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WhatsApp Stickers: A Reward System to Boost Students' Motivation in Learning Grammar

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Abstract

Mastering grammar among primary pupils is a challenge in teaching and learning English. Lack of knowledge in correct words arrangement becomes a hindrance for pupils to communicate and understand ideas effectively. Different grammar structures and rules in English also affected pupils' encouragement in learning. In order to solve the problem, a reward system using WhatsApp Stickers is introduced as an intervention. WhatsApp Stickers are given as a reward for teaching and learning for English grammar. Research designs used in this study are pre and post test, pupils' document, and quiz. Data were collected using interview, pupils' achievement, and observation. Findings show the intervention helps improve pupils' achievement, motivates pupils to learn, and displays a positive attitude toward grammar learning. The study helps the teaching grammar process and benefits pupils in communicating basic information using digital media. Further recommendations to use the same intervention for adult learners to see the extent of WhatsApp Stickers effectiveness and suggesting a study to be conducted for other skills such as listening, writing, and speaking skills

Keywords: Sticker, Grammar, Reward, Motivation

Introduction

Recent researches had emerged on recent approaches toward natural language learning and teaching. Interactions among language learners should be engaging and constitute language learning experiences in a more self-sufficient way. Today's teaching and learning focuses on students' ability to think critically, connecting knowledge with the real world, mastering information technology, communicating and collaborating (Afsyah, 2019). These criterias set the standard in grammar learning to develop students' proficiency. Therefore, current teaching and learning need to blend various methods and approaches using technology aligned with globalization needs (Essel, 2017).

Mustaffar, Baharuddin and Yunus (2019) suggest that technology can be an effective teaching aid to grasp challenging concepts of grammar rules. Ta'amneh (2017) supported that technology such as computers, mobile phones, smart phones, and the internet are considered as effective tools to support the teaching and learning process. Integrated approaches with

the help of computer technology and mobile devices benefit teachers to monitor and support students' progress compared to traditional grammar teaching methods (Refat et al., 2020). Experts proposed that the use of media in the learning process can attract interest and motivate student learning (Afsyah, 2019).

Motivation is one of the most important factors in learning English and has been recognised by educational psychologists as a main driving force towards learning (Ieremenko, 2017). Intrinsic motivation is driven by personal fulfillment and long-lasting while extrinsic motivation is driven by external rewards. Two types of motivation are interrelated to ensure students achieve learning language goals. Thus, teaching and learning requires engagement of behaviour, emotionally, and cognitive to involve in academic activities.

Motivating and encouraging engagement for learning grammar become challenges for teachers. Therefore, according to Kheryadi (2017), WhatsApp are one of the tools that is beneficial to motivate students in communicative language learning. The media is one of the newest technologies that can be used as another different teaching and learning method. The media also proved its effectiveness in teaching and learning English (Kheryadi, 2017; Hamad, 2017; Ajid, 2018; Mwakapina, 2016) on learners' self-confidence and motivation to learn. WhatsApp usage reflects the advantages of increasing and directing students' attention towards their environment. It improves learners' motivation for independent learning based on their abilities and interests. Despite challenges of learning grammar in Malaysia context, this study aims to investigate the effectiveness of WhatsApp Stickers as a reward to boost up motivation for learning grammar.

Literature Review

Grammar plays an essential language form to create meaningful sentences for learners to understand the language (Savignon, 2017). Abdullah and Shah (2015) defined that grammar as the structure of language or syntax which expressed through a set of specific linguistic rules. Hence, ESL learners are required to construct sentences and express their ideas confidently to avoid misunderstanding of the original ideas and meaning (Yaacob & Yunus, 2019). Several studies showed English language viewed as a learning subject in which focusing merely on the mechanics of the language rather than use it for communicative purposes. Learning grammar is perceived as complex in Malaysian context as most pupils are having difficulties in using correct English grammar in their writings (Fazil & Ehsan, 2020). As a result, this paradigm of learning English will continually and persistently be regarded as an alien language to the learners. Moreover, Afsyah (2019) argues that the use of language and clear vocabulary makes writing more insightful and interesting, and communication spontaneously occurs. Poor grammar, word choice disadvantage for communication, and lack of vocabulary affects reader's understanding and listener. Learning English language was never their first language (L1) for Malaysia learners and became a dilemma (Fazil & Ehsan, 2020).

