



Using Multimedia Interactive Grammar to Enhance Possessive Pronouns among Year 4 Pupils

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Abstract

This study was designed to improve the students' grammar specifically in possessive pronouns using Multimedia Interactive Grammar (MIG) as a teaching and learning strategy. The participants of the study were Year 4 pupils from a primary school and the researcher was the teacher who conducted the action research in the classroom and the cycle of the intervention had been done once. The data collected were tests, supported with interview and teacher's reflective journal. Improvement was shown based on the data obtained as there was an increase of scores in the second test compared to first test. Moreover, it was found that MIG was able to enhance pupils' understanding, motivation and promote fun learning in the classroom. The results of the study indicated pupils' positive behaviors and responses towards the use of MIG in learning grammar.

Keywords: multimedia, interactive, grammar, pronouns, possessive pronouns

A. Introduction

English is regarded as one of the most important languages of the world. At present, it is used as an official language in 52 countries. According to British Council (2013), approximately 1.75 billion people worldwide are speaking English and it is forecasted that by the year 2020, two billion people will be using or learning to use English. Realizing the importance of the English language, our government has implemented a new curriculum, Primary School Standard Curriculum (KSSR) in which elements of grammar, phonics, and Language Arts are given more emphasis to help improve pupils' command of English.

Zhang (2009) stressed the importance of grammar teaching in the English language teaching field as grammar is the base of English that facilitates the syntax or the way words are constructed in the language. Grammar is a set of rules of a language and knowledge of these rules would enable learners to create an infinite number of meaningful sentences in a lifetime. This is supported by Subasini & Kokilavani (2013) who pointed out that grammar is the fundamental basis of our ability to express our thoughts because grammar encompasses the sound, meaning, and formation of phrases and sentences from words. Apart from that, being

grammatically competent will enable the speaker to express his thoughts or ideas clearly and concisely. Therefore, having a good knowledge of grammar is vital to avoid misunderstandings as language with errors will disrupt the smooth flow of communication and conversations. Savage, Bitterlin & Price (2010) also stated that mastering grammar empowers a person to develop competence in the aspects of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Therefore, it is vital for pupils to start improving and have a good knowledge of grammar from young to help them communicate effectively when using English language.

Problems of Using Possessive Pronouns in the Classroom

Based on my past teaching experiences as a teacher trainee when teaching Year 4 pupils in two different schools, I realized that the majority of the pupils were very weak in grammar. The pupils were often demotivated when learning grammar as they perceived it as very difficult and boring. In my third practicum session, I faced the same problem with my Year 4 pupils as well. The pupils showed very little interest in learning grammar and they did not pay attention in class. As a result, the pupils were not able to complete their grammar exercises and homework as they did not even understand what they had learnt. This had also led them in doing their grammar exercises just for the sake of doing it for the teacher which resulted in making plenty of errors and wrong answers.

Besides that, the pupils often made mistakes in using pronouns too and this has caused a distortion of meaning in the pupils' sentences. For instance, the pupils often used the possessive pronouns 'ours' and 'yours' wrongly and this had led to a lot of confusions in the classroom. Misunderstandings often occur during communication when using English language in class as pupils often used the wrong pronouns. It truly saddens me to see that my pupils could not even use the correct pronouns and they were unwilling to learn and rarely try to improve their grammar.

A possible explanation regarding pupils' poor understanding on grammar is due to the interference of the pupils' mother tongue. As Avanika, Niroj, Ambalika & Rajesh (2009) stated, the learner's first language interferes in the acquisition of the second language. Based on my observations, the Year 4 pupils were unable to use possessive pronouns correctly. Pupils were often confused when to use the possessive adjective 'my' and the possessive pronoun 'mine'. According to Abu Bakar, Abdul Hamid, Mat Awal & Jalaluddin (2007), the acquisition of English as a second language is hindered due to the structural differences between the Malay and English language. The different variation of possessive adjectives and possessive pronouns do not exist in the Malay language. For instance, the sentence 'This is my book' is '*Ini buku saya*' in Malay. Meanwhile, the sentence 'This book is mine' is '*Buku ini kepunyaan saya*' in Malay. In both of these sentences, possessive adjective 'my' and possessive pronoun 'mine' is the same in the Malay language which is '*saya*'. As a result, pupils faced difficulties in differentiating the usage of 'my' and 'mine' due to the unparalleled structures of the Malay and English language.

