Integrating Interactive PowerPoint Slidesto teach Subject-Verb-Agreement (SVA) in Rural Primary Schools in Sarawak

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Abstract: Languages learning today receive influence from the expansion of technology as language learners expose to it. Henceforth, this changes open different path in language learning to be more effective. Similarly, the growing needs of technology implementation in jobs sectors cause the importances to equip the young generation with technology skills. With that, this paper attempts to review the integration of educational technology in the teaching of subject-verb-agreement (SVA) in adding '-s' or '-es' to verbs. Therefore, this study explore in-depth understanding on educational integration to determine the implications of it in the learning of English as a second language.
Keywords: Educational technology, grammar, subject-verb-agreement, English as a second language,

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I. INTRODUCTION:

Languages are always become the mean of communication. As the globalization process occurs around the world, the need of human's interaction in various sectors increase, thus allow technology embedded into our life. Gradually, technology changes the way of learning too. In result to this, English increases its status as the world *lingua franca.* Now, it is necessary for every individual to possess a good level of proficiency in language that can be understand globally, which is English.

According toCrystal (2003), English language has known as global language and become the most significant language in the world.Genç & Bada (2010) wrote that English language has been listed as the official or co-official language of over 42 countries and is spoken extensively in other countries where it has no official status. Balla (2018) mentioned English language has taken an important place in communication and use by millions of people all around the world. Consequently, the learning of English has become a major concern in Malaysia national education system.

In this country, English language has become a major subject in eleven years of compulsory primary and secondary education. In equivalent, it is tested in the national exam in all levels which are known as UPSR (taken at the end of 6 years of primary education), PT3 (taken at the end of third year in secondary education) and SPM (taken at the end of the fifth year of secondary education). As we increasingly embracing the globalization phenomenal across the world, the government aware that being literate in English language is important.With that the Malaysia Education Blueprint (2013) is created to achieve this. This latest education policy aims to develop young Malaysians that able to think critically, creatively, knowledgeable, possess leadership skill and can interact effectively that benefits them to succeed in this era. Along with this, it is hope that this change in education system assists the young generations to face challenges present in this century.

In Malaysian education system, English language is listed as a second language. There are four languages skill to be mastered which are listening, speaking, reading and writing skill. However, one would not be able to do so if he is not well equipped with good grammar skill. Grammar skill is an essential part in language learning as the real meanings cannot be understandable if the correct grammar rules are not applied in the correct manner. This is supported by Zakaria (2013) where grammar plays a significant role in governing the use and application of language. He added that without good knowledge on grammar, one could not communicate verbally and write efficiently and professionally. This causes the individually to be nearly imppossible in articulating accurate thoughts and make them intelligible for readers and listeners. Therefore, grammar is consideref important in the learning of language before one can be acknowledge to have good proficiency in the language.

Several studies were conducted on grammar for betterment of English language teaching and learning in Malaysia. According to Suppiah, Subramaniam and Subrayan (2011), the learning of English grammar has always been a challenging task particularly for students at the national type schools in Malaysia. Besides that, a study by Charanjit et. al (2017) mentioned that despite of learning English in primary and secondary schools, students in the higher learning institutions level are found to make some grammatical errors in their writing.

In similar study conducted in different countries where Bennui (2008) studied on grammar accuracy in written text where the L1 (Thai language) interference in term of word order, subject-verb agreement and noun determiners in the learning of L2 (English language) had caused the students to make errors in paragraph writing. Simultaneously, Henry and Roseberry (2007) discovered that there is a correlation between various types of errors within wrong usage of grammar in writing task by students of University of Brunei Darussalam. Therefore, the lack knowledge of grammar interferes the competencies of an individual in aspect of their writing skill.

Cullen and Kuo (2007) addressed the nature of spoken English is usually spontaneous and unplanned and produced in real time with no opportunity for editing, unlike written English. Thus, the features of spoken English lead to several distinct grammatical features of spoken English as speakers try to fulfil the interpersonal and interactive functions of spoken language in real time (Hilliard, 2014). In this vein, spoken English will be difficult to be understand without the correct grammatical features of English language. This is supported by Mumford (2009) where not learning features of spoken grammar can impede students' ability to speak English fluently and appropriately.

