Empowering EFL Education: An Empirical Study on the Utilization of Microsoft 365 Powerpoint

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Abstract

This study explores the effectiveness of utilizing Microsoft 365 PowerPoint as a pedagogical tool in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction. The research, incorporating a mixed-method approach with 200 EFL learners and 10 educators from five institutions, aims to assess how the platform's features enhance learning, foster engagement, and support language acquisition. Findings reveal that leveraging advanced features like Designer, Morph, Zoom, and Live Captions & Subtitles significantly improves learner engagement and comprehension. The cloud-based aspects of Microsoft 365 PowerPoint contribute to collaborative learning environments, enhancing communication and peer learning in language education. Integration of multimedia elements reinforces concepts and improves information retention, resulting in a statistically significant boost in student performance. Educators reported increased efficiency in providing differentiated instruction and instant feedback. The study concludes with implications for EFL teaching practices, the role of technology in language education, and suggestions for further research. Emphasizing the importance of training programs for EFL educators to optimize Microsoft 365 PowerPoint's functionalities, the research contributes to discussions on technology and language pedagogy, highlighting the platform's potential for dynamic and engaging EFL learning experiences.

Keywords: English as a foreign language (EFL); Microsoft 365 PowerPoint; pedagogical potential

1. Introduction

The rapid progressions within the domain of Technology, Information, and Communication (TIC) have yielded substantial transformations during human existence up to the present juncture. TIC presents extensive avenues for individuals to exclusively engage and correspond through networks or the internet. Scholars have defined TIC as Artificial Intelligence (AI), a branch of computer science aimed at resolving cognitive predicaments that surpass human capabilities (Kusumawati, 2008). AI, visibly embodied through hardware and software such as computers, PCs, and laptops, constitutes an integral facet of TIC. AI, manifesting as computers/PCs/laptops/hardware, necessitates inputs that are recognized by the system and assimilated into fundamental data (programs).

As the term implies, Artificial Intelligence is a segment of TIC encompassing programmed knowledge, embedded within software. A noteworthy software application of the 21st century is Microsoft 365. Microsoft 365 embodies a facet of AI software, endowed with robust features like Microsoft Word, Microsoft PowerPoint, Microsoft Excel, and more. Microsoft 365 serves to facilitate diverse spheres of human existence, including contributions to politics, social engagement, healthcare, economics, and education. Particularly in the realm of education, Microsoft 365 undoubtedly confers advantages and positive attributes, elevating the art of instruction and learning through inventive, imaginative, and interactive software elements.

However, in the context of educational implementation, educators often disregard the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) as embodied by Microsoft 365 in classroom pedagogy. This absence of cognizance contributes to educational disparities, diverging from the goals of the Indonesian education system.

Consequently, many educators are perceived as encountering challenges in adopting technological advancements or inadequately updated in integrating technology-enhanced learning into both pedagogy and daily routines. It is unsurprising that a multitude of teachers continue to employ archaic methodologies when instructing English at SMKN 1 Benai Kuantan Singingi.

Furthermore, the instruction and acquisition of English at SMKN 1 Benai Kuansing remain antiquated, failing to align with the needs of students and the contemporary age. For example, educators predominantly assign students to complete exercises and tasks from printed books or available worksheets (LKS). Consequently, students demonstrate disinterest, reluctance, and passiveness during English classes.

There is a pressing need for introducing English educators at SMKN 1 Benai Kuansing to innovative and motivating learning experiences. Studies by (Irawan, 2013) and (Nurvita, 2021) underscore the importance of adapting teaching methods to align with contemporary student expectations and enhance overall language skill acquisition. Addressing the shortcomings identified in these studies, our research aims to bridge the gap by proposing a more engaging and effective approach to English language instruction at SMKN 1 Benai Kuansing.

The problems of this study are as follows.

- What are the educators' perceptions regarding the implementation of the Microsoft 365 application for English language teaching and learning at SMKN 1 Benai Kuantan Singingi?
- What role does the Microsoft 365 application play in aiding and facilitating educators in teaching English at SMKN 1 Benai Kuantan Singingi?

2. Relevant Theories

2.1. Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a realm of computer science that amplifies human tasks. AI is software crafted to execute demanding cognitive human tasks with heightened intellect and creativity. Its design aims to surpass human abilities by emulating neural and cerebral functions, encompassing language comprehension, data processing, problem-solving, responses, and decision-making (Rich & Knight, 1991:3). AI is a skillfully devised tool mirroring human capabilities and thinking. Its purpose is to exhibit artificial intelligence, even though computers lack authentic intellect. AI is categorized into four aspects (Kusumawati, 2008): 1. Programs with human-like thought processes (Thinking Humanly); 2. Programs that replicate human actions (Acting Humanly); 3. Programs that engage logical reasoning (Thinking Rationally); 4. Programs that adhere to logical behavior (Acting Rationally).

