CHAPTER 1

#SHAREWITHME: IG "QUESTIONS" POST TO ENHANCE STUDENTS' ENGLISH SENTENCE FORMATION

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ABSTRACT

The Malaysian government highly envisions students to master the English language, which is greatly emphasised in the Malaysia Education Blueprint (2013-2025). Mastering the English language is imperative for students to have solid prior foundations in terms of linguistic properties such as grammar, vocabulary and sentence formation. However, many secondary school students still struggle to form correct sentence structures. To make the matter worse, having low participation of secondary school students in English online learnng has become a major concern among teachers during this pandemic. Students with low English proficiency especially, are demotivated to participate as they face the problem of creating simple sentences for writing tasks given by teachers. In order to tackle the problem, qualitative research was conducted by using Instagram "Question" post feature as part of the module to enhance students' English writing skill in sentence formation as an enrichment activity. 30 Form 2 students with low English proficiency from a national secondary school in Bintulu, Sarawak were selected to be the participants in this study. The instruments used in this study were open-ended questions in pre and post-tests as well as questionnaires. Data were then coded and analysed using thematic analysis. Social media platforms especially Instagram could be utilised as one of the effective tools to enhance students' sentences formation. It is concluded that this small module will be helpful to motivate low English proficient students to enhance their English writing skills especially in sentence formation.

Key Words: #ShareWithMe, Instagram, sentence formation, writing, social media-enhanced language learning.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Education aspires to enhance and strengthen the quality of English education among Malaysian students, as acknowledged in the Malaysian Education Blueprint (2013-2025) and therefore, it is undeniably important for students to acquire all four English Language skills. Writing is one of the most significant language skills that students must master in order to achieve academic success. However, it is found that many Malaysian students encounter writing difficulties, especially in terms of grammar and punctuation (Ghabool et al, 2012). The problem has been aggravated when online learning is being widely implemented in our education system as an alternative to traditional face-to-face learning due to the outbreak of Covid-19. Among all the four language skills, ESL teachers and students find it most difficult to teach and learn writing through a virtual classroom (Yunus et al., 2012). This is further supported by Han et al. (2018) where it is found that ESL students lack motivation in learning the four important English Language skills, especially writing through online lessons. Learning writing through online classes is found to be much more challenging for students with low proficiency in English as they are too weak to monitor their learning independently, which causes them to be less motivated in participating in online classes. Apart from that, students' negative attitude towards online learning is also challenging to ensure the success of online learning. Instead of having a formal online class, many students take it for granted and fill the time with their own activities and one of most prevalent activities is getting hooked on social media such as Instagram. Instagram has been favoured by youngsters nowadays as they enjoy sharing their life experience as well as reading about others' life experience through the feature, Instagram Story. According to Ismail (2014), social media has been widely used by Malaysian teenagers to serve the purpose of socialising, communicating, enhancing knowledge and entertainment. Since Malaysian students spend a lot of time on Instagram, it should be utilised to enhance interactive online learning among students. Al-Jarrah (2019) found out that social media plays a dominant role in helping students to develop their English Language writing skills. Therefore, the utilization of #ShareWithMe on Instagram Story for English learning is believed to be able to promote fun and interactive learning among students, as well as to motivate them to express their opinions and share their sentences based on the topics given. Students are encouraged to respond to the "Question" post by using short and simple sentences, which promotes a supportive online learning environment among students. This enrichment activity also provides opportunities for students to interact with their friends as well as with their teacher by voicing out their thoughts and exchanging ideas through their favourite and most used social media. In short, this paper discusses the effectiveness of using #ShareWithMe as post-class activities to enhance students' English sentence formation.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Over the past decade the research in English language learning has highlighted the use of technology incorporated in teaching and learning activities. With the concurrent pandemic of COVID-19, the use of technology has become a necessity for both teachers

and students. Students with low English proficiency especially, tend to have low confidence in participating in the online lesson. Therefore, this study refers to Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory as a significant framework to determine the students' learning process through social interaction with teachers. At the same time, this study integrates the usage of Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) by using Instagram as a medium to provide an interactive platform in motivating students' participation to enhance students' writing skills, specifically on sentence formation. Kukulska-Hulme (2020) suggested that MALL application may boost motivation particularly among students in this context by the sharing of knowledge on what has been written through social media. In terms of improvement in English writing skills, Zarei and Rudravarapu (2020) claimed that Instagram is one of learning platforms that provides the chance for students to be engaged in meaningful interactions and improve their English language skills including grammar rules, and vocabularies.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research design

This innovation, #ShareWithMe adopts the method of quasi-experimental research design. #ShareWithMe is designed, and Instagram is the main tool used to carry out this research.

