Chapter 57

‘Litsygram’ in Enhancing Secondary School Students’ Reading Comprehension of English Language Literature Component

Nurhani Omar¹, Sugitha Kunjanman ², Erni Zakiah Abdul Aziz³, Manimegalai Govindasamy⁴ & Assoc. Prof. Dr. Melor Md. Yunus⁵

¹English Language Teaching Centre, Malaysia
²SMK Taman Bukit Maluri, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
³SMK Bandar Baru Sentul, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
⁴SMK Seksyen 27, Shah Alam, Malaysia
⁵Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, Malaysia

nurhani.omar@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

‘Litsygram’, or ‘Literature Made Easy with Instagram’, is a project that aims to propagate the use of digital learning tools among students in contextualized pedagogy. Although a stipulated number of hours have been dedicated to the teaching and learning of the English Language in school, teachers often face challenges to deliver lessons as required by the syllabus within the school year in traditional classrooms. Inclusive in the form four syllabus is the mandatory Literature Component. As such, Instagram is selected as an integrated blended learning tool in an attempt to address time constrain and flexibility issues. The project, too, is in line with the characteristics of 21st century learning as it promotes collaborative learning, integrates technology and develops students’ creative and critical thinking skills. Thus, this study aims to explore the effect of Instagram to enhance form four students’ reading comprehension of a short story which is a part of the English Literature Component. Additionally it is to investigate the students’ perception towards Instagram as an effective learning platform. A case study method was adopted to carry out this research. 80 form four students from three secondary schools were selected to participate in this study through a purposive sampling. Data were collected from the students’ accumulative scores that were recorded throughout the three-week project followed by a questionnaire via Google Form comprising 5 closed-ended items and 2 open-ended items as well as the researchers’ field notes. The findings reflected significant improvement in the students’ overall scores which indicated that ‘Litsygram’ is an effective tool in enhancing their reading comprehension. Furthermore, the findings from the questionnaire had revealed that
most of the students liked using Instagram in learning short stories by having fruitful discussions and a shared sense of purpose through the interactive features of Instagram. The implication derived from this study is that teachers need to be made aware of integrating social media as learning tools in the teaching of English as a Second Language (ESL), particularly, in the teaching of Literature Component to upper secondary school students.

**Key Words:** Instagram, perception, English as Second Language (ESL), Literature Component, secondary school students

1. **INTRODUCTION**

The use of digital media substantiates the emphasis on the implementation of ICT in the teaching and learning advocated in the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025. In this study, the digital learning tool chosen is Instagram that was contextualized as ‘Litsygram’, or ‘Literature Made Easy with Instagram’. In learning the literature component of short stories, a teacher-centred approach often took precedence where the learners were recipients of information provided by the teacher (Shermila, 2015). Consequently, students were dependent on interpretations of the teacher instead of discovering the elements of the texts independently. Furthermore, the teacher often spent a lot of time explaining the background of the text and/or the author, which would have been spent by the students to analyse the text. Hence, the researchers have expounded on the need to explore the effect of Instagram on enhancing form four students’ reading comprehension of a short story which is a part of the English Literature Component. Additionally it is to investigate the students’ perception towards Instagram as an effective learning platform

2. **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The underpinning theory of this study drew on the constructivist learning theories, primarily Piaget’s Cognitive Constructivism Theory which asserts that learning occurs by active construction of meaning rather than passively (Amineh and Asl, 2015). Moreover, Eggen and Kauchak (2010) posited that constructivism in a social context highlights the focus on facilitating learners’ constructions of knowledge using social interaction. Therefore, ‘Litsygram’ attempted to encourage learners to actively construct meaning and interact socially within a domain that was contextualised where they would be able to facilitate independent learning individually and collectively.

‘Litsygram’, moreover, replicated the notion of classroom flipping. Faisal and Rashidah (2015) asserted that practitioners could raise teaching quality through the flipped model by leveraging technology-enhanced instruction to maximise teaching and learning processes. ‘Litsygram’ enabled both teachers and learners to share and discuss materials beyond the classroom. Nonetheless, Melor (2018) cautioned that despite the extensive availability of authentic materials, selecting the right online materials is crucial
for efficient and effective learning. This provided learners with the opportunity to evaluate materials and comments shared paving the way to develop their critical thinking skills.

In addition, Ayuni et. al (2017), in a study which explored the use of Instagram in language learning among adult learners, demonstrated that they exhibited positive attitudes and perception. Furthermore, the result of a research by Al-Ali (2014) showed that Instagram facilitated active learning as students were accountable for generating and expressing ideas, thus, creating a personalised learning experience for them.

Significantly, ‘Litsygram’ offered a way for students to take control of their learning by working at their own pace. They could peruse through the materials and discussions shared in their Instagram groups beyond the traditional classroom. Similarly, they would inevitably revise and reclaim crucial information while working through formative assessments (Goodwin & Miller, 2013).

4. METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted over a three-week period involving of 80 Form Four students from 3 secondary schools in the Klang Valley. The integrated blended learning tool, Instagram was used to test the students’ understanding of a short story by answering questions posted by their classmates. Students were also required to complete a questionnaire in order to gauge their perceptions towards the use of Litsygram in enhancing their understanding in learning literary items.

5. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The innovation findings showed a lot of positive impacts on the learning process and also preferred learning style. Students found Litsygram interesting and were driven to do better in each subsequent question. Student autonomy was established undoubtedly with teachers playing the role of facilitators. This was done not during school hours thus the flexibility of the learning time. Flexible after-school hours allowed the students to be able to participate actively or even collaborate with group members to find answers or to learn new things related to the topic. Most of the learning was done online and did not take much time. The Instagram platform enabled Litsygram to be a place for collaborative learning among the students as they were allowed to discuss prior to posting their answers. The findings of this innovation pointed out the positive aspect of having a mobile discussion room using Social Networking Sites, in this case Instagram mainly, to assist language learning.

6. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

According to Melor et. al. (2012), the use of social media provided the best platform for teachers to prepare their lessons effectively. A more efficient and systematic method of testing could be attained while providing a more suitable platform for teaching and learning.
Litsygram is hoped to introduce a more meaningful and exciting learning session. It can also be a platform that can be used for revision of Literature notes and exercises.

To conclude, Litsygram not only enhanced students' interest but also kept them motivated in learning literature in the 21st century style. This might help to produce students of quality who could be on par with the rest of world class learners. Teachers need to be aware that by integrating social media as an important part of learning tools might enhance students’ understanding and motivation in mastering the Literature components.

REFERENCES


