



Journal home page: <http://www.journalijar.com>

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL  
OF INNOVATIVE AND APPLIED RESEARCH

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### INCREASING PUPILS' INTEREST AND ENGAGEMENT DURING LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT PROCESS THROUGH SMARTFORMS.

Teoh Ci Xin<sup>1</sup>, Chua Chin Nee<sup>1</sup> and Melor Md. Yunus<sup>2</sup>.

1. Research Scholar, Faculty of Education, University Kebangsaan Malaysia.
2. Deputy Dean of Research and Innovation, Faculty of Education, University Kebangsaan Malaysia.

#### Manuscript Info

#### Manuscript History

Received: 12 October 2018  
Final Accepted: 14 November 2018  
Published: December 2018

#### Keywords:

SmartForms, Google Forms, computer-assisted language assessment, English.

#### Abstract

Learning a language, especially a second language, is not as straightforward as it seems. In fact, it is a complex process that involves several skills, which will lead to the ultimate goal of language comprehension and output. When learning a language, pupils need to understand what they have listened or read so that teachers can evaluate their comprehension level of the subject content. In order to ensure that pupils will be engaged during the assessment process, many new and different teaching strategies and methods that incorporate ICT elements have to be applied. In this modern age where rapid advancement in the field of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is evident, this concept is especially relevant and crucial in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century classrooms today. The question is how can we move away from the traditional method of assessing language comprehension using exercise books and worksheets? These conventional methods of assessing language comprehension have decreased in popularity and slowly losing its ability in engaging pupils in the assessment process. Hence this paper was set to investigate how the innovation, SmartForms could increase the interest and engagement of pupils in the process of completing the language assessment tasks. In context, 50 Year-3 pupils from two primary schools in Melaka Tengah, Malacca and Kota Bharu, Kelantan, Malaysia had been selected to participate in the study carried out using this innovation during English lessons. Data for this action research was collected through the use of pre and post- perception questionnaire survey after pupils participated in the intervention carried out. Research findings revealed that this innovation increased pupils' interest and engagement during the language assessment process. SmartForms has the potential to be used as an alternative tool to evaluate pupils' comprehension skill of other academic and non-academic subjects.

\*Corresponding Author:- Teoh Ci Xin.

#### Introduction:-

Understanding what other people say or write may seem like an effortless process carried out by humans, however, it is more complicated than it might seem, particularly when it comes to the learning of a second language. In this

context, most young learners are already working from a disadvantaged position, where they not only view themselves as distinct from the language used in the text but they are often not equipped with a sound linguistic knowledge of that language (Roessingh & Kover, 2002). In the Malaysian context, teachers are often tied down by the lack of ICT resources that would allow them more freedom and creativity to explore a different approach to teaching and assessing in the English classrooms (Lim, 2013). Teachers often do not have adequate time and resources to go past the traditional methods of assigning assessment tasks in the form of exercise books or worksheets to their pupils. Hence it is essential that teachers shed a new light on the way language is being evaluated in the language classrooms and get the pupils interested and motivated to learn the subject content and complete the assessment tasks given. Parallel to this, the best way to evaluate language has also been a long-standing debate in the language community. There is no one superior strategy in assessing language but there is certainly a better approach in terms of its potential to attract pupils' interest and engagement during the assessment process. Many kinds of researches have been done to find out which is the best method to teach ESL or EFL pupils how to master the major language skill (Liu, Moore, Graham & Lee, 2003; Levy, 2009) but little has been researched about how language can be assessed differently and more effectively, even less so in the Malaysian context. In the era where computers and other digital tools are slowly invading the 21st century classrooms of today and becoming a part of learners' everyday life, it is a sad scenario to observe that pupils' access to a variety of learning tools is still very much limited and the use of ICT devices in the language classrooms is not very prevalent in the language classrooms (Yunus, 2007; Alazam et al., 2012). Hence it is crucial for pupils to have in our modern age, and their interest should influence the teaching and learning process. To further support this notion, Kreutz and Rhodin (2016) mention that allowing pupils to learn the English Language through ICT devices that are very much present in their daily lives will increase their motivation in the teaching and learning process.