3.2. Research respondents

The research respondents involved were 30 Form 2 students with low English proficiency. They were selected through the method of purposive sampling. These respondents comprised 16 male students and 14 female students. All of them are currently students of a national secondary school in Bintulu and their average scores were ranging from 10 marks to 40 marks in English School Based Assessment.

3.3. Research instrument

Three research instruments were used in carrying out this research namely pre-test and post-test, observation and a survey questionnaire. Both pre-test and post-test consisted of 20 questions with 15 sentence formation questions and 5 multiple choice questions. Respondents had to write sentences based on the words or pictures given and choose the correct sentences. All the intervention of #ShareWithMe were designed using genuine pictures of the researchers aligned with the themes emphasised in the Common European Framework of Reference for Language (CEFR). Throughout the process of uploading #ShareWithMe, researchers observed respondents' participation, followed by replying to all their responses the next day. Comments and words of encouragement were given progressively and constructively. In order to validate the effectiveness of #ShareWithMe, a survey questionnaire consisted of five statements and one open-ended question was designed to study its outcome. Respondents were to choose either "Agree"

or "Disagree" according to all the five statements. Also, they were required to share their opinion towards using the intervention of #ShareWithMe.

3.4. Research procedure

This research was carried out throughout a duration of two-week. Before introducing the intervention of #ShareWithMe to all the respondents, a pre-test was conducted. Responses were marked according to a rubric designed by researchers and scores were then graded based on the Criterion Referenced Assessment (CRA). After the pre-test, all respondents were taught and exposed to some basic rules of sentence formation namely subject verb agreement (SVA) and sentence structures (SV, SVO, SVC, SVOC). Researchers uploaded #ShareWithMe using the prominent story's feature on Instagram. Respondents were asked to check out #ShareWithMe and respond to it accordingly. Throughout the process of uploading #ShareWithMe, researchers also utilised Instagram post's feature to share input as extra linguistic knowledge in terms of sentence formation and vocabulary. All replies were then screenshotted. Researchers replied to all the responses daily. After two weeks, a post-test was given to examine respondents' skills in sentence formation followed by a survey questionnaire.

3.5. Data Collection and Analysis

All scores collected from both of the pre and post-test were graded according to the Criterion Referenced Assessment (CRA). The scores were recorded, and a comparison was made too to identify improvements that the respondents had made.

Table 1: The pre-test and post-test's results

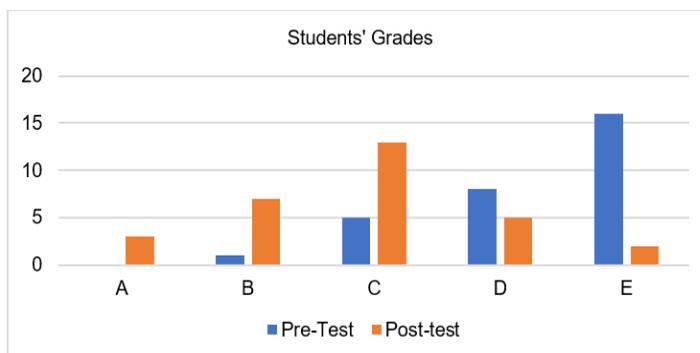| Marks	Grades	Number of students	
		Pre-test	Post-test
80 – 100	A	0	3
65 – 79	B	1	7
50 – 64	C	5	13
40 – 49	D	8	5
0 – 39	E	16	2

Figure 2: Respondents' grades in both pre and post-test.

Based on Table 1 and Figure 2, there was a significant sign of improvements shown in the post-test results. At the early stage, none of the respondents scored A and a total number of 16 respondents scored E for the pre-test. However, 3 respondents managed to score A and the number of respondents who scored E had dropped drastically to 2. Despite the two respondents who were still not able to pass the passing benchmark in the post-test, their respective scores of pre-tests (8% and 21%) and post-test (31% and 37%) still showed an upward trend. The result indicates that the intervention of #ShareWithMe not only enhances but helps respondents to write better writing. Table 2 portrays the data collected based on the survey questionnaire.

