E-Kamus for Teaching and Learning Effectiveness at Open University Malaysia.

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Abstract

E-Kamus is an approach introduced by Open University Malaysia (OUM) to improve the English language proficiency of the students. Since early 2009, English has been fully used in the aspect of teaching and learning process in OUM. The change of using bahasa Melayu to English was indeed a great challenge to OUM. Moreover the students were from various levels of background and proficiency of English. Most of them lack the grasp of basic language skills and thus affect their understanding in the teaching and learning process. OUM had taken the initiative to provide the e-Kamus software in order to cater to flexible and accessible education. This paper discusses the usage of e-Kamus among the OUM students in mastering English through the 'Double Click' and 'Mouse Move' functions without the on-line system. The process does not need students to type the words and to highlight them in finding the meaning. By using e-Kamus, it helps the students to find the meanings of words more quickly, exactly and easily by using the applications based on texts like Web browser, Microsoft Word, Notepad and others. With the usage of the e-Kamus, OUM students will be able to follow the process of teaching and learning effectively and to enrich their vocabulary.

Keywords: e-Kamus, English proficiency, double click and mouse move, enrich vocabulary

E-Kamus for Teaching and Learning Effectiveness at Open University Malaysia.

1.0 Introduction.

E-Kamus is an approach introduced by Open University Malaysia to students and staffs in order to increase the quality of English language proficiency in the field of education. Moreover, OUM had, since early 2009 taken the step to fully use the English language in the teaching and learning process (Tutor Connexxions: Issue 20/January 2009). In realizing the effort and the aim, OUM had taken the initiative to subscribe to the e-Kamus from a company, Alaf Teras in Malaysia with the intention to help students in mastering the English language well. E-Kamus is a bi-lingual English-Malay, Malay-English dictionary software that comes complete with the Malay language spelling checker known as Alaf Eja. What is interesting about the e-Kamus software, is- it is provided with 18 types of additional dictionaries that could be used together with the e-Kamus software. Besides, e-Kamus software needs to be fastened to the computer in order for your computer to have an electronic dictionary without the internet lines.

E-Kamus is a bilingual dictionary software which was developed to enable computer users who frequently use the ordinary dictionaries as their references. It is the only dictionary program that offers finding the meanings of words method by merely moving the mouse (pointing to the mouse cursor). Besides, users could obtain the meanings of words by the `mouse move' method or `double click' and they do not even need to type and highlight the words. As computer software, e-Kamus is not a virtual product but it is an easy software to use, saves time and could be taken anywhere if connected to your laptops. It is an advantage of e-Kamus which could not be found at any other dictionary software at its level.

2.0   Why OUM Chooses to Use the E-Kamus.

Since early 2009, OUM had taken a drastic step in introducing the policy of using the English language fully in its teaching and learning aspects. This does not mean the bahasa Melayu is being marginalized; instead it is being consolidated via the compulsory courses, Malaysian Qualification Agency (MQA) like the Bahasa Kebangsaan course. Furthermore, OUM is the first open distance learning university in Malaysia with 86,000 students undergoing 71 programs that are being offered. As a university as many students as this, it definitely would face many problems especially on their English language proficiency. Based on the various levels of English language proficiency among its students, OUM had to find ways to consolidate the usage of English in line with the new policy introduced.

Prior to that, OUM had taken steps in strengthening the proficiency and the usage of English language to its students by preparing modules written in simple English. Besides, OUM had also carried on with the bilingual examination system. In addition to that, OUM had introduced the new evaluation system in the examination for a few courses based on the multiple-choice questions (MCQ) (Learner Connexxions. Issue 48: February 2009). In relevance to that, OUM hopes its students will be able to improve their English language usage widely, either in the teaching and learning process, or in their communication skills. Both approaches introduced by OUM had given a lot of impact in the English language usage among the students. Clearly, the approaches had encouraged the students to use the English language more in their learning aspects.