The issue regarding pupils' wrong usage of pronouns is similar with pupils from other states in Malaysia. According to a research by Abdul Rahim & Abdul Rahim (2014), a majority of the pupils from the first class in Year 4A1 struggled with the use of possessive pronouns. The pupils were unable to use the pronouns correctly and required extensive guidance from their teachers in answering questions on possessive pronouns.

Besides that, English teachers resorted to drilling method in the teaching of grammar and this caused the pupils to become demotivated to learn grammar. Drilling produces rote memorization, dull creativity and spending long periods of time on repetitive tasks is not a productive learning situation (Yu, 2013). It does not contribute to literacy achievement. This is supported by Witchukriangkrai (2011) who pointed out that the drilling method might not be effective as academically weak students would end up being dispirited as they might not be able to keep up with their friends. Therefore, this has stirred a huge desire in my heart to find ways and alternatives in my teaching approaches in order to overcome this issue at hand.

I decided to use MIG as my intervention strategy to enhance my pupils' knowledge on possessive pronouns. These pupils needed help to improve their grammar as well as to boost up their motivation in learning grammar in a fun way.

The following research questions were formulated in order to meet the research objectives.

1. How does the use of Multimedia Interactive Grammar (MIG) increase pupils' understanding of possessive pronouns?
2. How does Multimedia Interactive Grammar (MIG) motivate the pupils in learning?
3. How does the use of Multimedia Interactive Grammar (MIG) engage pupils in fun learning?

B. Literature Review

1. Vygotsky's ZPD and Scaffolding

This research aimed to determine whether the use of technology specifically focusing on MIG would result in enhancing Year 4 pupils' grammar on possessive pronouns. This research adopts Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory. According to Spencer (2011), Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory engages the transmission of information and cognitive skills from one generation to another involves teaching and learning in which a child acquires information through interaction with adults. There are two main key concepts in Vygotsky's theory which include the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and scaffolding. ZPD refers to an array of tasks that a child can carry out with the help of someone who is more skilled, frequently an adult who represents the culture in which the child develops. It centralizes upon the idea that children can achieve more with the assistance of others compared to what they can do alone. Thus, I had applied this theory into practice towards my pupils whereby through the use of MIG in my teaching, it enabled them to learn and improve their understanding on possessive pronouns.

Scaffolding is an interactive process in which adults adjust both the amount and the type of support they offer to the child, leading to the child's ability to function independently. It is an instructional technique in which the teacher firstly models the desired learning task and the responsibility is then gradually shifted to the students. In a classroom, students do not merely receive guidance from the teacher but from their more knowledgeable peers as well. In my research, I had incorporated co-operative learning exercises where lower proficiency pupils develop with the help from their more skilful peers within ZPD. I had formed groups of mixed-abilities in which pupils who were more knowledgeable provided assistance to the other group members in learning grammar. This type of social interaction is coherent with Vygotsky's (1978) theory that learning is not an individual process. It is a social process in which students learn through interactions with their teacher and peers in the classroom.

Scaffolding techniques have been used in many studies and have yielded positive results. One of the studies on scaffolding is the study by MohdSidek (2011) where the role of scaffolding within a child's ZPD via interaction with others who are more superior could assist in second language (L2) syntax development. He found that the child was able to produce correct grammatical syntax which was similar to the model or target input in the post-description in comparison to the pre-description. The findings in this study concluded that scaffolding in ZPD has shown to be an effective vehicle for the child to develop L2. Therefore, given its credibility and effectiveness of Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, I have decided to employ Vygotsky's theory in my research.

2. Using Multimedia in the Classroom

The positive impact of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the teaching and learning process is undeniable. Using technology in class has a positive effect on pupils' attitude towards learning and makes the learning process enjoyable. Creating a fun and exciting learning environment is vital as Krashen (1982) stated that when a learning situation has a low affective filter, it lessens learners' anxiety and make the learners more comfortable. As Rabah (2015) asserted, the use of ICT is a powerful tool for enhancing the learning process as studies revealed that higher engagement levels and higher motivation levels in students were observed when ICT was integrated in the teaching and learning process in the classroom. The use of technology can also be incorporated during English lessons to enhance pupils' learning. Bahous, Bacha & Nabhani (2011) pointed out that learners will definitely be encouraged and motivated to use the target language when new forms of technologies are incorporated in the language class.