Table 2: Data Collected based on the Questionnaire (*n*=30)

	STATEMENTS	AGREE *n (%)*	DISAGREE *n (%)*
1	I can learn how to write better sentences from #ShareWithMe.	30 (100)	0 (0)
2	I can remember new words, phrases and idioms (vocabularies) from #ShareWithMe.	29 (96.7)	1 (3.3)
3	I hope #ShareWithMe can be included as part of the English activities of my school work.	28 (93.3)	2 (6.7)
4	I feel motivated to construct sentences and join English language activities through #ShareWithMe.	28 (93.3)	2 (6.7)
5	I am excited and interested to have more activities on #ShareWithMe related to my English subject.	30 (100)	0 (0)

As depicted in Table 2, 100% of the respondents (*n*=30) agreed that they could learn how to write better sentences from #ShareWithMe **(Statement 1)**. It is prevalent that all of them (100%) found that #ShareWithMe is interesting and looked forward to having more #ShareWithMe pertaining to their English language subject **(Statement 5)**. Data collected from these two statements solidate the effectiveness of #ShareWithMe as it not only strengthened respondents' sentence writing skills but also arouse their interest to participate in the after-class activities. Besides, 96.7% of the respondents (*n*=29) claimed that they could remember new words, phrases and idioms shared from #ShareWithMe **(Statement 2)**. This is due to reviews and feedbacks given by the researchers after one day of posting #ShareWithMe. Respondents would be able to learn from reading others' replies as well as feedbacks from the researchers. This indirectly fostered the sense of peer-assisted learning. From the aspect of curriculum, 93.3% (*n=28)* of the respondents solidly agreed that #ShareWithMe could be incorporated as part of the English language's post-class activities **(Statement 3)**. This showed respondents expectation towards having a different form of enrichment activity as compared to those regular in-class assignments. With supplement to that, a total of 93.3% (*n*=28) of the respondents felt motivated to write sentences and join English activities through #ShareWithMe **(Statement 4)**.

The overall results derived from the questionnaire and open-ended question signify a positive impact and an encouraging behaviour among the respondents towards the usage of #ShareWithMe. Respondents were able to form better sentences based on the benefits that #ShareWithMe had offered to them. This research adopted the concept of triangulation *(pre and post-test, observation* and *questionnaire)* to reaffirm and validate the consistency of the results.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Enhance students' sentence formation skills

From the results of the pre-test and post-test, it is clearly shown that #ShareWithMe is effective in enhancing students' English sentence formation skills. The students who participated in this research have portrayed remarkable improvement in their results after incorporation of #ShareWithMe as an enrichment activity. During the pre-test, many students did not really understand the basic rules of sentence formation and could not form simple sentences properly. After several input, constructive comments and feedbacks from the teacher through #ShareWithMe, students were getting more familiar with the basic rules of subject-verb agreement and hence, they showed improvement in the post-test by writing longer and better sentences with lesser language errors. Despite a few students who did not pass the passing benchmark in the post-test, they still displayed progress in their sentence writing based on their respective scores. Al-Jarrah et al. (2019) said that the use of social media in teaching and learning enriches students' vocabulary and develops their writing performance. Thus, the integration of #ShareWithMe as a post-class learning tool is believed to be successful in enhancing students' sentence formation skills.

4.2. Motivate students to learn writing sentences

From the observation, it is found that #ShareWithMe has effectively motivated students to learn writing sentences. Students were very excited to share their opinions based on the topics selected for #ShareWithMe because the topics were interesting and closely related to students' lives. Despite some language mistakes made in their sentence writing, it was exciting to see active responses from the students in responding to #ShareWithMe. Surprisingly, certain students who were found to be more introverted in physical English classes became very active in expressing their opinions by responding to #ShareWithMe. This is in tandem with the findings of a study done by Asil (2020) who discovered that online learning is very useful in encouraging participation of all kinds of students in the lessons as shy and introverted students are more comfortable to participate in online activities. Apart from that, it is also believed that many online resources provide a positive learning platform to encourage interaction among students and develop learning autonomy among students (Krishnan et al. 2020). #ShareWithMe serves as an interactive learning tool which allows students and teachers to interact with one another by exchanging ideas and giving feedback to one another's response, and indirectly motivates students to learn sentence formation. Therefore, it is clearly shown that #ShareWithMe is useful in developing interest among students towards learning English and motivating them to learn sentence formation in a fun and interactive way. This is in tandem with the findings of a study done by Zarei and Rudravarapu (2020) who claimed that Instagram encourages meaningful interaction among students and improves their English. Hence, it is safe to say that #ShareWithMe has achieved its potential in motivating students to learn sentence formation**.**

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

It is hoped that #ShareWithMe will help teachers and students to have meaningful learning experiences in utilizing Instagram as a tool to learn English in an engaging way. Based on the results of this study, it is proved that students gave positive feedback in learning English writing to improve their writing skills particularly in sentence formation. It is also believed that #ShareWithMe can stimulate students' interest towards the language, as well as improve their motivation and confidence in learning the language. As for future research, the use of #ShareWithMe can be implied in English lessons for different writing skills, grammar or vocabulary as enrichment activities for students with different English proficiency levels.

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