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RESEARCH ARTICLE

TIKTOKACTIV IN ENHANCING ESL PUPILS' WRITING SKILL FOCUSING ON ACTION VERBS.

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Abstract

The popularity of social networking sites is constantly growing among the iGeneration. This study attempted to investigate the effectiveness of TikTokActiV as a tool for teaching and improving ESL pupils' writing skill focusing on action verbs. The respondents of this study comprise of 60 primary school pupils from a rural school, a sub-urban school and an urban school in southern part of Malaysia. The pupils' writing skill development were measured using pre and post-test containing 20 questions. Action research design was used to understand the effectiveness of using 'TikTokActiV'. The pre-test and post-test conclude that by incorporating TikTokActiV as a teaching tool in English language classrooms, pupils will have significant improvements in ESL writing skills.

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Introduction:-

In recent years, English has been considered as one of the most influential language. It is now the key factor of globalization - of political views, international business as well as education (Jonson, 2009). Therefore, knowing how to write in English is necessary in today's fast-growing world for academic, economy and technology. Writing assessment turns out to contribute the highest marks allocation in written examination. In fact, vocabulary has a critical place in sentence construction and essay writing. Most of the English as Second Language (ESL) pupils in Malaysia face learning challenges to acquire and comprehend lexical items, mainly because of lack in vocabulary (Kaur, 2013). ESL pupils in Malaysia are facing huge challenges to produce sentences with good grammar, perfect sentence structures and suitable vocabulary in their written examination. Moreover, pupils are not motivated to write correct sentences because they find it to be extremely difficult to come up with contextual ideas for their writing. Thus, the presence of popular social networking site such as TikTok was adapted to TikTokActiV teaching and learning tool which was used as a platform to improve ESL pupils' writing skill in a fun and motivating environment.

In this age of modern-day technology and ICTs, online social networks have captured the attention of educators and policy-makers as an alternative tool for language teaching and learning (M. Yunus & Salehi, 2012). According to Bartlett-Bragg (2006), social networks have a range of applications that augments group interactions and shared spaces for collaboration, social connections, and aggregates information exchanges in a web-based environment. Social networks are used by millions of users, most of whom are pupils and adolescents, for a variety of purposes but with a heavy emphasis on social needs (M. Yunus & Salehi, 2012).

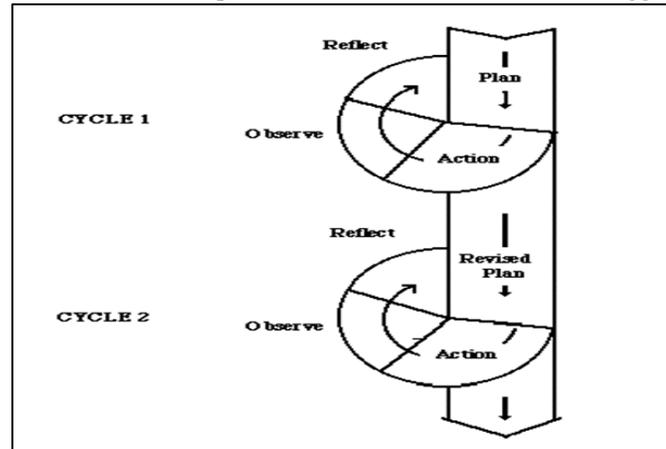
Due to their familiarity and positive response towards technology-based activities, it is deemed that the blending of the latest mobile application such as TikTokActiV tool using the TikTok social networking application would be effective in teaching ESL writing skill. The app was developed by Beijing-based tech unicorn Bytedance and has took over the top spot from Facebook and WhatsApp, with more than 45 million downloads worldwide