Thus, I have decided to use Multimedia Interactive Grammar (MIG) as a technological tool for my intervention because the integration of technology in language learning in classrooms would be able to attract pupils and motivate them to learn grammar. Besides that, the use of MIG in learning grammar is a step towards meeting the criteria for this rapidly globalizing 21st century learning as it is ICT salient.

The research also adopts Mayers' (2005) cognitive theory of multimedia learning. According to the theory, learners learn more deeply and attempt to build meaningful connections between words and graphics than from words alone. This is because multimedia supports the way that the human brain learns (Sorden, 2012). People learn more from a combination of both words and pictures rather than from words alone. The words need not necessarily be in the written

form only. Words can be both spoken or written, while pictures can be any form of graphics. These graphics include illustrations, photos, animation, or video.

Parveen & Rajesh (2011) conducted a research to examine the effect of multimedia in teaching English. Pre-test and post-test were conducted to evaluate the actual outcome of using the multimedia tools in teaching English. It was found that the improvement in their students' scores after using the multimedia tools was 32%. The significant increase in the scores confirms the premises that interactive multimedia is very effective in teaching English. A study by Ranjit (2011) also revealed that the use of multimedia in learning grammar was indeed effective as mean scores of the experimental group (taught using multimedia) was higher than that of the control group (taught using conventional instructional strategy). Therefore, it can be concluded that by using MIG to teach possessive pronouns, pupils would be able to differentiate better the usage of the various pronouns and use the pronouns correctly.

C. Methodology

1. Research Design

In this research, I had selected the action research model proposed by Kemmis & McTaggart (1988). According to this model, there are four basic steps in an action research cycle which are plan, act, observe, and reflect. Figure 1 below illustrates the steps of intervention I had taken.