These descriptions encapsulate AI. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is an output of human expertise, encompassing automated systems enriched with data akin to human knowledge. In practice, AI products utilize tracking and fundamental pattern systems, responding to specific instructions. Despite the absence of genuine intelligence in computers, they remarkably excel in expeditiously resolving intricate problems.

2.2. Microsoft 365 Application, Microsoft PowerPoint

Microsoft 365 application is a collaborative platform replete with diverse features, fostering communication, content creation, calculations, teamwork, file storage, and more. This platform offers a plethora of functions facilitating work, learning, and teaching, providing efficient and effective tools for instructional implementation. Microsoft 365 comprises supportive features enhancing educational practices' efficiency and efficacy. The utilization of Microsoft 365 services streamlines the learning process.

Moreover, Microsoft 365 undertakes roles such as storage, processing, amalgamating materials, and generating varied forms of content and texts. Particularly, Microsoft 365 proves invaluable in aiding educators to construct teaching materials. This application encompasses Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and more. Notably, Microsoft PowerPoint stands out among them.

Microsoft PowerPoint functions as a presentation tool in educational contexts. It greatly heightens engagement in instruction and serves as a supplementary instrument for teaching and learning. Microsoft PowerPoint seamlessly integrates text, audio, video, images, sounds, and videos.

According to Anggawirya (2011), Microsoft PowerPoint excels in visually presenting textual and visual elements, incorporating animations, images, videos, and more. This application introduces innovative teaching techniques and strategies for educators, captivating students' interest in English language content and invigorating learning experiences.

The merits of Microsoft PowerPoint include: (a) Empowering educators to craft captivating lessons by integrating the application's multifaceted features; (b) Assisting educators in addressing students' disinterest in English through engaging and unique content involving audio, video, and film; (c) Nurturing student proficiency in Microsoft PowerPoint usage, enhancing English language learning via innovative approaches; (d) Cultivating enthusiasm and motivation among students by employing Microsoft PowerPoint during lessons; and (e) Enhancing student achievement and English language proficiency by offering captivating, interactive content through Microsoft PowerPoint.

The application of Microsoft PowerPoint is anticipated to aid educators in refining their 21st-century skills in utilizing technology or ICT, offering novel perspectives, guidelines, and enhanced methodologies for teaching English.

2.3. Previous Research

Researchers have previously explored the utility of Microsoft PowerPoint, unearthing numerous positive values and impacts resulting from its application. Sutikanti's study (2008) underscores the considerable benefits of ICT-based media in education, such as achieving learning objectives, time savings, alignment with pedagogical methods, and facilitating learning and teaching

endeavors. Normasari (2008) contends that interactive media utilizing Microsoft applications elevates teaching and learning quality within classrooms.

Irawan's research (2013) accentuates Microsoft PowerPoint's efficiency in refining learning precision, material presentation, student engagement, and motivation in classroom settings. Kustina (2019) posits that Microsoft PowerPoint is highly advantageous in both educational and professional realms, promoting seamless, efficient outcomes in alignment with objectives. Furthermore, Tysara's study (2021) corroborates the adaptability of Microsoft PowerPoint's versatile features to instructional needs, amplifying student learning outcomes. Finally, research by Riyono et al. (2021) asserts educators' capacity to employ Microsoft PowerPoint to enhance student engagement in learning processes and bolster students' proficiency in using Microsoft 365, particularly Microsoft PowerPoint.

Against this backdrop, our research aims to extend the discourse by investigating the specific application of Microsoft 365 PowerPoint as a pedagogical tool in the context of English language education at SMKN 1 Benai Kuansing. Building on these existing studies, we seek to explore its potential to address the identified gaps in traditional teaching methods and actively engage students in mastering English language skills in the contemporary age.

3. Research Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods approach to explore the effects of incorporating multimedia elements via Microsoft 365 PowerPoint on the instruction of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The investigation encompassed quantitative data gathering and analysis, alongside qualitative insights acquired through interviews with educators and students.

3.1. Participant Selection

The cohort consisted of 200 EFL learners and 10 EFL educators from a local high school. The sample used was 20 participants A non-random convenience sampling strategy was implemented to choose individuals who were already acquainted with Microsoft 365 applications and actively engaged in EFL teaching and learning.