OUM had once again taken a positive step in improving the English language proficiency to the students by introducing the e-Kamus software as a tool that could aid students in obtaining the meanings and translations in a short time. OUM's effort had enabled students to learn the English language in a simple way, by not having to carry and check on thick dictionaries. This was further stressed by Prof Dr Mansor Fadzil, OUM Senior Vice President who said that the introduction of e-Kamus to students would function as a learning aid in English and could help them in completing assignments like finding meanings, reading and comprehending the references better (Learner Connexxions. Issue 52: September 2009). There were a few reasons why OUM chose the e-Kamus as a learning aid to students, tutors and staffs;

    i.   Used as an aid in learning the English language effectively.

    ii.   Easy to use and makes the learning more interesting and effective.

    iii.   Used as a reference and translation of meanings for spellings and words in the Malay language to the English language and vice-versa.

    iv.   Helps students to write and produce better and quality assignments in English.

    v.   Improve the usage of English language among the OUM students and staffs besides consolidating the Malay language.

    vi.   Functions to correct the spelling errors in the Malay Language.

3.0   Advantages of Using E-Kamus

OUM's effort to introduce the usage of e-Kamus to its students and staffs had given many advantages and benefits in terms of English language usage in OUM. Students using the e-Kamus benefit from the software which helps them in various aspects in learning the language effectively in revealing meanings, synonyms and translations. E-Kamus provides many advantages to students for it provides basic dictionaries in English-Malay and Malay-English. Moreover, e-Kamus has 18 types of additional dictionaries that could be used by students to find meanings easily in various fields like Mathematics, Kamus Dewan Third and Fourth Edition, engineering, Computer, Science, Medicine, Arabic, Chinese and others.
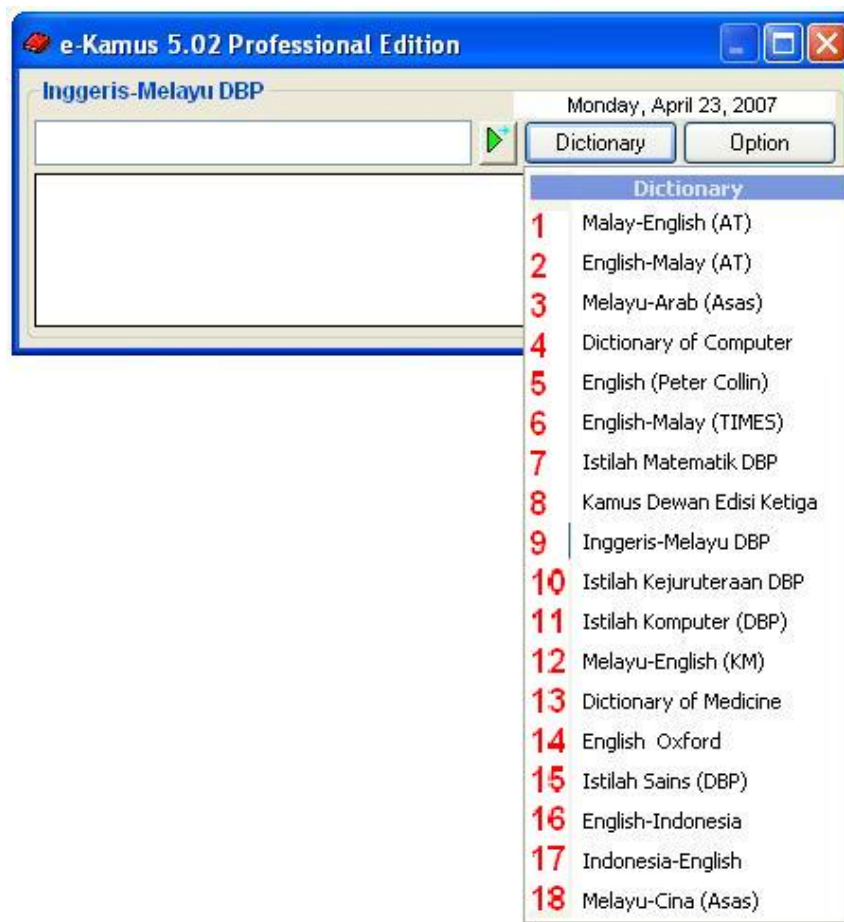
Three simple ways to use e-Kamus;

a. Typing the word at the meaning-finder box.

