



VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT OF ESL STUDENTS
USING ENGLISH SUBTITLED MOVIE CLIPS

BY

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ABSTRACT

As the English language proficiency level of students in Malaysia is still worrying, there is a need to find out the causes of such issue and to solve them effectively. One of the causes found to be the lack of vocabulary knowledge that students possessed. Hence, this study aimed to determine the effects of using English-subtitled movie clips for vocabulary development on public secondary school students. This study adopted a mixed-mode approach combining quantitative and qualitative methods. For the quantitative study, a quasi-experimental design was employed that consisted one class of Form 1 students as participants. The experiment was done three times over a period of two weeks where English-subtitled movie clips were shown in the lessons. The results showed that there was a significant increase for each session. However, there was no significant increase over time between the three sessions. As for the qualitative part, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 6 students. It was found that the students had positive perceptions on using English-subtitled movie clips to learn vocabulary and that they would learn better if there was guidance from teachers when using the material. Nevertheless, the results from this study suggest that using English-subtitled movie clips can be an effective option for teachers to utilize in their lessons.

خلاصة البحث

يعاني كثير من الطلاب المازيين من ضعف في مستوى في اللغة الانجليزية، لذلك وجدت الباحثة حاجة ملحة لمعرفة أسباب هذه المشكلة وايجاد حلول جذرية لها. و من الأسباب التي تم العثور عليها هو قلة المفردات الإنجليزية التي يملكها الطلاب. لذلك هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى تحديد تأثير استخدام مقاطع الفيديو التي تحتوي على شريط كتابة باللغة الإنجليزية لتطوير المفردات لطلاب المدارس الثانوية العامة الحكومية. حيث تألفت هذه الدراسة من نوعين من مناهج البحث و هي منهج كمي ونوعي. فيما يتعلق بالمنهج الكمي، فقد طبقت على فصل واحد من طلاب مستوى اول، تم استخدام تصميم شبه تجريبي مع المشاركين. و تم إجراء التجربة ثلاث مرات على مدى أسبوعين. أظهرت النتائج أن هناك زيادة ذات دلالة احصائية لكل جلسة. لكن، لم تكن هناك زيادة ذات دلالة احصائية مع مرور الوقت بين الجلسات الثلاث. أما بالنسبة للمنهج النوعي، أجريت مقابلات شبه منظمة (مقننة) مع 6 طلاب. وقد وُجد أن الطلاب لديهم تصورات إيجابية حول استخدام مقاطع الفيديو التي تحتوي على شريط كتابة باللغة الإنجليزية لتعلم المفردات. إضافة إلى ذلك، ذكروا أنها كانت مرشدة لهم للتعلم بشكل افضل. أخيرا تشير نتائج هذه الدراسة إلى أن استخدام مقاطع الفيديو التي تحتوي على شريط كتابة باللغة الإنجليزية يمكن أن يكون خيارًا فعالاً للمعلمين لاستخدامه في دروسهم.

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion, it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Education.