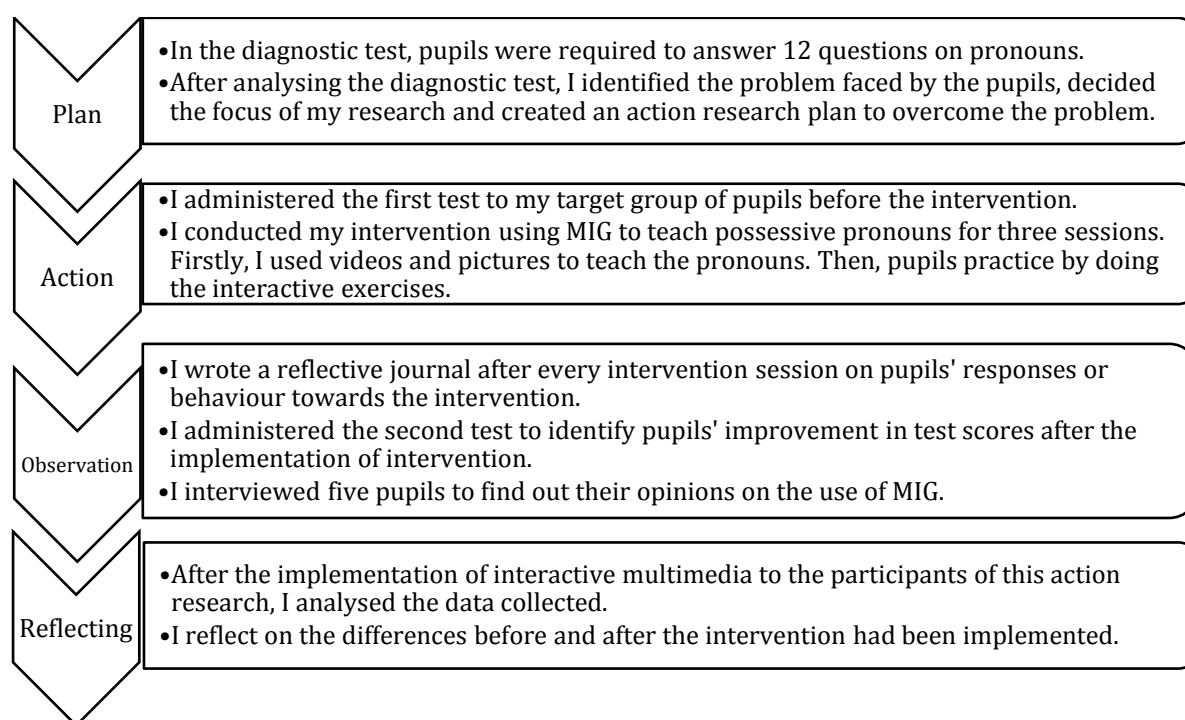


Figure 1: The Four Steps in Action Research Cycle

2. Participants

This research was carried out in a primary school called *School with Few Pupils (Sekolah Kurang Murid)*. In Malaysia, there is a number of this kind of schools in which the enrolment is not more than 150 pupils for the whole school. The selected Year 4 class was the only class for Year 4 in this school and it consisted of only ten pupils. So, the participants involved in this research were only ten pupils. They were six males and four females with mixed-ability. All the pupils were Malays and they came from a low social economic status background. Therefore, they had less exposure to the use of English language. The pupils' first language was the Malay language and based on my observations, they only used the Malay language to communicate with one another. The pupils also told me that they did not use English language to communicate with their family members at home. This might be one of the factors which explained the pupils' poor understanding of grammar as the pupils were of a low proficiency in the English language. The pupils often struggled to understand simple instructions given by the teacher using the English language.

3. Technique of Data Collection

In this action research, I had used MIG to enhance the ten participants' grammar focusing on possessive pronouns. It was carried out for three sessions with the participants. Firstly, I started

the implementation by administering the first test on possessive pronouns to find out the pupils' understanding on it. After analyzing the results of the first test, I started my intervention with the use of MIG to teach possessive pronouns which were *mine, yours* and *his*. The interactive multimedia in which I had used contained videos explaining and demonstrating the usage of possessive pronouns, pictures, and animations. During the practice stage of the lesson, pupils were given interactive exercises on possessive pronouns. At the end of the first intervention session, I wrote a reflective journal based on my observation of pupils' responses or behaviors in learning grammar using MIG.

The second stage of the implementation was teaching the pupils on the remaining three possessive pronouns which were *hers, ours* and *theirs* using interactive multimedia. Pupils were given interactive exercises on these three possessive pronouns. A second reflective journal was written to record pupils' responses or behaviors throughout the intervention session. Next, my intervention session consisted of a combination of all the six possessive pronouns which were taught during the first and second intervention sessions. This was to refresh the pupils' memory and to ensure they had fully understood the six different possessive pronouns. At the end of the intervention session, I wrote a reflective journal based on my observation of pupils' responses and behaviors towards learning grammar using interactive multimedia.

Then, I administered the second test to the pupils to enable me to compare their results for the two tests. This helped me to identify any improvement in the pupils' understanding on possessive pronouns after the implementation of intervention.

Lastly, five selected pupils were interviewed to receive feedback regarding their opinions in using MIG in learning grammar. The pupils were selected based on their active participation in the class. Interviews were conducted to engage five participants in one-on-one dialogue in the least formal style to encourage the participants to elaborate their thoughts in the least intimidating manner. Interview questions which served as a guideline were prepared using the English language. However, during the interview session, I had adjusted the language used to meet the participants' levels and to ensure they were able to understand the questions posed. The participants were given a choice to either speak in English or in Bahasa Malaysia. Each session with the participant lasted around four to five minutes. Overall, the entire interview session was conducted for approximately half an hour.

4. Instruments

In this research, I had utilized three data gathering methods to determine the accuracy and credibility of my findings by applying the concept of triangulation. Data triangulation method is the process of verifying evidence from different individuals, types of data or methods of data collection to ensure the study would be more accurate as information was drawn from multiple sources (Creswell, 2012). The three data collection methods that I had employed were: (1) tests, (2) teacher's reflective journal and, (3) interview.

5. Data Analysis and Interpretation

In this section, the data collected using the tests were analyzed quantitatively while teacher's reflective journal and interview were analyzed qualitatively. Their results were discussed below.

(a) Tests

Table 1: Results of Pre-intervention and Post-intervention Tests

Participants	First Test (%)	Second Test (%)	Differences (%)
Participant 1	33	67	34
Participant 2	47	93	46
Participant 3	40	87	47
Participant 4	47	80	47
Participant 5	47	93	46
Participant 6	47	87	40
Participant 7	73	100	27
Participant 8	93	100	7
Participant 9	87	100	13
Participant 10	93	100	7
Mean	60.7	90.7	

The overall results of the participants in the tests were compared in Table 1. There were six participants who scored lower than 50% for the first test. Among the six participants, four of

them scored 47%, one of them 40% while the lowest was 33%. None of these participants scored lower than 50% for the second test. Among these six participants, two of them scored 93%, another two participants scored 87%, while the remaining two participants scored 80% and 67% respectively. The data presented also showed comparisons of four participants who scored above 50% during the first test. All four participants scored 100% in the second test. The results from the participants' overall scores indicated a tremendous improvement among the participants in which the intervention strategy was able to help the participants understand better about possessive pronouns.

