities. The research encompassed diverse data collection methods, including surveys, interviews, case studies, and observations, to provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic.

Findings revealed that local chapters that actively embraced technology and offered a blend of online and offline networking opportunities experienced higher levels of engagement and inclusivity. Leveraging digital platforms enabled these chapters to reach a wider audience, transcending geographical limitations and fostering global connections among professionals.

Effective leadership emerged as a critical success factor, with strong and committed leaders playing pivotal roles in steering local chapters towards sustainable development. Leadership continuity and strategic planning were identified as essential elements for ensuring the long-term viability of networking communities.

Moreover, inclusive programming and a diverse range of industry-specific events were found to encourage meaningful interactions, knowledge sharing, and collaborative endeavours among professionals from various backgrounds. Such diversity promoted cross-industry collaborations, leading to innovative solutions to common challenges.

The study also highlighted the importance of data-driven decision-making and the need for clear metrics to measure the impact of networking initiatives.

Limitation of Study

One limitation of this study on developing professional networking at local chapters for sustainable development is the potential for self-reporting bias in the survey responses. Participants may provide socially desirable answers or overemphasise the positive aspects of their networking experiences, leading to an inflated perception of the effectiveness of local chapters. Additionally, the study focused on a specific geographical region, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other cultural contexts and regions with different networking dynamics. Future research could expand the scope to include a more diverse and representative sample to overcome these limitations and provide a broader understanding of sustainable networking practices.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study highlights the potential benefits of developing professional networking at local chapters for sustainable development. Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable insights into the positive aspects of networking at local chapters for sustainable development. To enhance the credibility and impact of future research in this area, employing robust survey instruments, diversifying the sample, incorporating comparative analysis, and including cross-cultural research would be essential.

Developing professional networking at local chapters holds promise for fostering collaboration and knowledge-sharing for sustainable development. By addressing the limitations and building on these findings, policymakers, professionals, and organisations can make informed decisions to promote more effective and inclusive sustainable networking practices on a broader scale.

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CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS: EXPLORING IDEOLOGIES IN SELECTED MALAYSIAN ENGLISH WORKBOOKS

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Abstract

This paper examines the ideologies present in several selected English language workbooks currently available in the market. Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis framework, namely the description, interpretation, and explanation stages, is used as the research framework. The linguistic focus of the analysis is on representations of gender via visuals, word choice, and language patterns. The aim was primarily to identify gender stereotypes, biases, or assumptions that might be perpetuated through the discourse in the selected workbooks. The findings reveal that a set of gendered social roles and the system of representations defining the male and female is prevalent in the books. The paper, thus, argues that the ideological representations of gender have not been merely a question of capturing facts but a reflection of the gendered roles of behavioral choices in a variety of domains such as family, occupation, hobbies, etc. The paper's findings suggest that it is crucial for us to recognize that language use is never neutral. In other words, ideology is always present in the language. Thus, the paper suggests that writers of educational content should attempt to challenge gender stereotypes and integrate universal principles such as equality in their writing.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, Malaysian English workbooks, socio-cultural implications, gendered representation, gender stereotypes.

Background of Study

This critical discourse analysis (henceforth, CDA) study investigates how certain linguistic features are used to maintain a favoured or bordered range of meanings in selected Malaysian workbooks. It aims to uncover how language uses and features smuggle in as common sense, assumptions that can be challenged, debatable, controversial, or inapplicable (Goatly, 2000).

Several English language workbooks available in the Malaysian market that serve as essential tools in language learning and development, providing structured exercises, activities, and language practice for students are placed under the critical lens in this study. The researchers opine that the workbooks are not neutral instruction materials but have embedded ideologies that reflect and further reinforce existing societal values, and power structures (Mirhosseini, 2017).

Like other CDA research, the researchers hope to reveal the power dominance that might be imposed through discourse. The study agrees that gender representation in all domains of societal structures plays a pivotal role in shaping power dynamics, and as professed by Bourdieu's theory – individuals would internalize gender norms, leading to the perpetuation of traditional gender roles and power imbalances. In Bourdieu's notion, certain behaviours and traits associated with masculinity are privileged and reinforced in society, contributing to the dominance of men in various spheres (Mottier, 2002).

Fairclough's CDA framework (1995, 2003) is used to uncover the implicit ideological assumptions in the selected workbooks as their cursory survey of related literature indicates that studies related to discourse-ideology links in the instruction materials in the Malaysian setting are non-evident. Through this study, it is hoped that the recurring themes, stereotypes, and biases conveyed through the selected books are exposed objectively.

Statement of Problem

Several studies have examined how gender superiority and inferiority are subtly conveyed through language and images. For example, a study by Sovič and Hus (2015), who analysed visuals in English language textbooks used for children in Slovenia, found that male characters are presented as being more active while females are presented as less active and docile. The researchers argue that such portrayals can contribute to the creation of 'sexual duality', leading to the children who use the book to continue adopting socially approved conceptions of male and female power structures. In relation to this, the Education for All report (United Nations Educational, 2006) identified stereotypes

that persist in learning materials and, too often, portray differing expectations of girls and boys, which can negatively affect the global quest for gender equality.

Similarly, Macaulay and Brice (1997), who analysed a grammar reference book, discovered that females appeared more often as direct objects (43%) than as subjects (41%), while males appeared much more often as subjects (84%), hence concluding that 'gender bias and stereotyping are widespread in ELT textbooks. Studies from both developing and developed countries indicate that females tend to be underrepresented. In addition, both males and females are depicted in gender-stereotyped ways, which can narrow and constrain children's visions of who they are and what they can become, as opined by Blumberg (2007). She further argues that materials used in teacher training also reinforce gender-stereotyped attitudes and becomes an impediment on the road to gender equality with female students navigating around this almost invisible obstacle.

In the context of the above arguments, this study agrees with (Merkle, 2018) that one of the most common obstacles in place is that of patriarchy, a power hierarchy exclusively based on the gender divide. This divide in social roles and values is the most common pattern in power distribution across societies. Also relevant to this study is the argument that inequalities in power are sustained by assigned gender roles perpetuated through discourse leading to a gendered division of labour, which in turn shapes the distribution of power at all levels, from the household to the highest levels of the societal structure (see Merkley, 2018 for a thorough elucidation of this idea).

Significance of Study

This study has significant implications for English language education and classroom practices in Malaysia based on the findings on the prevalent presence of gender stereotypes in English workbooks that were scrutinized. The study also provides crucial insights into the perpetuation of harmful stereotypes within educational materials that demand more attention and action. Consequently, it is hoped that authors and publishers review and revise workbook content to foster a genuinely inclusive and equitable representation of gender and other cultural aspects. Educators can then utilize these materials actively to challenge the reproduction of gender biases and promote a more empowering educational experience. Additionally, policymakers need to establish robust guidelines for creating culturally sensitive and stereotype-free educational materials. Overall, this study hopes to become of critical significance to catalyse some understanding in this area and hopefully lead to better representation and diversity in ELT materials.

Research Questions

The current research attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. How does the frequency of male and female actors' representation compare in the workbooks?
2. How do the representations of male and female actors in the texts contribute to the promotion of specific gender stereotypes, values, and biases?
3. What are the prevailing ideologies found in the workbook discourse and how do they impact the power hierarchy between genders?

Methodology

This study utilizes a CDA framework to analyse, interpret, and explain linguistic units in a set of discourses in terms of its social, political, and cultural context. As claimed by Schaffne and Wenden (1995, p. xviii), "such an analysis goes beyond the 'mere' linguistic structures of the text and takes the social and institutional of the text production and text reception into account." Similarly, van Dijk (1993) proposes that CDA should "go beyond mere description and explanation and pay more attention to the socio-political and cultural presuppositions and implications. An important aspect of CDA is the belief that language is a product and producer of the values and beliefs in the society in which it operates. In line with these thoughts, the research takes a constructivist approach, "which examines the ways in which events, realities, meanings, experiences and so on are the effects of a range of discourses operating within society" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 81). The methodological framework used is Fairclough's CDA framework (1995) as presented in the table below.

Table 1.0 Fairclough's three-stage CDA framework (1995)

STAGES	DESCRIPTIONS
Description (text analysis)	of the formal properties of the text
Interpretation (processing analysis)	of the relationship between text and interpretation
Explanation (social analysis)	of the relationship between interaction and the larger social context and the meaning effects that result from such a relationship

The description stage involves content analysis, and analysis of linguistic elements such as vocabulary, syntax, and discourse structure in the selected English workbooks to identify recurring patterns and themes. In this paper, only two areas are presented: nouns and noun phrases associated with occupations and activities, and transitivity verbs "material," "mental," "verbal," "behavioural," "existential," "relational," and "abstraction" (Machin & Mayr, 2012).

In the interpretation stage, the researchers uncover the latent meanings and implications related to gender stereotypes, societal norms, and other values and biases. Finally, in the explanation stage, the findings are interpreted within a broader social and cultural context to examine how these ideologies function in society and how they might influence learners' perceptions, attitudes, and interactions with others.

Findings and Discussion

As this is an ongoing research project, this paper will only present the findings that have been gathered at the point of publication of this paper. The following observations have been made based on the analysis of three ELT workbooks for students in Malaysian secondary schools. The researchers began their study with a content analysis to determine female/male proper names that were not gender-neutral (such as Jennifer, Mak Minah, etc.) and images. From the analysis, as presented in Table 2 below, it can be noted that the frequency of male actors is far greater than female representations. Thus, it can be noted that in terms of visibility there is greater visibility on male actors. One of the ways in which gender bias is accounted for is in terms of invisibility as proposed by Zittleman and Sadker (2002). Invisibility is a total or relative exclusion of a group in discourse. Materials with this type of bias tend to omit one or the other gender in examples, illustration, or texts. Overall, it can be noted that the representation of the female gender is lower than the males making it slightly imbalanced. Interestingly, in one of the workbooks, images of seven male characters were presented in the first 17 pages compared to only one female.

Table 2.0 Representation of female and male actors (by gendered name, and images)

NAMES				IMAGES			
FEMALE		MALE		FEMALE		MALE	
250	42.8%	333	57.2%	47	42.7%	63	57.3%

In addition to the frequency count as in Table 2, the researchers analysed the occupations associated with the actors. The framework presented in the International Standard Classification of Occupation (<https://ilostat ilo.org/resources/concepts-and-definitions/classification-occupation/>) was adapted for this study to objectively categorise the job-specific representations of the actors as in Table 3 below. Also analysed were the activities that were associated with the actors. Both these analyses relate to stereotyping. As explained by Zittleman and Sadker (2002) stereotyping is unfair assignment of characteristics to a group of people, based on individual attributes and differences. They assert that stereotyping may contain among others, positive or negative prejudices about groups of people, such as portrayal of women as emotional, or propagate the message that men are good with technology, while women are not.

Table 3.0 Representation of actors according to occupations

SKILL LEVEL	FEMALE	MALE
Professional and technical	biologist	paediatrician
	doctor	engineer
	teacher	teacher
	researcher	astronaut

		nutritionist
		ICT expert
		web designer
		professor
		ophthalmologist
		governor
Administrative, managerial, business	editor	head of agency
	principal	headmaster
	entrepreneur	entrepreneur
		chairman
Clerical and supportive roles		manager
	nurse	tutor
	secretary	
Sales and services	translator	
	sales assistant	busker
	food critic	tv host
	storekeeper	radio host
	model	motivator
	Telephone operator	chef
Manual works	cashier	Postman
		construction
Uniformed occupations		driver
		policeman
		soldier
Sports professionals		firefighter
		badminton coach

The analysis in Table 3 indicates the manifestation of male dominance and the existence of stereotypes in occupational representations. For example, ten different jobs are associated with men in the professional and technical category while only four for females. A similar finding was observed by Aguilar (2021) who claims that males were depicted in a larger number of visualized occupations than females in Mexico. Similarly, Barton and Sakwa (2012) found that textbooks in Uganda have a biased representation of gender roles characterized by women's invisibility and silence, their employment in domestic roles and lower rank occupations. In addition, Yang (2014) found out that apart from a limited representation the types of occupations, females were mostly portrayed in stereotyped professions such as cashier, secretary, and nurse like the findings in this study.

Table 4 indicates the analysis of the activities according to gender. While there is some attempt to avoid stereotypes, it can be noted that traditional roles played by women are being perpetuated via activities like baking, cooking, and ironing. Although there is some depiction of men doing household chores, a lot more needs to be done to challenge gender stereotypes in society. A stark contrast is also observed in outdoor activities with males having a larger share of activities that require energy and endurance such as kayaking and diving. This perpetuates the stereotype that such activities are more suited for males while shopping and fashion-related activities are for females.

Table 4.0 Gender representation in leisure activities patterns:

ACTIVITIES	FEMALE	MALE
Domestic chores	Baking a cake, preparing food, ironing, sweeping	Breaking the coconut, laundry
Indoor	Window shopping, dancing, choir, taekwondo, archery	Woodworking, video game, chess, music band, reading, bowling
Outdoor	Gardening, wingsuit flying	Travelling, diving, exercise, fishing, extreme sports, archery, kayaking, football
Others	beauty	

Apart from analysing nouns and noun phrases, the researchers also investigated the transitivity and representing actions based on Halliday's functional theory of language (1985). For this paper, only data from 12 reading texts are used in the analysis where the frequency of verbs was categorised based on

the four uses: material (accomplishment of tangible and concrete tasks such as She wrote a letter) mental (a process of feeling, thinking, and perceiving such as My mum thinks...), verbal (related to the process of verbalizing such as She talked), and behavioural which shows the process of performing actions (She decided).

The below analysis on the frequency of the verb usage reflects some stereotypical gender representations, for example, males seem to have lower frequencies of verbs associated with mental and verbal activities compared to females which implies that females are more mentally and verbally active or expressive (with verbs like talk, argue and think) compared to males. This reinforces the stereotype that women are more emotional, talkative, or introspective, while men are more reserved or less communicative. At the same time females appear to have a higher frequency of verbs associated with verbal communication compared to males which reinforces the stereotype of women as talkative, communicative, and relationship-oriented, while men are portrayed as being less communicative or less interested in interpersonal interactions. Not surprisingly verbs most used with males are behavioural actions or patterns (such as he threatened and the policeman arrested) that reinforces the stereotype that men are more action-oriented, assertive, or dominant, while women are portrayed as being less assertive or active in their behaviour.

Table 5.0 Transitivity and Representing Actions based on Halliday (1985)

GENDER	MATERIAL	MENTAL	VERBAL	BEHAVIORAL	%
Male	1	1	1	18	55
Female	1	2	5	9	45

Overall, the analysis confirms that gender biases are still prevalent in our ELT materials. These biases align with previously held assumptions about traditional gender roles, hobbies, and abilities, which are perpetuated via discourse and may hinder progress toward gender equality.

Limitations

The study's scope is limited by the size and selection of the workbook samples used for analysis. In this study, only three workbooks were analysed. Hence, this may not adequately represent the entire range of workbooks used in Malaysian classrooms, potentially impacting the generalizability of the findings. However, it ought to be noted that qualitative investigations typically involve small samples as stated by Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007) Furthermore, past studies using qualitative methods such as Guest et al. (2006) indicate that data saturation in qualitative analysis often occurs after the first 12 samples. Another limitation is related to the application of Critical Discourse Analysis, which involves interpretation and some subjective judgment. Different analysts might interpret the data differently, leading to potential variations in the results and conclusions. The researchers' own beliefs and perspectives could have also influenced the analysis and interpretation of the data, potentially introducing bias into the study. Lastly, while the study identifies the presence of gender stereotypes, establishing a direct causal relationship between these ideologies in workbooks and their impact on students' beliefs and attitudes may be challenged. However, despite these potential limitations, the study still provides valuable insights into the presence of ideologies and gender stereotypes in Malaysian English workbooks, serving as a foundation for further research and critical discussions in the field of English language education.