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I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Abstract | ii |
| Abstract in Arabic | iii |
| Approval Page | iv |
| Declaration | v |
| Copyright Page..... | vi |
| Acknowledgment | vii |
| List of Tables | x |
| List of Figures | xi |
| CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 1.1 Background of the Study | 1 |
| 1.2 Statement of the Problem..... | 4 |
| 1.3 Research Objectives..... | 6 |
| 1.4 Research Questions..... | 6 |
| 1.5 Conceptual and Theoretical Framework | 7 |
| 1.6 Operational Definitions of Terms | 9 |
| 1.6.1 Vocabulary | 9 |
| 1.6.2 Vocabulary Development | 9 |
| 1.6.3 ESL Students..... | 9 |
| 1.6.4 Movie Clips..... | 10 |
| CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW..... | 11 |
| 2.1 Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) in Education | 11 |
| 2.2 Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) in Teaching and Learning of a Language..... | 15 |
| 2.3 Multimedia and Principles of Language Learning | 20 |
| 2.4 Mayer’s Cognitive Multimedia Learning Theory..... | 23 |
| 2.5 Importance of Vocabulary in Language Skills | 27 |
| 2.6 Incidental Vocabulary Learning | 30 |
| 2.7 Krashen’s Input Hypothesis..... | 32 |
| 2.8 Previous Related Research | 33 |
| CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY..... | 38 |
| 3.1 Research Design | 38 |
| 3.2 Participants | 38 |
| 3.3 Sample Size | 40 |
| 3.4 Instrumentation | 40 |
| 3.5 Instrumentation of Qualitative Study (Interview) | 42 |
| 3.6 Materials | 43 |
| 3.6.1 Movie Clips..... | 43 |
| 3.7 Sampling Procedure..... | 43 |
| 3.8 The Pilot Study | 44 |
| 3.9 Research Procedure | 47 |
| 3.10 Delimitation of the Study..... | 48 |
| 3.11 Limitation of the Study..... | 48 |
| 3.12 Data Analysis..... | 49 |
| 3.13 Internal Validity..... | 50 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND FINDINGS | 52 |
| 4.1 Introduction..... | 52 |
| 4.2 Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables | 52 |
| 4.3 RQ1 (A): Statistically Significant Difference of Scores in Pre-test and Post-test..... | 53 |
| 4.4 RQ1 (B): Increase of Scores for the Three Times of Treatments..... | 54 |
| 4.5 RQ3: Perceptions of Students on Using English-Subtitled Movie Clips to Learn Vocabulary..... | 56 |
| 4.5.1 Preferences on the Movie Clips | 57 |
| 4.5.2 Video with Texts Versus Text Only | 58 |
| 4.5.3 Learning Vocabulary from the English-subtitled Movie Clips..... | 59 |
| 4.5.4 Subtitles on the Movie Clips..... | 61 |
| CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS | 63 |
| 5.1 Discussions | 63 |
| 5.2 Recommendations..... | 66 |
| REFERENCES | 67 |
| APPENDIX A: APPROVAL LETTER TO CONDUCT RESEARCH FROM EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND RESEARCH DIVISION (MINISTRY OF EDUCATION MALAYSIA) | 78 |
| APPENDIX B: APPROVAL LETTER FROM THE EDUCATION STATE DEPARTMENT OF WILAYAH PERSEKUTUAN KUALA LUMPUR (WPKL) | 79 |
| APPENDIX C: REQUEST LETTER OF PERMISSION FOR THE PRINCIPAL OF SMK TAMAN SETIWANGSA TO CONDUCT RESEARCH | 80 |
| APPENDIX D: BLANK SAMPLE OF VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE SCALE USED FOR QUANTITATIVE DATA | 81 |
| APPENDIX E: SAMPLE OF STUDENTS' VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE SCALE USED DURING PILOT STUDY (PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST) | 83 |
| APPENDIX F: SAMPLE OF STUDENTS' VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE SCALE USED IN SESSION ONE (PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST) | 87 |
| APPENDIX G: SAMPLE OF STUDENTS' VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE SCALE USED IN SESSION TWO (PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST) | 91 |
| APPENDIX H: SAMPLE OF STUDENTS' VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE SCALE USED IN SESSION THREE (PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST) | 95 |
| APPENDIX I: TRANSCRIPTION OF INTERVIEW FOR QUALITATIVE DATA | 99 |