Thus SmartForms has been created, an assessment tool adapted and innovated from the template of Google Forms to induce pupils' interest and engagement in completing their language assessment tasks. This study aims to examine how SmartForms could increase the interest and engagement of pupils in the process of completing the language assessment tasks.

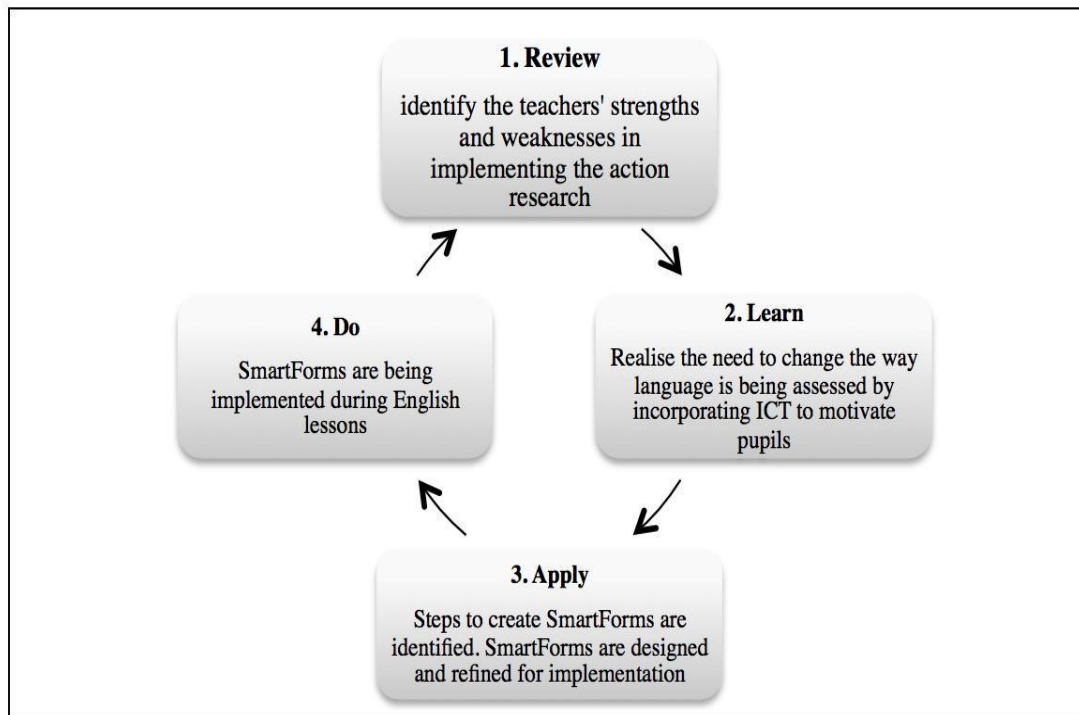
### **Literature Review**

Integration of ICT in education is vital as it allows learning to take place inside and outside the four walls of the classrooms provided that the facilities of technology are supplied (Ghavifekr & Rosdy, 2015; Salehi & Salehi, 2012). In relation, Computer-assisted Language Assessment (CALA) can be understood as tests that are administered using computer applications to elicit and assess test-takers' performance (Suvorov & Hegelheimer, 2014). CALA is an innovation where technology can create a true transformation of language testing process and a whole new experience of how language can be evaluated for the language learners. It has undergone significant changes in terms of its potential and adaptability since then. Mislevy et al. (2008) contends that even though a major part of CALT still revolves around the idea of paper-based tests, it has also witnessed positive changes that include computer-adaptive testing, new item types, integrated skills assessment, and automated evaluation.

Google Forms have long been synonymous in the research field in terms of data collection for large-scale surveys but its application in the language classrooms is still very restricted. Hence based on the notion of adapting technology to facilitate, contextualize, and improve the assessment of linguistic abilities through CALT, we have come up with the innovation of adapting the template of Google Forms to design our own language assessment tasks for our pupils to increase their interest and engagement in the teaching and learning process.