Conclusion

The analysis of dominant themes, values, and ideologies present in English workbooks through Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis framework provides valuable insights into how language materials can subtly shape learners' perspectives and attitudes. By uncovering implicit biases and assumptions, educators and policymakers can take proactive steps to address these issues and create more inclusive and empowering ESL classrooms. Raising awareness about the ideological dimensions of language use is crucial for promoting critical thinking among learners and encouraging them to question prevailing norms and stereotypes. Eventually, by promoting a more critical approach to language learning and use, educators can help learners become more discerning consumers of language and foster a more equitable and tolerant society.

By analysing the subtle nuances of language, these investigations aim to shed light on the often-overlooked impact of lexical choices on shaping attitudes, beliefs, and values in learners. Incorporating theories of linguistics, cultural studies, and emotion psychology, these studies provide a comprehensive approach to understanding the multifaceted role of language in educational materials.

Many gender-related barriers and biases have declined over the years, but gender stereotypes continue to create problems in the progress of women's careers (Tabassum & Nayak, 2021).

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DIGITAL NATIVES VS DIGITAL DINOSAURS: ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATORS' DILEMMA IN ONLINE TEACHING AND LEARNING

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Abstract

This study aims to compare the impact of digital media on different age groups to determine if they can be classified as either “digital dinosaurs (DD)” or “digital natives (DN)”. The study investigates the usage of digital technology among educators of varying age groups and explores the challenges they face in online teaching and learning. A mixed-method approach involving an online survey and open-ended feedback was utilised, with 153 English language educators from different levels of institutes. The findings indicate no significant difference between age groups using digital technology for online teaching. Thus, it is inconclusive to label younger educators (21-40 years old) as digital natives and older educators (41-60 years old) as digital dinosaurs. Challenges identified include poor internet connection, lack of student participation, insufficient technology knowledge, and a shortage of gadgets.

Keywords: Digital native, digital dinosaur, digital media, online teaching and learning

Background Of Study

In the digital era, education has undergone significant transformations, particularly in online teaching and learning, with the COVID-19 pandemic accelerating this shift. English language educators face a unique challenge as they adapt to the divide between digital natives and digital dinosaurs from different generations. While some teachers previously relied on traditional methods, the pandemic highlighted the importance of integrating technology into teaching (Hamam & Hysaj, 2022). With the emergence of smartphones, social media, and artificial intelligence, educators struggle to identify the most suitable technologies to enhance their teaching (Kim et al., 2021). To stay relevant, educators must update their skills and embrace technology in online learning. However, despite the advantages of online teaching, educators encounter challenges like limited access to digital devices and internet connectivity (Chinnathambi et al., 2022).

The study aims to explore the challenges and opportunities faced by English language educators in online teaching, considering the contrasting characteristics and needs of digital natives and digital dinosaurs. Objectives include investigating the use of digital technology among educators of different age groups, identifying challenges in online teaching and learning, and examining educators' perspectives on improving online education.

Statement Of Problem

This research paper addresses English language educators' dilemma in online teaching and learning, considering the distinctions between DN and DD. While Prensky (2001) introduced the concept of digital natives and the divide between younger and older students regarding technology, conflicting perspectives exist. Novice teachers tend to adapt better to technology, whereas older teachers may resist changes. Farjon, Smits, and Voogt (2019) emphasise the role of educators' attitudes in adopting digital technology for teaching and learning, while Li et al. (2019) find no significant difference in technology integration between digital natives and digital dinosaurs. Technical issues such as internet connectivity and limited student device access pose challenges (Erarsian, 2021). To address these challenges, positive strategies are recommended (Tao and Gao, 2022), and interactive activities can boost motivation and engagement in online learning (Fahriany et al., 2022). Despite prior research, there remains a gap in understanding how English language educators navigate the digital landscape,

and this study aims to fill that gap by exploring challenges and proposing effective strategies for digital integration in education.

Significance Of Study

The study's significance lies in addressing the dilemma English language educators face in online teaching, navigating the differences between DN and DD. It offers valuable insights for enhancing digital integration in education and informing policy decisions to equip educators with the necessary skills. The research can shape targeted professional development programs and foster inclusive and engaging teaching practices by identifying challenges and opportunities. It contributes to the body of knowledge on digital integration, paving the way for future exploration and refinement of teaching methodologies in the ever-evolving digital landscape. Ultimately, the study aims to improve the quality of online learning experiences and benefit both educators and students.

Research Questions

1. How do educators of different age groups utilise digital technology in their teaching practices?
2. What are the main challenges that educators encounter in their online teaching and learning experiences?
3. What are the perspectives of educators regarding potential improvements to online teaching and learning methodologies?

Method

This study used a mixed-method approach through an online survey and an open-ended feedback sheet. The online survey was prepared using the Google Form platform. There were 21 items in the survey, and a Cronbach's Alpha reliability test was conducted to test the reliability of the constructs of the questionnaire. The construct is considered reliable if the Alpha (α) value is more significant than .70 (Hair et al., 2013). The results revealed that the questionnaire is reliable ($\alpha = .933$), as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1.0 Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of items
0.933	21

The open-ended feedback form consisted of 5 questions and required long answers. This was done to support and authenticate the responses for the online survey. The respondents comprised 153 primary, secondary, institute, and university English language educators. They were selected randomly via email and WhatsApp. Data collected were then analysed using SPSS version 26 for descriptive analysis.

Findings and Discussion

Use of Digital Technology among Educators

DN educators outperformed DD educators in online teaching, including lesson design, digital media, online assignment marking, communication, and tech skills.

Table 2.0 Use of Digital Technology among Educators

ITEMS	DN Educators (N=62)		DD Educators (N=91)		MOD
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
1. Prepared to design my own lessons.	3.94	.847	3.63	1.092	DN
2. Prepared to learn from my colleagues.	4.44	.692	4.10	.920	DN
3. Prepared to learn from YouTube tutorials.	4.44	.738	3.98	1.054	DN

4. Confident in using digital media.	3.87	.757	3.52	1.015	DN
5. Mark pupils' assignments online regularly.	3.66	1.023	3.52	1.026	DN
6. Can adapt to online learning.	4.13	.713	3.92	.969	DN
7. Can have two-way communication online.	4.24	.740	4.11	.960	DN
8. Can share technological skills in online learning.	3.94	.827	3.70	1.080	DN

Challenges that Affect Educators' Online Teaching and Learning

DN educators have positive outlooks on digital tech as time-saving, collaborative, and motivating. DD educators value it for enhancing assessment quality and student focus. Online teaching benefits from it, with challenges embraced.

Table 3.0 Challenges that Affect Educators' Online Teaching and Learning

ITEMS	DN Educators (N=62)		DD Educators (N=91)		MOD
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
1. Saves time.	3.73	1.011	3.63	1.092	DN
2. Better quality of assessment.	3.42	1.064	4.10	.920	DD
3. Chances for collaboration among teachers.	4.03	.768	3.98	1.054	DN
4. Pupils are more focused when using digital technology.	3.00	1.131	3.52	1.015	DD
5. Motivated to teach better using digital technology.	3.73	.961	3.52	1.026	DN
6. Early retirement is not an option	2.63	1.044	3.92	.969	DD
7. Better classroom management	3.40	.966	4.11	.960	DD
8. Overspend money and resources for digital learning	3.47	1.097	3.70	1.080	DD

Independent t-test

An independent-samples t-test was run to compare the challenges of digital technology for DN and DD educators. Table 4 showed no significant differences ($t(151) = -.736; p=0.463$) in the scores.

Table 4.0. The difference in challenges of digital technology between DN educators and DD educators

Group	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
DN Educators	61	4.26	.835	-.736	151	.463
DD Educators	92	4.36	.764			

Content analysis was used to analyse open-ended feedback from educators, describing the characteristics of the document's content and comparing responses between those aged 21-40 and 41-

60. Out of 153 educators, 138 (90%) responded to the feedback sheet, and themes in Table 5 were derived and quantified for each group.

Table 5.0 The problems faced by educators between ages 21 to 40 and 41 to 60 during online teaching and learning.

No.	Themes	Educators from 21 to 40 years old		Educators from 41 to 60 years old	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	Internet issues	33	40.2	22	39.3
2	Lack of student participation	18	22.0	18	32.1
3	Lack of knowledge and skills in technology	12	14.7	4	7.1
4	Lack of gadgets	8	9.8	9	16.1
5	Lack of time	7	8.5	2	3.6
6	Lack of parental involvement	2	2.4	1	1.8
7	Health problems	2	2.4	0	0
	TOTAL	82	100	56	100

Educators faced seven main problems during online teaching: internet issues (40.2% ages 21-40, 39.3% ages 41-60), lack of student participation (22.0% and 32.1%), technology knowledge (14.7% for younger), gadget availability (16.1% for older), time constraints (8.5% for younger), and health issues (2.4% for younger). Parental involvement was not a significant concern for either group.

Limitations

The study’s limitations include a potential response bias as some educators chose not to provide feedback. Additionally, the research focused solely on English language educators, limiting the generalizability to other subject areas. The reliance on self-reported data may lead to subjectivity or recall bias. The study only explored educators’ perspectives without considering student feedback or input. Despite efforts to use content analysis, subjective interpretation of responses might impact data analysis. The research’s cross-sectional design limits the establishment of causality and long-term implications.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, English language educators, regardless of age, encounter similar challenges in online teaching and learning, such as internet issues and lack of student participation. However, younger educators are more inclined towards technology adoption. In comparison, older educators value digital technology for better assessment quality and student focus. Educators’ positive perception of digital technology highlights its potential to enhance online teaching experiences. Recommendations for future research include conducting studies involving students’ perspectives on online learning challenges and exploring innovative ways to address the identified issues. Longitudinal studies can assess the long-term impact of digital integration on educators’ practices and student outcomes.

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IMPROVING NURSE-PATIENT COMMUNICATION THROUGH A TASK-BASED ENGLISH COURSE FOR NURSING STUDENTS: TASK SELECTION, SEQUENCING AND PEDAGOGIC DESIGN

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Abstract

The growing prevalence of English as a lingua franca in professional settings has led to an increased emphasis on designing English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses that incorporate authentic communication tasks to better prepare students for future jobs (Basturkmen, 2022). This study aims to conduct a Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) need analysis to identify authentic tasks focusing on nurse-patient communication for nursing students. By doing so, it will provide essential insights to design a task-based ESP course, specifically targeting the enhancement of nurse-patient communicative skills among nursing bachelor's degree students. The research will employ a mixed research method to facilitate task selection, sequencing, and pedagogic design. Ultimately, the findings may offer a valuable framework from need analysis to task design for the TBLT-ESP course design, particularly in the context of nursing English.

Keywords: Task-based language teaching, English for Special Purposes, Needs Analysis, course design, Nursing English

Background

As globalization continues to shape our society, English has become the dominant language for work-related purposes, serving as a lingua franca (Basturkmen, 2022). Subsequently, the Ministry of Education in China (2022) has acknowledged the importance of nurturing undergraduates with a blend of language proficiency and professional knowledge, thereby driving the demand for enhanced ESP courses in local universities. In Hainan, China, the development of international health resorts has created promising opportunities for nursing students with bilingual capabilities. Therefore, fluency in English has become an asset for nursing careers. Educators in China are now faced with the task of revamping their ESP curricula to meet students' pedagogical needs and align them with the job market requirements.

Hainan Vocational University of Science and Technology, known for promoting high-level technical skills in local communities, is responding to the Ministry of Education's "integrate theory with practice" policy (2022). To achieve this, the university encourages the construction of application-oriented undergraduate course designs, emphasizing practical skills development for future careers. Within this framework, college teachers are urged to develop applied courses, such as Nursing English, as an integral part of professional programs. Through this concerted effort, Hainan Vocational University aspires to equip its students with the essential skills necessary to excel in their future nursing careers.

Statement of the Problem

There are many ESP courses existing, however, it has been observed that existing Nursing English courses often fail to address the authentic job-related tasks of nursing students (Lee Jin Choi, 2021). To bridge this gap, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) need analysis emerges as an effective approach, enabling the identification of real-world needs and guiding the design of ESP courses that align with industry demands.

While the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach has received significant attention in ESL (English as A Second Language) education for its focus on real-world activities and life preparation beyond the classroom, its potential in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) remains largely overlooked. Long (2015) pointed out that the question remains about how exactly the information obtained from Needs Analysis (NA) can and should be used in task design and associated syllabus designs. This study aims to conduct a TBLT need analysis that specifically centers on nurse-patient communication for nursing students. The primary objective is to gather essential information for designing a task-based ESP course. Specifically, the study targets nursing students enrolled in the Bachelor of Nursing program at Hainan Vocational University of Science and Technology in China, with the goal of enhancing their nurse-patient communicative skills and effectively preparing them for their future nursing careers.

Significance

The task-based English course for nursing students is vital in the globalized healthcare industry, to enhance their employability and open up new opportunities. Improving the institution's ESP course will yield better teaching outcomes and lead to higher employment rates for graduates. Local communities will also benefit from specialized medical and nursing courses to meet their specific human resource needs.

This research aims to advance nursing English courses by conducting a TBLT need analysis, offering empirical insights into its application in ESP. The study's TBLT needs analysis will contribute to the design of applied nursing English courses, serving as a valuable reference for ESP researchers and teachers in designing pedagogical tasks. The findings may also provide a viable framework from need analysis to task design for TBLT-ESP course development, offering valuable insights to enhance ESP instructional planning.

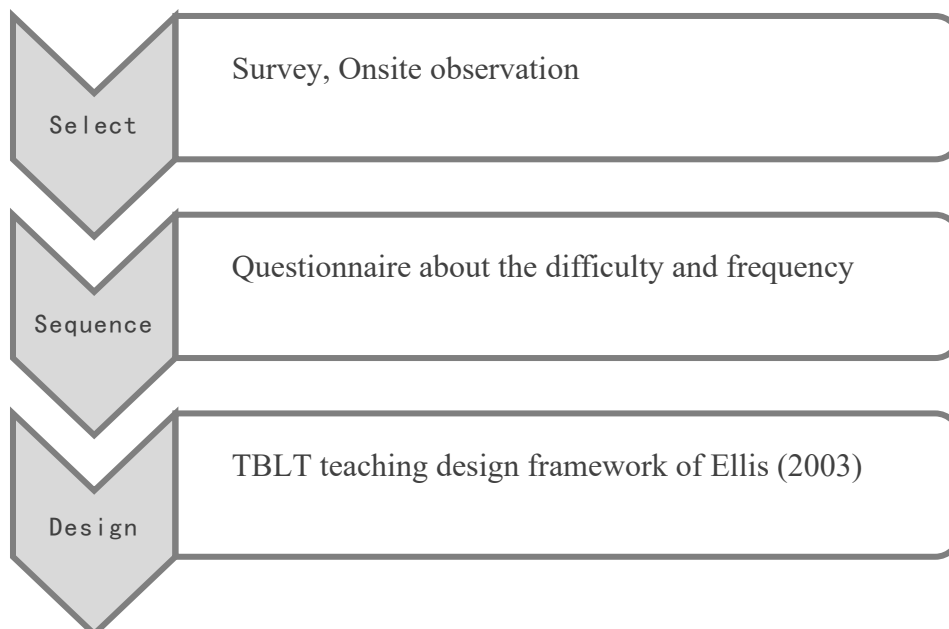
Research Questions

The study aims to achieve its objective by integrating ESP theory, TBLT needs analysis theory, and Cognition Hypothesis theories while considering the impact of pragmatic language teaching paradigms. It seeks to address the following three research questions:

1. What tasks should be included in an English curriculum designed for Nursing students to meet their work field needs?
2. Based on the TBLT Need Analysis and Cognitive Hypothesis:
 - a. How should these target tasks be sequenced?
 - b. What factors contribute to the complexity of the tasks and their sequencing?
3. How can the nurse-patient communication course be effectively implemented according to TBLT theory?

Method

This study will employ a mixed-methodology approach with three stages.



The framework from TBLT ESP needs analysis to design.

