UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

EXPLORING THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH SYNTAX – TREE DIAGRAM VIA AN INTERACTIVE MULTIMEDIA COMPUTER-AIDED LEARNING MATERIAL (CALM)

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ABSTRACT

Syntax skills are very important for English language acquisition that enable all English users, especially the Second language learners to improve their writing and speaking skills as the knowledge acquired can guide the users to correctly place the words, phrases and clauses in sentences. Without the knowledge, sentences may not be accurately constructed. Unfortunately, syntax skills and the rules are deemed complicated to learn and acquire. The learning is considered complex that the content is difficult to understand; and also, is acknowledged as boring and not motivating. It negatively affects learners' English language performance, motivation and attitude. Hence, there is a need to seek better improved teaching and learning materials that can effectively assist syntax learning amongst the Second language learners. One of the learning efforts that can be put forth is by integrating computer technology in the teaching and learning. In this study, mixed-method approach is used. The respondents understudy are the Second language learners; UiTM undergraduate students, taking LG240 (English for Professional Communication) programme. For the purpose of the study, the respondents are divided into experimental and control groups; and, the syntax learning material that is CALM (Computer-aided Learning Material) is developed. The CALM development takes into consideration of the Instructional System Design (ISD) models, motivational consideration that is the ARCS model and the learning theories that are the Behavioural, Cognitivist and Constructivist. Pre-test and Post-test are conducted during the research process in order to determine significant research findings. The respondents also respond to Likert-scale survey questionnaire that is the close-ended survey as well as to open-ended survey and written reflections. The study applies SPSS version 26 for the statistical analysis, and thematic coding is used for the open-ended survey and the reflections. The results of the findings showed that the learning of syntax via media materials improve significantly Second language learners' performance, motivation, attitude and learning retention. The experimental group outperformed the control group for all the variables tested. From this study, it is hoped that the results and the discussion presented would assist language instructors, content developers, language experts, academicians and all related agencies to incorporate media materials in teaching English syntax, thus, further enrich the L2 language acquisition. This nature of teaching and learning approach can potentially act as a learning alternative to the learners and can provide learning options for better learning. Hence, there is a need to work on such promising learning material with the support of the ISD and motivational models as well as the learning theories. The up-to-date implementation for the syntax learning material that involves computer technology perhaps can be better developed, improved and customised over time.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background of the Study

1.1.1   Scenarios in Malaysia: General Overview

The development of the country improves together with the world's demand. Slowly, we can observe and witness, as the country has reached its maturity, its economic development, political control, and social value also show some promising potentials (Bubicz, Barbosa-Povoa & Carvalho, 2019), so does its educational evolvement (Hanushek & Woessmann 2020). Fifty years back, our forefather kept reminding us to challenge our ability in order to seek knowledge and to pursue the highest academic attainment one can get. However, what many hardly believe is that these academic attainments and the educational values are actually contributing to a significant move of a country towards achieving better economic evolution thus helping the country politically and socially (Klofsten et al., 2019). "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world" (Mandela, 1990). This scenario, at one point, demonstrates how education can play its simple role – to educate and make people educated - but can become a powerful tool to a country specifically to the government to maneuver its future path (Ma'rof, 2014). With the world's constant growth, here comes another episode as technology intervention transpires to assure reformation and modernization (Mohamed Razali, 2013; Maradana et al., 2019).

1.1.2   Scenarios in Malaysia in General - the Steps Forward

Growing up in this country, Malaysia is seen as having developed spectacularly. Starting from colonization, Malaysia finally got its independence and marched its way to make Malaysians proud. The moves taken place are by incorporating the wise financial and political decisions - at the beginning - then moving forward with the technology immersion. Thus, practically, Malaysia should be equipped with better skill human capital and better exposed to the technology intervention in order to fulfil its vision to be a developed country. There are instances that technology intervention helps improve the country in several sectors (Mohamed Razali, 2013); in education, the