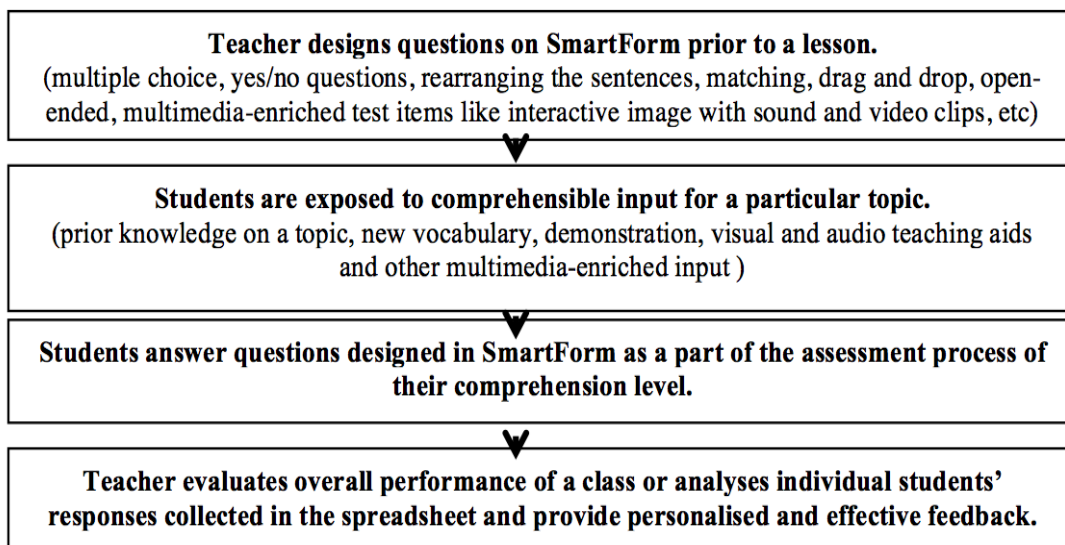
### **Material and Methods:-**

This action research adopted the Kolb Cycle Model that comprises of four phases, namely review, learn, apply and do. The model is presented in Figure 1.



**Fig 1:-**The implementation of action research using the Kolb Cycle Model

This study adopted the quantitative method for data analysis because the results can be presented in tables and graphs and it is conclusive (Rajasekar, Philominathan & Chinnathambi, 2013). Data were collected for this study through the use of pre and post questionnaire survey. All 50 participants were asked to complete a pre-perception questionnaire survey prior to being exposed to the intervention. After the intervention was implemented for a period of 4 weeks during English lessons, each of the participants was then asked to complete a post-perception survey using the same questionnaire template. Comparative analysis was carried out to find out the difference in the findings of the pre and post questionnaire survey. The process of designing, personalising and implementing SmartForms is shown in Figure 2.



**Fig 2:-**The process of designing, personalising and implementing SmartForms

**Results:-**

The data collected from the items found in the pre-perception and post-perception survey are tabulated in the first section. Then the findings are further analysed descriptively in the second section.

**Table 1:-**Comparison of the findings for pre and post-perception questionnaire survey

No.	Items	Pre-perception		Post-perception	
			No. of participants (%)		No. of participants (%)
1.	How do you feel about lessons in English?	fun	12 (24)	38 (76)	
		boring	37 (74)	7 (14)	
		others	1 (2)	5 (10)	
2.	How do you like to complete your homework (the assessment tasks)?	on the computer	24 (48)	30 (60)	
		on exercise books	26 (52)	20 (40)	
3.	Do you like/want to be assessed or learn English through the use of SmartForms?	Yes	18 (36)	39 (78)	
		No	8 (16)	6 (12)	
		Maybe	24 (48)	5 (10)	
4.	Do you like/want to be assessed or learn other subjects through the use of SmartForms?	Yes	16 (32)	26 (52)	
		No	14 (28)	10 (20)	
		Maybe	20 (40)	14 (28)	
5.	Why do you like/want to be assessed or learn through the use of SmartForms? (Participants can choose more than 1 answer)	I will not feel bored.	15 (38.5)	23 (46.9)	
		I can watch videos and look at pictures.	21 (53.8)	24 (49)	
		I can check my own mistakes when doing the task.	13 (33.3)	24 (49)	
		I can go online to look for answers.	11 (28.2)	16 (32.7)	