during the three-month period (Zheping, 2018). This is the first music video-based teaching aid created to improvise the traditional method of teaching writing skill. The authenticity in terms of the audience has provided a real motivation for pupils to get involved in the activities and enjoy the lesson using mobile phones. Thus, it is appropriate that this platform is explored and utilized to support language learning (Amin Embi, Md Yunus, & Omar, 2012). The attractive factor of this platform is the user has complete control over the content of his or her profile or account. It includes a reaction feature so you can react to your friends' videos, new creative tools and virtual reality-esque filter (Heathman, 2018). According to Mckenna, Green, & Gleason (2002), these are one of the main reasons why the use of social networking site has increased rapidly where individuals yearn to find others who share similar interests for social purposes. Hence, it is believed that it possesses huge potential as an educational tool due to these features offered. Today's pupils and classrooms are becoming more diverse and unique each day (M. M. Yunus, Salehi, & John, 2013). Skills they learn using TikToKActiV tool includes writing, cognitive, interaction, listening, acting, associating and memory. Teachers benefit from TikTokActiV in a variety of way such as teacher-directed study, self-paced pupils' study and independent study.

Literature suggests that there are some disadvantages in terms of using ICT in the teaching of writing skills (M. Yunus & Salehi, 2012). The use of computer technology could cause the lackadaisical attitude among pupils whereby they will not take their work seriously (M. Yunus, Nordin, Salehi, Embi, & Salehi, 2013). Furthermore, ICT and social networking sites distract pupils' attention in the classroom and provide a tendency for the pupils to use short forms and informal abbreviations in their writing tasks (M. Yunus et al., 2013). The presence of ICT tools in the classroom makes the pupils negatively involved during the class time and makes the class control difficult for the teachers (M. Yunus et al., 2013). Walther & Bunz (2005) elaborated that by the exchanging of ideas and opinions via Internet and computer, it is difficult for TikTokActiV users to convey some complex and abstract ideas meaningfully. This might lead to misunderstandings or misleading of ideas which is not beneficial for pupils' learning (M. Yunus & Salehi, 2012). This significant number of social networking site users also indicate concerns to issues pertaining the lack of privacy of information that may contribute to cases such as identity theft, bullying, online stalking, embarrassment and even blackmailing as pointed out by Gross, Acquisti, & John (2005). Furthermore, Kabilan, Ahmad, & Abidin (2010) have also written similar ideas on the challenges of the online environment for the learning of English. Therefore, it is very important to draw pupils' awareness and attention on the aspects of learning on TikTokActiV so that pupils will be clear of their learning goal and will be working towards it. The use of TikTokActiV requires vast knowledge on application usage among teacher and pupils. As an inhibitor, both educators and pupils are expected to understand and manage the software functionality, such as how to access, login protocols, communication processes, and the access and storage of information (Bartlett-Bragg, 2006). Educators have identified similar experiences where pupils are reported to be spending more time working with the technology than with the content (Sanders, 2006). According to Lucas & Moreira (2009), using social networking as a tool facilitates informal interactions, which influence pupils' formal learning outcomes particularly in ESL writing skill. Traditional educational models focused on one-way passive transfers of information from educators to pupils in the form of lectures and textbooks; TikTokActiV teaching tool provides a flexible space for sharing sentences which apply accurate action verbs in creative videos which increased communication between pupils and teacher (Gamble & Wilkins, 2014). The rapid development of social media has heightened the interest to utilise TikTok ActiV and its impact on learning. TikTok ActiV provides pupils with a portable learning tool and allows pupils to share videos consisting of sentences among their peers to enhance their understanding on more action verbs and ways to apply them in sentence writing.

Materials and Methods:-

This study used action research approach based on Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) model in order to investigate the effectiveness of using TikTokActiV as a tool to enhance pupils' ESL writing skill. The Kemmis and McTaggart spiral action research consists the following stages: Planning, Acting, Observing, and Reflecting (Banfield & Cayago-Gicain, 2006). The TikTokActiV acts as a basis to improve ESL pupils' writing skill focusing on correct usage of action verbs with the application of TiktokActiV as the tool in teaching and learning process. This action research integrates quantitative approach through pre-test and post-test. A set of post-tests which contained different questions compared to pre-test was given to pupils. The end result of pre and post-test was then compared to analyze the data for the intervention that was done for almost two weeks. The pre-test and post-test consisted of 20 questions which aim to identify the effectiveness of TikTokActiV in improving ESL pupils' writing skill focusing on action verbs.