In the first stage, the TBLT Needs Analysis Theory will be utilized to identify appropriate tasks by conducting online semi-structured surveys among 10 domain nurses. Accordingly, the target tasks will be suggested based on the results of the survey. Then via observing authentic communication scenarios for ten days by 5 trainee nurses (the senior nursing students), the target tasks will be further confirmed. At last Pedagogic tasks will be adapted and designed for classroom use, supplemented by materials from the Nursing English textbook.

The second stage will adopt quantitative research to sequence these tasks. A Likert-type

questionnaire, containing frequency and difficulty ratings of each task, will be distributed online to 60 nursing majors at Hainan Vocational University of Science and Technology. Tasks will then be sequenced in decreasing frequency and increasing difficulty. For tasks with high difficulty scores, the study will incorporate the cognition hypothesis and Robinson's SSARC model, recommending sequencing based on increasing cognitive complexity, particularly for nurse-patient interactions. Students will provide their perceptions after the teacher's explanation, and an open-ended item will allow additional task suggestions.

In the final stage, the pedagogical tasks will be designed based on TBLT theory, using the data from the first two stages. The effectiveness of the task design will be evaluated by three expert ESP teachers, resulting in an authentic nurse-patient communication task teaching plan.

Findings and Discussion

In response to the lack of guidelines in the literature on systematically selecting tasks for inclusion in a syllabus based on needs analysis (Roger Gilabert & Aleksandra Malicka, 2022), The study aims to develop a viable framework for task design in Teaching English for Specific Purposes (TBLT-ESP) courses, starting from need analysis.

The finding of this study will resonate with Serafini and Torres' (2015), which demonstrated the practical utility of conducting a TBLT needs analysis for English for business courses. The approach involved consulting insiders to generate a list of relevant tasks and surveying students to gauge task frequency and difficulty. Based on this, target tasks were designed.

Building on these insights, the current study investigates the feasibility of TBLT needs analysis in a nursing context, combining Cognitive Complexity (Robinson, 2005) with sequencing to design the teaching plan using the TBLT method (Ellis, 2003).

Drawing on the valuable insights provided by Gokool (2018), who identified communication task topics for isiZulu health science students, this study seeks to identify and incorporate additional nurse-patient communication tasks with local characteristics in Hainan province, China.

By emphasizing the significance of authentic and localized ESP materials, the findings of this study are expected to provide valuable insights for enhancing ESP course design in the nursing field.

Limitations

The study reported in this article is of a small scale, involving only 5 domain nurses and 10 trainee nurses for the task survey and onsite observation. A larger-scale investigation could lead to more convincing results. Additionally, Long (2005) suggested that tasks can be investigated using triangulated data from both insider and outsider sources. A broader range of sources and methods should be consulted, such as job description manuals. The adoption of ethnographic methods may uncover more tasks with local characteristics.

It is also important to note that this study focuses solely on communication tasks. For a more comprehensive needs analysis, an in-depth investigation should closely examine tasks performed in different modalities, including written tasks in addition to oral ones.

Conclusion

In conclusion, ESP courses need to be designed based on student's specific language needs, as well as local language dynamics in which students use English. The findings of this study will stress the importance of conducting an ongoing needs analysis and developing needs-responsive instruction that can meet students' specific learning purposes, in addition to their pragmatic needs.

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CEFR-ALIGNED PRIMARY CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK: RURAL NATIONAL PRIMARY SCHOOL ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS' ATTITUDES AND SLANTS

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Abstract

This study attempted to explore attitudes and slants of Rural National Primary School English Language Teachers in Sarawak, Malaysia towards the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)-aligned Primary Curriculum Framework. This study used quantitative analysis to interpret data gathered through the questionnaire. A set of a questionnaire in the form of Google Form was prepared. The link to this questionnaire was shared with English language teachers from rural area national primary schools of 12 divisions in Sarawak, a state in Borneo Malaysia to serve the aim of this study. 749 English language teachers had responded to the questionnaire. Specifically, the analysis and discussion are organised in terms of teachers' attitudes and slants. Besides, the demographic profiles of English language teachers were taken into account in doing the analysis and discussion. The findings have shown that the teachers' attitudes and slants towards CEFR-aligned Primary Curriculum Framework for Primary School's English Language Education are positive. The chief findings of this study can be a source of references to the researchers, policymakers, teachers, academicians, or others who have intention on the similar focus of study to further improve English language education in Malaysia especially in teaching and learning, and assessments.

Keywords: CEFR-aligned Primary Curriculum Framework, Attitudes, Slants, English Language Teachers, Sarawak Rural National Primary Schools

Introduction

English is an important language in Malaysia and the government is working to improve English language education in the country. The CEFR-aligned Primary Curriculum Framework is a new initiative that aims to help learners develop the knowledge and skills they need to use English proficiently. The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) is a framework for describing language proficiency. It has been adopted by many countries around the world, including Malaysia.

Therefore, the objectives of this study are to: 1) identify the attitudes of rural national primary school English language teachers in Sarawak towards CEFR-aligned Primary Curriculum Framework; and 2) identify the slants of rural national primary school English language teachers in Sarawak towards CEFR-aligned Primary Curriculum Framework.

The study is to answer the research questions which are: 1) What are the attitudes of rural national primary school English language teachers in Sarawak towards CEFR-aligned Primary Curriculum Framework?; and 2) What are the slants of rural national primary school English language teachers in Sarawak towards CEFR-aligned Primary Curriculum Framework?

Related Literature

The implementation of CEFR in Malaysia and some other countries has led to both challenges and opportunities. These challenges and opportunities, as based on past studies reflect teachers' acceptances in terms of their attitudes and slants towards CEFR-aligned curriculum. Some of the challenges that have been reported include insufficient training for teachers on how to use CEFR, and lack of knowledge and exposure to CEFR among teachers (Ajop & Said, 2020; Alih et al., 2020; Díez-Bedmar & Byram, 2019; Foley, 2019; Kaur & Mah, 2018; Kok & Aziz, 2019; Phoolaikao & Sukying, 2021; Tosun & Glover, 2020; Uri & Aziz, 2018); low English proficiency levels among teachers (Aziz & Uri, 2017; Foley, 2019); difficulty to implement CEFR-aligned teaching and learning (Jerald & Shah, 2018; Sidhu et al., 2018); CEFR document's abstract nature, insufficiency of research into CEFR's school-based uses, and the teachers' philosophies and cultures (Lee et al., 2022); the content of the material do not suit Malaysia's context in terms of culture which was said to be imbalanced and less relevant (Bakir & Aziz, 2022; Din & Yamat, 2020; Hadi & Shah, 2020; Rahim & Daghig, 2019; Shak et

al., 2021; Takal et al., 2021); the internationalization of the contents caused the low proficiency learners to have difficulties to comprehend the learning materials (Shak et al., 2021); the textbooks lack of supplementary materials (Momand et al., 2019; Shak et al., 2021; Takal et al., 2021); and challenging vocabulary, the use of difficult words in grammar explanations, and lack of sentence and paragraph structures in the writing part of the CEFR-aligned materials (Takal et al., 2021).

Some of the opportunities that have been reported include CEFR is essential to lead to the betterment of learners' English language proficiency (Kok & Aziz, 2019); and CEFR can help to improve the alignment of curriculum, assessment, and instruction (Sidhu et al., 2018; Zaki & Darmi, 2021). The implementation of CEFR in Malaysia is still in its early stages, and there is still much work to be done. However, the potential benefits of CEFR are significant, and it is clear that the framework has the potential to improve English language education in Malaysia. The CEFR-aligned curriculum benefits English language teachers in Malaysia in their teaching as it covers significant language functions which are necessary to be learned by the learners.

Methods

The methodology of the study is illustrated in Figure 1.

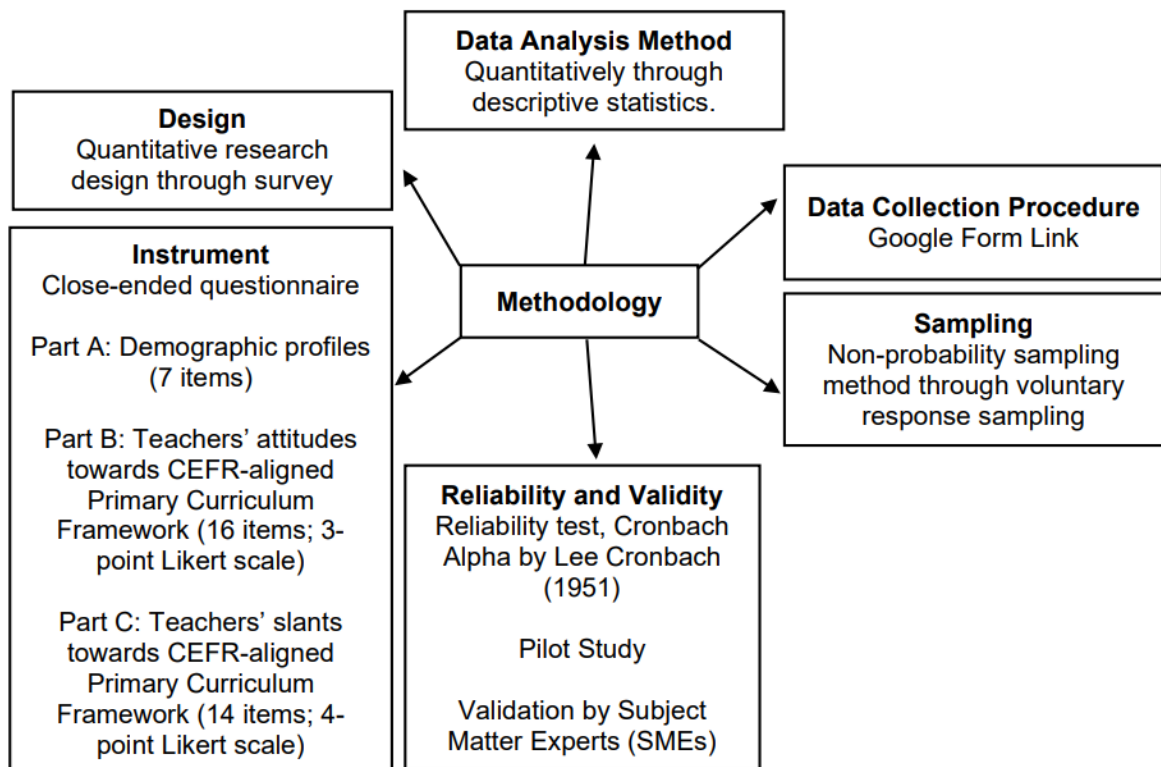


Figure 1.0 Methodology

Results and Discussion

Demographic Profiles

The demographic profiles of the respondents are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic profiles of the respondents

No.	Items	Frequency (Percentage, %)
1	Sex	Male 221 (29.5)
		Female 528 (70.5)
2	Option	Optionist teacher 535 (71.4)
		Non-optionist teacher 214 (28.6)
3	Age	21-30 years old 209 (27.9)
		31-40 years old 225 (30)
		41-50 years old 172 (23)
		51-60 years old 143 (19.1)

4	Experience in teaching CEFR class	1 st year	215 (28.7)
		2 nd year	199 (26.6)
		3 rd year	161 (21.5)
		4 th year	174 (23.2)
5	CEFR class	Year 1	281 (37.5)
		Year 2	276 (36.8)
		Year 3	273 (36.4)
		Year 4	332 (44.3)
6	CEFR Training	Yes	526 (70.2)
		No	223 (29.8)

Teachers' attitudes towards CEFR-aligned Primary Curriculum Framework

The teachers were fully prepared to familiarise themselves with and to embrace the framework. Other than that, most teachers have strong interest to know more about CEFR-aligned curriculum and they are ready to attend series of courses, trainings or workshops in order to equip themselves with the related information. Furthermore, they were confident and partially confident to teach using this CEFR-aligned primary curriculum (adapt the suggested pre- and post-lesson activities to serve the teaching and learning's objective(s); write lesson's objectives (MLO and CLO) that are measurable and achievable, and are related to the Learning Standards; and incorporate the content in CEFR-related documents and materials into teaching and learning, and assessments). The study also found that the teachers were partially able to design and administer a sequence of formative assessments to assess their pupils' performance and record the results with reference to the Curriculum Standards, and apply differentiation strategies in the lessons to meet learner's individual learning needs. Most teachers said that they partially talked in English with their pupils most of the time during English lessons. Although some teachers perceived themselves as a challenge to teach English language concerning this CEFR-aligned curriculum, they put some efforts by doing some readings on CEFR related documents and articles to increase their understanding, and doing the adaptations when planning their lesson plans for a better teaching and learning.

Teachers' slants towards CEFR-aligned Primary Curriculum Framework

The teachers agreed that the CEFR-aligned curriculum is understandable as in the way it is being organised and presented in the documents. Also, they agreed that the curriculum boosts their awareness on the importance of English as a spoken language; and the importance of the curriculum in preparing Malaysian learners to be proficient in English language independently and autonomously, developing learners' learning potential and language proficiency, and preparing as well as keeping the learners as school-leavers in pace with the rapidly emergence global economy and globalised job market. Besides, the teachers were aware of the opportunities for language learners to practice using English language which covers four language skills and grammar offered by the curriculum. The teachers asserted that more trainings, workshops and courses on teaching and learning should be conducted for them so that they are properly prepared to implement the curriculum. This is to address that they need to have a proper sequence of assessments and differentiation strategies in order to track learners' progress, and to identify their strengths and weaknesses.

Some teachers felt that the ingredients of CEFR do fulfil the needs of Malaysian learners at their primary level, yet it is not the best available option to be aligned with the curriculum due to context factor and target levels. Also, most teachers claimed that CEFR-aligned curriculum places too much focus on promoting communicative language learning thus emphasizes less on other language skills.

Conclusion

Overall, the study found that English language teachers in Sarawak rural national primary schools were generally positive about CEFR-aligned Primary Curriculum Framework. The study's findings have implications for teachers' training and curriculum development in Malaysia. The Ministry of Education should provide more trainings and supports to help teachers implementing CEFR-aligned Primary Curriculum Framework effectively. The curriculum should also be adapted to take into account the needs of rural school learners.

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ADVANCING PROFESSIONALS: THE KEY ROLE OF ELT ORGANIZATIONS

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Abstract

ELT (English Language Teaching) organizations are instrumental in driving professional growth by offering resources, support, and opportunities for English language teachers to enhance their skills and career prospects. They also promote networking and collaboration among professionals, both locally and globally, provide diverse educational opportunities, and keep teachers informed about the latest research and trends. Through workshops, conferences, webinars, and online courses, teachers refine their teaching methods, engage in discussions, establish connections, and expand their professional networks, gaining valuable perspectives and expertise. The presentation narrates the growth and expansion of the Nepal English Language Teachers' Association (NELTA), a prominent organization in South Asia. It emphasizes NELTA's vital role in fostering the professional development of its members through creating opportunities, providing national and international exposure, certification programs, and advocacy efforts, simultaneously empowering them continuously to enhance their skills and make substantial contributions to the field of ELT.

Keywords: Leadership, Professional Development, Collaboration, Challenges, and Sustainability

Background

ELT organizations facilitate the personal and professional advancement of English teachers by providing platforms and opportunities, fostering networking and collaboration. They offer diverse educational avenues such as workshops, training, conferences, webinars, online courses, and global exposure to enriching skills and knowledge. The presentation entitled "Advancing Professionals: The Key Role of ELT Organizations" is based on experiences in the context of Nepal. It focuses on the significant impact and essential role of the Nepal English Language Teachers Association (NELTA) in enhancing its members' competencies and skills in ELT. It emphasizes how NELTA provides invaluable resources, support, and opportunities for its members to grow. Moreover, it will highlight the best practices, challenges, sustainability, and the path ahead, along with a brief introduction to NELTA, its expansion over time, journey, successes and setbacks, collaborations, effective leadership, and strategies to overcome challenges.