LIST OF TABLES

| <u>Table No.</u> | | <u>Page No.</u> |
|------------------|--|-----------------|
| 2.1 | Working Memory. Reprinted from Multimedia Learning (p.44), by R.E. Mayer, 2001. Cambridge England: Cambridge University Press. Copyright 2001 by Cambridge University Press. Reprinted with permission | 26 |
| 3.1 | The Intact-group Pretest-posttest Design | 38 |
| 3.2 | Scoring System by Wesche and Paribakht (1996) | 40 |
| 3.3 | List of Vocabularies Used in the Research | 41 |
| 3.4 | List of Vocabularies Used in the Research (shaded) | 46 |
| 3.5 | Shapiro-Wilk Test Result | 49 |
| 3.6 | Potential Threats to Internal Validity and Controlling Measures | 51 |
| 4.1 | Results for Descriptive Analysis | 52 |
| 4.2 | Results for Paired Sample t-test | 53 |
| 4.3 | Mauchly's Test of Sphericity | 54 |
| 4.4 | Tests of Within-Subjects Effects | 55 |
| 4.5 | Pairwise Comparisons | 55 |
| 4.6 | Results from Thematic Analysis of the Interview | 56 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| <u>Figure No.</u> | | <u>Page No.</u> |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1.1 | Conceptual Framework | 7 |
| 1.2 | Theoretical Framework | 8 |
| 3.1 | Vocabulary Scores for Pilot Study | 44 |
| 3.2 | Research Procedure | 47 |

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

English is regarded as one of the most spoken languages in the world (Marlina & Xu, 2018) and several countries have regard English language as a second language, including Malaysia (Thirusanku & Yunus, 2017). In the latest Malaysian Education Blueprint, the second (2nd) shift mentions that to transform the education system, every child needs to be competent in Bahasa Malaysia as well as in English (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2013). This denotes that English is highly regarded in the Malaysian context and myriad of ways need to be carried out in order to attain a better education system, One of which is to integrate technology in the teaching and learning process. This is what that hadbeen written in the seventh (7th) shift of the blueprint in which technology needs to be maximised to ensure high quality teaching in all subjects, including English.

In teaching English language, one cannot escape from relating it to communication as it is the main purpose of language (Ahmad, 2016; Sirbu, 2015). In communication, it is important to note that learners perceive a language as recurring patterns of phrases and words (Ellis, 1997) and, as observed by Ellis (1997), one may be able to speak, listen and understand a language effectively with sufficient vocabulary (Ahmad, 2016). Although vocabulary is regarded as the basic component of a language, it is important in every stage that the learner of language to develop their vocabulary corpus not just at the beginning (Naeimi & Foo, 2015). In other words, insufficient vocabulary may actually affect language acquisition and use (Asgari & Mustapha, 2012).

It is noted that the most prominent skills in learning a language are the four skills which are listening, speaking, reading and writing but vocabulary knowledge is as important a skill in any language. This is agreed by Min (2013) in which he mentioned that vocabulary knowledge is an important aspect to communication even if the learner is competent in other aspects. He added that in order to become a successful language learner and to adapt in an environment that uses English, it is vital that one keeps increasing his vocabulary knowledge. In relation to this, Alharbi (2015) says that the process of building vocabulary is critical for language learners, including English in order to understand the communication especially of the native speakers. This goes for both spoken and written forms of the language in which this is also agreed by Sirbu (2015).

To adhere to this context, one of five aspects of Krashen's theory of second language acquisition is taken into consideration, that is, the input hypothesis. According to Krashen, the acquisition of language, including vocabulary in specific, is based on the substantial amount of language that people are exposed to and this is what he called as comprehensible input (Abukhattala, 2013). Bycomprehensible input, it means that the messages received from the input must also be understood at one point but not in overall manner. The input is the fundamental environment that enables learners to acquire language within the context exposed. To further explain this, Krashen designed a formula of $i+1$ in which the i is the current level of language competency and 1 is the level beyond it. When learners are exposed to the $i+1$ input, they are able to increase their competency (Brown, 2007; Krashen, 1982)

Therefore, in order to acquire a language and in this case the vocabulary, context is essential. Krashen emphasizes the idea of having contexts from different aspects such as the language context and also the learner's knowledge of the world in

order for a person to be able to acquire the language (Brown, 2007). He also stated that the ideal nature of language acquisition is when it happens subconsciously (Krashen, 2010 as cited in Latifi et al., 2013). This is when incidental vocabulary learning takes place.

