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Malay Language Grammar Mastery through Video Game ‘Tatabahasa Adventures @ Cabaran Tatabahasa’ among Students of Centre for Foundation Studies, IIUM

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ABSTRACT

Considering students nowadays are more exposed to casual language styles that do not adhere to standard grammar rules especially in Malay language, therefore their ability to practice the right grammar rules either in speaking or writing can be worsened. Moreover, some students may find grammar less interesting to study compared to other subjects. ‘Tatabahasa Adventures’ is a comprehensive approach to provide IIUM foundation students with a context-rich environment while learning the common mistakes in Malay language grammar. ‘Tatabahasa Adventures’ has been designed for students to personalize their own level while playing this game. 20 students of Centre for Foundation Studies, IIUM, have been asked to try out this video games. The effectiveness of this video game has been praised as it has become a platform for students to learn grammar repeatedly in a fun way. ‘Tatabahasa Adventures’ recognizes the value of video games as an effective method for grammar learning to help students across Malaysia to master in Malay language grammar.

Keywords: grammar; Malay language; context-rich environment; video games.

1. INTRODUCTION

Grammar is important to achieve proficiency in a language. This is said to be so because the use of the correct structure allows humans to communicate effectively in both oral and written forms to deliver a message that is intended accurately and appropriately. Nowadays, the mastery of Malay grammar in the community, especially among students in schools and universities, is at a concerning level. This point can be proven through the results of a study conducted by Siti Khodijah Chee Mee (2020) in her study entitled 'Malay Language Syntax Mastery among Malay Language and Linguistics Undergraduate Students at Universiti Putra Malaysia'. She found that the level of student mastery was in medium level. Most students master the use of language well, but do not master the types of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences. In addition, according to Zaliha Mohamad Nasir et al. (2013), in her study entitled 'Mastery of Malay Grammar Among Students at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia', she also stated that the issue of weak grammar mastery is not only experienced by foreign students who study Malay, but local students also experience the same problem. This issue is also experienced by students at the school level which can be proven through statistics that show students find it difficult to understand and master Malay grammar in any important exam stage in Malaysia because students are only tested on exam-oriented language skills. In relation to that, the teaching and

learning system (PdP) based solely on examination of the Malay language should be changed. This is so because the knowledge and skills of grammar among students are actually incomplete, without looking at the aspect of their language proficiency. Competency here refers to the student's ability to use the language based on specific situations (Nor Hashimah Jalaluddin & Julaina Nopiah, 2011).

Based on the analysis of previous studies, a survey on the mastery of grammar among students at the Centre for Foundation Studies, International Islamic University Malaysia (CFS, IIUM) was conducted. As a result of the survey, the researcher found that the mastery of the CFS, IIUM students in practicing the correct use of Malay grammar, whether in oral or written form, was at a moderate level. In relation to that, an initiative has been carried out to improve students' mastery and expand their knowledge about common mistakes in Malay grammar, namely a gamification approach in the form of video game in teaching and learning activities (PdP) has been generated. 'Tatabahasa Adventures' is a 2D game that covers Malay grammar topics for students to practice grammar and reflects the richness and diversity of Malay grammar. 'Tatabahasa Adventures' features contain questions about common Malay grammar mistakes in various difficulty levels. In order to evaluate the effectiveness of this video game in helping to strengthen the mastery of grammar among the students of the CFS, IIUM a questionnaire was conducted involving students from various fields at the CFS, IIUM. As a result, students who have practiced this video game have shown an understanding of Malay grammar after playing 'Tatabahasa Adventures' thus strengthening their understanding of grammar, which can be seen in Figure 2.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 The basic description of 'Tatabahasa Adventures'

The production of 'Tatabahasa Adventures' is by using a software, which is the Unity software that has been developed by Unity Technologies. This video game is inspired by the video game 'Super Mario' by combining grammar elements as an innovation for Malay language education. In short, this video game requires players to pluck cherries (which represent grammar questions) and dash through a number of obstacles and challenges. There are three distinct stages in the game. Each player's level of difficulty increases as the level does. In addition, players must successfully answer all the grammatical questions in order to go on to the next level or to the finish all the level. They must reanswer the question if they don't pass until they succeed.

