

Innovative Approaches in ESL to Enhance Motivation and Attitude Through Technology Integration

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Abstract

The study was conducted to identify major problems students of a tertiary institution in the Southern part of Malaysia face in learning the English Language. A survey via Padlet was conducted to find out students' opinions on the current classroom teaching and learning instructions. Most respondents stated that they find the conventional method of classroom instruction uninteresting and dull. The students also mentioned that they wished to have more technological tools incorporated into the classroom. Therefore, a lesson that incorporated the use of Quizizz and Kahoot was conducted on the topic of Job Interview. Students responded positively to the lesson. This suggests that educators should consider the incorporation of technological tools in the classroom, such as Quizizz and Kahoot, to boost students' motivation and positive attitudes towards English language learning.

1. Introduction

In this era of globalisation, information technology and knowledge explosion have led to the increase in teaching and learning of English as an international language. Teaching English as a second language is always a challenging task. When it comes to the places where English serves a very limited purpose, it becomes more crucial to teach and learn. Teaching and learning English in different countries has faced some problems. Malaysian students learn English for at least 11 years during their schooling years; however, they do not achieve a desirable level in various language skills, and some are not able to compose and utter proper and complete English sentences. Teachers have spent a lot of their time and money teaching and increasing students' proficiency in the English language; however, the desired outcome is still unattainable. Perhaps it is time for teachers to re-evaluate the methods used in their classroom teaching and learning process. Teachers should adapt well to the current generation's trends and lifestyle where they are more technologically inclined. As motivation and students' attitudes towards learning are very important to make sure that the lesson is effective, teachers should always check whether their practices are interesting and can motivate the students to learn and have a positive attitude towards learning.

A major concern to second language researchers has been the role played by attitudinal and motivational factors in second language learning. These factors are deep within the students' minds. Motivation has been widely accepted by both teachers and researchers as one of the key factors that influence the rate and success of second language learning. The original impetus in second language motivation research comes from social psychology since learning the language of another community cannot be separated from the students' social dispositions towards the speech community in question.

This factor is the most important obstacle in learning English. Most students are not interested in learning the language and just think about passing the subject; thus, because they are not interested, they do not listen to their teacher and do not learn anything. Even if they learn something, they will forget it quickly because they do not have the interest to learn. English teachers should encourage the students to learn the language by using various methods and techniques. This encouragement should not just be verbalised, but some awards should be

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considered to increase the motivation and interest of students. Therefore, this study intends to find out the problems faced by a group of diploma students in a tertiary institution located in the southern part of Malaysia regarding the teaching and learning of the English language and consequently devise a lesson that answers students' aspirations and desires.

Teaching English as a second language is challenging, particularly in contexts like Malaysia, where English serves a limited purpose. Despite over a decade of English lessons, many Malaysian students struggle to achieve the desired proficiency. Teachers invest considerable time and resources, yet the expected outcomes remain elusive. Given the global reliance on technology in education, it is crucial to understand its impact on Malaysian language classrooms. With the current generation being more technologically inclined, educators must adapt their methods to align with students' interests and lifestyles. By integrating technological tools into the classroom, teachers can enhance student motivation and foster a positive learning environment, ultimately improving language acquisition outcomes.

2. Literature Review

Motivation is widely recognised as a cornerstone of successful language learning, influencing students' engagement, persistence, and ultimate proficiency outcomes (Dörnyei, 2005). In SLA research, motivation is often categorised into intrinsic and extrinsic forms, with intrinsic motivation stemming from personal interest and the enjoyment derived from learning, while extrinsic motivation involves external factors such as grades or rewards (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Gardner's socio-educational model emphasises the role of integrative motivation, where students are motivated by their desire to integrate into the target language community and culture (Gardner, 1985). This model underscores the importance of fostering a supportive and positive learning environment that nurtures students' intrinsic motivation, thereby enhancing their language learning outcomes.

The integration of technological tools into language classrooms has transformed teaching practices and provided new avenues for enhancing motivation in SLA. Recent studies highlight the efficacy of platforms such as Padlet, Quizizz, and Kahoot in facilitating interactive and enjoyable learning experiences (Hwang, Lai, & Wang, 2015). These tools support real-time feedback and foster a competitive yet collaborative learning environment, significantly improving students' language proficiency and confidence. Such technological interventions align with contemporary students' preferences for interactive and digitally mediated learning experiences, thereby enhancing motivation and engagement (Stockwell, 2013).

Moreover, the role of attitudinal factors in second language learning is crucial. Motivation, particularly integrative motivation driven by students' desire to integrate into the target language community, plays a pivotal role in sustaining learning efforts and achieving proficiency (Ganaprakasam & Karunaharan, 2020). Fu et al. (2022) underscore that motivation's impact on learning outcomes extends beyond individual aspirations, influenced also by contextual factors and the social environment. Students' attitudes towards the target language and its speakers also influence their learning journey, highlighting the need for educators to create supportive environments that foster positive attitudes and intrinsic motivation (Daskalovska et al., 2012).