E-Kamus give convenience to students in finding the meanings of words by typing the word in the meaning-finder box. Word typing method could be done by choosing the types of dictionaries to be used, then the students could type the word, for instance the word **'interest'**, in a few seconds, the meaning of the word **'interest'** would be displayed automatically.
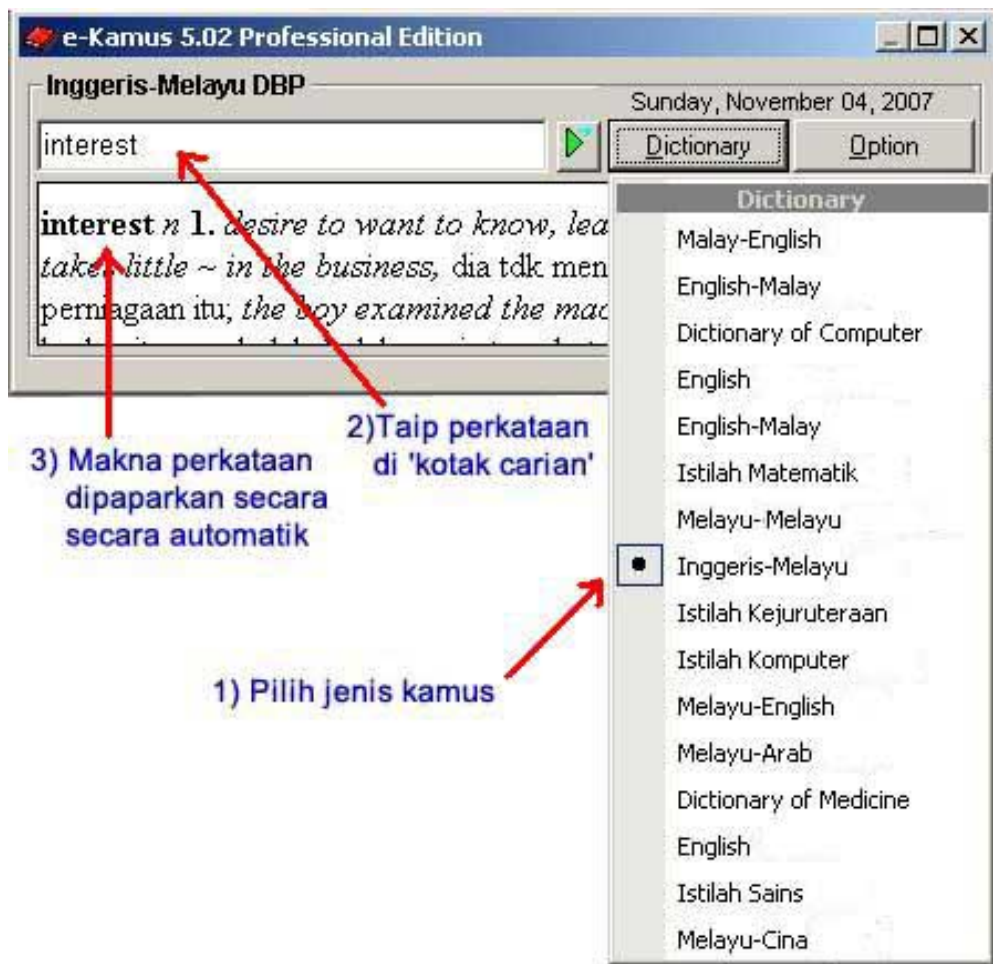
b. Double-Click and Alt + Cursor Method:

E-Kamus enables students to find the meanings of words in a few split seconds through the double-click method. Students only need to move and use the computer's mouse to find meanings either by the **double-click** or **Alt + cursor**. The meanings of words could be obtained instantly by using the double-click method on the words that they don't understand. Quick findings could also be done by using the Alt + cursor button i.e.; by pressing the Alt button and show the words they don't understand with the cursor. The method could be used for all types of applications based on texts, like Internet explorer, Netscape and others. Microsoft Office (MS Word, MS Excel, MS PowerPoint and others) Compile HTML Help files e-Book and Adobe Reader.
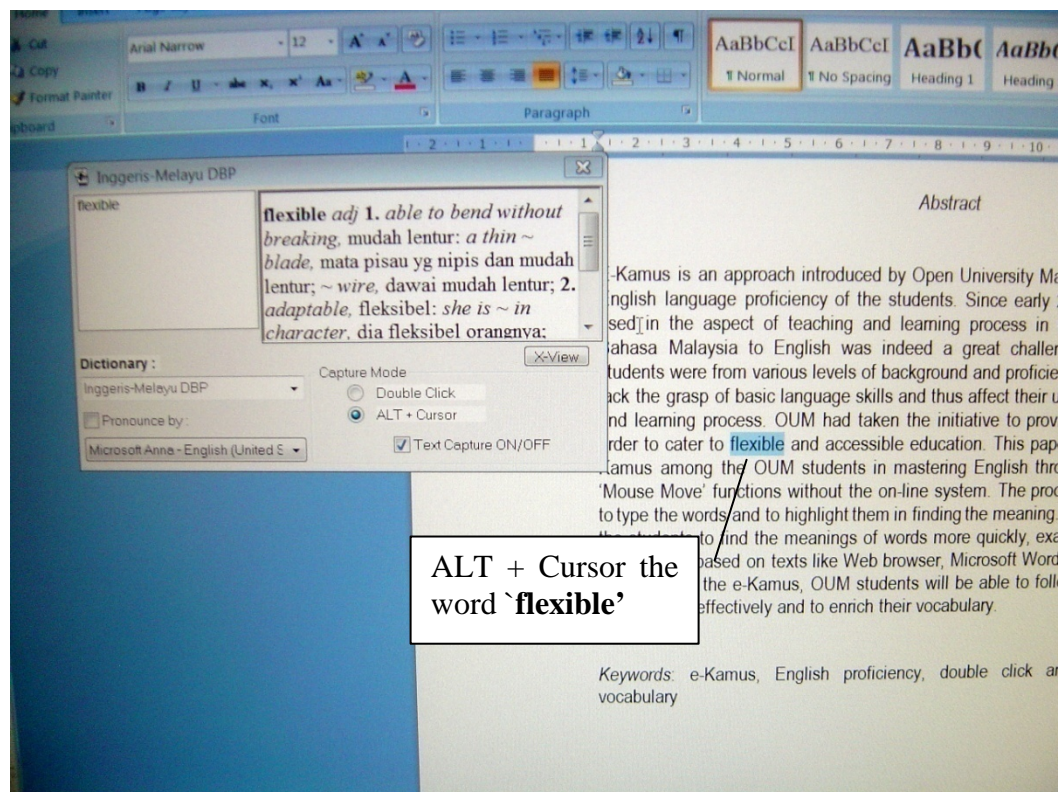
1. E-Kamus Application in Microsoft Word.

    i. E-Kamus functions as meaning finder for words and could give the complete elaborations in seconds through the double-click. Students should choose the types of dictionaries to be used, for instance; Kamus Dewan Third or Fourth Edition. Then they could use the double-click method to find the meanings of words by moving the mouse to the words. They only need to double-click the word, for example `**tetikus'**. In seconds, the meaning of the word **'tetikus'** would be found by the student.