2.2 Analyzing the effectiveness of 'Tatabahasa Adventures' through the questionnaire

Questionnaire becomes the main instrument in evaluating the effectiveness of this video game. A total of 20 respondents consisting of CFS, IIUM students from various fields were selected to play the video game. Then, they have to answer the questionnaire given for the researcher to evaluate the level of effectiveness of 'Tatabahasa Adventures' in strengthening their grammar knowledge. There are two evaluation scales used in this study, which are the Guttman Scale and the Likert Scale, while there are four sections in the questionnaire used by the researcher. The first part of the questionnaire is respondent information. Next, the second part, which is the level of students' mastery and interest in grammar topics (before playing the 'Tatabahasa Adventures' video game) and the third part, which is the level of effectiveness of the 2D 'Tatabahasa Adventures' video game in strengthening students' mastery and interest in grammar

topics (after playing video game 'Tatabahasa Adventures'). Finally, the fourth part, which is the effectiveness of the components found in the video game 'Tatabahasa Adventures'. The Guttman Scale was used to evaluate the students' accurate perception of their grammar mastery before playing 'Tatabahasa Adventures', while the Likert Scale was used to evaluate their perceptions and opinions about the effectiveness of the video game 'Tatabahasa Adventures' in helping them master grammar after playing the game. The results and discussion of this questionnaire can be seen through the display and explanation of Figure 1 and Figure 2.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Students' level of mastery and interest in the topic of Malay grammar (before playing the 'Tatabahasa Adventures' video game)

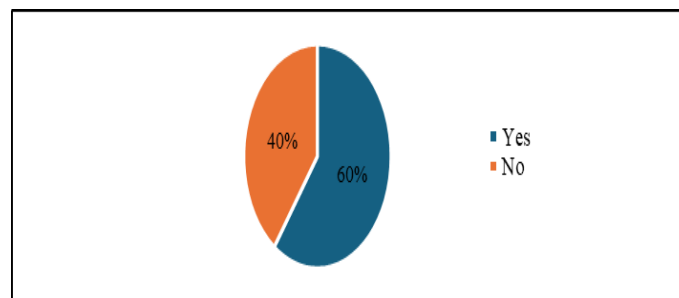


Figure 1. Question: Based on Your Experience Throughout Studying Malay Subject, Do You Have Problems Understanding the Correct Use of Malay Grammar?

Based on Figure 1, there are a total of 8 students, which are 40% who answered 'No' because they do not have problems to understand the correct use of Malay grammar, while a total of 12 students, which are 60% who answered 'Yes' because they still have problems to use correct grammar despite having studied this topic since school. This point illustrates that Malay is easy to learn, but difficult to master, especially the grammar aspect (Jeniri Amir, 2005 as cited in Elmy Maswandi et al., 2022). Furthermore, this questionnaire gives a preliminary impression that most students only learn grammar topics to pass the exam, but when it comes to written assignments in Malay language at the university level, the grammar proficiency among them is very unsatisfactory and is still in a moderate state. This is said to be so because there are still mistakes made by them due to the problem of lack of understanding and lack of reinforcement of grammar knowledge that lasts in their lives. However, the results of the questionnaire changed after they played the video game 'Tatabahasa Adventures' as shown in Figure 2.

3.2 Students' level of mastery & interest the topic of Malay Grammar (after playing the 'Tatabahasa Adventures' video game)

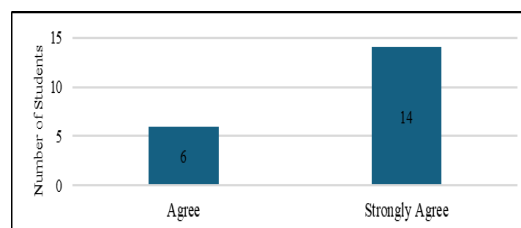


Figure 2. Question: After Playing the Video Game 'Tatabahasa Adventures', I Was Able to Further Strengthen My Mastery of Correct Grammar Usage.

Based on Figure 2, the results of the questionnaire after the students played 'Tatabahasa Adventures' showed positive feedback when 6 students, which are 30% agreed, while 14 students, which are 70% strongly agreed that the video game 'Tatabahasa Adventures' can help them strengthen the mastery of correct Malay grammar. Furthermore, they can identify and correct grammar mistakes that are often made through exposure to the questions found in the video game. The fact is, this video game is a very effective initiative in teaching and learning activities (PdP) because students understand and reinforce grammar topics through a more interesting approach than attending lectures and answering exams alone. This initiative is also in line with the opinion of Ahmad Afandi et al. (2024), which is that game-based learning coincides with the learning characteristics of the 21st century because it is more student-centered thus helping instructors to apply these 21st century skills.

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, from 60% of CFS, IIUM students who have problems to understand and master Malay grammar correctly, have shown positive feedback that is 100% of students reached a consensus agreeing that the video game 'Tatabahasa Adventures' successfully helped them understand and strengthen their mastery Malay grammar correctly. It is clear that, this video game is an interesting platform for learning, in addition to assessing the competence and strengthening the players' grammar while creating an effective learning experience that leverages the concept of gamification in education for students. Furthermore, through this 'Tatabahasa Adventures', students are also able to develop problem-solving skills and help address their focus for future challenges and opportunities in an ever-changing world. Finally, 'Tatabahasa Adventures' is an innovation in the world of education, especially in an effort to strengthen and dignify the Malay language in line with current technological progress. This video game is seen to have a high potential to be commercialized by registering a patent and expanding its use to students at other universities and students at the school level in an effort to further strengthen their knowledge of Malay grammar.

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