Charanjit et. al (2017) stated out that among the aspects of grammar, Subject-Verb-Agreement is one is of the most commonly marked errors in students writing. Analysis from the study revealed that these students have poor command of the English language. Siti Hamin and Mohd Mustafa (2010) reported that subject-verb agreement area is very important to express ideas especially in writing, where non verbal communication is absent, the students really need to master this rule in order to write effectively. As a result, they can convey their message clearly and effectively. Deterdingand Poedjosoedarmo (2001) explained the rules of SVA are if a subject is singular, its verb must also be singular; if a subject is plural, its verb must also be plural. The incorrectness use of SVA would caused confusion or difficulties to understand the exact meaning of an individual. Therefore, it is important that the subject and verb agree with one another.

Language learners always view that plural subject which written in phrases are confusing thus they will use the closest subject to the verb to determine whether the verb should be written in singular or plural. This is supported in Saadiyah et al (2007)where there were 631 errors in SVA which was the third most common problems made by the ESL learners. Similarly, Taher (2011) noted that SVA was the second frequent errors made the learners in both free and controlled writing.. Taher added that the errors were probably made due to the lack of grmmatical knowledge and direct translation from Swedish language to English language. Thus, this study attempts to see the usage of interactive powerpoint tools in the teaching and learning of SVA among level two students in a primary school which age between ten to twelve years old.

Purpose of the study

This research intends to see the effectiveness of using technology tool in teaching subject-verb-agreement (SVA) in terms of adding '-s' or '-es' among level 2 students in a primary school that situated in rural area where internet connection is unavailable and researcher attempts to integrate technology in the grammar lesson.

II.   LITERATURE REVIEW

The teaching of Grammar on SVA

Grammar is the core and essential element in language learning. According to Thornbury (2004), grammar is the backbone of a language and it describes the way language is organised. Wickham (2011) pointed that grammar is vital in primary English curriculum. In study by Marlyna, Tan and Khazriyati(2007), they found the SVA was one of the most frequent errors found in the students' writing. Similar study by Hijjo (2014), pupils syntactically were not fully aware on how to build correct phrase or sentence in English, and they morphologically did not use '-s' or '-es' in a proper way.

According to Normazidah, Koo and Hazita (2012), pupils posses less interest in learning English and view is as difficult subject to learn which have worsened the acquisition of rules of Subject-Verb Agreement. This perceptions may resulted to the learners' background where outside the classroom, the exposure to English is limited. The young learners often speak in their mother tongue which encourage non supportive environment that discourage them to figure and apply the SVA rules in their daily life.Therefore, language learners face difficulties to master SVA rules as pupils who lack of enough comprehension of the Subject-Verb Agreement rules and also practice would easily make mistakes.

Definition of technology and educational technology

There are various definitions on technology stated. Oxford Dictionary defines the word technology as scientific knowledge that is used in practical ways in industry. Meanwhile, MacMillan Dictionary states technology is an advanced scientific knowledge used for practical purposes. Technology can be best defined as applying scientific knowledge in order to solve practical problems   (McDougald, 2009).

However, in term of educational technology, Richey (2008), explained that it is the study and ethical practice of facilitating learning and improving performance by creating, using and managing appropriate technological processes and resources. Hence, it supports the classroom teaching and learning. at the same time, language learners gain more opportunities to complete tasks given on the computer rather than the conventional method using pencil and paper.
Educational technology is the effective use of techn

Integration of educational technology in classroom
The use of technology has become an important part of the learning process in and out of the class (Ahmadi, 2018). It has been known that the young generations today are well-exposed to technologies. According to UNICEF (2017), technology has changed the world as more children go online and this changing their childhood. Thus, this encouraged more involvement of technology to suit their learning styles. This includes the used of technology as a tool in language learning. The advanced technologies allow children to access wide range of learning experience, hence able to practice the skill and knowledge outside formal class education. Pelet (2014) stated that the development of new technologies has extended many opportunities in assisting language learning at all levels of education.