This study explores on learning vocabulary incidentally and to a certain degree it subconsciously to Krashen's claim. Rott (2012) defines this learning process as a process of "picking up words" as a learner goes through extensive listening, speaking, reading and writing activities. This process happens when a learner is focused into learning the major aspect of the language at that time and learning vocabulary simultaneously (Zeeland & Schmitt, 2013). In order for this process to function, there must be repetitions of words and taking into considerations that the amount of vocabulary occurred must be extensive and substantial to a certain degree (Webb, 2014 & Zeeland & Schmitt, 2013).

As discussed, the best way to learn vocabulary is to learn incidentally as claimed by Krashen and also by providing the appropriate context for better understanding of the words. Schmitt (2000) recognizes the meaning aspect of a word which is one of the important lexical components for using the word appropriately according to context (as cited in Wang, 2013). Learning vocabulary without context could impede the learning process in which it could pose a heavy load for the learners to process the meanings of the vocabulary and thus resulting in their lack of interest in learning the language (Sirmandi & Sardareh, 2016) Hence, with the aid of elements such as pictures and sounds, like in movie clips, they would help learners create mental images and "...provide a concrete picture of the words" (p. 1274, Mousavi & Gholami, 2014) In addition, the issue can also be related to Mayer's Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning in which he claims that words are better learned by people

with the assistance of pictures (Mayer, 2014). He further explained in his book entitled *The Cambridge Handbook of Multimedia Learning* that due to advancement of technologies, “pictures” mentioned before also include a more dynamic graphics such as videos and animations. In this case, movies are also a part of the dynamic graphics mentioned. To support this, Ramos (2015) found that L2 learners acquire vocabulary through incidental learning and he suggested that there also should be a focus on learning vocabulary incidentally through technology means.

Therefore, to be at par with the mentioned shifts in the Malaysian Education Blueprint, it is paramount for students in Malaysia to also develop their English vocabulary in order to be competent in English language. One of the ways to achieve this is by taking Mayer’s Cognitive Theory of Multimedia into consideration in which this is also related to the seventh (7th) shift that is integrating technology to maximise learning experience. Hence, this study seeks to be aligned with what is inscribed in the Malaysian Education Blueprint.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It is unfortunate that even after almost 11 years of learning English in school, still much of the Malaysian students’ English proficiency level needs to be improved (Thirusanku & Yunus, 2017). There are various factors contributing to the students’ low proficiency level. Lacking in vocabulary is one of the main reasons that is hindering the students to master other language skills which are listening, speaking, reading and writing and consequently inhibiting the language proficiency (Kaur, 2012). This is because when the students have little vocabulary known to them then they are not able to use them or even manage to understand the meaning conveyed (Varatharajoo et al., 2015).

Regrettably, it is found that students in Malaysia have insufficient vocabulary size in order to pursue their studies especially in English-medium institutions (Ahmad, Md Yunus, & Hasan, 2016; Ashrafzadeh & Nimehchisalem, 2015; Harji et al., 2015; Manan, Ali, & Shamsudin, 2013). It is agreed by many that vocabulary instruction is important and that teachers should play a role in developing the students' vocabulary to prepare them in continuing their studies at a higher level of education (Ahmad et al., 2016; Alfaki, 2015; Ashrafzadeh & Nimehchisalem, 2015; Harji et al., 2015; Manan et al., 2013; Mohd Nasir et al., 2017). Without sufficient vocabulary from secondary schools, students could face difficulties in improving their competency in English and simultaneously could face challenges in pursuing higher education level especially in English-medium institutions.

In addressing this problem, one of the ways that can be used by secondary school teachers to develop the students' vocabulary is by using English-subtitled movie clips. There have been studies on the effectiveness of using subtitled movie clips for English vocabulary acquisition for ESL and EFL learners and the results are mostly positive (Nasab & Motlagh, 2017; Sabouri & Zohrabi, 2015; Bavaharji, Alavi, & Letchumanan, 2014; Gorjian, 2014; Karakaş & Sariçoban, 2012). However, very few studies have been found on public secondary school context in Malaysia. One of the studies was a research by Amalina (2017) on using subtitled movie clips on phrasal verb recognition. Other than that, there are not many research using subtitled movie clips on learning vocabulary can be found in a public secondary school context in Malaysia. Hence, this particular research is aimed to fill the research gap found. Public school context is chosen because despite the nation's aspiration for the students to master English language (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2013), they are still lacking in terms of mastering English language (Thirusanku & Yunus, 2017). Hence,

it is important to seek solution especially in the public-school setting to achieve the aspiration embedded in the Malaysian Education Blueprint. As for choosing secondary school, the material (movie clips) used in this research requires a higher level of reading ability than of primary school students, hence, it is more suitable for secondary school level.