Brief Introduction of NELTA

NELTA as a volunteer, non-profit making, non-political, and non-governmental, prominent ELT organization in South Asia, has been playing a vital role in driving its members for professional growth since 1992 with an aim to develop skilled human resources and improve quality education through English Language Teaching in Nepal. NELTA's inception took place in a small room at the British Council, Nepal, with a few like-minded individuals. NELTA draws its strength from its widespread branches and provinces, spanning from district to central levels, encompassing its dedicated members. It functions through 58 Branches/Chapters along with 7 Provincial Committees across the country and covers 60 districts out of 77 with 5500+ life members that include teachers of English from pre-primary to tertiary, university levels (private and public), teacher trainers/educators, and professionals associated with ELT from home and abroad.

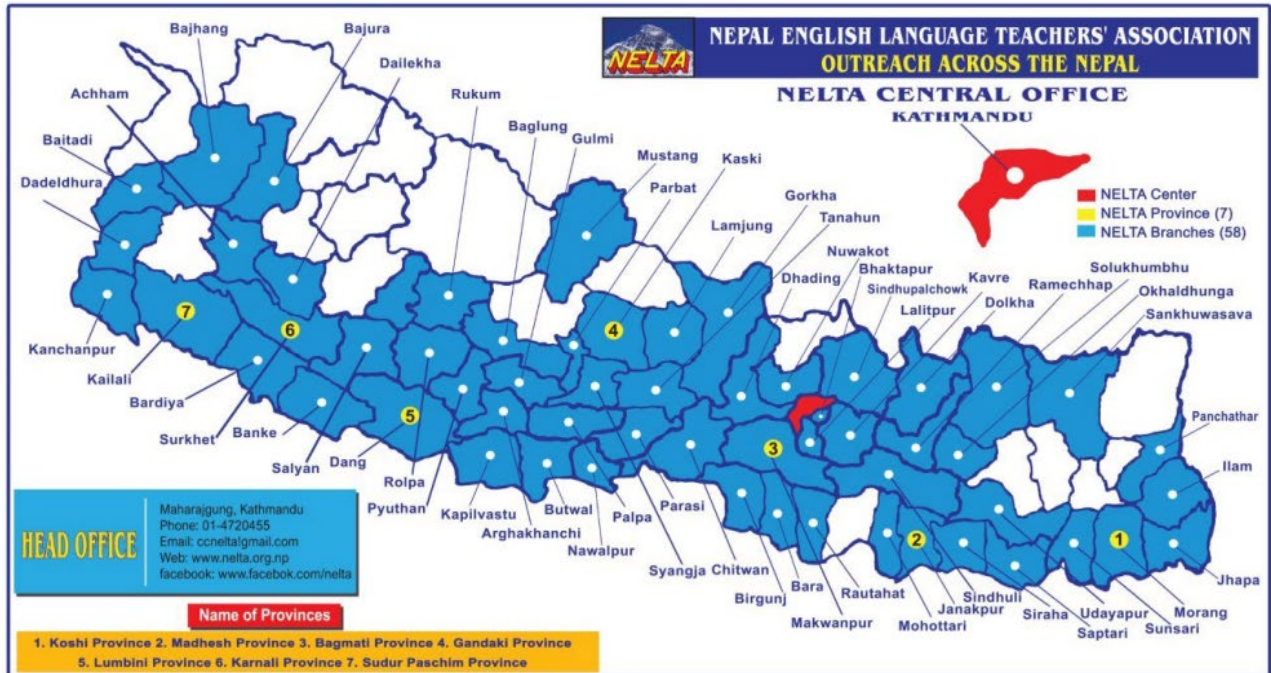


Figure 1 NELTA's Coverage

Leadership and Professional Growth of Members

Leadership in organizations plays a crucial role in fostering the effective professional development of the members. Leadership helps to build the organization. The organization provides you with a platform for individual growth. It will help you to:

- inspire and motivate to grow further.
- set specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals to provide direction and purpose.
- provide coaching and mentorship, and
- get exposure for professional development.

The model of leadership within organizations should embrace shared leadership and the promotion of collaboration. By doing so, any organization can harness the collective intelligence and capacities of its members, resulting in enhanced solutions, innovation, and overall advancement. As stated by Clark, J. T. (2008), 'Humans' ability to effectively collaborate is at the core of leadership' (p. 16). Shared leadership is an approach that emphasizes the distribution of leadership responsibilities among team members within an organization. Instead of relying solely on a single leader, shared leadership encourages active and inclusive participation and involvement of multiple individuals in decision-making, solution-finding, and influencing the organization's direction. The leader's role in education involves tasks in leadership, management, and administration (Dimmock, 1999 Adams et al., 2017). Leadership is a responsibility. It has shifted from being derived from an individual or a few individuals to a larger collective source, which encompasses the imagination and insights of many (Freire, 2000). Leadership and organization involve members and offer opportunities for further growth, enhancing their distinct ability to achieve their vision or objectives.

NELTA has been instrumental in promoting English language teachers in Nepal. The organization's focus on both national and international exposure expands educators' horizons, fostering knowledge exchange with global peers. NELTA's impact is evident in advocating for language education policies, enabling significant contributions to ELT. Regular workshops, training sessions, series of webinars, conferences, and certification programs empower members and cater to them at all levels. NELTA's commitment to strategic planning, seen in its annual meeting, solidifies its influence through a bottom-up approach, strengthening its impact on the field.



Figure 2 Strategic Planning Meetings with the Representatives of Branches and Provinces

Collaboration

NELTA believes in collaboration and partnership at national and international levels. It has wider networking and affiliation with various organizations such as the British Council, Nepal, RELO, the US Embassy, Nepal, IATEFL, TESOL, Africa ELTA, BELTA in Bangladesh, ELTAI in India, MELTA in Malaysia, JALT in Japan, SPELT in Pakistan, Egypt TESOL, Spain TESOL, the Global English Education China Assembly, as well as national and international universities and publication houses. In addition, NELTA has signed MOU with the Center for Education and Human Resource Development (CEHRD), under the Ministry of Education Science and Technology with the vision to develop and expand quality education to help establish and develop an educated, cultured, prosperous, and dynamic society through quality education. Thus, NELTA works in line with the Ministry of Education, closely with the Department of Education, and local authorities in different public schools through its branches and provinces. These platforms facilitate discussions, connections, and the expansion of professional networks, reinforcing the organization's essential role in the field. ELT organizations present a range of tailored educational prospects for language teachers.

Challenges

All executive committee members, whether in branches, provinces, or the center, are volunteers. Despite their commitment, balancing their professional lives with organizational duties is challenging. The organization operates on a volunteer basis and as a non-profit entity; it is not permitted to accumulate funds in the bank due to financial restrictions dictated by the existing law of Nepal. The few staff members burdened with extensive responsibilities are also financially strained. The workload is overwhelming, particularly when managing multiple projects concurrently. Moreover, members' expectations and aspirations have surged, requiring careful management within the organization's constraints. With a vast number of members and committees, maintaining effective organization becomes challenging. The organization grapples with the difficulty of managing its sizeable membership and committees.

Sustainability

For the sustainability of the organization, effective communication, networking, and trust are of paramount importance. NELTA has been collaborating with districts and centers to organize programs at various levels. These collaborations could involve initiatives such as providing English language classes to other organizations like the Attorney General's Office and the Nepal Bar Council. Potential funding sources could encompass membership fees, as well as financial and in-kind support from partner organizations and supporters.

To facilitate professional growth, it is imperative to identify relevant sources and projects. Encouraging branches and provinces to engage in joint ventures, establish connections with potential contributors, and submit proposals can significantly give to overcoming these challenges. In essence, NELTA places a strong emphasis on teamwork and partnership, uniting individuals with diverse backgrounds in the pursuit of shared objectives and sustainability.

Conclusion

ELT organizations play a decisive role in advancing teaching professionals. They offer professional development, networking opportunities, empowerment, and resources for their members. NELTA serves as an exemplary model, driving the professional growth of its members. It supports members'

capacity building by involving them in cross-border research projects, providing training, workshops, and webinars, and offering national and international exposure to enhance their knowledge in ELT and ICT skills, including leadership. Members constitute the strength of the organization, reciprocating sustainability and fostering the growth of the members. Nonetheless, challenges persist.

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INTEGRATING TOULMIN'S MODEL TO IMPROVE THE PERSUASIVE WRITING SKILLS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN MALAYSIA

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Abstract

In persuasive writing, a writer defends his stance with a strong argument. However, students experience challenges when attempting persuasive writing. This paper aims to identify common features of ESL persuasive writing adopted by secondary school students and factors that affect the quality of their writing. For this study, a total of 150 essay samples were collected from students for analysis. Toulmin's model was employed to analyse the essays by identifying the persuasive elements that were employed by the students in their essays. Additionally, a questionnaire was also distributed to understand the factors which influence their writing. The findings reveal that the students' writing quality is greatly affected by the persuasive writing features that they employed as well as other factors such as reading and general knowledge. It is highly recommended that Toulmin's model be included in ESL classrooms to nurture the students' persuasive writing and critical thinking skills.

Keywords: Persuasive Writing, Toulmin's Model, English Second Language (ESL)

Background of Study

ESL writing instruction in Malaysia is exam-oriented and instructor-centred (Kaur, 2015) as students are provided only with what they need to pass their examinations (Aziz & Mat Said, 2020). It is necessary for students to be proficient in different writing genres, which include persuasive writing (Aziz & Ahmad, 2017). With persuasive writing, writers are able to address real-world issues while attempting to change their readers' minds, so they made take action and resolve conflicts (Johnson et al., 2018; Wachsmuth et al., 2018). Many persuasive writing models have been developed over the past several decades (Flower & Hayes, 1981; Harris & Graham, 2018; Fei-Wen, 2010; Stambaugh, 2011; Ooi & Seelan, 2011; Sampson, Enderle, Grooms & Witte, 2013). Toulmin's Model (Toulmin, 2003) is the most widely recognised due to its simplicity, which allows students to gain a clear understanding of persuasive writing discourse (Zainuddin & Rafik-Galea, 2016).

Statement of Problem

The persuasive writing genre is complex (Abdul Aziz, 2021). It demands students to create a well-reasoned and well-supported argument. Despite being masters of verbal argumentation, they struggle with putting their ideas on paper (Fox, Fitz, Reiner, 2017; Aziz & Ahmad, 2017, Rashid & Chan, 2017). This results in an essay with barely inadequate content as students also demonstrate poor organisation, a lack of support in their reasoning and immature language (Lam et al, 2018; Abdul Aziz, 2021). The late introduction to persuasive writing to the students, which takes place during their upper secondary years, prevents them from gaining adequate exposure as their focus is also divided across other genres (Abdul Aziz, 2021). The teacher being unable to adequately teach persuasive writing may also prevent the students from mastering the (Lam et al, 2018). An effective teacher (Islam et al., 2022) should adopt appropriate teaching and learning approaches, design an effective teaching plan and deliver content to provide the students with the skills and knowledge to master their persuasive writing.

Significance of Study

Academic writing skills, such as persuasive writing, are vital for students (Zakaria & Hashim, 2020), especially during their tertiary education, as they are expected to produce high-quality written assignments that are well-reasoned, organized, and supported by credible sources (Brent, 2017; Goldman, 2019). The development of a persuasive essay requires the students to use critical thinking skills to argue their points (Aziz & Ahmad, 2017). Unfortunately, this is no easy task, especially for non-

native English speakers (Tankó & Csizér, 2018). The results of this study should show that changes must be made to help students improve their persuasive writing skills and that a new method of instruction needs to be developed and integrated into the ESL classroom.

Research Questions

1. To what extent do the features of Malaysian secondary school students' persuasive essays reflect the features of Toulmin's Model?
2. What are the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that influence the quality of the students' persuasive essays.

Methodology

The participants were chosen with purposive sampling and included 150 Form 4 students from three different schools within the Hulu Klang Area. The schools chosen had a largely Malay population. Before data collection, permission was gained from each of the schools' administrators. Each student was assigned to write an essay according to a list of prompts provided by the researcher that were based on past SPM examination questions. The researcher was to answer any questions. After the essays were finished, the researcher collected them for grading and analysis. A scoring rubric developed by Tunku Abdul Rahman University College (TARUC) was utilised to grade the essays while the existing SPM marking scheme was used to provide scores for the essays. Toulmin's Model facilitated the content analysis of the students' essays to uncover common features within the students' persuasive writing. This was done by tagging the persuasive features employed by the students and recognizing the pattern of persuasion based on Toulmin's Model. Additional features such as organisation, content, as well as language use were also observed. Additionally, the students filled out and submitted questionnaires which includes their background information as well as to assess the factors that influence the quality of their essays.

Findings and Discussion

Out of the 150 essay samples, only ten of them scored high while 97 samples scored low and the remaining 43 earned average scores. The essay samples were analysed using Toulmin's Model and tagged for the persuasive writing elements. According to data gathered from the essay samples, the students are shown to be capable of structuring the basic argumentative elements of persuasive writing. However, most of them are only able to form the basic persuasive foundation using Toulmin's (2003) main elements and failed to fully employ the optional elements. The high-scoring and average essays were well-written, organized, and supported, providing a clear stance in their introduction along with a thesis statement. However, they did not fully take advantage of the optional elements. The low-scoring essays, however, used simple words with shorter sentences and paragraphs with limited use of Toulmin's persuasive elements. They also made too many errors and did not provide enough content to warrant high scores. The questionnaires also revealed that the students consider reading, the teacher's instruction, the students' motivation and their general knowledge to be among the factors that affect their persuasive writing.

Limitations

Besides time constraints as data collection needed to be done within the school year, the research was limited to only using the Form 4 students since they were closest to the age of the Form 5 students who were busy preparing for their SPM examinations. While 150 essay samples appear to be adequate, a much larger sample size would have yielded better results. However, the research lacked transportation to make any further trips and could only target the schools closest to their residence.

Conclusion

Persuasive writing instruction is exam-oriented and has little focus on critical thinking. This is the result of secondary school students only being exposed to the genre in their ESL classrooms during their upper secondary school years and their attention being spread across other writing genres as well. The results show that only a small number of students are capable of composing a well-written essay while the rest have an average or low proficiency in constructing a persuasive argument. The among of reading, general knowledge, the students' motivation and the teachers' ability to teach are among the

factors that can affect the quality of the students' essays. A concept model was developed based on the research results and Toulmin's Model. a future study could implement it. After implementation of the model, a comparison can be drawn between the students' persuasive writing ability before and after they are exposed to Toulmin's Model.

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CEFR SPEAKING ASSESSMENT; ARE MALAYSIAN TEACHERS READY?

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Abstract

The reformation of English Language Education in Malaysia developed with the introduction of Common European Framework of References (CEFR) emphasizes on providing equal weightages for all the four skills; Reading, Writing, Speaking & Listening in the Malaysian National Examination, SPM since 2021. This transformation which began to provide equal focus on Speaking Skills insists teachers to become efficient Assessors and Interlocutors who would provide the deserving scores according to band score descriptors specified by The Malaysian Examination Board. Nevertheless, the lack of courses and coaching sessions has questioned the teachers' potential in awarding SPM candidates with appropriate scores. Hence, the calling of the Malaysian Ministry of Education in developing quality and proficient speakers who can stand equally with international speakers and the level of readiness among English language teachers in mastering the band score descriptors and placing the pupils in the accurate band score leads to the aims of this research; to identify teachers' readiness in executing SPM Paper 3 1119/3 and to investigate their understanding on the scoring criteria for speaking. Questionnaires were distributed to 50 English teachers who have experience being an Assessor and Interlocutor. Results claim that teachers are very much aware on how the Speaking Test should be conducted but majority of them mention that they are uncertain about the keywords used in descriptors to differentiate pupils' proficiency when awarding marks. This data would assist the policy makers to understand the current status of Assessors and Interlocutors which can then allow them to take necessary steps to enhance the quality of Speaking Test Examiners.

