PRODUCING ENGLISH GRAMMAR MODULE IN SELF-ACCESS LEARNING MODE TO ENHANCE ENGLISH PERFORMANCE AMONG POLYTECHNIC SEBERANG PERAI STUDENTS

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To my beloved husband, mom and sister.

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ABSTRACT

This research is about testing the implication of the produced module towards student's performance in learning English language. The production of this module is base on self-access learning mode and grammar items. The research involved sample from diploma in business studies students at Polytechnic Seberang Perai. Single group pre and post-test experimental design was used as a mainframe for this research. The significant performance showed by the sample was tested using the paired sample T-test just to ensure that the improvement in performance was not happen by chance. This research was also set to find out on student's perception towards their level of proficiency, confidence and motivation in using English language. The findings illustrated that there is a significant improvement made by the respondents after they used the produced module. The result also indicates that student adept more positive attitude in perceiving their proficiency level, confidence and motivation in English language after using the module.

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini adalah berkenaan dengan pengujian implikasi modul yang dihasilkan terhadap prestasi pembelajaran pelajar. Modul yang dihasilkan adalah berdasarkan kaedah pembelajaran kadar kendiri dan menggunakan subjek bahasa Inggeris sebagai isi kandungannya. Pengujian ini melibatkan sampel pelajar diploma pengurusan perniagaan dari populasi Politeknik Seberang Perai.Kaedah *"single group pre and posttest experimental design"* telah digunakan untuk mengetahui kesignifikan peningkatan yang ditunjukan oleh responden. Kajian ini juga turut melihat perubahan pandangan pelajar terhadap kecekapan, keyakinan dan motivasi pelajar terhadap penggunaan Bahasa Inggeris. Hasil kajian mendapati responden mengalami peningkatan di dalam prestasi pembelajaran bahasa Inggeris setelah menggunakan modul tersebut. Kadar peningkatan ini dikesan melalui ujian paired sample T-test .Kajian ini juga telah menunjukan bahawa pandangan pelajar terhadap keupayaan untuk memperoleh kecekapan, keyakinan diri dan motivasi telah berubah dan mengalami peningkatan yang memberangsangkan .

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PART 1
INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Preface

Language learning is essential to everyone including animals. For animals, their languages are very unique, that we human can hardly learn their language. But for humans, languages can be learned by anyone who has the ability and will. As quoted from Noam Chomsky allude in Victoria Fromkin and Robert Rodman (1998),

"When we study human language, we are approaching what some might call the "human essence", the distinctive qualities of mind that are, so far as we know, unique to a man."

From the quotation above, perhaps we can see that the possession of language is more than any other attribute that distinguishes humans from animals. Language is a medium for human to communicate with each other. Acquisition of language helps human to convey and disseminate message like needs, wants, feelings, instructions and any form of ideas. In order to understand and to be understood by others, we as humans got to have the capacity to produce sounds that signify certain meanings.

Everyone knows at least a language. There are thousands or maybe more languages that exist in this whole wide world. But the most widely and internationally use is English. In Malaysia it self, English is treated as the second language for the country. The implementation of English language in Malaysia began during the British colonialism. The existence of secular education through the Malay, Chinese, Indian vernacular schools and the English schools are responsible for nurturing a new effect of the Malaysian linguistic scene. The English public school system that was dedicated for the high class of the society in Malaya for example the royal family has created a forum of English speaking elite society. Allude from Asmah Haji Omar (1992):

"... It was only with education in English that the people of any race at all could hope to earn a good salary for working with the government."

Based on the quotation above, it can be said that even from the early days the English language had already marked features of exclusivity. To be able to use the language means that the person is acknowledged with the rich and the famous, noble and powerful and had the opportunity to earn and be accepted as a member of the elite society.

The significance of English language to the society had change overtime. Since the New Educational Policy in 1971, English has been declared as the second most important language in Malaysia. Due to the declaration, English became a compulsory subject in all government schools and institutions of higher learning. If over the years English had been a symbol for status, now English language is used mainly for communication with others. In the era of information, communication and technology (ICT), everyone needs to be proficient in English. This is because English language will be undoubtedly the main medium of communication and source of knowledge. Anyone who dearth of it will be left behind. In order to be at par with everyone, mastering English language will be crucial, as the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohammad (2001) said in the 55th UMNO general meeting:

"If we do not want to be left out and become victims of Information Technology, we must seriously strive to acquire this new knowledge. One condition for us to master this knowledge is by mastering the English language."

Acquiring knowledge is the key to innovations and development. According to Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohammad (2001), ninety-nine percent of the information we need is in English. Similarly, hardware and software technology are developed and distributed in English. The simple example that we can see is the usage of Internet that it is operated mainly in English medium. With majority things being conducted in English, it is quite impossible for information that had been retrieved to be translated in to the national language. To overcome this issue, mastering English is one of the solutions. English will allowed us to obtain wide band of information and not to be bound with only local language resources. The progress and development of Malaysia depend on the workforce skill. As a generation who will be the next labor force, we should equip ourselves with knowledge that obviously we can obtain widely in English language. To be proficient in English will not only help the country but also to ourselves. As mention in ELT methodology principles and practiced written by Nesamalar Chitravelu, Siratha Sithamparam and Teh Soon Choon stated that a person who is proficient in English would enhance their chances of securing a good job and getting promotions.