Based on the findings in Table 1, it is obvious that there was a significant change in the perception of the pupils before and after the use of SmartForms in the language assessment process during the English lessons. Item 1 shows that there was a notable increment of 26 pupils post-intervention who felt that learning English is 'fun' when SmartForm were being used during the assessment stage of the lesson. For item 2, when pupils were asked about their choice for task completion, the post-study result shows that 30 pupils enjoyed completing their assessment work 'on the computer' rather than on the exercise books as compared to only 24 pupils for pre-study. In addition, item 3 reflects that there was a substantial increment of 21 pupils who would opt to be assessed and learn English through the use of SmartForms after they were exposed to the intervention.

Based on the data collected for item 5 on why pupils want to be assessed or learn through the use of SmartForms, there was an increment of 8 pupils who agreed that they would 'not feel bored' when using SmartForms to complete their assessment tasks post-intervention. This increase in interest and engagement of the pupils is further supported by the data collected for item 4 where more than half of the participants, 26 pupils agreed that they were willing to learn and be assessed in other subjects through the use of SmartForms. Moreover, 24 pupils stated their reason for wanting to use SmartForms as being able to 'watch videos and look at pictures'. Further analysis on item 5 highlights that pupils want to use SmartForms because they can 'check their own mistakes' (increment of 11 pupils post-intervention) and 'go online to look for the answer' (increment of 5 pupils post-intervention) when doing the assessment task.

### **Discussion:-**

This study provides research-based evidence to support the idea of incorporating technology into the teaching and learning process of language learning, in particular, the language assessment process. Yunus (2013) maintains that the integration of ICT in the teaching of ESL reading and writing promotes autonomous learning and independent work habits. In context, the significant increase in the number of pupils for item 1 to item 3 indicates that pupils find being assessed through the use of SmartForms has elevated their interest in the English lessons. In other words, when pupils are being assessed through computer-assisted means, they would be more engaged and motivated to learn and complete the tasks given. The findings from item 5 reflect that more pupils have started to be aware and take responsibility for their own learning when working with SmartForms. They could go online to check for the meaning of new words that they came across and even look up for more information when they are unsure about their own knowledge about a particular topic given. Besides that, working with SmartForms has proven to be able to engage the visual learners more effectively as they were exposed to more videos and pictures during the completion of the assessment tasks. Pupils could also correct their own errors on-the-spot independently or after peer review or after getting feedback from the teacher before submitting their response online. In this way, pupils would no longer find the process of completing language assessment tasks monotonous like that of the experience with completing tasks on exercise books and worksheets. Instead, it would be more engaging and collaborative in nature.

In line with the findings of this study, it was found that there were positive changes in the perception of the participants towards the incorporation of SmartForms during the assessment stage of the lessons before and after the study. Hence, it can be said that the implementation of SmartForms is successful in bringing positive impacts towards increasing pupils' interest and engagement in the process of completing the language assessment tasks. In support, Yunus et.al. (2009) and Musheer (2018) assert that working with ICT enhances learners' motivation to learn and accomplish tasks because they are allowed to break free from the traditional method of learning. In other words, if ICT is used effectively, it will bring about a positive impact in the teaching and learning process in the language classrooms, and on students' academic performance at large.

### **Conclusion:-**

The incorporation of ICT into the teaching and learning process has been said to be able to fulfill and satisfy the need of the 21st-century learners (Yunus, et.al., 2010). SmartForms is an alternative to the traditional approach,

which can sometimes be considered dull and monotonous for the generation Z learners nowadays. It can be concluded that this innovation, SmartForms has been proven to increase pupils' interest and engagement during the language comprehension assessment process. In other words, SmartForms enhances learners' motivation to learn, promotes the active participation of the learners during the lesson, trains them to take charge of their own learning and helps teachers to carry out response analysis for the assessment tasks more effectively. In hindsight, this study also highlights the potential of using SmartForms as an alternative tool to evaluate comprehension skill of other languages, which will benefit not only English teachers but also teachers from other fields of expertise, course developers and other stakeholders in the education field.