Keywords: CEFR, Assessors, Interlocutors, Readiness, Speaking

Background of Study

The Malaysian Ministry of Education (MOE) has introduced the implementation the Malaysian Education Blueprint (2013-2025) since the year of 2013 with the aim of transforming our Malaysian education system to be in parallel with international standards (Johar & Aziz, 2019). Connecting this to the Malaysian English Education, the focus would be to improve pupil's proficiency and achieve an international ideal. This includes nurturing pupils into developing effective communicative skills in schools through the enhanced and well-planned teaching of the four main skills; Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening to produce competent English language users who will later be able to excel locally and globally (Paneer Selvam & Mohamad, 2019). These needs claim the alignment of the latest curriculum which is acknowledged as Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Menengah (KSSM) or Standard Curriculum for Secondary School that has been implemented under the Malaysian Education Blueprint of the Common European Framework of References (CEFR) (Azlina & Ying, 2020). This Framework is targeted to standardize the language proficiency that has been adopted in many countries in their education system for the same purpose; to reach a standardized global standard of proficiency (Eddie & Aziz, 2020).

Statement of Problem

In Malaysia, majority of pupils sees English as a foreign language and hence they receive less exposure towards the language and rarely uses the language when speaking or writing in their daily lives (Azlina & Saraswathy, 2021). This causes difficulties to comprehend the need of the question among the students. The fact that teachers who are questioning (interlocutor) are not allowed to paraphrase the questions to ensure pupils' understanding makes it worse. Students remain silent and lose their chance to gain marks in Speaking their speaking test. This then relates to the ability of the interlocutors and assessors to conduct the examination with integrity and provide suitable scores to the pupils according to their professional judgement and understanding of how the marking descriptors work.

Significance of Study

This research presents an understanding that teachers are aware of the technical aspects of the

Speaking Test execution. Unfortunately, most of the English teachers has claimed that they are not completely ready and efficient enough to evaluate pupils during the Speaking Examination. Though this statement does not justify the situation of all the English teachers but this is clearly the concern among the majority of English teachers who require better training and coaching sessions to enable them to clarify the difference descriptors in the band score and then being able to provide grades for the candidates (Diep & Hiew, 2021). Teachers are certain that the responsibility given to them is a matter that determines the future of the SPM leavers who will be using these results to apply for higher education institutions and later embark into their career world. Hence, misjudgment on their language proficiency is completely intolerable.

Research Questions

1. What are the needed criteria by an English teacher to execute SPM Paper 3 1119/3 efficiently?
2. How do teachers use the Speaking Assessment Scoring rubrics into evaluating a candidate during SPM Paper 3 111/3?

Method

The tool that used for this study is questionnaire. Questionnaire is provided to support the findings of the study. The questions are related to teachers' readiness in implementing SPM speaking assessment. The questionnaire was adapted, and it was developed by Hamed (Taherdoost, 2019). The teachers will have to choose between score 1-4. 1 represents totally disagree, 2 represents disagree, 3 represents agree and 4 represents totally agree. It consists of two sections which are Section A and Section B. Section A referred to the speaking assessment technical aspect while Section B covers teacher's understanding of the marking rubrics. There were 50 questionnaires distributed to the English teachers all over Malaysia through Google form. The participants are from secondary school who have experience in executing SPM speaking assessment in 2022/2023. The results later will be presented in the form of percentage in pie chart for clear understanding. The pie chart will also be reviewed to justify the gained results.

Findings and Discussion

It can be concluded that the majority of the teachers involved in the survey claimed that they are not completely ready in awarding scores for the pupils. It is rather challenging to understand the distinguishment between key words in different band score. They also mentioned that they are not confident enough to place them in any band descriptors and constantly tend to question themselves if they have placed a candidate in a particular band. They understand that it is a huge responsibility, but sufficient guidance and in-depth coaching is not given to the teachers. Even worse when a teacher who is newly posted and does not have any exposure and experience understanding the scoring system is sent out to other schools to become an assessor (Seedhouse & Morales, 2017).

It is undeniable that videos have been released by the Ministry of Education to guide English teachers understand the different level of band score and a booklet for Speaking Examiners has been circulated for the teachers. Nevertheless, teachers believe this is not sufficient to mold them into becoming an effective assessor. This interpretation differs from what has been gained from a smaller number of teachers who claimed that they have been trained to play their roles as assessors and interlocutors, but it is worth highlighting at this point that the additional training session has only taken place in certain states. Even so, they suggested that it would be an advantage if courses are conducted in thorough and in relation to the exact test that is being conducted every year.

Limitations

It is worth noting that there are limited research focusing on the readiness of Examiners for SPM Speaking Examination per say. Hence, finding referral points as a support from previous research could be a challenge. Nevertheless, this research is supported by information on the readiness of speaking tests conducted across the globe (Diep & Hiew, 2021). An example would be IELTS speaking that has been recognized for many years, it is certain that the evaluating system and the qualities of an examiner has clearly been acknowledged and practised to sustain the quality of the examination (Seedhouse & Morales, 2017 & Truong & Samed, 2021).

Conclusion

To conclude, this research presents an understanding that teachers are aware of the technical aspects of the Speaking Test execution. Unfortunately, most of the English teachers has claimed that they are not completely ready and efficient enough to evaluate pupils during the Speaking Examination. Though this statement does not justify the situation of all the English teachers, but this is clearly the concern among most English teachers who require better training and coaching sessions to enable them to clarify the difference descriptors in the band score and then being able to provide grades for the candidates (Diep & Hiew, 2021). Teachers are certain that the responsibility given to them is a matter that determines the future of the SPM leavers who will be using these results to apply for higher education institution and later embark into their career world. Hence, misjudgement on their language proficiency is complete intolerable.

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SUPPORTING UNDERGRADUATES' LITERATURE REVIEW WRITING SKILLS IN THE ENGLISH MEDIUM INSTRUCTION CONTEXT

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Abstract

This study examines the methods and programs utilized to help undergraduate students develop their literature review writing abilities in the English Medium Instruction (EMI) context. Students who do not speak English as their first language encounter significant challenges in the EMI environment because they must navigate the difficulties of academic writing while juggling the requirements of scholarly literature synthesis. This study will employ a mixed-methods approach that combines qualitative and quantitative procedures. Undergraduate students will be interviewed about their opinions, experiences, and first impressions of the strategies and interventions used to assist them in writing literature reviews in semi-structured interviews to gather qualitative data. The effectiveness and satisfaction levels of the different strategies and interventions employed to support their research review writing abilities were quantified using a survey questionnaire. The participants will be undergraduates taking an English-taught academic writing course. Purposive sampling will be employed to select participants. The findings highlight several effective strategies, such as peer review exercises that encompass individualized and classroom-based approaches. The study also emphasizes how important it is to use technology in the assistance process, like plagiarism detection software and online citation management systems. The research findings can be applied to better curricula, teaching strategies, and institutional regulations that are meant to boost students' academic writing abilities and support their success in higher education.

Keywords: English Medium Instruction (EMI) context, Literature Review writing skills, undergraduate students

Background of Study

This study examines the strategies and interventions used to assist undergraduate students in honing their writing abilities for literature reviews in the context of English-medium instruction (EMI). In many academic settings, English is the primary language used for instruction, particularly in higher education institutions. However, for non-native English speakers, this can pose significant difficulties in terms of academic writing, particularly in the context of literature reviews (Singh & Kaur, 2016). Literature reviews are an integral part of research papers and require students to critically analyze existing scholarly works and synthesize them to form a cohesive argument or research question. However, undergraduates often struggle with this task, especially when English is not their first language. They face challenges in understanding academic texts, identifying relevant sources, structuring their review, and effectively integrating the ideas and findings of previous studies (Chen & Wang, 2022; Hyland, 2019). This research study seeks to explore effective strategies and interventions that can support undergraduate students in enhancing their literature review writing skills within the English medium instruction context. The study aims to investigate the specific difficulties faced by students, identify the underlying causes, and propose targeted interventions to address these challenges. The findings of this research have the potential to inform pedagogical practices and curriculum development in English medium instruction contexts, ultimately improving the academic writing skills of undergraduate students and enhancing their overall learning experience.

Statement of Problem

Within the English Medium Instruction (EMI) context, non-native English-speaking undergraduate students encounter specific challenges in developing their literature review writing skills. Navigating the intricacies of academic writing while grappling with the requirements of scholarly literature synthesis poses significant obstacles for these students (Galvan & Galvan, 2017). Although various strategies and interventions are employed to aid students in improving their literature review writing skills, there is a research gap regarding the effectiveness and satisfaction levels of these approaches within the EMI context (Margic & Vodopija, 2018). This study aims to address this research gap by investigating the strategies and interventions used to assist undergraduate students in enhancing their literature review

writing skills. By employing a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys, the study aims to gather insights from students' experiences, viewpoints, and impressions of the techniques and interventions employed to support their literature review writing. Additionally, the study will explore the efficacy of various strategies, including classroom-based and individualized approaches, along with the incorporation of technology, such as plagiarism detection software and online citation management systems. The findings of this research will contribute valuable insights that can inform curriculum development, instructional practices, and institutional policies aimed at improving non-native English-speaking undergraduate students' academic writing skills and facilitating their success in higher education.

Significance of Study

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to advancing English Language Education, particularly within the English Medium Instruction (EMI) context. Non-native English-speaking undergraduate students face unique challenges in developing their literature review writing skills, which are essential for academic success. By investigating the strategies and interventions used to assist these students, this study provides valuable insights that can inform classroom practices and policy decisions. The findings reveal a range of effective strategies, including both classroom-based and individualized approaches, along with the incorporation of technology such as plagiarism detection software and online citation management systems. These insights can be used to improve curriculum development, instructional practices, and institutional policies, ultimately enhancing students' academic writing skills and promoting their success in higher education. Educators can utilize the findings to implement evidence-based interventions and tailor their teaching methods to better support non-native English-speaking undergraduate students in their literature review writing. Additionally, institutions can develop targeted programs and policies to address the specific needs of these students, fostering a more inclusive and supportive learning environment. Overall, the study's findings have practical implications that can positively impact classroom practices and inform decision-making at the institutional level, thereby advancing English Language Education within the EMI context.

Research Question

This investigation is centred on the following main research question:

What are the most effective strategies and interventions, including classroom-based and individualized approaches, as well as the incorporation of technology, such as plagiarism detection software and online citation management systems, to assist non-native English-speaking undergraduate students in improving their literature review writing skills within the English Medium Instruction (EMI) context?

Method

The data collection for this study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative data was gathered through semi-structured interviews with undergraduate students enrolled in an academic writing course taught in English. The interviews aimed to explore the students' experiences, viewpoints, and impressions of the techniques and interventions used to help them improve their literature review writing skills. On the other hand, quantitative data was collected through a survey questionnaire to assess the effectiveness and satisfaction levels of the various strategies and treatments used to support the students' research literature review writing skills. Purposive sampling was employed to select participants, ensuring the representation of non-native English-speaking undergraduate students within the EMI context. The data analysis involved thematic analysis of the qualitative interviews to identify effective strategies and interventions, and statistical analysis of the survey data to determine the effectiveness and satisfaction levels.

Findings and Discussion

The findings of this study confirm the existence of distinct obstacles faced by non-native English-speaking undergraduate students in the English Medium Instruction (EMI) context when it comes to developing their literature review writing skills. The research revealed a range of effective strategies and interventions that can assist these students in improving their skills. The incorporation of technology, such as plagiarism detection software and online citation management systems were highlighted as significant in supporting their literature review writing process. The study identified the

importance of both classroom-based and individualized approaches, including peer review activities, in helping students navigate the complexities of academic writing and scholarly literature synthesis. These findings challenge previously held assumptions that a one-size-fits-all approach is sufficient for supporting non-native English-speaking students in their literature review writing. Instead, the study emphasizes the need for tailored interventions and the integration of technology to meet their specific needs. The findings confirmed the efficacy of the identified strategies and interventions, supporting their potential to improve students' literature review writing skills within the EMI context. The incorporation of technology was particularly valued by the students, as it enhanced their ability to manage references and avoid plagiarism, addressing common challenges faced by non-native English speakers. The study's findings not only validate the use of these strategies but also provide evidence for their effectiveness in supporting academic writing development.

Limitations

Limitations of this study include the use of purposive sampling, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to a broader population. The study focused specifically on undergraduate students enrolled in an academic writing course taught in English within the EMI context, potentially overlooking the experiences of students in other disciplines or language instruction settings. Additionally, the study relied on self-report measures through interviews and surveys, which may be subject to response biases or limited objectivity. The study did not explore the long-term effects of the interventions on students' writing skills or their overall academic performance. Future research could address these limitations by including a more diverse sample, incorporating objective measures of writing proficiency, and conducting longitudinal studies to assess the sustained impact of the interventions.

Conclusion

To sum up, this study highlights the difficulties that non-English-speaking undergraduate students face when learning to write literature reviews in an English Medium Instruction (EMI) setting. However, there are useful ways to assist these undergraduate students, such as through the use of online citation management systems and plagiarism detection software. The study emphasizes how important it is to tackle the challenges of writing and synthesis by combining individualized strategies with classroom-based approaches, such as peer review exercises. These findings are valuable for English Language Education because they provide guidance for developing curricula, enhancing teaching methods, and putting into practice regulations that improve the writing abilities of undergraduate students and set them up for success in higher education. It is recommended that educators and institutions adopt these methods while future research should focus on assessing the long-term impacts of interventions increasing the diversity of the sample population using measures to evaluate writing proficiency and conducting longitudinal studies to assess sustained influence within an EMI context.

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UNVEILING THE POTENTIAL OF MOBILE TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION: TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES

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Abstract

This study evaluated teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward using mobile devices for learning and teaching. Smartphones and other mobile devices can enhance active language learning activities, boosting students' learning capacities and development. Furthermore, the study evaluated both the benefits and drawbacks of mobile technology use, as well as to analyse views and attitudes regarding it. Teachers' attitudes toward mobile devices were mixed, with positive attitudes toward them as learning aids but negative attitudes against their use as teaching tools. However, all participants identified mobile technology's promise for assisting online learning and predicted that it will gain popularity in the future. The data analysis also indicated the significance of self-efficacy traits and their influence on teachers' views and attitudes toward mobile device use. The study provides implications and recommendations for increasing the use of mobile devices in classroom learning, as well as areas that deserve additional research.

Keywords: Mobile devices, Digital technology, Mobile learning, Technology use

Background of Study

This study investigates the use of technology for pedagogical purposes in education, focusing on the adoption of mobile technology for language learning and instruction. It highlights the need for teachers to acquire digital skills to effectively utilize technology in the classroom. Mobile technology offers various advantages, such as portability, communicativeness, collaboration, and practicality, making it an appealing option for enhancing learning experiences (Jeong, 2022; Xu, 2022). Studies suggest that mobile learning can be beneficial for language learning, offering opportunities for interaction and practice with the target language (Puebla et al., 2021; Lai et al., 2022). However, challenges like internet accessibility and teachers' need for different approaches to integrate mobile technology remain (Haleem et al., 2022; Yu et al., 2022). Overall, the study emphasises the importance of preparing future teachers to use innovative educational technology effectively in their instructional practices, particularly in the context of language education.

Statement of Problem

The existing literature strongly advocates for modernizing the education system through the integration of educational technology. Authors like Bowman et al. (2020) and Yu et al. (2022) emphasize the need for educators to embrace technology to enhance teaching quality. The use of mobile technology for language learning has gained attention, but resistance and barriers among teachers persist (Jnr., 2021; Nikolopoulou et al., 2022). Transitioning from traditional to technology-based teaching requires digital skills and training, with emphasis on positive beliefs and attitudes towards technology (Gabriel et al., 2022; de Juana-Espinosa et al., 2023). Schools must provide special training and support to promote teachers' competence and confidence in using technology effectively (Ngao et al., 2022; Andreasen et al., 2022). Positive attitudes and self-efficacy towards technology play a crucial role in successful technology integration (Williams et al., 2023). This study investigates teachers' views and attitudes regarding technology, with the expectation that they will use mobile technology for future language learning and instructional reasons. There is insufficient research on teachers in international schools, hence this study fills a gap in the existing literature. The findings of this study have the potential to provide useful insights into the improvement of teaching and learning, particularly in the context of educational technology.

