THE USE OF MICROSOFT® POWERPOINT® TO LEARN ENGLISH LANGUAGE AMONG UITM PRE-DIPLOMA STUDENTS

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BORANG PENGESAHAN STATUS TESIS^ʋ

JUDUL: **The Use of Microsoft® PowerPoint® to Learn English Language among UITM Pre-Diploma Students**

SESI PENGAJIAN: 2006/2007-1

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To my beloved mother and father

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many people I would like to thank for their assistance in writing this report. There are a few who I would like to specifically thank here.

I appreciate very much the guidance and direction given to me by my supervisor, Dr. Noor Zainab Abdul Razak from the inception of this project to its conclusion. I would also like to thank my friends, Euphrasia Lee, Jacqueline Sim and Shirley Su who were always there when I needed them.

I also appreciate the support and cooperation of my good friend at Universiti Teknologi Mara, Mukah Campus, Ananda Tilaka Sekara, for taking time to read and edit this piece of work. I must also thank my buddies Zainol, Audrey and Winston for keeping me sane throughout my course of study.

Finally, a word of thanks also to my father, Frankie and my mother, Grace who instilled in me a lifelong love of learning and my lovely sisters, Angeline and Geraldine who were always there to support me.

ABSTRACT

This study seeks to examine the effects of using presentation software Microsoft® PowerPoint® to teach English. Specifically, this study attempts to investigate student motivation, attitude and anxiety when presentation software Microsoft® PowerPoint® is used to learn English. The respondents in this study were 40 Pre-Diploma students who were following the BEL 040 course offered by UiTM, Mukah Campus. The main methodology employed in this study was a survey questionnaire. Interviews were conducted on 10 of the students who had also responded to the questionnaire. The data were analyzed and computed as percentages. The results obtained showed a generally positive motivation of students towards learning English through the use of computers and Microsoft® PowerPoint®. Also, this study found that students have positive attitudes towards using Microsoft® PowerPoint® to learn English. Anxiety level varies depending on the situation. Based on this study, it could be concluded that the use of Microsoft® PowerPoint® and CALL to teach must be encouraged as it helps to motivate students and develop a positive attitude towards learning English.

ABSTRAK

Tujuan kajian ini ialah untuk mengenalpasti kesan-kesan pengunaan perisian Microsoft® PowerPoint® untuk mengajar Bahasa Inggeris. Secara khususnya, kajian ini cuba untuk menyelidiki motivasi, sikap dan kebimbangan pelajar apabila perisian untuk membuat penyampaian seperti Microsoft® PowerPoint® digunakan untuk mempelajari Bahasa Inggeris. Responden dalam kajian ini ialah 40 pelajar Pra-Diploma yang mengikuti kursus BEL 040 yang ditawarkan oleh UiTM, Kampus Mukah. Metodologi utama yang digunakan dalam kajian ini ialah borang soal selidik. Temu bual juga dijalankan ke atas 10 orang pelajar yang juga telah memberi respon kepada borang soal selidik. Analisis data telah dijalankan dan telah diubah kepada peratusan. Keputusan yang telah diperolehi menunjukkan bahawa secara umumnya, motivasi pelajar adalah positif terhadap pengunaan komputer serta Microsoft® PowerPoint® untuk mempelajari Bahasa Inggeris. Selain daripada itu, kajian ini telah mendapati bahawa pelajar mempunyai sikap yang positif terhadap pengunaan Microsoft® PowerPoint® untuk mempelajari Bahasa Inggeris. Paras kebimbangan adalah berlainan berdasarkan situasi. Berdasarkan kajian ini, kesimpulannya ialah pengunaan Microsoft® PowerPoint® serta CALL untuk mengajar perlu digalakkan kerana ia dapat membantu untuk memberi motivasi kepada pelajar dan sikap yang positif terhadap pembelajaran Bahasa Inggeris.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BEL 040	-	Intensive English I
CALL	-	Computer -Assisted Language Learning
CMC	-	Computer-Mediated Communication
EFL	-	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	-	English as a Second Language
L2	-	Second Language
MoE	-	Ministry of Education
OHP	-	Overhead projector
UiTM	-	MARA University of Technology

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Introduction

Educational technology and Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) provide many benefits for the acquisition and application of English Language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and grammar. Wen (1999: 83) states that "the use of computer is a tide we cannot stop [and] if we do not swim along we will only be drowned." Since the introduction of CALL, students in the west have benefited. Hence, this leads to the need to investigate whether Malaysian students are also getting the benefits of educational technology and CALL and progressing on par with students in other parts of the world.