The comparison of mean scores revealed that the second test (90.7) was higher than the first test (60.7). The bar graph below shows the results of the mean scores for the two tests.

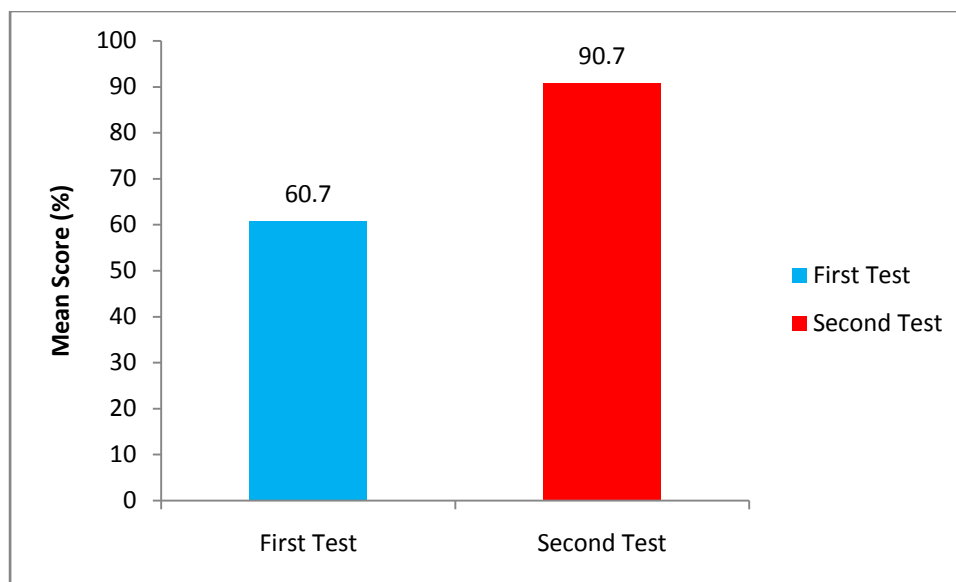


Figure 2: The Mean Scores of the First Test and Second Test

Figure 2 indicated an increase of 30% between the two tests. Based on the analysis, I concluded that all the participants had improved in using possessive pronouns. The statistical results showed a strong indication that the participants had experienced a positive transformation before and after the implementation of the intervention strategy of MIG.

(b) Teacher's Reflective Journal and Interview

To analyze reflective journals and interview, firstly I read through the participants' responses or behaviors towards the use of MIG in learning grammar after each intervention session. Next, I identify the themes that emerged and the themes I had found were enhanced understanding, motivation, and fun learning.

(i) Enhanced Understanding

The first theme that emerged was enhanced understanding. The participants said it was both faster and easier to understand grammar using interactive multimedia. These findings showed that the use of MIG in teaching grammar had helped in enhancing the understanding of the participants on grammar. One participant said "*...previously, I was always confused with his and hers. Now, I can differentiate them and remember 'his' is for male and 'hers' is for female*".

(ii) Motivation

Although the participants got the wrong answer, they did not seem discouraged. They laughed at the animation and wanted to try to answer the next question. They did not give up. The participants were very motivated in answering the interactive questions. They also busy communicating with each other, discussing about the answers for the interactive exercises. Participants who were initially passive also started to join in the discussion

The participants said that the interactive multimedia encouraged them to learn about grammar because it was not boring. This was evident as the participants said that "*Yes, the interactive multimedia motivates me to learn grammar because it is different from grammar books which are boring*", and "*Yes, because I like to watch the videos and moving pictures*".

(iii) Fun Learning

During the learning process, the participants were very happy and shouted “Me! Me! Teacher! Me!” hoping that I would call them upfront. They really like to use my laptop to click the answers. I was so pleased when I saw those who were passive earlier started to be active and raised their hands hoping I would call them to the front. Participants were very enthusiastic in learning possessive pronouns using MIG.