Significance of Study

This research highlights the importance of mobile technology in language learning and instruction. It aims to provide valuable insights for the effective application of mobile devices in language education. Further investigation into learners' experiences with mobile technology, including preferences, challenges, and benefits, is encouraged. The study specifically focuses on international schoolteachers

who are likely to adopt this approach in their instructional practices. By exploring perceptions and attitudes towards mobile technology, the research seeks to offer a comprehensive understanding of its role in language education. The findings may guide the integration of mobile devices to support an effective learning and teaching process.

Research Questions

1. How do teachers perceive the use of mobile technology for language study and instruction?
2. What are teachers' attitudes toward the use of mobile technology in language learning and instruction?
3. Why do teachers have these perceptions and attitudes?

Method

The researcher sent out emails to participants, detailing the data gathering method and sharing informed consent and interview questions. Participants were allowed to ask questions and agreed to have the 25–35-minute interviews. Following that, attendees could ask more questions. The responses were collated and reported in a researcher's journal, and the recordings were double-checked for correctness. To maintain anonymity, identifying data was omitted. Clean verbatim transcriptions were produced, with fillers and interjections removed while vital information was retained. The scripts were subsequently translated, bringing the data collection procedure to a close. Lastly, the data was logically analyzed, organized, categorized through coding, and examined to uncover patterns connecting variables in mobile technology application and teachers' perceptions and attitudes. The researcher utilized NVivo 10, a software designed to organize and identify connections among variables from the data, facilitating complex and time-consuming data analysis.

Findings and Discussion

The study explored teachers' perceptions about using mobile devices as learning and instructional tools. Overall, teachers had positive beliefs, finding mobile devices beneficial for language performance, class discussions, and class management. They appreciated mobile devices as content-resource tools, accessing language learning websites and e-books for reading and vocabulary enrichment. Mobile devices were also seen as useful translator devices with updated vocabulary and grammar explanations. The study suggested that personalized learning was supported by mobile devices, allowing students to access learning content based on their preferences. However, challenges included technical limitations like slow internet connectivity, distractions from social media, and health concerns related to excessive screen time. Teachers showed positive attitudes toward using mobile devices for learning, citing practicality and accessibility. They believed in their self-efficacy to use mobile devices effectively due to prior experience. However, attitudes were mixed when considering mobile devices as instructional tools, with negative experiences leading to resistance. Despite this, participants acknowledged the inevitability of integrating technology in education to keep up with globalization. Teachers should employ specific strategies to maximize mobile device potential in language learning while minimizing distractions. The study emphasizes the importance of proper implementation to enhance learning outcomes.

Limitations

The qualitative technique with a small number of participants limits generalizability to different socio-cultural backgrounds and countries with different IT infrastructures. To capture dynamic shifts in beliefs and attitudes, longitudinal research with rigorous techniques is required. There might be missing facts and validity concerns while transcribing the interviews in English. The study emphasises the need for additional extensive research to address these constraints and provide a deeper understanding of mobile technology integration in the language classroom.

Conclusion

This study investigates teachers' perceptions and attitudes on using mobile devices for learning and instructional practice. Participants who were interviewed considered mobile devices positively contribute to language development as learning and teaching tools. However, due to unpleasant

experiences during teaching, sentiments toward employing them as teaching aids were mixed. Perceived ease of use, perceived utility, self-efficacy, enactive mastery, and physiological arousal were all factors that influence beliefs and attitudes. This study contributes to the field of English Language Education by providing insights on the ideas and attitudes of teachers for efficient mobile technology integration in language learning and education. It makes suggestions for optimising classroom use and encourages continuous development in teaching methods. Furthermore, it creates the groundwork for future studies to keep current with the latest tools and approaches.

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STUDY ON RELIABILITY ISSUES OF A GENERAL ENTRANCE EXAM OF ENGLISH IN MONGOLIA USING CHATGPT AND BINGCHAT (2020 – 2022)

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Abstract

General entrance exam plays as a gatekeeper which determines the future of test takers. Thus, such a nationwide test in English must meet all the reliability criteria. What if the very test contains certain errors which then fails to be reliable? This would not only indicate the general entrance exam has poor capability to test the real knowledge and skills of English of the candidates, but also acts as a hindrance for the candidate's future education. Thus, this study on the test item's reliability of the general entrance exam on English was conducted. Within the scope of this study, only reliability of the general entrance exams of English administered in 2020 – 2022 was studied. Adopting a document analysis approach, 110 test item errors were categorised into nine types using ChatGPT and BingChat. As this exam falls short of item reliability, we identified factors that affect the reliability to offer potential solutions.

Keywords: language testing principles, test item reliability, item errors, ChatGPT, BingChat

Background of Study

Assessment is a ubiquitous aspect of our daily lives, and the word "test" often elicits feelings of anxiety and apprehension. Large-scale evaluations and tests, in particular, can have a profound impact on a test taker's future career, education prospects, and life trajectory, serving as gatekeepers to various opportunities. For instance, the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), a premier large-scale English proficiency test, is a requirement for those seeking to study, work, or immigrate to English-speaking countries outside of the USA (Hamid et al., 2019). In Mongolia, the General Entrance Exam (GEE) is a high-stakes test that all high school graduates must pass to gain admission to a university. As thousands of graduates take the exam annually, it is crucial that the GEE meets all language assessment criteria, including reliability, validity, practicality, authenticity, and washback effect. In this study, we focused on assessing the test item reliability of the GEE, as error-free test items are essential for establishing reliable scores. To achieve this goal, we conducted a comprehensive analysis of the GEE materials administered between 2020-2022, comprising a total of 550 test items. Using ChatGPT and BingChat, artificial intelligence search engines, we identified 110 errors and classified them into nine error types, including ambiguous options, incorrect answer options, instructional error, weak distractors, punctuations, erroneous item, unnatural use of English, insufficient context, and extralinguistic knowledge required.

Statement of Problem

Reliability is a fundamental principle of test development, and it includes several sub-principles. One such sub-principle is that a test item or task should not contain ambiguity for the test taker (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010). However, despite the importance of reliability in test development, there is a lack of studies that have examined the University Entrance Exam (GEE) in Mongolia. To date, only one recent study has investigated the predictive validity of the GEE in relation to students' academic success in higher education institutions. Ankhbayar (2021) found that only around ten percent of the variation in students' academic success was explained by their GEE scores, highlighting the need to examine the reliability and validity issues of the GEE. Apart from it, no research has been conducted on this very aspect of the GEE in Mongolia. Hence, it is highly essential for further research concerning issues around GEE in Mongolia. Our use of ChatGPT and BingChat as tools represents the first-ever attempt to check the reliability of GEE test items in Mongolia, and we hope that our findings can inform future efforts to improve the GEE and other similar assessments.

Significance of Study

As there has not been any study conducted on test item reliability of GEE, we have attempted to reveal that there are problems that we need to fix as quickly as possible. Doing so, test developers can pay

closer attention to meet the reliability criteria by utilizing AI such as ChatGPT. Moreover, if we can identify the item errors as well as the nature of such errors, the agency which is responsible for the test development can make changes to their procedures by accessing AI and/or employing a native speaking professional in language assessment. After all, the results of the test define the future path of candidates, therefore, such matter has to be carefully handled without a single error. Lastly, it is time for Mongolia, where English is taught as a foreign language, to incorporate concepts such as English as an international language to its curriculum as well as testing system.

Research Question

Are all the test items of the General Entrance Examination reliable?

Method

The aim of this study was to examine the University Entrance Exam (GEE) materials administered from 2020 to 2022 to identify and classify any language-related errors in the test items and to verify their reliability. The 2020 GEE comprised four variants, each containing 50 test items, for a total of 200 test items. Variants C and D included the same items as variants A and B, but in a random order. The 2021 GEE consisted of five variants, each containing 50 test items, for a total of 250 test items. Variants C, D, and E also included the same items as variants A and B, but in a random order. Thus, a total of 650 test items were analyzed in this study. We conducted a detailed analysis of the test items to identify and categorize any language-related errors using ChatGPT and BingChat, the latest artificial intelligence engines, and ensured the reliability of our categorization by cross-checking the results.

Findings and Discussion

In this study, we conducted a comprehensive analysis of 550 test items administered between 2020 and 2022, in order to identify and categorize errors that affect the reliability of the General Entrance Exam. Our analysis revealed a total of 110 errors, which were classified into nine different error types, namely: items with ambiguous options, incorrect answer options, instructional errors, weak distractors, punctuation errors, erroneous items, unnatural use of English, insufficient context, and extralinguistic knowledge required. Of all the error types, the most frequent were items with ambiguous options (39 errors) and items containing one or two grammatical errors (37 errors). Although weak distractors and items requiring extralinguistic knowledge each had eight errors (Henning, 1989), they were still significant factors affecting the reliability of the test and thus included in this study. Lastly, errors related to confusing instructions were the least frequent, with only three errors identified.

Based on the abovementioned cases, we can conclude that we need a native-speaking expert in language testing. Alternatively, we can utilize cutting-edge technologies such as ChatGPT and BingChat AI for the development of reliable test items. Another consideration to keep in mind is that we need to include as much a context as possible for each test item so that such ambiguity or insufficient context-related item issues could be avoided. Additionally, the education agency responsible for the test development needs to train their exam developers as well as experts in the fields of language testing and test development in-depth.

Limitations

This study limited its scope with only item reliability of the test materials administered in 2020 - 2022. In further study, there is a great need to investigate whether the GEE meets other language testing principles such as practicality, validity, authenticity as well as washback effect. In addition, we need to search for better ways to reform the overall test so that it can truly assess the language use.

Conclusion

To answer to the research question, based on the findings, we can conclude that the General Entrance Exam items are not fully reliable. This is a serious issue as such a high-stake exam plays an important role for the further education and career of test takers.

To solve the item reliability issue, we can utilize the latest technology, ChatGPT and BingChat AI for our advantage as they can provide human-like authentic responses in English retrieving from over 3-billion-word corpus from various resources (Gonsalves, 2023). The use of such AI is particularly highly crucial for countries like us where English is taught as a foreign language and there is scarcity of

native-speaking professionals.

Finally, it is time to make a reform in GEE to test the candidates' overall linguistic competences rather than with discrete grammatical items and comprehension only reading passages. We should assess how learners are able to use the language, not just the linguistic knowledge.

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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF AUDIO-BASED SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE DISCUSSION IN IMPROVING CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS AND ORAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

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Abstract

Chinese universities do not adequately emphasize critical thinking and oral communication skills. Additionally, the integration of synchronous online discussions for teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) in higher education, particularly in China, is limited. The study uses a blended learning approach to enhance students' critical thinking and oral communication skills by combining audio-based synchronous online discussion (ASOD) with face-to-face instruction. The research uses a mixed-method approach, which incorporates the Chinese translation of the California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST) and the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) speaking tests as pre- and post-assessments. The effectiveness of ASOD in blended learning is investigated through a non-equivalent control group design. A questionnaire was administered to investigate students' attitudes toward ASOD. Interviews were administered to collect students' perspectives on ASOD. The findings have significant implications for providing empirical data for the use of ASOD in the classroom and future research.

Keywords: Audio-based synchronous online discussion, critical thinking skills, oral communication skills, and blended learning

Background of Study

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2009), a national organization that represents more than 5 million workers worldwide and leaders in business, government, and education, have identified critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication as the four learning competencies and skills required for 21st-century learning. This is to prepare students for the new global economy as critical thinking and oral communication skills are therefore two of the most important competencies today. Moreover, *China's Standards of English Language Ability (CSE)* by the Ministry of Education of China (2018) has emphasized the need to develop critical thinking skills.

However, Chinese universities have not place sufficient emphasis on critical thinking skills. Chinese university EFL learners encounter difficulties in speaking from linguistic, psychological, and sociocultural perspectives (Malik et al., 2021). In recent years, researchers have acknowledged the effectiveness of synchronous technology by providing real-time feedback (Lin & Gao, 2020), and deepening social connections between instructors and students, and among peers (Rinekso & Muslim, 2020). Using audio-based online discussions, university students perform better in critical thinking (Guo et al., 2021) and oral communication skills (Chen & Chew, 2021). Thus, this study hopes to showcase ASOD's positive impact on improving students' critical thinking and oral communication skills.

Statement of Problem

According to Zhang et al. (2022), integrating critical thinking skills with other courses leads to an impactful development of critical thinking skills as compared to an independent critical thinking course. Although several studies have been conducted to improve students' critical thinking skills through writing (Liu & Stapleton, 2018; Nejmaoui, 2019) and reading classes (Wilson, 2016; Din, 2020; Sari & Prasetyo, 2021), there is limited research on integrating critical thinking skills into oral English language courses. Moreover, university English courses in China do not provide sufficient opportunities for verbal interaction. Hence, students pay little attention to English-speaking skills because the English test for college entrance does not include a speaking test. Instead, they put more effort into listening, reading, and writing, which are graded via paper-pencil exams (Luo, 2022). Additionally, as clarified by Xue et al. (2020), a major educational trend in China is to integrate online and offline education. However, the use of synchronous online discussion in EFL teaching is still limited in higher education and limited studies have been conducted in China. Based on this context, this study will examine the effectiveness of Audio-based Synchronous Online Discussion (ASOD) to improve university students' critical thinking and oral communication skills.

Significance of Study

Firstly, this research will provide empirical evidence as to whether ASOD will benefit students in higher education by improving their critical thinking and oral communication skills, as there has been limited research using ASOD in China. Secondly, the present study advances the application of ASOD in EFL classrooms in China for EFL teachers. Participating in this study will also benefit EFL learners by improving their critical thinking and oral communication skills, which will significantly help their study of English as a foreign language. Finally, universities and foreign language faculties will be enriched with the knowledge of using synchronous online tools and blended teaching methods not only in Spoken English courses but also in other English language-related courses.

Research Questions

1. What is the effectiveness of using audio-based synchronous online discussion to improve students' critical thinking skills?
2. What is the effectiveness of using audio-based synchronous online discussion to improve students' oral communication skills?
3. How do students perceive the efficacy of audio-based synchronous online discussion in improving their critical thinking skills and oral communication skills?

Method

The Chinese translation of the CCTST test was administered as a pre-test for the control (n=35) and experimental (n=35) groups. Both groups also took a face-to-face IELTS speaking test. The control group received traditional face-to-face instruction, while the experimental group learnt *Spoken English* through ASOD for six weeks. Students in both groups took a post-test of the Chinese translation of the CCTST and the IELTS speaking tests after the experiment. Then, students in the experimental group were administered a questionnaire. Finally, one-third of the experimental group students were randomly selected for semi-structured interviews.

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26 provided paired t-tests and independent t-tests to analyze the mean scores of the pre-and post-tests of the Chinese translation of the CCTST and the IELTS speaking tests. Moreover, frequency analysis was conducted to determine the response distribution for each Likert scale item in the questionnaire. Regression analysis predicted the relationship between ASOD and critical thinking and oral communication skills. Finally, a thematic analysis was used to analyze the patterns, themes, and meanings emerging from the interview transcripts.

Findings and Discussion

This study is still an on-going project and thus, only initial observation and assumption can be made at this point. Overall, the findings of this study provide empirical evidence for using ASOD in the language classroom to improve students' critical thinking and oral communication skills. Participating in ASOD activities, which require students to collaborate, establishes a sense of community where deeper understanding can be created through the collision of thoughts. This study will concur with Oh & Kim (2016) and Guo et al. (2021), who reported high cognitive engagement in the audio-form postings, indicating that the discussion content contained higher-order thinking, such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

Furthermore, the findings will align with Chen & Chew (2021) and Namaziandost et al. (2022), who reported significant improvements in English-speaking skills with synchronous voice chat. Therefore, the audio-based online discussions in the present study are expected to stimulate and develop students' critical thinking and English-speaking skills.