There are various factors that contribute to the success of learning English as a Second Language (ESL). One of the much talked about and written about factors is motivation. Nesamalar, Saratha and Teh (1997: 10) assert that "it is indisputable that motivation is an extremely important factor in successful language acquisition". English is a compulsory subject in the Malaysian School Curriculum. The concerted effort by the Ministry of Education to improve competency levels among Malaysian students will not succeed even with progressive teaching and learning strategies, if the students themselves are not motivated to learn. Also, according to Nesamalar, Saratha and Teh (1997: 9) although English is a compulsory subject in schools, "a high percentage of students

fail to achieve an acceptable level of competence" in English and one of the reasons is "low motivation."

Literature suggests that educational technology can help to motivate learners of English as a Second Language develop language skills and as stated by Eggen and Kauchak (2004: 414), "research has identified positive effects of technology on motivation in at least four areas: self-esteem and self-efficacy, attendance, attitudes, and involvement". However, not all lecturers in universities are putting this knowledge into practice as they are still not utilizing the technology tools provided for them to use in their teaching methods. Some are still having problems being 'techno phobic'. Students are becoming more advanced in the use of technology and if educators do not follow this trend, they will be out-of-date. In order to keep-up with the trends in education, educators need to incorporate technology into their teaching. However, many educators are still unaware of the benefits or purposely ignoring the fact that students enjoy using technology to learn because of personal reasons.

Some educators do use computer technology for personal purposes but not for teaching. A study by Rosli, Zamalia and Shafiee (2002) on ICT (Information Communication and Technology) usage among MARA University of Technology (UiTM), Shah Alam Campus lecturers, found that ICT literacy among UiTM lecturers is high but the usage of ICT for teaching and learning is still low. Majority or 82.5% of the respondents indicated that UiTM should increase its investment in ICT skills training for staff and 76.9% indicated that it should also increase its investment in ICT facilities and the ratio of computers to lecturers should ideally be 1:1. UiTM took the suggestions and made the effort to ensure the ratio and the providing computer related training courses on programs like Microsoft Word, PowerPoint and Flash to enable the lecturers to update themselves.

Fisher (2003) suggests using PowerPoint for ESL teaching. PowerPoint is a type of presentation software that allows users to show coloured text and images with simple animation and sound. CALL involves the use of computer and its

application to teach and learn language. PowerPoint can be considered as a part of CALL. Fisher (2003) explains that "PowerPoint has been in existence for many years, it has just begun to spread to schools and ESL classrooms… [and]…the reason for this delay is that technology requires hardware, which is relatively expensive." However, this is not a problem for lecturers in Malaysian universities as presentation software like Microsoft® PowerPoint® is easily available and usually comes bundled with most of the office computers as part of the Microsoft Office package. Though, many are still unaware of how useful it can be as an aid in teaching. This study involves the use of Microsoft® PowerPoint® to teach and learn the English language. Effects on students' motivation, attitude and anxiety in learning through the use of Microsoft® PowerPoint are investigated. This provides an insight into the effectiveness of the technique with goals of improving instruction, teaching methods and other pedagogical practices employed by educators.

1.2   Background of the Study

At present, the Malaysian Ministry of Education (MoE) is spending a lot of money on encouraging teachers to incorporate the use of technology into classroom teaching and also CALL. MoE (1999:2) states:

> "The vision and mission of teacher education in Malaysia is to develop a system of education that is on par with world standards in producing teachers who are constantly striving to achieve excellence and who are willing to work diligently towards fulfilling the aspirations of the nation."

In line with this, strategies have been designed to equip teachers with the knowledge and skills to use technology effectively in the classroom. Information Technology (IT) is also introduced as a subject major in courses offered by teacher training colleges. The MoE has also made a strong commitment to use information

technology and provide both equipment and training to all 10,000 schools all over the country (Intel Business Centre, 2004). Providing all school teachers with training, laptops and computers is an important step taken to promote the use of technology and also CALL. The equipment and training are also provided in institutions of higher learning.