Moreover, when language learners use technology-based tools in class, they learn to master technology skills which beneficial to compete in the job sector. However, the integration of technology in the classroom depends on the teachers' teaching method. According to Abunowara (2014), many teachers are sometimes afraid of new technology hence have negative attitudes towards the implementation of it, but this is not the case for younger learners. With that, the perceptions of teachers towards educational tools and their abilities to use the tools effectively hinder young learners apply them in language lesson.

Past studies attempt to prove technology able to assist the second language learning. A study by Solano et. al (2018) stated that technology is widely used nowadays in order to improve the education system at all levels in language learning. Boles (2011) stated that technology integration foster interaction and motivation in students in ways that a class taught without technology simply could not. With this, it can change the teaching method and provide appropriate practice among teachers to the ways students acquire the targeted language. Meanwhile, Wang and Smith (2013) figured that the usage of mobile phones in the development of reading and grammar skills showed a positive language learning among the students. From the study, it is found that using technology tool, in this case mobile phone, appear to be convenience and foster self-learning among them.

Technology and young learners
Suitable learning environment is crucial for students to learn. As the young generations receive greater exposure in technology development, integrating technology-based learning would be effective to assist their learning. This is supported by Diallo (2014) that technology-based learning environments tend to motivate the students. As the students are motivated to learn, they would be more active in the teaching and learning process. This is supported by Nyirenda (2013) which indicated the usage of multimedia in education appeals to the interest of the learners to learn. Meanwhile, Mohammed and Abdulghani (2016) mentioned technology plays an important role in facilitating learning such as effective educational methodologies such as self-directed, independent, and collaborative learning

As technology integration allow learners to be independent or collaborating, it able to cater the learning styles of the learners. Simultaneously, teachers can observe the learners' understanding through the results or work produced by the end of the lesson. This is because, the learners possess high motivation to work with technology tools throughout the lesson. At the same time, Cecile et al (2014) agreed that technology mediated learning provideslanguage educators with the means to increased exposure to the target language within the classroom by providing offline as well as online resources.

Similarly, technology integration in classroom also assist teachers to provide pupils-centered learning. This is in line with one of the pedagogical principles in Malaysia curricular framework where teaching is learner-centered (Malaysia Education Blueprint, 2013). According to O'Neill & McMahon (2005), in student centred learning classrooms, students actively participate in the peer and self-assessment process, in conjunction with teacher assessment, for formative assessment. Eventually, student-centered classroom permits learners to learn to analyse and evaluate their own learning process with the support of teachers, rather than waiting for teachers to tell them where their learning is deficient.

Implications of technology integration
According to Costley (2014), it is found that most pupils believe their learning improved through technology integration into classroom curriculum. The paper also stated that using technology injected fun learning thus helped them to improve more, increased student motivation, student engagement and student collaboration, increased hands-on learning opportunities,   increased confidence in students,increased

technology skills and allows for learning at all levels. In related to this, Baytak, Tarman and Ayas (2011) mentioned children today love to learn by interacting,doingand discovering and thus technology makes learning interesting, enjoyable, and interactive. With that, the integration of technology in classroom showed positive implication on the pupils' learning regardless their age and learning styles.