Double Click the word `**tetikus**'
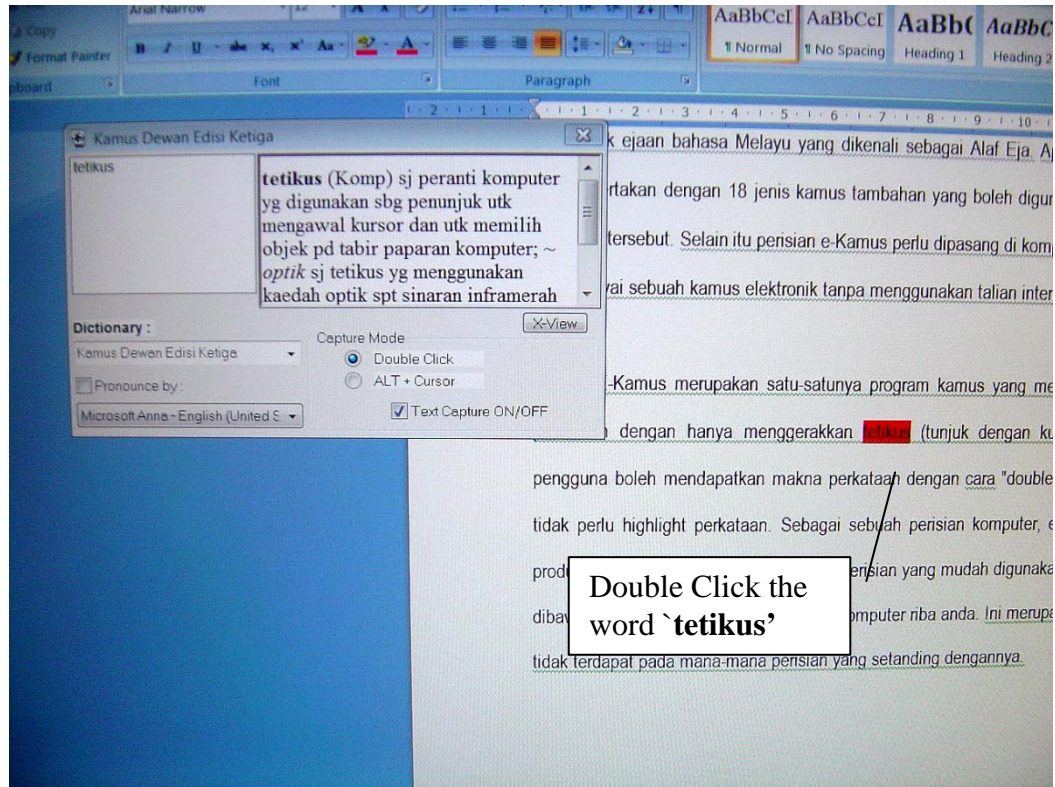
ii. The function of mouse move and double-click could be used by students to find the translation of words from English language to Malay language. In order for it to function, the student needs to choose the types of dictionaries to be used, for example the English-Malay (AT) dictionary. Then, the student needs to only move the mouse to the word, for instance the word `**accessible**'. Then double-click the word. In seconds, the word will be translated to the Malay language. The method is the fastest in obtaining a translation of word from the English language to Malay language.