Finally, the findings will be consistent with Osborne et al. (2018), in which most students believed online discussions were conducive to the development of their critical thinking, and Mazzarelli (2023), in which most participants perceived audio-recorded assignments could benefit their speaking skills. Thus, it is hoped that students in this study will perceive that the audio-based synchronous online discussions benefit their critical thinking and oral communication skills.

Limitations

It should be noted that this study has two limitations. First, the sample size in this study is relatively

small, and the predominantly female participants may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future studies need to include more participants with equal numbers of males and females. Second, the experiment was designed to teach six critical thinking subskills over a period of six weeks. If the experiment is conducted for a longer period, students' critical thinking and English-speaking skills may be significantly different.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study aims to address the lack of emphasis on critical thinking and oral communication skills in university English courses in China by integrating audio-based synchronous online discussions into a blended learning environment. This ongoing project has the potential to contribute to English language education by demonstrating the effectiveness of ASOD in improving critical thinking and oral communication skills among university students. The results of the study can inform classroom practices, benefit EFL learners, and inspire the integration of synchronous online tools and blended teaching methods in various English language-related courses, which will facilitate a more comprehensive and engaging approach to language education.

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“HEY, WHATSAPP GUYS”: VLOG CONTENT SELECTION THROUGH EXPOSURE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AMONG TERTIARY LEVEL STUDENTS IN THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM.

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Abstract

This research study aimed to investigate the content selection process for vlogging projects among students in an English classroom. The study employed a case study methodology and utilized an open-ended questionnaire to collect data from a sample of 51 students. Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the qualitative data, while descriptive statistics, cross tabulation, and chi-square tests were used to examine the relationships between variables. Additionally, the influence of social media exposure on content selection was explored, highlighting the impact of platforms like YouTube and Instagram on shaping students' content choices. Overall, this research contributes to the understanding of how students select content for vlogging projects and provides insights for educators and practitioners in incorporating vlogging as a pedagogical tool in the English classroom. The findings can inform the development of strategies to enhance content selection and engage students effectively in vlogging activities, fostering creativity, educational value, and viewer engagement in their projects.

Keywords: vlog, social media, oral communication, content creation

Background of Study

In today's digital era, where social media platforms have become an integral part of daily life, vlogging has emerged as a popular medium for communication, self-expression, and content creation (Ibrahim, 2021). As the popularity of vlogs continues to soar, it has become increasingly important for individuals, particularly in the younger generation, to develop the necessary skills to effectively navigate and contribute to this digital landscape. Vlogging not only offers a creative outlet but also presents opportunities for personal branding, entrepreneurship, and even career advancement (Lagore, 2015). Therefore, it is essential to investigate how tertiary students in the English classroom familiarize themselves with vlog content selection through exposure to social media. This study aims to explore the content selection process for vlog project production and identify the factors influencing students' selection of vlog content. By understanding these aspects, educators can better equip students with the job prerequisite needs of today's generation, including digital literacy, communication skills, creativity, and adaptability, which are crucial for success in the rapidly evolving digital landscape (Cobo, 2013). Additionally, the findings of this research can inform curriculum development and pedagogical approaches to enhance the English language classroom experience and prepare students for the demands and opportunities of the digital age.

The objectives of this study are twofold. Firstly, the study aims to investigate the content selection process for vlog project production within the English classroom setting. This objective seeks to explore how students navigate through various options to determine the most suitable content for their vlog projects (Franklin, & Harmelen, 2007) By understanding this process, educators can gain insights into students' decision-making and provide appropriate guidance to enhance their content selection skills. Secondly, the study identifies the demographic data from the sampling that influences students' selection of vlog content. This objective seeks to uncover the underlying motivations, preferences, and considerations that shape students' choices when it comes to vlog content. By identifying these areas, educators and content creators can better align their offerings with students' needs, thereby creating a more engaging and effective learning experience.

Research Questions

To achieve these objectives, the study will address the following research questions:

1. What are the demographic characteristics and trends among the students?
2. What are students' preferences in selecting content for vlog project production?

Methodology

The study employed a case study design to investigate the relationship between content created by

content creators and content created by students. Data was collected using an open-ended questionnaire, administered to both content creators and students. This data gathered insights of their content creation practices and preferences. The questionnaire responses were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key themes and patterns. Additionally, cross tabulation and chi-square tests were conducted to determine the significant relationship between the variables. Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize the quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire. The combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis techniques provided a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between the content selections among the two groups.

Sample

The study included a sample of 51 students who were selected to participate in the research. The participants were chosen using a purposive sampling technique, considering factors such as their experience with content creation and their willingness to participate. The sample size of 51 students was deemed appropriate for a case study approach, allowing for in-depth exploration of the research questions, and ensuring sufficient diversity in perspectives and experiences. The participants' demographic information, such as age, gender, and academic background, was collected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the sample characteristics. The inclusion of a diverse student population aimed to enhance the generalizability and validity of the study findings.

Findings and Discussion

During this study, an open-ended questionnaire recorded the demographic information and the main section of the study: social media usage and content selection. Several 51 students taking UB00202 Oral communication in English were involved.

Q1: What are the demographic characteristics and trends among the students?

The demographic data of the respondents from the 51 samples reveals some interesting patterns. The sample was fairly balanced in terms of gender, with 33.33% being male and 66.67% female. The majority of respondents (78.43%) were 21 years old, indicating a concentration of young adults in the study. Other age groups were represented, but with smaller percentages ranges from 19 to 24 years of age. In terms of geographic origin, the highest frequency of respondents was from Sabah (80.39%), followed by Sarawak (11.76%), Kelantan, Pahang, and Penang. This suggests that the study has a strong representation from the Borneo region as the university is based in Sabah and accepts mostly Sabahan students. The ethnicities of the respondents were diverse and unique that representing the Borneo indigenous ethnics, with Bajau (31.37%) and Malay (15.69%) being the most common. Other ethnicities, such as KadazanDusun, Bugis, Brunei, and others, had smaller frequencies. Regarding socioeconomic background, the majority of respondents (78.43%) belonged to the B40 category, indicating a significant representation from the lower-income group. On the other hand, 21.57% were from the M40 category, which includes the middle-income group. For the education background, most respondents (76.47%) completed their education with STPM qualifications, indicating a substantial number of students with pre-university qualifications. Smaller percentages were attributed to Matriculation, Foundation certificate, Diploma, and Degree holders. Regarding English proficiency, the majority of respondents (94.12%) achieved a Muet Band score ranging from 3 to 3.5, indicating a satisfactory level of English language proficiency. A smaller percentage (5.88%) fell within the Band 2 to 2.5 range, which suggests some variation in language proficiency among the respondents and mostly hold a strong basic English skill.

Overall, the demographic data provides valuable insights into the characteristics of the sample, which can help in understanding the representativeness of the study and interpreting the findings in a more nuanced manner.

Q2: What are students' preferences in selecting content for vlog project production?

The crosstabulation table shows the relationship between content created by content creators and content created by students. Out of the 61 total cases, when content creators create content, 26 cases (42.6%) indicate that students do not create similar content, while 35 cases (57.4%) indicate that students do create similar content. The expected count for students not creating similar content when content creators create content is 21.7, while the expected count for students creating similar content is 29.3. Overall, there seems to be a tendency for students to create similar content when content creators create content, with more cases falling into the "Yes" category. Yes indicates similarity of the themes shown by the topic selection.

The chi-square test results on table 2 indicate that there is a significant relationship between content created by content creators and content created by students. The Pearson chi-square value is 8.885 with 1 degree of freedom, and the associated p-value is .003. This suggests that the observed frequencies in the crosstabulation are unlikely to occur by chance, and there is a statistically significant relationship between the two variables. The continuity correction chi-square value is 6.923 with 1 degree of freedom, and the associated p-value is .009. This result further supports the presence of a significant relationship. The likelihood ratio chi-square value is 12.550 with 1 degree of freedom, and the associated p-value is less than .001. This indicates strong evidence of a relationship between the variables. Additionally, the Fisher's exact test also yields a p-value of .003 for a two-sided test and .002 for a one-sided test, further supporting the significance of the relationship.

Based on these results, we can conclude that there is a significant relationship between content created by content creators and content created by students. The relationship between content creators and students suggests that the content creators' choices in type, style, and format can influence the content preferences of students. Similarly, students' content may also affect or be influenced by the content produced by creators.

Limitation

The first limitation from this study is the small sample size with only of 51 participants. With a limited number of respondents, the study's generalizability is constrained, and the findings may not accurately represent the broader population. A larger and more diverse sample would enhance the study's external validity and increase confidence in the results. Another limitation is a cross-sectional design that provides a snapshot of content selection and student preferences at a specific point in time. This design limits the ability to establish causal relationships or understand how content preferences may change over time. Longitudinal studies could provide valuable insights into trends and changes in content selection behaviour among student creators and their audience.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings of this study highlight the significance of entertainment value, creativity, benefits for viewers, personal experience, and social media exposure in content selection. Students recognized the need to create engaging and entertaining content that captures the attention of their audience (Cohen,2013). They emphasized the importance of showcasing their creativity and uniqueness in their vlogs, striving to stand out from the crowd. Additionally, students acknowledged the responsibility of providing valuable and informative content that educates and inspires their viewers. Moreover, the study revealed that personal experience played a pivotal role in content selection. Students drew from their own interests and experiences to create authentic and relatable vlogs. This finding underscores the importance of personal connection and authenticity in content creation, as students were more inclined to produce vlogs about topics, they were passionate about and had first-hand experiences with. Social media exposure emerged as an influential factor in content selection. Students indicated that they were influenced by the content they consumed on platforms like YouTube and Instagram, shaping their own content choices. This highlights the impact of social media as a source of inspiration and reference for content creation.

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ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN EDUCATION: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

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Abstract

This study explores the opportunities and challenges of integrating artificial intelligence (AI) in education. As AI technology advances, it presents immense potential to transform traditional teaching methods and enhance learning outcomes. However, it also brings forth various challenges, including ethical concerns, the need for teacher training, and potential bias in algorithms. This paper aims to provide an in-depth analysis of the opportunities and challenges associated with AI integration in education, highlighting the significance of this study in shaping future educational practices. By addressing key research questions and employing data collection and analysis, this study offers insights into the potential benefits and limitations of AI in education. The findings and discussions provide a comprehensive understanding of the current state of AI in education and its implications for students, teachers, and educational institutions.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, Education, Opportunities, Challenges, Integration.

Background of the Study

In recent years, artificial intelligence has emerged as a powerful tool with the potential to revolutionize various industries, including education. AI technologies, such as machine learning and natural language processing, have the ability to analyze vast amounts of data, personalize learning experiences, and provide real-time feedback to students. This technology holds great promise for improving educational outcomes and addressing the diverse needs of learners.

However, the integration of AI in education also presents several challenges. Ethical concerns arise regarding data privacy, potential bias in algorithms, and the impact on the role of teachers. Additionally, there is a need for substantial investment in infrastructure, teacher training, and curriculum development to effectively implement AI in educational settings.

Statement of Problems

This study aims to address the following key problems associated with the integration of artificial intelligence in education:

1. Ethical concerns: AI systems collect and analyze vast amounts of student data, raising concerns about data privacy, security, and potential misuse of personal information.
2. Teacher training and support: Teachers need to acquire new skills to effectively utilize AI tools in their teaching practices. Lack of adequate training and support may hinder successful implementation.
3. Potential bias in algorithms: AI algorithms may inadvertently perpetuate biases present in the data they are trained on, leading to unequal opportunities and discriminatory outcomes.
4. Infrastructure and resource requirements: Integrating AI in education requires substantial investment in infrastructure, software, and hardware, which may be a challenge for resource-constrained educational institutions.
5. Impact on the role of teachers: The introduction of AI in classrooms may raise concerns about the future role of teachers, potentially leading to job displacement or changes in the nature of teaching.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant as it provides a comprehensive analysis of the opportunities and challenges associated with the integration of AI in education. By understanding the potential benefits and limitations, policymakers, educators, and researchers can make informed decisions regarding the adoption and implementation of AI technologies in educational settings. The findings of this study will contribute to the ongoing discourse on AI in education and shed light on the ethical, pedagogical, and practical implications of its integration. Ultimately, this research aims to inform the design and development of AI systems that enhance learning experiences, promote equity, and support the role of teachers.

Research Questions, Data Collection, and Analysis

To address the aforementioned problems, the following research questions will guide this study:

1. What are the potential opportunities presented by the integration of AI in education?
2. What are the key challenges and ethical concerns associated with the use of AI in educational settings?
3. How can teachers be effectively trained and supported to utilize AI tools in their teaching practices?
4. What strategies can be employed to mitigate potential bias in AI algorithms used in education?
5. What are the infrastructure and resource requirements for successful integration of AI in educational institutions?

Data will be collected through a combination of literature review, surveys, interviews, and case studies. The literature review will provide a theoretical foundation, while surveys and interviews will gather insights from educators, students, and experts in the field. Case studies will offer real-world examples of AI integration in education. The collected data will be analyzed using qualitative and quantitative methods, including thematic analysis and statistical techniques, to identify patterns, trends, and implications.

Findings and Discussion

The findings and discussions of this study will provide an in-depth understanding of the opportunities and challenges associated with AI integration in education. It will explore the potential benefits of AI in personalized learning, adaptive assessments, and intelligent tutoring systems. Additionally, it will address the ethical concerns related to data privacy, security, and potential bias in AI algorithms.

The study will emphasize the importance of teacher training and support to effectively utilize AI tools in educational practices. Strategies for mitigating potential bias in algorithms and ensuring equitable opportunities for learners will be explored. Furthermore, the infrastructure and resource requirements for successful AI integration in educational institutions will be discussed.

Through a comprehensive analysis of the findings, this study will contribute to the existing knowledge on AI in education, highlighting key implications for policymakers, educators, and researchers.

Limitations

This study acknowledges several limitations. The research will be conducted within a specific context, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. The sample size for surveys and interviews may be constrained due to resource limitations. Additionally, ethical considerations regarding data privacy and the usage of personal information will be carefully addressed. Despite these limitations, this study aims to provide valuable insights into the opportunities and challenges of AI integration in education.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study highlights the potential opportunities and challenges associated with the integration of artificial intelligence in education. It provides a comprehensive understanding of the ethical concerns, teacher training needs, potential bias in algorithms, infrastructure requirements, and the impact on the role of teachers. The findings and discussions contribute to shaping future educational practices and inform decision-making regarding the adoption and implementation of AI technologies in educational settings. By addressing key research questions and employing data collection and analysis, this study aims to provide valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and researchers.

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ENGLISH EDUCATION AT THE HIGHER SECONDARY LEVEL IN BANGLADESH: CHALLENGES AND CONSIDERATIONS

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Abstract

English is taught as a compulsory subject at each level of education in Bangladesh though the goal has not been achieved yet. The current study aimed at investigating the real scenario of English education at the higher secondary level in Bangladesh. Mixed method approach was used to conduct the study. 20 English teachers and 20 students were given questionnaire to have their opinion on the respective issues as well as their in-depth interview was taken. It was explored that both the teachers and the students face challenges regarding authentic materials, using proper methodology, effective classroom activities and assessment procedures. So, this study could be a great source for the future research in this field to improve the whole procedures of teaching and learning English at the higher secondary level in Bangladesh.

Keywords: English Education, Higher Secondary Level, Challenges

Background of Study

English has been being taught as a second language at the higher secondary level in Bangladesh with the goal of making students skilled in four basic skills, but the level of competency is very low (Chowdhury & Kamal, 2014). To improve the condition of English education at each level of Bangladesh, a number of initiatives was taken by the government and different foreign institutions since 1997 to recent time to have an efficient and skilled workforce but the outcome is not up to the mark (Hamid, 2011). Therefore, bearing the economic interest in mind, improvement in English language teaching and learning has become the prior concern. To illustrate, multifaceted problems such as the politically motivated decision in lowering the status and use of English in Bangladesh since the independence (Chowdhury & Kabir, 2014), inconsistent language in education policies (Rahman & Pandian, 2018), implementation of communicative language teaching (CLT) curriculum, teaching method and instructional materials in practice (Rahman, Pandian, 2018), implementation of assessment reform and language teachers' professional development (Karim & Mohamed, 2019) are the most significant drawbacks that preclude ELT to meet national expectation in Bangladesh.