Andrade (2014) reported that the use of technology inclassrooms able to provide a meaningful and interesting approach for language learning. However, the integration of technology may have the downside due to certain circumstances. In a study by Kumar, Raduan and D'Silva (2008) found that teacher readiness affects the effectiveness of technology integration in the classroom. The study encourage teachers to undergo training to increase their skills and change their perceptions on using technology tools in classroom. Another study bySchwartz & Pollishuke (2013) where effective usage of technology integration requires a teacher with clear objectives, who knows the curriculum and effective instructional strategies, and who can give children engaging learning experiences to grow and to have more experiences to relate to their prior knowledge. In other words, teachers need to be familiar with technology before capable of helping the learners. Otherwise, technology effectiveness is not guarantee despite of its role to support the acquisition of new knowledge and skills (Ujbanyi et all, 2017) . The study added that educators need to have the required background to work with technology tools in order for it to be efficient.
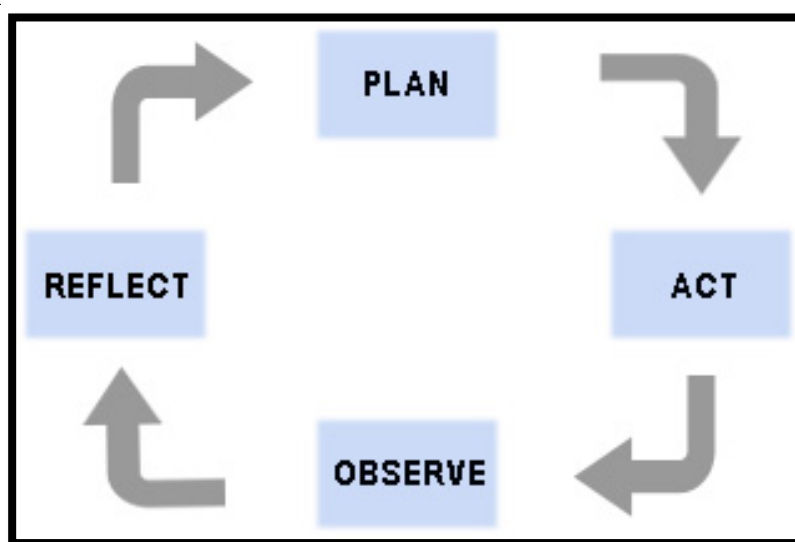
III.   METHODOLOGY:-

Research Design

Figure 1: The Kemmis and McTaggart Action Research Model

The study was conducted based on The Kemmis and McTaggart Action Research Model as it allows insiders' standpoint on the learning issues and pupils' writing progresses (Abraham, 2015). The model comprises the steps of plan, act, observe and reflect (Kemmis, McTaggart & Retallick, 2004). According toHuang (2010), researchers need to develop an action plan to improve what is already happening.This is portrayed by looking into whether the interactive powerpoint slides has helped in the sentences construction of SVA. This is conferred by looking into the result produced by the respondents by the end of the intervention.

In the planning stage, the problem was identified and suitable intervention was chosen. In this stage, the right instruments were determined to measure the effectiveness of the intervention. Next, the intervention was conducted as the step in acting stage. The study was carried out to collect the data and result. Finally, the results obtained were observed in the observing stage. The results were analyzed to determine whether the intervention had reflected any changes or not. The researcher collected data through questionnaires, observation checklist as well as pre and post-test to ensure the triangulation of data occured. Lastly, the researcher reflected upon the effects of the intervention for further planning.

Respondents

A total of 50 pupils which varied from low to high proficiency of English language were elected to participate in the study. They were chosen from two primary school located in rural area in Sarawak. The respondents were 20 males (40%) and 30 (60%) females. All of them age between 10 to 11 years old.

Data Analysis

The questionnaires was analyzed thematically while the observation checklist was studied by htier frequencies of occurence. Latly, the pre-test and post-test results were analyzed using inferential statistics. All respondents from School X were coded as X1, X2, X3 and so on. Respondents from School Y were coded as Y1, Y2, Y3 and so on.

IV.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the data collected related to the usage of interactive powerpoint slides to improve the teaching of SVA to help pupils to write correct sentences. The collection of data suggested that the usage of interactive powerpoint slides is helpful to the pupils. There were improvement shown in pupils' written work after the intervention being carried out.

Questionnaires

Table 1:-Comparison of item means between the Before and After using Interactive Powerpoint Slides for School X and Y

No.	Items	Mean	
		Before	After
1	I know the sentence structure	2.9	4.1
2	The method used by the teacher today help me to write sentences better.	3.4	4.3
3	I am confident in writing sentences.	3.2	4.5
4	Writing sentence is difficult.	4.2	3.3
5	It is hard to determine the position of subject, verb and agreement in writing sentences.	4.5	3.7

Table 1 showed the data obtained from the questionnaire. Item 1 portrayed an increasement of 1.2. The mean for Item 2 and 3 were improved 0.9 and 1.3 respectively. There was a decrease of mean for Item 4 which was -0.7 and Item 5 showed -0.8 in comparison of before and after the intervention.