Double-click the word `**accessible'**
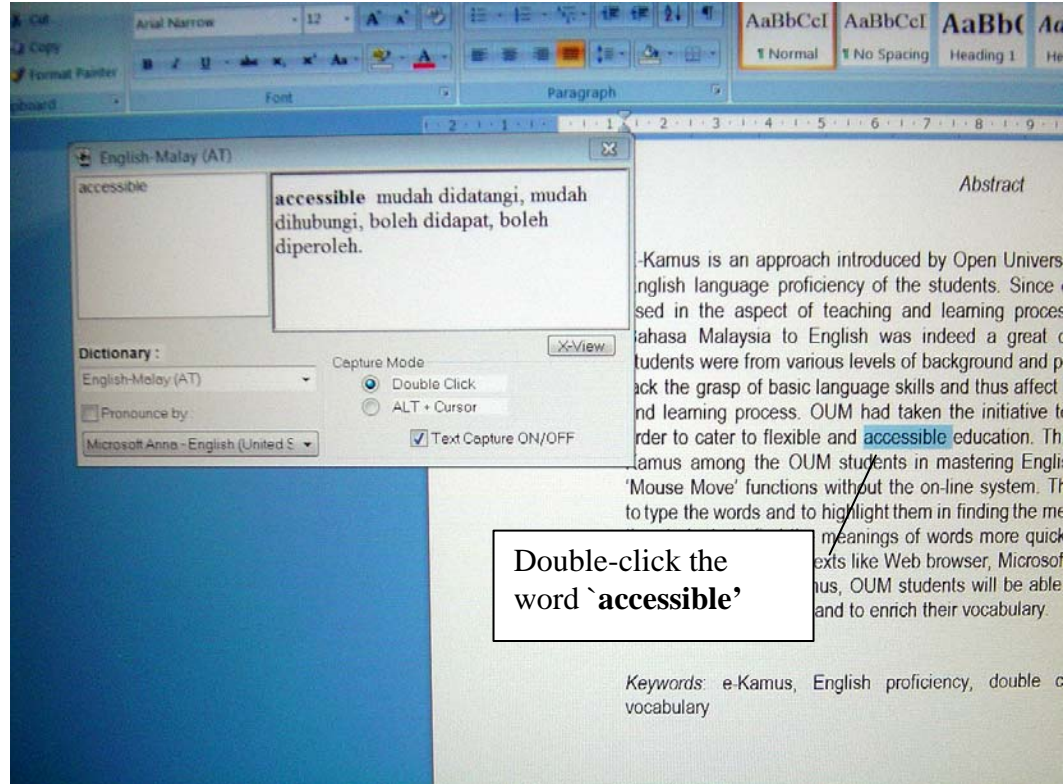
iii. The function of ALT + cursor is another way that could be used by students to do the translation process from the English language to the Malay language and also the finding of meaning of a word. The same process is also needed to function for the Alt + cursor method, and then the student will need to choose the types of dictionaries to be used. The student only needs to move the mouse to the word, for example `**flexible'**, then press Alt + cursor. In seconds, the translation for the word will be found. This method is considered to be very quick and easy in obtaining the translation or meaning of a certain word which is not understood by the students.

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ALT + Cursor the word `**flexible'**

2. E-Kamus Application in online Newspapers.

E-kamus could also be used to find meaning or doing the translation of a certain word in an online newspaper. The process of using e-Kamus in the newspapers is similar to the Microsoft word and other text-based applications. Students only need to move the mouse at the word they don't understand, for instance 'venture'. Then they need to double-click on the word. In seconds, e-Kamus will scan the word and provide its meaning which was not understood by the students in the earlier stage. E-Kamus functions to help the students while they are doing their reading on the online newspapers in a simple and precise way.

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c. **Automatic Spelling Checker in the Malay language.**

E-Kamus also functions as automatic spelling checker in the Malay language. If there are spelling errors, the word will be underlined with a red line. Users with the 'right click mouse' method on the red marked word, e-Kamus will suggest that the correction word be chosen. For Microsoft Word application, without e-Kamus, Microsoft word will only check the word by referring to the English language. By using the e-Kamus, Microsoft word will check, refer and suggest the Malay word.