Polytechnics as one of the public education institution should be emphasizing on English as well. One of the reasons are, Polytechnics serve the purpose of preparing work force for the country. The job market now is demanding on the work force that has multiple skills and has the ability to communicate in English fluently. Communication is the most essential part in business transactions or trade. Since English has become the world language, so it is important for us to ensure that every polytechnics leavers that went in to the job market can communicate in English smoothly.

1.2   Research Background

English is taught in both primary and secondary schools in Malaysia. However, there is a high percentage of students fail to achieve an acceptable level of competence in English. This is reflected in the PMR, SPM and SPM(V) examination. Comparatively with SPM(V) in 1998, the percentage of SPM(V) in year 1999 for English subject has shown declination about 0.4%. (Utusan Malaysia, 18 September 1998) The decline in English subject can be correlated with the proficiency level achieved. The low level of proficiency in English can be a disruption for the country in producing a well skill labors.

According to Asmah Haji Omar, (1992) 'nationism' supported by proficiency in the English language is essential in Malaysia's rise to become a developing and industrial nation. In addition to take its place in internationalism, Malaysia's participation in international affairs has charted a marked increased in the last decade or so and this phenomenon is complimented by an increase in the attention given to teaching and learning of English. Therefore as an institution that prepared students for the work force, Polytechnics have to emphasize on English language.

At the present time, for commerce field students, proficiency in English is not an entry requirement. As stated by the Malaysian Technical Education Department in the Ministry Of Education Malaysia, (1995) many students doing the certificate and diploma courses lack an adequate foundation in the language. This situation will certainly affect the proficiency level of Polytechnics students. Language proficiency actually needs continuous effort. To achieve success, students need to go the extra mile and not solely depend on their teacher's teaching. The world of commerce especially in business fields needs players who can communicate fluently and confidently. Being able to communicate fluently will be a crucial quality for a candidate in the job market. The emerging of global economy to Malaysia and the whole wide world has witness the importance of English language as the main medium of communication. Therefore to ensure that Malaysia will not left behind, the existing and potential workforce will have to master English language. Giving

such situation, a practical approach needs to be taken. As a start, we need to look at the very basic components in learning language, that is grammar.

The correct usage of English language is reflected on how a person speaks and writes. It shows the capability of one's mind and knowledge in using the language to convey messages. Hence it also represents linguistic competence. In the words of Mary Norton allude in Victoria Fromkin and Robert Rodman, (1998):

" We don't talk fancy grammar and eat anchovy toast. But to live under the kitchen doesn't say we aren't educated."

Grammar may be defined as the rules of a language. It governs the way in which words are put together to convey meaning in different contexts. In other words grammar determine language proficiency. As quoted from Carrol, (1996) allude in Krashen, (1987):

"Once the student has a proper degree of cognitive control over the structures of a language, facility will develop automatically with the use of the language in meaningful situations"

Based on the quotation above, it can be said that knowledge of grammar enables language users to put words together in the correct order to communicate ideas and intentions efficiently.

Learning grammatical distinctions requires a great deal of time even for the most skilled learners. Carol Chomsky (1969) cited in Victoria Fromkin and Robert Rodman, (1998) stressed that native English speakers are still in the process of acquiring certain grammatical structures in English well into adolescence. The learning process of grammar that the student obtains from the school is not enough. In acquiring grammar knowledge it is important that the student practice reinforcement activities. Reinforcement and such activities can help student to have better understanding and avoid grammatical mistakes. Psychologists like Pavlov, Watson and Thorndike alluded in the same book believe that it is possible to predict and explain the way people learn by studying the behavior of animals. Through their

experiments, they have proved that repetition is seen as important to bring about habit formation and learning. Repetition of learning can be done through self-access learning. Through self-access learning, grammatical learning can be conducted on the learner's own space. Lewis (1990) in Learning About Language Assessment stated that:

> "Informal self-assessment is a natural part of language learning. Formalizing self-assessment should help focus the learner's attention on their strength, weaknesses and further needs. If used continuously through out a course, self-assessment has been shown to be of great value for both teacher and learner. Arguments in favor of self- assessment have concentrated not only on the value to the learner of the feedback provided, but also on the benefits of involvement in the process itself. Learners gain a better understanding of the criteria used in assessment, which promotes greater involvement in development of those criteria...."