In summary, integrating technological tools into language learning environments not only enhances engagement and motivation but also supports diverse learning styles and preferences. By leveraging these tools effectively, educators can create dynamic and inclusive learning environments that promote active participation and meaningful language acquisition experiences. However, while numerous studies have explored the use of technology in language learning, few have specifically examined its effects on student motivation and attitudes in Malaysia. Hence, this study aims to fill the gap in order to enrich the literature of this area of study in the Malaysian educational context.

3. Methodology

The participants in this study were diploma students from a tertiary institution in southern Malaysia, selected to explore their experiences and challenges in learning English within a classroom setting. Data were collected through written interviews before and after the revised lesson plan. The interview was conducted using Padlet, an interactive online tool that allows real-time responses. This method engaged students in a familiar digital environment, encouraging honest and detailed feedback. Based on the findings in the first interview, a revised lesson plan was developed incorporating group work and collaborative learning alongside technological tools and e-learning platforms such as Kahoot and Quizizz to facilitate a blended learning environment. These platforms were chosen due to their interactive nature and ease of use, which are expected to increase student engagement and motivation in learning. For context, Quizizz and Kahoot are online assessment tools that allow educators to create and administer quizzes to students in an engaging format.

Students' motivation, interest, and attitudes were observed and recorded to evaluate the new lesson plan's effectiveness. The revised lesson aimed to increase engagement by leveraging students' familiarity with

technological tools, hypothesising that this would reduce anxiety, boost confidence, and create a more enjoyable learning atmosphere. Continuous monitoring and analysis of Padlet responses allowed for real-time discussion between students and the teacher, creating a dynamic and responsive learning environment. These methodological steps aimed to align teaching methods with students' aspirations and preferences, ultimately creating a more effective and enjoyable English language learning experience for diploma students.

4. Discussion

The written interview session using a Padlet wall revealed that students' motivation and attitude towards traditional classroom teaching methods were low and negative. Many students found the lessons uninteresting and expressed a lack of enthusiasm for the conventional 3-hour lecture format. They suggested incorporating technological tools or applications to make the learning experience more engaging.

In response to the feedback, a revised lesson plan was implemented, incorporating group work, collaborative learning, and the use of technological tools and e-learning platforms such as Kahoot and Quizizz. Feedback gathered after the revised lesson plan was executed showed that all students enjoyed the lesson. They reported feeling excited to test their knowledge and compete with classmates. The interactive and engaging nature of the activities motivated them and made them look forward to future lessons. These changes significantly increased students' motivation and interest in learning English. Their confidence and self-esteem improved, and the integration of technology helped reduce anxiety by providing a familiar and comfortable learning environment. The use of these tools made learning enjoyable, allowing students to focus on ideas, issues, and opinions rather than just language acquisition. This approach enhanced their overall learning experience.

The use of these applications also fostered a healthy competitive environment, allowing students to engage in revision in an enjoyable manner. Even if they answered questions incorrectly, they learned the correct answers, which helped them avoid mistakes in the future. The immediate feedback provided by these tools was also beneficial. Teachers also found the applications useful, with a variety of topics available to incorporate into different lessons. However, a notable drawback is the requirement for a stable internet connection, which is essential for the smooth execution of these activities.

One limitation of this study is the small sample size, which may not represent the broader population. The findings, while insightful, may not be generalisable to all students in similar educational contexts. Additionally, the study's focus on a specific group of diploma students in a southern Malaysian institution may limit the applicability of the results to other regions or educational levels. The study primarily focused on the immediate impact of these technological tools on students' motivation and engagement, leaving the long-term effects unexplored. While the initial response was positive, it remains unclear whether the increased motivation and improved learning outcomes are sustainable over time. Future research could benefit from a larger and more diverse sample size, as well as a longitudinal approach to assess the lasting impact of technology-enhanced language learning.

5. Conclusion

Therefore, educators are encouraged to adopt and integrate technological applications like Quizizz and Kahoot in their teaching strategies. These tools not only make the learning process more interactive and enjoyable but also foster a positive attitude towards language acquisition. The positive feedback from students and teachers underscores the importance of adapting teaching methods to align with students' preferences and the current digital landscape. The integration of technology has facilitated a dynamic and interactive classroom setting, making learning more accessible and enjoyable. However, the reliance on stable internet connectivity presents a challenge that needs to be addressed to ensure consistent implementation. Overall, this study demonstrates that innovative and technologically integrated teaching approaches can substantially enhance the learning outcomes and experiences of students in a tertiary institution. Future research should explore the long-term impacts of these methods and further refine strategies to overcome connectivity issues, ensuring broader applicability and sustainability.

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Conflict of Interest

We declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of the paper.

Author Contribution

The authors confirm their contribution to the paper as follows: **Study Conception and Design:** Nor Fadhilah Ahmad Powzi and Lina Zainal; **Data Collection:** Lina Zainal; **Analysis and Interpretation of Results:** Nor Fadhilah Ahmad Powzi; **Draft Manuscript Preparation:** Nor Fadhilah Ahmad Powzi, Lina Zainal. All authors reviewed the results and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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