Figure 1:-Research Conceptual Framework - Kemmis and McTaggart (1988)

The model in Figure 1 distinguishes four phases that was conducted within each research cycle. Data collected from the intervention are analysed and interpreted on how successful the TikTokActiV as a teaching tool has been in teaching ESL writing skill. In the planning stage, the researchers identified writing skill as a foremost challenge for the pupils, so the TikTok ActiV teaching tool was planned to use in the classroom which develops pupils' vocabulary and supports pupils' writing skill. This was followed by the action of systematically incorporating the plan in classroom lessons and monitor the use of TikTokActiV as teaching tool in helping pupils' in their writing skill. Then, the data collected through pre-test and post- test were observed diligently. During the reflection stage, the researchers drew an accurate conclusion on the usefulness of using TikTokActiV as a teaching tool in enhancing ESL pupils' writing skill. This cycle was completed when there was a positive outcome from the first cycle of the research model.

A total of 60 pupils from Year 3 of School A, School B and School C in southern part of Malaysia participated in the study. These pupils were divided equally among three schools; 20 pupils from School A (sub-urban school), 20 pupils from School B (rural school) and 20 pupils from School C (urban school). The intervention used in the study were employed by three English language teachers from respective schools.

The pupils were given a brief introduction about the intervention and were given pre-test in the first week. Pupils were then required to familiarize themselves with the TikTok social networking application and teachers distributed 5 action verbs to each pupil. Pupils then act out those action verbs correctly using TikTokActiV. These videos were then shared and downloaded to be used in the classrooms to aid writing lessons. In the second week of the intervention, pupils were given a second set of action verbs which were used to create more TikTokActiV videos. This time around, pupils were asked to make simple sentences using the action verbs, which they incorporated into their videos and shared during the classroom lessons with other classmates. At the end of the lessons, pupils were also encouraged to complete the TikTokActiV modules prepared by teachers. These modules provide hashtags for example #tiktokactiVcelebrate, which enabled pupils to search and view videos which was created by their classmates on specific action verbs. These efforts were taken to generate a conducive learning environment (Md. Yunus & Hern, 2011) thus permitting pupils to experience learning action verbs using technology. In the final stage of the intervention, pupils were required to respond and answer to the post-test to analyze the outcome of the intervention.

The pre-test and post-test were done by pupils in hard copies. Both pre-test and post-test consisted of 4 parts with different levels of difficulties. Part 1 - the lowest difficulties level, Part 2 - the low average level, Part 3 - high average and Part 4 - the highest difficulties level. Pupils' mastery levels were identified through their answers. Marks were obtained and tabulated to compare the percentage for pre-test and post-test in order to measure the effectiveness of TikTokActiV teaching tool in enhancing the correct usage of action verbs hence improving pupils' writing skill.

Findings and Discussions:-

In this research, pre-test and post-test were conducted among 60 pupils in three vernacular Chinese schools mentioned in this study. The mean scores and percentages for both tests were calculated and compared between the schools comprises of urban, sub-urban and rural schools to discover whether there was any improvement after the three-week interventions.

Table 1:-Improvement of participant's scores between Pre-test and Post-test.

		Total scores	Mean	Percentage	Percentage of increment
School A	Pre-test	82/400	4.1	20.5%	58.75%
	Post-test	317/400	15.85	79.25%	
School B	Pre-test	136/400	6.8	34%	42.25%
	Post-test	305/400	15.25	76.25%	
School C	Pre-test	196/400	9.35	49%	30.5%
	Post-test	318/400	15.90	79.5%	

Based on Table 1, it clearly indicates that there was an improvement of mean scores in all three schools after the usage of TikTokActiV teaching tool in enhancing ESL pupils' writing skill. The highest increment of 58.75% was achieved in School A followed by an increment of 42.25% was achieved by School B and an increment of 30.5% in School C. Based on the data analysis from the pupils' pre-test and post test result, it can be concluded that the scores have significantly improved after the application of TikTokActiV in the teaching writing skill. TikTokActiV successfully helped pupils to enhance their writing skills through the application of accurate action verbs in sentence construction. 55 pupils out of 60 pupils participated in the intervention able to obtain a higher score in comparison of pre-test and post-test. Based on the positive progress in post-test, this study managed to tackle one of pupils' major problem to write correct simple sentences, which is the use of correct action verbs in writing.