Based on the quotations above, it is apparent that self- access learning is an adequate method for language learning. Through this method learners can evaluate themselves and know how much they have achieved. From the information above, the study will look on learning English grammar through self-access learning method to aid learners in improving their English grammar.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

At Polytechnic Seberang Perai, Pulau Pinang, recent English examination results for Jun 2001 session shows only few of the commerce department students obtain distinction. The details of the result are shown below.
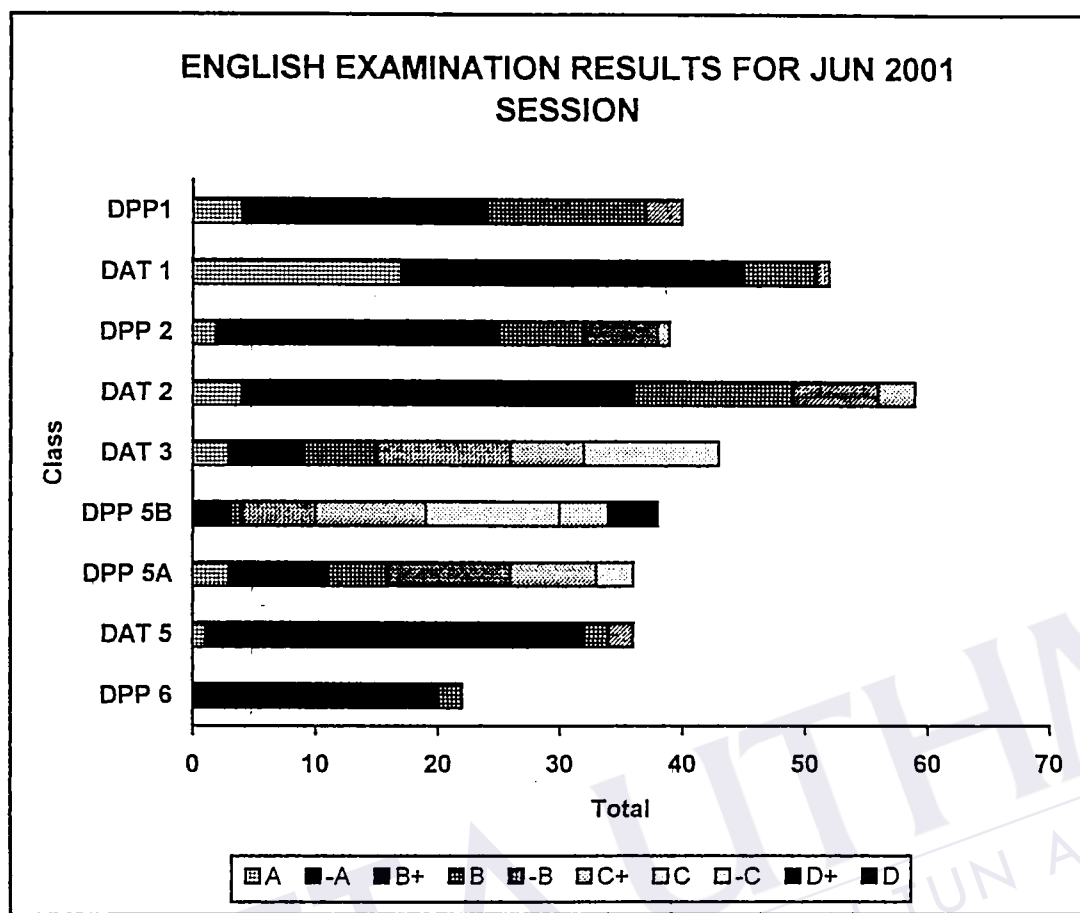
Figure 1.1 : English Examination Results For Jun 2001 Session
Source: Examinations unit Polytechnic Seberang Perai.

As seen in the statistic, most of the students manage to obtain grade B+ and B. Where else the rest could only get grade B- and below. Looking at a positive perspective, this situation actually shows that the students have the potential to be proficient and excellence in English language learning. To improve in English one needs tools. One of the tools that can be use is, English grammar module in self-access learning mode. Therefore this study will examine whether the producing English grammar module in self-access learning mode can improve their perceptions and their performance in English language.

1.4   Research Question

The research question was emerged form the statement of the problem. Below are the research questions:

1.4.1   How do students of diploma in business studies perceive their English proficiency after using the module?

1.4.2   How do students of diploma in business studies perceive their confidence in English language after using the module?

1.4.3   How do students of diploma in business studies perceive their motivation towards learning English language after using the module?

1.5   Hypothesis

Based on the research questions, one hypothesis is materialized. Below is the concern hypothesis.

H_0 = There is no significant different in students of diploma in business studies performance after using the module.

H_1 = There is a significant different in students of diploma in business studies performance after using the module.

1.6 Research Objective

The research objective is divided into two parts. The first part is on the overview objective of the research and the second part is on the specific aims of the research.

1.6.1 General objective

The general objective of this study is to produce an English grammar module in self-access learning mode. The purpose of this module is to help the students of diploma in business studies at Polytechnic Seberang Perai to enhance their performance in English usage.

PART 7
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