Statement of Problem

National Education Policy (2010) of Bangladesh focused on the English education for authentic communication purpose so that the learners can grow themselves as the global citizen and the present study was conducted to investigate how successfully the learners can communicate in English. According to the study of Karim (2015), though the authorities related to English education in Bangladesh adopted different policies time to time, none of the initiative was completely successful to achieve the communicative objectives of English education at the higher secondary level in Bangladesh. According to Sultana (2018), assessment systems can motivate the learners to achieve different skills, but the higher secondary assessment system does not focus on assessing listening and speaking skills. Though CLT has been implemented at the higher secondary level of education with a great number of merits, it is not being followed properly in every case for the lack of materials, friendly classroom environment and sufficient teachers training (Rahman & Pandian 2018). So, the current study dealt with the existing research works in the same arena and tried to add some new but significance dimensions that might be helpful for both the English teachers and learners.

Significance of Study

This study is significant from a number of perspectives. This study unfolded the real situation regarding teaching-learning of EFL reading, EFL writing, EFL listening and EFL Speaking skills at the higher secondary level in Bangladesh including the challenges both the teachers and the students face at this level. So, the respective authorities and the teachers as well as the future researchers and policy makers can have important guidelines from this study to improve the current scenario of English education at

the HSC level in Bangladesh.

Research Questions

1. To what extent is the current HSC Textbook being suitable for mastering four language skills?
2. To what extent are the classroom activities suitable for effective teaching and learning English language skills?
3. To what extent is the teaching methodology appropriate to teach English?
4. How does the current assessment system inspire students for learning English language skills?

Method

Mixed method approach was chosen as the avenue for the present study. Twenty English teachers teaching English at the higher secondary level in Dhaka division of Bangladesh and forty students of the same level were given questionnaire to have their opinion and at the same time they were also interviewed.

Findings and Discussion

Findings from Questionnaire Survey

It is found from the teachers' questionnaire survey that 55% participants opined that HSC Textbook is suitable for teaching but a notable number (30%) of the participants remained neutral that indicates that they do not have proper analysis of the Textbook. In case of the questionnaire related to the effectiveness of the method, classroom activities and assessment system more than 50% of the participants gave positive feedback but, in each case, a notable number remained neutral and also a notable number (35%) thought that assessment system does not motivate the students much. On the other hand, though more than 50% of the student participants opined that HSC textbook and teaching methodology is suitable for their learning, a notable number of them disagreed in the same cases (25% and 20%) and 25% of the participants kept them neutral in case of the question of suitability of their Textbook. Most significantly, a large number of the participants (55% and 45%) thought that classroom activities and assessment system are not effective to motivate them.

Findings from Interview

While taking teachers interview, most of the teachers said that HSC Textbook is suitable for teaching four language skills though they do not have proper facilities to arrange authentic classroom activities based on this and they try their best to adopt proper methodology, but they cannot do this properly for mixed method learners. They also said that the Assessment system cannot motivate the student properly because it does not include assessing listening and speaking skills. On the other hand, though the view of the students is almost similar regarding Textbook and teaching method, but they think that classroom activities are not suitable for effective learning as the teachers rarely give them opportunity for group and pair works and assessment procedure is not motivating to them.

Limitations

Every study may have some limitations and the current study is not an exception. Based on the area and topic of the study, it could be a large level study though the researcher could not do this for the shortage of time as well as for having no funding. Besides, more data collection tools could be applied to the study like classroom observation to have more reliable and valid data.

Conclusion

It can be said that the overall scenario of English education at the higher secondary level in Bangladesh is improving day by day, but the growth is not up to the mark for a number of challenges that both the teachers and learners face. So, true research-based initiatives should be taken to overcome the challenges and to implement necessary actions.

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PRE-SERVICE ESL TEACHERS' READINESS FOR CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING IN ESL CLASSROOMS

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Abstract

It has been discovered to be an extremely difficult challenge to implement Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) in schools in Malaysia because of the structure of the educational system that is currently in place (Idrus, 2014). There exist possible gaps in multicultural awareness and insufficient measures to adequately equip pre-service teachers in the implementation of Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT). The purpose of this research is to determine pre-service ESL teachers' comprehension of CRT and how they describe their preparedness for CRT. A qualitative research design was employed and included three pre-service ESL teachers, using the purposive sample method. Semi-structured interviews and document analysis were used to capture distinct aspects of the issue. According to thematic analysis, pre-service ESL teachers lack familiarity of CRT knowledge, which hinders their capacity and readiness to teach in multicultural classrooms.

Keywords: Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT), Cultural Competency, Pre-Service ESL Teachers, Qualitative Study, Ministry of Education Malaysia

Background of Study

The existence of culture is an undeniable aspect of human existence, as it is deeply imprinted into individuals at a subconscious level. Given the considerable impact of being culturally responsive in teaching on individual advancement, it is imperative for pre-service teachers to possess the necessary readiness to effectively implement Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) inside educational settings. Although CRT has been a longstanding topic, its implementation in educational settings remains limited (Idrus, 2014). This is supported by Anuar (2017), stating that there is a consensus that the use of CRT in educational settings is not common, resulting in a diminished efficacy in the facilitation of teaching and learning. Given the diverse composition of Malaysia as a nation comprising multiple ethnicities, it is crucial to acknowledge the significance of cultivating cultural responsiveness in the role of a teacher. According to McAllister and Irvine (2002), using cultural responsiveness in teaching can facilitate the instructional process. Nevertheless, research has indicated that pre-service teachers had the potential to develop stereotypical perceptions on multicultural students because of limited exposure to diverse cultures and a lack of intercultural awareness (Milner et al., 2003).

Statement of Problem

In the context of cultivating cultural responsiveness in the classroom, it is imperative to possess prior engagement with multicultural experiences. As a result of limited or non-existent interactions with students from culturally varied backgrounds, pre-service teachers possess limited understanding and awareness of diversity issues, leading to the emergence of cultural and racial inequities within the classroom (Milner et al., 2003). According to Yilmaz (2016), a comprehensive comprehension of multicultural education might enhance students' academic performance by enabling them to intuitively grasp their own perspectives. Teachers are required to develop a deep understanding of the cultural dynamics and specific circumstances within their classrooms. This comprehension is crucial for fostering equitable teaching and learning environments, as well as facilitating various good outcomes. However, there appears to be a lack of cultural awareness, which subsequently affects teachers' readiness for effective and fair teaching.

Significance of Study

This study is intended to add to the existing body of knowledge by investigating the perspectives and practices of ESL teachers in culturally diverse settings in relation to their comprehension and utilisation of CRT. It is identified that ESL teachers can develop a greater appreciation for cultural diversity when they engage with culturally diverse students. Moreover, ESL students will enhance their ability to properly express themselves as a result of teachers' increased appreciation and acceptance of their

cultural peculiarities. Furthermore, this study also highlights that it is imperative for the Ministry of Education (MoE) to actively work towards the creation of specialised examinations that evaluate teachers' readiness to teach students from different cultural backgrounds within inclusive educational settings. The implementation of these examinations will be mandated as a prerequisite for assessing teachers' qualifications when applying for employment at educational institutions.

Research Questions

1. How do the respondents perceive CRT?
2. To what extent are the respondents ready to apply CRT in their classrooms?

Method

Initially, qualitative data was acquired through semi-structured interviews (SSIs) and document analysis. During the interview, the researcher asked respondents pre-prepared questions. The researcher also asked probing questions to better comprehend certain aspects. The researcher then transcribed the audio to better listen and interpret what was said and examine the data. The study employed thematic analysis to examine SSIs, wherein codes were generated, and themes were examined to derive findings. Lesson plans were the documents collected by the researcher. These documents are crucial for presenting important discoveries. After collecting lesson plans, the researcher evaluated them using CRT guidelines for teachers.

Findings and Discussion

Based on the obtained responses, respondents exhibited a discernible understanding of the topic of culture in Malaysia and shown the ability to provide justifications for each distinct aspect of it. However, when more questions were made explicitly on CRT, the answers exhibited varying degrees of comprehension regarding the topic. The data gathered indicates that pre-service teachers exhibit a discernible deficiency in their exposure to and familiarity with CRT, yet they inadvertently utilise CRT elements in teaching practices. The findings also revealed that two participants demonstrated readiness for CRT, whilst the other individual reported feelings of insufficiency, resulting in an underlying dispute. About two-thirds of the respondents expressed a sense of ease when it comes to teaching in multicultural settings, while the remaining third indicated feelings of uneasiness, suggesting a lesser degree of confidence in instructing in such diverse classes.

Limitations

The fundamental constraint of this study is the limited research population, which consists of only three respondents. The research conducted in this study was limited in its inclusion of a substantial sample of ESL pre-service teachers for the purpose of assessing their understanding of CRT. This limitation was mostly due to the restricted accessibility of potential respondents.

Conclusion

This study serves as a valuable resource for pre-service teachers in Malaysia, a country defined by its multicultural composition, to adequately equip themselves for the implementation of CRT. Moreover, this tool can serve as a valuable resource for policymakers seeking to promote the understanding of other cultures and cultural competency of pre-service ESL teachers. This, in turn, will help assure the equitable provision of instruction to students. It is hoped that future research could utilise a substantial number of samples that come from different cultural backgrounds to produce comprehensive and inclusive findings. All in all, this research aims to provide pre-service teachers with a comprehensive understanding of the realities they might anticipate in a real-world classroom setting.

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SCAFFOLDING NOVICE ESL WRITERS WITH THE TAZ BURGER STRATEGY: A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY

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Abstract

Writing is a complex and daunting process for ESL learners, often limited by personal strategies and differentiated teaching approaches. This study addresses this issue by investigating the efficacy of scaffolding through the TAZ Burger Strategy to assist novice writers in an ESL Classroom. Using a purposive sampling approach, a qualitative case study was employed. Data collection was done through semi-structured interviews with secondary school students in Terengganu. The participants were provided with scaffolding using the TAZ Burger strategy over a six-week period. Thematic analysis was applied to reveal their insights on the strategy. Findings from this study suggest that novice writers have a favourable interest in using the strategy. The implication of this study suggests the integration of the TAZ Burger strategy, or any visual organisers provides a platform for unlocking the writing potential of novice learners through the transformative learning experience.

Keywords: ESL learners, writing, scaffolding, novice writers

Background of the study

Versatility in writing is one of the most important communicative competency skills in the era of competitive workforce industries. Excellence in writing is not only vital for effective communication in society (Wong & Md Yunus, 2019), but it also opens doors to opportunities to secure better employment, career advancement (Selvaratnam, 2018), and tertiary education (Singh et al., 2017). Despite its demands and importance, mastering the skill of writing is an ongoing challenge for ESL/EFL learners. Most ESL learners exit secondary education below a satisfactory level of English proficiency (Harun & Abdullah, 2020), which causes them to have difficulty expressing themselves well in verbal and written communication (National Graduate Employability Blueprint 2012-2017, 2012). ESL learners with difficulty mastering the skills need differentiated approaches in the learning classroom, which makes writing less intimidating. This calls for the role of a teacher to provide structured support to learners with special needs, like novice ESL learners, to improve their competency in writing.

Statement of the problem

ESL learners mostly have difficulty expressing ideas clearly in writing, and a large majority of them admitted that they do not know how to start writing an essay. They also do not know how to organise their ideas clearly using accurate vocabulary in sentences (Sianturi et al., 2020). Writing issues among secondary ESL learners are also reflected in the report from the National Examination Syndicate (2020), indicating that despite having average proficiency in the language, most ESL learners struggle to deliver ideas clearly as their essays lack maturity, depth, and creativity. The complexity and difficulty of writing tasks cause learners to feel lost and hopeless about excelling at this skill (Selvaraj & Aziz, 2019). Adding to this concern, ESL learners are also underexposed to differentiated strategies for writing. The shortage of effective writing strategies in the formal writing classroom is a major factor contributing to students' poor writing skills (Ahmad Ghulamuddin et al., 2021). ESL teachers in schools are still dependent on using traditional approaches to teach writing in ESL classrooms (Singh et al., 2020).

Significance of the study

Addressing the urgent need for differentiated pedagogical strategies for writing is imperative to the advancement of ESL learners in English proficiency, particularly in writing. Introducing a writing strategy like implementing graphic organisers to facilitate writing gives learners the opportunity to be scaffolded in learning the process of writing. The usefulness of graphic organisers in assisting learning is confirmed in extensive literature. Graphic organisers help to organise ideas in writing (Rahmat, 2020) and improve understanding of difficult concepts (Puspitawati, 2017). TAZ Burger is a graphic writing organiser that uses the visual of Malaysian local food, *pau sambal* or *Burger Malaysia* as a metaphor for the process of writing an essay (Aznan, 2022). The stages of the writing process are scaffolded by using layers of

a burger. It incorporates the visual appeal of graphic organisers to simplify the difficult process of writing an essay. Therefore, providing necessary pedagogical support like TAZ Burger in ESL writing classrooms allows ESL learners to become less intimidated by writing tasks and leads them to have more confidence in achieving their writing goals.

Research questions

What are the perceptions of ESL learners in a rural secondary school towards the use of TAZ Burger in a writing classroom?

Method

This qualitative study employed an exploratory case study to investigate the phenomenon of using TAZ Burger to scaffold writing in an ESL classroom. The research participants included three secondary school students in a Terengganu rural school, encompassing two boys and three girls. They were selected through purposive sampling from a group of students who were involved in a 7-week writing programme using TAZ Burger. Participants in this programme were intermediate students. Participants were tasked with writing descriptive essays (WT1) in the first week of classroom lessons. They were given the same writing task after exposure to TAZ Burger for six weeks through Writing Task 2 (WT2). Changes in writing in WT1 and WT2 were observed and analysed using document analysis. Three participants were selected by fulfilling one of these criteria: (i) scoring the highest marks in writing after using TAZ Burger; (ii) showing the highest improvement in writing after using TAZ Burger; and (iii) showing the lowest improvement in writing after using TAZ Burger. Semi-structured interviews were conducted separately to explore their perceptions of TAZ Burger as a scaffolding writing strategy to improve their writing. The interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and analysed using thematic analysis.

Findings and discussion

The study's findings showed the positive influence of using TAZ Burger in boosting the writing performance and interest of rural learners. The findings support findings from quantitative studies such as Devari (2020) and Elshaer (2018) on the usefulness of the Hamburger strategy in improving writing quality and promoting writing interest to ESL learners. Generally, this study revealed four key findings. All participants agreed that the use of TAZ Burger helped them write essays more effectively. Learning about TAZ Burger also made them view writing tasks as less intimidating, and writing classroom activities were more interesting and appealing. The participants also admitted that it was their first experience using any kind of writing strategy in the classroom. Even though there was the least improvement in marks, one participant admitted that the experience of learning to write using TAZ Burger made writing more interesting. The findings of this study corroborate Abdul Aziz et al. (2018) that the use of graphic organisers alleviates students' engagement in learning.

Limitation

The findings of this study are limited to the exploration of perceptions of using TAZ Burger in descriptive writing among rural learners in Terengganu, Malaysia. Future research should endeavour to target different populations of urban learners for a more comprehensive view of the phenomenon. Besides, the exploration of using this strategy in writing should be extended to other writing genres to provide a wider understanding of its impacts on ESL learners.

Conclusion

This study highlights perceptions of using TAZ Burger as a strategy to scaffold the writing skills of rural secondary school students. It underscores that the use of this strategy is highly favoured by the students in terms of its visuals, usefulness, interest and improved writing efficacy. This approach provides an opportunity for struggling learners with a sense of hope that with the right amount of scaffolding provided in the classroom using tools like TAZ Burger, they can flourish in the challenging writing classroom. In a broader trend in education, the findings emphasise the importance of innovative teaching methods that cater for students of diverse needs, especially those in rural settings.

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eISSN 2716-6295



9 772 716 629 004