### **Acknowledgment:-**

The authors gratefully acknowledge SJKC Pay Fong 3, SJKC Chung Hwa and the Faculty of Education, University Kebangsaan Malaysia.

### **References:-**

1. Alazam, A. O., Bakar, A. R., Hamzah, R., & Asmiran, S. (2012). Teachers' ICT skills and ICT integration in the classroom: the case of vocational and technical teachers in Malaysia. *Creative Education*, 3, 70.
2. Ghavifekr, S. & Rosdy, W. A. W. (2015). Teaching and learning with technology: Effectiveness of ICT integration in schools. *International Journal of Research in Education and Science*, 1(2), 175-191.
3. Kreutz, J., & Rhodin, N. (2016). The influence of ICT on learners' motivation towards learning English. *MALMÖ HÖGSKOLA*. Retrieved from <https://goo.gl/XckZfb>
4. Levy, M. (2009). Technologies in use for second language learning. *The Modern Language Journal*, 93, 769-782.
5. Lim, T.D. (2013). Analyzing Malaysian English Classrooms: Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening Teaching Strategies. (Master's Thesis). Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/1773/25020>
6. Liu, M., Moore, Z., Graham, L., & Lee, S. 2002. A Look at the Research on Computer-Based Technology Use in Second Language Learning. *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*, 34(3), 250-273.
7. Mislevy, R., Chapelle, C. A., Chung, Y. R., & Xu, J. (2008). Options for adaptivity in computer-assisted language learning and assessment. *Towards adaptive CALL: Natural language processing for diagnostic languageassessment*, 9-24.
8. Musheer, Z. 2018. ICT as a catalyst for teaching-learning process: A meta-analysis study. *International Journal of Advanced Education and Research*, 3(2), 61-64.
9. Rajasekar, S., Philominathan, P., & Chinnathambi, V. (2006). Research methodology. Retrieved from <http://arXiv preprint physics/0601009>.
10. Roessingh, H. Kover, H. R. (2002). Working with younger-arriving ESL learners in high school English: Never too late to reclaim potential. *TESL Canada Journal*, 19(2), 1-20.
11. Suvorov, R., & Hegelheimer, V. (2014). Computer-Assisted Language Testing. In A. J. Kunnan (Ed.), *The Companion to Language Assessment*, 593-613. Malden, Massachusetts: Wiley-Blackwell.
12. Salehi, H. & Salehi, Z. (2012). Integration of ICT in language teaching: Challenges and barriers. *3rd International Conference on e-Education, e-Business, e-Management and e-Learning IPEDR*, 21,215-219. Retrieved from <http://www.ipedr.com/vol27/40-IC4E%202012-F10037.pdf>
13. Yunus, M. M. (2007). Malaysian ESL teachers' use of ICT in their classrooms: expectations and realities. *ReCALL*, 19(1), 79-95. DOI: 10.1017/S0958344007000614
14. Yunus, M. M., Lubis, M. A., & Chua, P.L.. (2009). Language learning via ICT: Uses, challenges and issues. *Wseas transactions on information Science and applications*, 6(9), 1453-1467. Retrieved from <http://www.wseas.us/e-library/transactions/information/2009/29-575.pdf>
15. Yunus, M.M., Hashim, H., Embi, M.A. & Lubis, M.A. (2010). The utilization of ICT in the teaching and learning of English: 'Tell Me More'. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 9, 685-691. DOI: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.12.218
16. Yunus, M. M., Nordin, N., Salehi, H., Sun, C. H., & Embi, M. A. (2013). Pros and cons of using ICT in teaching ESL reading and writing. *International education studies*, 6(7), 119. DOI: 10.5539/ies.v6n7p119s.