Based on the findings, the usage of interactive powerpoint slides able to assist pupils to write SVA sentences better. This is obtained from the collected data where pupils' understanding increase in Item 1. This supported the intervention had helped pupils to write sentences better in Item 2. Respectively, both Item 1 and 2 suggested the intervention able to guide pupils to construct SVA sentences better. The indicated data also depicted that pupils gained higher confidence in writing sentences after the intervention was carried out. As stated by Staden (2011), multimedia are usually used as scaffolding for the pupils with different ways in different levels in their learning.

Nevertheless, the collected data had shown that pupils' perspectives had changed in Item 4. There was a decrease in number of pupils that view on writing sentences is difficult. It seemed that the intervention managed to help pupils improve their knowledge. Similarly, Item 5 also indicated decreasement in the number of pupils that viewed it is hard to determine the correct position of subject, verb and agreement in constructing sentennces. It is assumed that the usage of interactive powerpoint slides is capable in assisting pupils' understanding of the correct SVA structures. This is supported by Clay (2001) where adequate experience and practice maneuvered pupils to show better performance in their learning.

Observation Checklist

Table 2:- Comparison of Pupils' Behaviours in Normal Lesson and Intervention Lesson for School X and Y

| No.	Pupils' Behaviours	Frequencies	
		Normal Lesson	Intervention Lesson
1	Engaged with task	27	46
2	Complete the assigned task	40	49
3	Participate actively in the lesson	35	48
4	Volunteer to answer questions	29	44
5	Copying others' work	11	9
6	Off task	5	2
7	Talking with friends	6	1
8	Daydream	6	1

From Table 2, Item 1 shown positive improvement where pupils' engagament increase to 92% in the intervention lesson. Similarly, the number of pupils who completed the task given recorded the highest percentage which is 98% in Item 2. Item 3 and 4 both show increment in percentage which were 96% and 88% respectively. The data indicated that the intervention increased pupils' interest towards the lesson. As supported by Perdue (2016), educational technology increased pupils' engagement and resulted in better performance due to deeper understanding of the content material.

In contrast, the findings for Item 5, 6, 7 and 8 show a decrease in frequencies where the items indicates negative behaviours. Lower prociency pupils show the most encouraging feedbacks in the intervention lesson where they start to focus and took part in the teaching and learning session. Likewise, disruptive behaviour which portrayed in Item 7 decrease to 2% where most of the learners were actively involved throughout the whole intevention lesson.

However, Item 5 also showed that pupils still copy their friends' work eventhough the percentage decrease from 22% to 18%. The data indicated that the strugglers still not convinced with their answers and the sentence construction is difficult for them to do. Perhaps, more exercises could be provided to expand their skill thus increase their confidence to write their own answers. With the usage of the interactive powerpoint slides as the educational tool, pupils would be more optimistic to master their learning.

Pre and Post-Test

Fig 1:- Analysis of Achievement Levels for Pre-test and Post-test
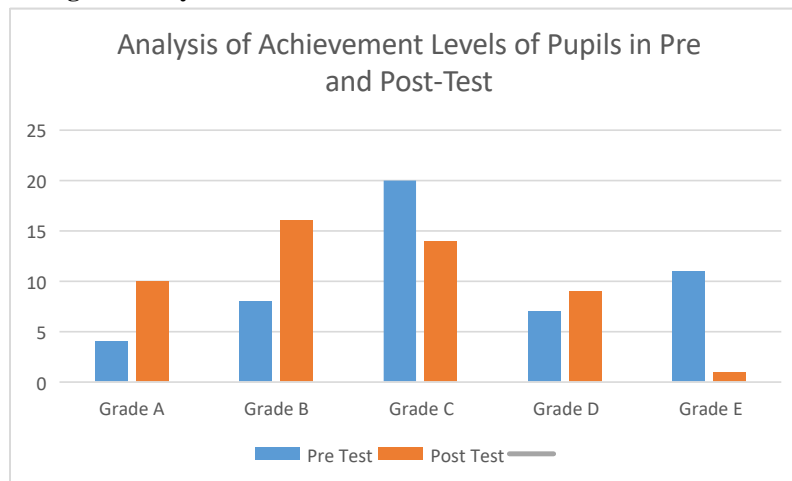
	Numbers of Pupils according to their Grades				
	Grade A (80-100)	**Grade B** (65-79)	**Grade C** (50-64)	**Grade D** (40-49)	**Grade E** (0-39)
Pre-Test	4	8	20	7	11
Post-Test	10	16	14	9	1