Four participants said that they felt excited in learning grammar using the interactive multimedia while another participant said he felt very happy. The first participant went on to say that he used to sleep during grammar classes but he no longer did ever since the MIG was used to teach grammar. Some of their comments include: “*I feel very excited. I have never learned grammar in such a fun way*”, and “*I feel very happy. This is the first time I like grammar*”. These findings showed that using interactive multimedia to teach grammar is enjoyable for the participants and encourages fun learning.

Based on the analysis of the reflective journal and interview above, the participants’ behavior and responses towards the use of interactive multimedia in learning grammar was very encouraging. Thus, it can be concluded that the implementation of the intervention had brought positive impacts towards the participants in terms of enhanced understanding, motivation, and fun learning in the classroom.

D. Findings and Discussion

The following findings are discussed based on the research questions:

- 1 How does the use of Multimedia Interactive Grammar (MIG) increase pupils’ understanding of possessive pronouns?
- 2 How does Multimedia Interactive Grammar (MIG) motivate the pupils in learning?
- 3 How does the use of Multimedia Interactive Grammar (MIG) engage pupils in fun learning?

Based on the results of my action research, my strategy of using MIG in the teaching and learning process improved the participants’ understanding of possessive pronouns. From the results of the tests, we could see improvement in the participants’ scores in which four participants obtained a perfect score of 100% and none of the participants scored below than 60% in the second test. This showed a sharp increase compared to the participants’ first test scores in which only four participants were able to obtain scores above 50%. The participant who scored the lowest in the first test also displayed a huge progress when the scores improved greatly from 33% to 67%. This clearly proved that the use of MIG was indeed very effective in enhancing the participants’ grammar. As Sharma (2013) asserted, interactive multimedia plays a huge role in enhancing students’ achievement and retention in teaching and learning English. When the students can remember the grammar item learnt, they can use it correctly and appropriately.

To answer my second research question, the results found were very positive and encouraging. The participants reacted positively towards the use of MIG in learning. They also displayed high levels of motivation and enthusiasm throughout the intervention sessions. In cases when the participants answered incorrectly, they did not become demotivated. Instead, they were very eager to answer more questions. Teoh & Neo (2007) highlighted that studies have shown that students who learn from interactive multimedia display higher levels of self-esteem and motivation.

To answer my third research question, the participants’ responses during the interview had shown that they agreed the use of MIG was fun and enjoyable. As Yap (2014) stated, the interactivity feature in the multimedia helps to make the learning process more fun. As students enjoy the lesson, they are motivated to learn and they can understand what they have learnt. Nevertheless, despite all the positive effects of the intervention, one setback was the participants became very enthusiastic and over-excited that at certain times, the class became too noisy and I had to calm them down first before giving further instructions.

E. Conclusion

In conclusion, the use of MIG is very useful in learning possessive pronouns. This is supported by Mayer (2005) who asserted that learners learn more effectively when multimedia-mediated content is incorporated into the learning environment compared to information which is presented only through a single medium. Students are more active, eager to learn as it engages a fun learning in a classroom.

This study is on the use of interactive multimedia in learning grammar focusing on possessive pronouns. In this 21st century learning, it is high time teachers realize the full

potential of multimedia learning and incorporate them in their teaching and learning sessions. Therefore, based on the analysis and findings presented, there are two suggestions that I would like to propose in order to enhance and sustain pupils' learning.

Firstly, I would like to propose the next researchers to use interactive multimedia to teach other grammar items such as nouns, verbs, and adjectives. An advantage of this interactive multimedia is that it is versatile, in which it can be re-used to teach and learn other grammar items. Thus, it saves the teachers from all the hassle as they can just reuse the available templates to teach other grammar items by merely changing the content.

Secondly, in this era of globalization, teachers should heed the call for learning diversity. Teachers should create a student-centered learning environment which gears towards independent learning and self-paced discovery. As we head towards a transformation in the KSSR curriculum, teachers should move away from the traditional chalk-and-talk method and facilitate 21st century learning environment throughout Year 1 to Year 6. As Teoh & Neo (2007) stated, the nature of interactivity and discovery in interactive multimedia are able to bring a change from the teacher- directed approach to a facilitated approach as it brings a boost to the monotony of passive learning. Hence, as this research was conducted on Year 4 pupils, I would like to encourage further researchers to use interactive multimedia for Year 5 and 6 pupils instead.

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