Language teaching has been developed over years from various psychology theory applications. The development moves from language teaching of controlled, structured approaches and syllabus towards communicative approaches that focuses on interactions rather than memorization. Traditional language teaching employs present-practice-produce (PPP) method leading learners to automatic use of new language features (Ellis, 2003). Text-manipulation exercises become less practical and Skehan (1989) discredit this approach as

level of success tends to be poorer in conventional foreign language learning. Online and offline learning assists the students to acquire knowledge easier and also encourages them to become independent students (Rusli & Harwati, 2018)

It is challenging to stimulate students' motivation to learn language especially for the second language learner. Keller 's (1987) introduces Attention, Relevance, Confidence, and Satisfaction (ARCS) a learning model for motivation in producing effective instructional design. The model highlights elements for motivation in learning and explains practical strategies to make students' motivation more predictable and manageable (Keller, 1987). ARCS enhances cognitive capability for meaningful learning thus encouraging practices of interesting activities in teaching and learning sessions (Refat et al., 2020). Early learning process requires obtaining and sustaining students' attention. The attention must be directed toward appropriate cues and it has to be acquired. Learning will be stimulated if the students' interest and curiosity are captured. Furthermore, reasoning the instruction with personal goals leads to a positive attitude for motivation toward learning. Even though personal needs are met, confidence is required to learn effectively. Teachers need to design appropriate learning designs and environments to increase the level of confidence towards success expectancy. In order to maintain desire to learn, it is a need to reinforce performance with rewards (internal and external rewards). Extrinsic rewards such as opportunities for achievements, certificates, and material reward while intrinsic rewards can be feelings of self-esteem, achievement from interacting with others, and opinions being heard (Keller, 1987).

Reward system is suggested to motivate and contribute to a successful teaching and learning. Reward systems in learning organizations recognize and reinforce learning through pay and promotion practices tied to risk-taking, flexibility, continuous improvement, and other behaviours congruent with organizational learning (McGill and Slocum, 1993). Traditionally, classroom point system, a form of token economy, expectations for desired student behavior and learning, rules that govern how points are earned, and criteria for earning prizes such as stationary upon receiving a certain number of points are vastly used by school teachers for motivation learning (Donaldson et al., 2014).

Mobile learning defines as integrating mobile tools and applications in assisting language learning inside and outside the classroom (Chinnery 2006; Hazaea & Alzubi, 2016:9). Many language teaching and learning strategies are developed based on mobiles and mobile-assisted technology to make language learning enjoyable and fun. Mobile Assisted Learning Language (MALL) is one method focused on mobile usage for language learning. Research on MALL showed a lot of resources can be exploited well from mobile usage (Kaseem, 2018). Studies also have found that learning while using technologies such as computers and smartphones are effective in improving student's engagement and active participation in classrooms (Johns, 2015; Robertson, 2019). Mobile technology provides opportunities for students to polish unique qualities through accessibility, personalization, and portability (Saran & Seferoglu, 2010, Shahbaz & Khan, 2019) during the teaching and learning process. Therefore, media increase and direct students' attention for learning motivation, blend interactions with surroundings, and teach students to adapt independently based on their abilities and interests.

Many recent studies have been done to investigate how WhatsApp affects students' teaching and learning. WhatsApp is one of the latest technologies that has been introduced in language teaching. This application can be installed on different types of smartphones and is free for the user via the Internet. The app offers users to create groups for communication among users through online meetings. Andújar (2016) states that WhatsApp has become an effective tool in L2 development in order to polish language skills and encourage students to actively participate in a language class (Baffour-Awuah, 2015; Cifuentes & Lents, 2011). The media is useful in communicating language in which students apply language in various contexts. Ashiyan & Salehi (2016) also mentioned WhatsApps is beneficial for different purposes because messages can be sent through Internet connection in the form of text, audio files, pictures, locations, and videos. The interface in the application provides opportunities for interactive communication between students and teachers. Ayuningtyas (2018) claimed that WhatsApp is a platform for students' to learn from peer mistakes, to think in English, and provide instant feedback from teachers.

Visual materials in WhatsApp provide opportunities for learning and teaching process (Ozdamli & Ozdamli, 2017). Visual materials make objects and concepts related to lessons easier, make abstract ideas concrete, increase motivation for learning, diversify teaching environments, and help recalling previous knowledge (Smaldino et. al, 2017) Ozdal and Ozdamli (2017) also added visual materials to provide critical thinking and save both time and effort. According to Castelyn and Mottart (2012) the usage of visual materials in education lead to active learning and teachers must vary types of visual to incorporate with course content in an attempt to increase learners' performance and motivation. A research to investigate the impact of visual materials when teaching languages by Canning-Wilson (2000) proved that using visual materials influence students' motivation, success, and attitude positively.

Numerous studies have been conducted involving different levels of institutions in teaching English. The study by Andujar (2016) proved positive results through experimental design on the number of errors in the aspect of grammatical, lexical, and mechanical aspects on 80 Spanish ESL third-year students' writing development. The study reflects major improvements specifically on WhatsApp application towards vocabulary and grammar aspects. Moreover, one study supported the influence of WhatsApps on English grammar teaching and learning in a primary school setting. Ali et al (2018) concluded teaching grammar using mobile phones has a positive impact on students' grammar. Finding shows a significant difference between experimental and control groups of 100 Grade 5 EFL students. Thus, these studies illustrated that using WhatsApp had an impact in improving English grammar for skills of listening, speaking, and writing.

Methodology

This study involves nine primary school pupils in suburban areas. Participants range from lower level proficiency to average proficiency in English language. This research used purposive sampling techniques. Research designs used in this study are pre and post test, pupils' document, and quiz. Data were collected using interview, pupils' achievement, and observation. WhatsApp Group is used as a medium of instructions during research. Pupils are given instructions on completing the tasks through WhatsApp group. Each task must be completed accordingly and WhatsApp stickers are given. Stickers given are in illustration form

and were carefully selected. A special sticker given for pupils that manage to complete all the tasks. Eight sessions are done for completing this study.