The paired sample t-test is run with the following hypotheses:

1. Null hypothesis: There is no significance difference between pre-test and post-test.
2. Alternative hypothesis: There is significance difference between pre-test and post-test.

The Table 2 below shows the descriptive statistics of the pre-test and the post-test scores, the mean for the pre-test is 6.2500 while the mean for post-test is 12.1300. The standard deviation for pre-test is 1.86231 and the standard deviation for post-test is 1.97681 which is more than the pre-test. This shows that the participants did better in the post-test whereby they obtained higher scores in the post-test compared to the pre-test.

Table 2:-Paired Sample Statistics

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
PRETEST	6.25	6	1.86231	.73687
POSTTEST	12.130	6	1.97681	.78257

Table 3 below shows that paired samples test was used to examine the different between score obtained by participants before and after intervention carried out. $p < 0.05$ would indicate a significant result and often termed 'highly significant. As indicated in Table 3, there was a significant difference in the score conditions; $t(2) = -5.350$, $p = 0.033$. This is further supported the researcher's alternative hypothesis that there is a significant difference between the implementation of TikTokActiV teaching tool in improving the ESL pupils' writing skill, as $p = 0.033 > 0.05$. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This shows that there is significant difference between the mean score of the pre-test and the post-test in where the participants did better in the post-test compared to the pre-test which shows that there is improvement among the participants after using the TikTokActiV teaching tool in improving ESL pupils' writing skill.

Paired Samples Test

Table 3:-Paired Samples Test of the Pre-Test and Post-Test

		Paired Samples Test					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Paired Differences							
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pre - Post	-43.83333	14.19140	8.19341	-79.08673	-8.57994	-5.350	2	.033

The improvement showed in pre-test and post-test implied that the use of TikTokActiV helps pupils to improve their ESL writing skills. The data of this study have shown that the action verbs learnt are better when they are associated in a fun learning environment rather than the traditional method. Mastery of action verbs to enhance writing skill is achievable with the use of TikTokActiV as a teaching tool where by pupils' increase their understanding when gesture and movement are used to represent action verbs.

Conclusion:-

Currently, social networks are used by millions of users, most of whom are students and adolescents, for a variety of purposes but with a heavy emphasis on social needs (Yunus & Salehi, 2012). The combination of the use of social network site and action verbs helps pupils to improve writing skills focusing on action verbs. According to Yunus & Salehi (2012), social networking services provide a better opportunity for interaction, planning and getting more information.

Basically, this study can be considered as a success because all of the objectives were achieved and TikTokActiV as teaching tool does help to enhance ESL writing skill. Pupils prefer to learn new vocabulary through the influences of TikTokActiV in order to experience learning in a positive manner compared to the actual classroom discussion. In this age of modern-day technology and ICTs, online social networks have captured the attention of educators and policy-makers as an alternative tool for language teaching and learning (Yunus & Salehi, 2012). Although some drawbacks may hinder the pupils to use TikTokActiV effectively, solutions can be set to abolish these weaknesses.

The Ministry of Education should therefore take into consideration in strengthening ICT facilities in schools through distributing free mobile phones for school use. This initiative will motivate pupils to improve their writing skill through TikTokActiV. On the other hand, educators should start introducing the advantages of mobile phones in education through systematically planned lesson plans for the benefit of learners. A teacher is still required to guide and direct the learning, especially over a fun virtual discussion space where students are left to their own devices. More studies regarding this TikTokActiV tool should be done to monitor the extend of effectiveness this tool can help in improving pupils' ESL writing skills.

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