Technology tools like computer, overhead projector (OHP), LCD projector and software are provided with the hope that teachers and lecturers will use them for teaching purposes. However, in both schools and universities, not all tools are fully utilized for many reasons. Some do make use of the OHP to do their presentation but many are still dependent on the conventional chalk and black board or markers and white board. Universities do encourage the use of presentation software in teaching although it is not compulsory.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Mukah Campus UiTM Exam Reports for 7 semesters show that students' performance in the English proficiency course, Intensive English 1 (BEL 040) generally range from average to poor. One of the reasons for this poor performance could be motivation in the classroom. As such, this calls for suggestion of new methods to be incorporated into the English class to motivate the learners and increase their proficiency level. This study introduces the use of presentation software Microsoft® PowerPoint® in the BEL 040 class. Also, in the study by Rosli, Zamalia and Shafiee (2002), the majority of the lecturers in UiTM indicated that UiTM should increase its investment in ICT skills training for staff, facilities and the ratio of computers to lecturers should ideally be 1:1. By early 2006, UiTM had succeeded in ensuring this ratio and while this study is being conducted, UiTM is also providing computer related training courses to all its academic staff, hoping that they would be able update their teaching methods. Academic staff are being exposed to Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Flash and Adobe Acrobat skills. However, it is also important to let them know that students

are actually interested in learning through the use of educational technology. This study will provide an insight into student motivation, attitude and anxiety when presentation software like Microsoft® PowerPoint® is used to learn English. If there is a positive outcome, this study will also be able to further support, encourage or promote the use of technology in teaching and learning. Both quantitative and qualitative data will be collected to find out if the use of Microsoft® PowerPoint® by lecturers in their teaching, works in motivating students and developing a positive attitude towards learning English.

1.4   Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

1.4.1   To investigate students' motivation towards using Microsoft® PowerPoint® to learn English.

1.4.2   To determine students' attitude when using Microsoft® PowerPoint® to learn English.

1.4.3   To evaluate students' anxiety when using Microsoft® PowerPoint® to learn English.

1.5   Research Questions

This research aims to address the following research questions:

1.5.1   What is students' motivation towards using Microsoft® PowerPoint® to learn English?

1.5.2   What are students' attitudes towards using Microsoft® PowerPoint® to learn English?

1.5.3   Do the students feel anxious when using Microsoft® PowerPoint® to learn English?

**1.6	Significance of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to investigate students' motivation, attitude and anxiety when presentation software Microsoft® PowerPoint® is used to learn English using a survey research design. It is hoped that the findings would benefit the teachers of English and encourage them to make full use of the resources available to them. The findings of this study will reveal whether the use of simple software like Microsoft® PowerPoint® can actually motivate learners and develop a positive attitude towards learning English. If it contributes to a certain degree, the success of students in learning English, the money invested by the government in preparing the technology for learning institutions is invaluable. Technology can be used to solve problems or shortcomings of the conventional methods of teaching and learning. This study could be shared as valuable "insights" for those involved: the ministry, the university, and the lecturers.

Gaining an insight into what motivates the students to learn English is invaluable in assisting the lecturers and the university to provide the correct incentives to further promote the use of computers and specifically presentation software in language learning. Recommendations will be made to the university and policy makers. The findings will also be shared among the lecturers who teach the same course in Malaysia and teachers in general with the aim to improve the present teaching and learning methods. This project has great significance, both locally for Sarawak and nationally for Malaysia as a whole as it will make a major contribution to the national drive towards developing a Knowledge-Based Economy in which intellectual power in the form of English language expertise can be harnessed together with the power of computer technology to fulfil Malaysia's wider development goals.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study were 40 Pre-Diploma students from UiTM Sarawak, Mukah Campus. Due to time constraint in doing this study, the data collection was restricted to examining a cross-section of the students' thoughts and emotional stances at a particular point in time. The data for this study were gathered from the 40 students after their experiencing the treatment for six weeks. The central problem of this study was to investigate student motivation, attitude and anxiety when presentation software Microsoft® PowerPoint® is used by students to learn English.

1.8 Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the terms used are defined as follows:

1.8.1 Motivation

"Motivation can be defined as the dynamically changing cumulative arousal in a person that initiates, directs, coordinates, amplifies, terminates, and evaluates the cognitive and motor processes whereby initial wishes and desires are selected, prioritized, operationalised and (successfully or unsuccessfully) acted out." (Dörnyei and Otto, 1998: 65)

1.8.2 Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL)

CALL is the use of computer and its application in language teaching and learning.

1.8.3   Microsoft® PowerPoint®

Microsoft® PowerPoint® is a type of presentation software created by Microsoft Corporation that allows users to show coloured text and images with simple animation and sound.

1.8.4   Attitude

Attitude is a predisposition to respond in a certain way to a person, object, event, idea or situation (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). The response may be derived without conscious reflections. Attitude can be seen from three aspects; cognitive, affective and behavioural (Rosenberg and Hovland, 1960 and Triandis, 1971).

1.8.5   Anxiety

Anxiety is associated with feelings of uneasiness, self-doubt, apprehension, or worry (Brown, 1987: 106).

1.8.6   BEL 040

BEL 040 refers to the 16-hour per week Intensive English 1 course for pre-diploma students in UiTM.

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