A comparison was done in Figure 1 which showed the achievement levels of pupils in pre and post-test. The results was graded into five categories as following: Distinction (grade A), Good (grade B), Satisfactory (grade C), Weak (grade D) and Very Weak (grade E). The numbers indicates the minimum and maximum marks that pupils need to achieved in grading them where Grade A range from 80 to 100 marks, Grade B range from 65 to 79 marks, Grade C range from 50 to 64 marks, Grade D from 40 to 49 marks and Grade E from 0 to 39 marks. The grading system used was adapted from the School Examination Analysis System (SAPS), Malaysian grading system.

The data analysis is tabulated in Figure 1. The graph show a positive increment in the number of pupils that managed to achieve grade A. There were only 4 pupils (8%) obtained grade A in the pre-test while 10 pupils (20%) obtained the same grade in the post-test. Simultaneously, the number of pupils who scored grade B increase from 8 pupils (16%) in pre-test to 16 pupils (32%) in the post-test. Apart from that, the numbers of pupils to obtain grade C in pre and post-test are 20 pupils (40%) and 14 pupils (28%) respectively. Even though the number decrease, the total number of pupils who obtained at least grade D for both pre and post-test improve from 39 pupils (78%) to 49 pupils (98%).

The graph in Figure 1 showed that there was an increase seen between pre and post-tests. This proved that with the integration of interactive powerpoint slides, pupils gained deeper understanding on how to construct SVA sentences. It indicated that the students were learning the differnce between, subject, verb and agreement as well as arrange them in a grammatically correct structure.

Nevertheless, there is a concern that teachers may forget the purpose of the study. Thus, teachers should not rigid in the writings produces by students as long as the SVA structure were written correctly. The variance in their writings should be expected as the learners may have limited as well as good range of vocabularies. As they interpreted the subject of the sentence, struggling pupils might provide different answers than the good ones. However, they would be able to achieve the purpose of the study where the correct sentence structure of SVA were accomplished. As mentioned by Pradeep (2013), grammar is the study of words and the ways words work together; aguide to put words together into sentences.

V. CONCLUSION

The integration of technology in the classroom has shown positive impacts in language learning. It is found that, it promotes active learning thus allow learners especially the young ones to explore the rules by themselves. According to Smeets and Mooij (2001), a student-centred environment facilitates "active-learning, discovery learning and higher-order thinking" which makes learning more meaningful. As a result, pupils have wide opportunities and access to enhance their understanding via the usage of technology tools in the classroom. Furthermore, this allows pupils to practice and at the same time motivated them to learn. High motivation proved as a factor that improve pupils' acquisition in language learning.simultaneously, it was found that the young generation embraces the technology advancement and interested in using technology in their life. This is supported by Linnes and Metcalf (2017) where today's learners are technology savvy. This is situation differs to the older generations where technology is not as advance as present and difficult to have any access to technology.

Similar to that, technology integration helps teachers to provide student-centered learning thus avoids traditional classroom that teach grammar in isolation, based on chalk and talk method. Despite of the rural areas, teachers still uphold the responsibilities to deliver knowledge using technology tools to survive 21st century. Teachers could do this with or without internet connection where technology should be promoted into the classroom using offline apps, offline modules, videos and so on. This is supported by Harwati (2018) where teachers need to promote technology in the classroom and must be prepared to teach the "content of the future" using software, hardware, digital, technological, and social media.

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