Result and Discussion

The purpose of the study was to investigate the effectiveness of WhatsApp Stickers as a reward to boost up motivation for learning grammar. Data pre and post test collected presented in table below.

Grade	Scores			
	Pre-test	%	Post test	%
A	3	33.3	9	100.00
B	1	11.1	-	-
C	3	33.3	-	-
D	1	11.1	-	-
E	1	11.1	-	-
Total	9		9	

Table 1: Result of pre-test and post-test

Based on the table, six participants' scores remarkably increased during pre and post test. Three participants scored 33.3 % and attained grade C and three participants scored 11.1% and attained grade B, D, and E respectively during pre-test. Meanwhile, three participants scored 33.3% and remained consistent at grade A. The findings showed this intervention helped to improve achievement in grammar learning. The findings align with Baleghzadeh and Oladrostam (2010) correlates constructive findings of language learning and mobile phones usage. Zhao (2005) sees mobile application serve a conducive environment when learning is difficult. Hence, Ali et al (2018) suggested teaching grammar through mobile phones has a positive effect on students' grammar.

Another findings show two participants show great improvement of achieving scores below passing grades during pre-test. Participants show distinctive achievement between pre and post test. It is assumed that participants pay less attention and are not interested in learning grammar lessons. Low marks scored during pre-test revealed grammar is seen as uninterested lesson (Elsherbini & Ali, 2017). Wang (2012) viewed that lack of interest in grammar has a demoralizing effect on motivation and creates escapism in learning. Therefore, the findings contrasted mentioned English is viewed as an alien to the learners consistently. The usage of WhatsApp stickers as a reward gives an effect toward academic performance. Thus, stickers as visual materials serve as providing quick feedback from teachers towards learning sessions. Students are able to assess their learning and understanding on grammar through rewards given. It also increases students' intrinsic motivation for gaining knowledge to the next level.

During the interview, participants give positive responses towards implementation of WhatsApp stickers. Participants are eager to participate in next lessons through rewards given. Participants' responses during the interview showed a positive attitude and motivation. Participants actively participated in the discussion after receiving WhatsApp Stickers. Through the interview, a participant gave a positive answer regarding stickers usage.

"I like it. I feel happy. Want to finish homework quickly. Wait until I get sticker"

Excerpt 1

Findings supported ACRS Model strategies of motivation. Students' attention is attached to tasks given. Students able to focus on the material and cues provided with the enhancement of stickers. Teacher's guidance through sessions help students follow up lessons on grammar. Students' confidence increased and helped them go through challenges in the lesson towards expectancy goals. Additionally, media improves and directs students' attention for learning motivation, blends interactions with surroundings, and teaches students to adapt independently based on their abilities and interests. Similar to Afsyah (2019) students confirm that they are happy and comfortable using WhatsApp in learning English because they can express themselves using English and are not afraid and ashamed to use grammar and choose the right vocabulary.

Participants observed to participate in group discussion actively in the WhatsApp group. Students interact with each other by support and giving feedback on tasks given. Andújar (2016) states that WhatsApp has become an effective tool in L2 development in order to polish language skills and encourage students to actively participate in a language class (Baffour-Awuah, 2015; Cifuentes & Lents, 2011). Findings also in line with Ayuningtyas (2018) claimed that WhatsApp is a platform for students' to learn from peer mistakes, to think in English, and provide instant feedback from teachers.

All participants are able to complete all tasks given and are awarded with special stickers. Participants' commitment convey autonomous learning increasing self-confidence, enthusiasm, motivation for student learning and being proactive. Autonomous students create responsible students for their learning. Ryan and Deci (2012) said motivated learners are prone to undertake challenging activities, engaged actively, enjoy and adopt a deep approach to learning and exhibit advanced performance, persistence and creativity. Students can practice language to share ideas without limited space and time in class through WhatsApp. Hence, The role of the teacher as a facilitator is important to ensure that students have adequate language exposure and teaching guidance.

Conclusion

As a conclusion, this study advocates WhatsApp Stickers plays an important role in boosting up motivation for English as Second Language learners learning grammar. Results of this research shows that this reward is effective to improve students' motivation, success, and attitude positively. It can be an influential current teaching and learning tool in encouraging students and teachers to learn grammar in fun and attractive ways. WhatsApp Stickers encourage students' active participation and increase students' attention towards learning. Harwati (2018) mentions teachers must be prepared to teach the "content of the future" using various technologies such as software, hardware, digital, technological, and social media. The study also can be used for improving the feedback process in teaching grammar

and benefits pupils in communicating basic information using digital media. Further research suggested to use the same intervention for adult learners to see the extent of WhatsApp Stickers effectiveness. Furthermore, the suggested study can be conducted for other skills such as listening, writing, and speaking skills because these skills are challenging for ESL learners mastering English language.

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