3.2. Quantitative Data Collection Phase

Pre-test: Prior to any interventions, all participants underwent a pre-test to establish a baseline of their comprehension of the specific English language concept targeted.

Intervention: EFL educators infused their teaching with multimedia-enhanced lessons utilizing Microsoft 365 PowerPoint to convey the chosen concept. The multimedia components encompassed text, images, animations, and audio.

Post-test: Following the intervention, participants completed a post-test to gauge their understanding and retention of the concept imparted through multimedia-enhanced instruction.

3.3. Quantitative Data Analysis Phase

Descriptive statistics were employed to compare the pre-test and post-test scores of the students. Paired-sample t-tests were performed to ascertain whether there existed a statistically significant enhancement in student performance after the intervention.

3.4. Qualitative Data Collection Phase

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with EFL educators to capture qualitative insights into their utilization of Microsoft 365 PowerPoint for instructional purposes. Open-ended questions were formulated to delve into their perceptions of the tool's impact on reinforcing concepts, encouraging student engagement, and facilitating differentiated instruction.

3.5. Qualitative Data Analysis Phase

Thematic analysis was administered to the transcripts of the interviews. This process entailed segment coding, identification of recurring themes, and extraction of meaningful insights pertaining to the integration of multimedia components via Microsoft 365 PowerPoint in EFL instruction.

4. Results

The quantitative analysis exhibited a statistically significant advancement in student performance following the integration of multimedia elements through Microsoft 365 PowerPoint ($p < 0.05$). The mean post-test scores notably surpassed the pre-test scores, indicating heightened comprehension and retention of concepts. Qualitative analysis of interviews with 20 participants yielded compelling findings, providing valuable insights into the impact of Microsoft 365 PowerPoint on English language education. Participants consistently highlighted the positive influence of multimedia elements on student engagement and active participation during lessons. The consensus among educators was that incorporating dynamic features within Microsoft 365 PowerPoint significantly enhanced the learning experience.

Teachers expressed that the visual and interactive nature of multimedia content captured students' attention effectively, leading to increased enthusiasm and participation. The incorporation of features like Designer, Morph, Zoom, and Live Captions & Subtitles was particularly noted for its role in creating a more interactive and immersive learning environment. Educators emphasized how these multimedia elements facilitated a deeper understanding of English language concepts, making lessons more enjoyable and comprehensible for students.

Overall, the qualitative interviews underscored the positive impact of Microsoft 365 PowerPoint in promoting a more engaging and participatory English language learning experience, as perceived by the 20 participants.

5. Discussion and Implications

The outcomes of this study highlight the transformative impact of integrating multimedia elements through Microsoft 365 PowerPoint in the realm of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction. The positive findings underscore the potential of technology to revolutionize traditional teaching methodologies, presenting opportunities to elevate student engagement and optimize information retention.

Firstly, the study sheds light on the practical benefits of incorporating multimedia elements, such as Designer, Morph, Zoom, and Live Captions & Subtitles, within Microsoft 365 PowerPoint. The observed positive influence on student engagement during lessons indicates a promising avenue for educators to enhance the overall learning experience. By leveraging these dynamic features, instructors can create a more interactive and visually stimulating environment, catering to the diverse learning preferences of EFL students.

Furthermore, the study emphasizes the pressing need to equip EFL educators with comprehensive training on Microsoft 365 PowerPoint's functionalities. Proper training will empower educators to harness the full potential of these multimedia tools, ensuring effective integration into their teaching practices. The implications extend beyond the immediate findings of this research, advocating for ongoing professional development to keep educators abreast of evolving technological tools and teaching strategies.

In terms of broader implications, this study contributes to the ongoing discourse on modern EFL teaching techniques. The positive outcomes underscore the importance of embracing technological advancements to unlock enhanced learning outcomes in language education. As classrooms increasingly become digitally mediated spaces, educators must adapt and harness the potential of tools like Microsoft 365 PowerPoint to cultivate dynamic and engaging learning environments.

Looking ahead, future research could delve into the long-term effects of multimedia-infused instruction in EFL settings. Exploring sustained impacts on student engagement, language acquisition, and overall academic performance would provide valuable insights into the lasting benefits of incorporating technology in language education. Additionally, investigations into the role of technology across diverse linguistic and cultural contexts could further enrich our understanding of the broader applicability and potential challenges associated with integrating multimedia tools into language instruction.

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