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Example of e-Kamus as the spelling checker in Microsoft Word;
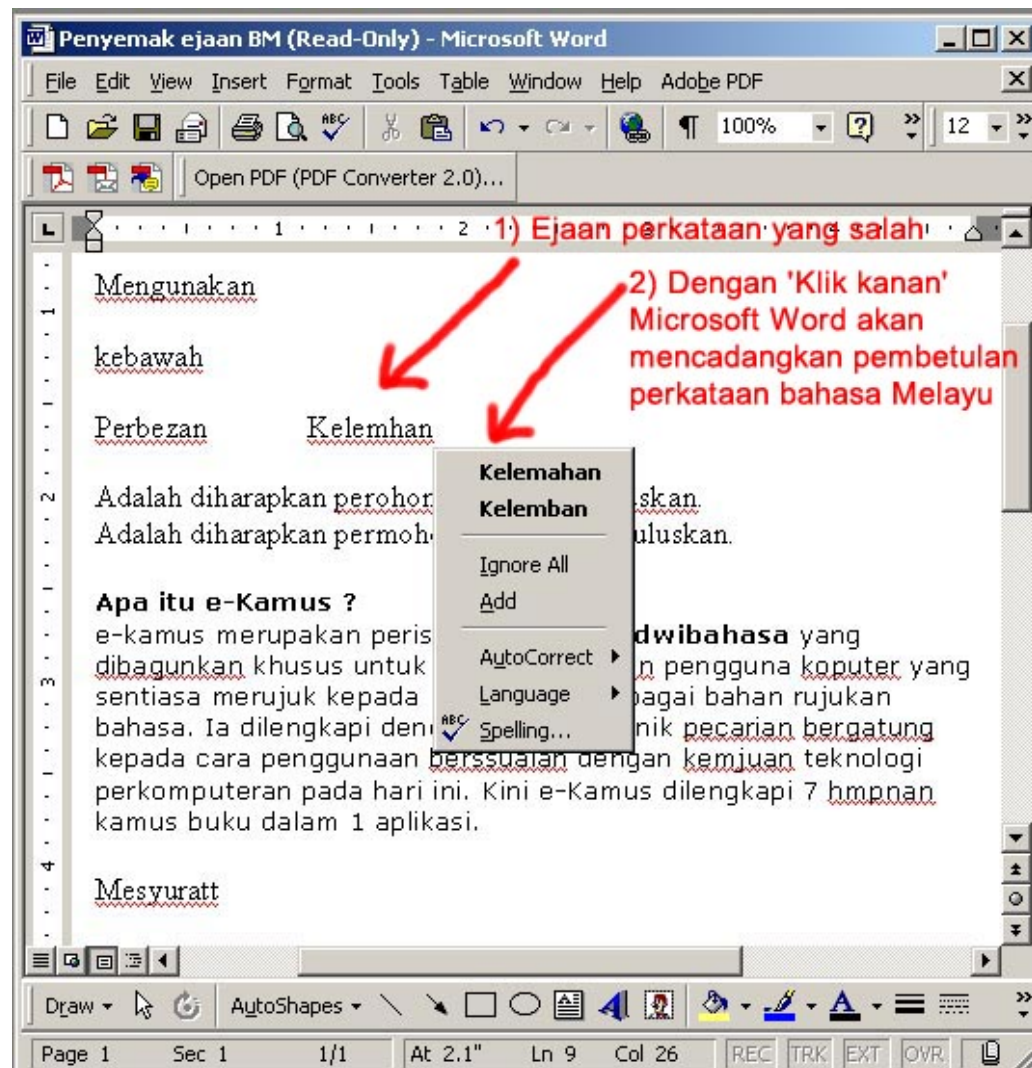
4.0   Conclusion

E-Kamus is an important bilingual dictionary to students and staffs of OUM especially in improving their English language proficiency. The use of e-Kamus had simplified the students' effort in finding meanings, translations and terms quickly and precisely. Besides, e-Kamus had also changed the learning system into more interesting and effective to students for they could master meanings of words easily by using the double-click method. The method had provided a way of finding certain meanings quickly without the user having to type certain words. Clearly, the e-Kamus introduced by OUM had given an approach to improve the proficiency of the English language among the students to a better level. Prof Dr Mansor had stated that e-Kamus software is easy to use, hence making the learning process more interesting and effective to the students of OUM.

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