Therefore, this study intends to explore one of the ways of developing vocabulary which is by using English-subtitled movie clips in a Malaysian public secondary school context.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To find out whether watching English-subtitled movie clips affects the students' vocabulary knowledge.
 - a) To investigate whether there is a statistically significant difference of vocabulary scores in the pre-test and post-test.
 - b) To investigate whether there is an increase of vocabulary gain scores over the three times of treatment.
2. To find out the students' perception on watching English-subtitled movie clips to learn vocabulary.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Does watching English-subtitled movie clips affect the students' vocabulary knowledge?
 - a) Is there a statistically significant difference of vocabulary scores in the pre-test and post-test?

- b) Is there an increase of vocabulary gain scores over the three times of treatment?
2. What is the students' perception on watching English-subtitled movie clips to learn vocabulary?

1.5 CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

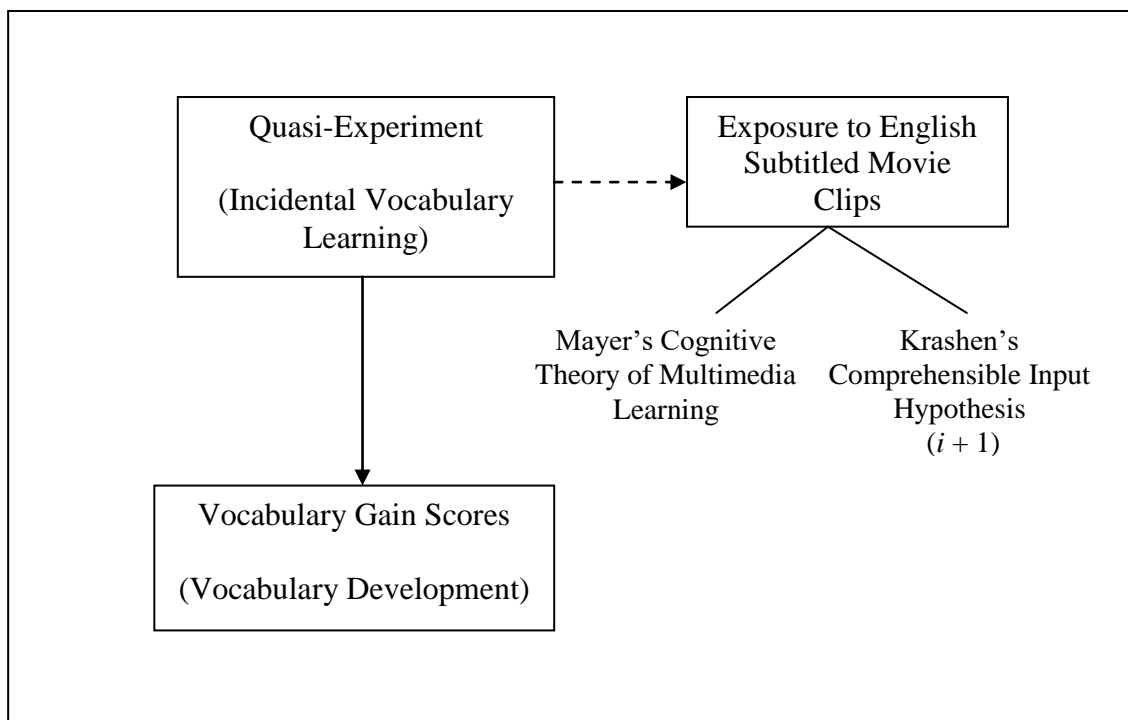


Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework

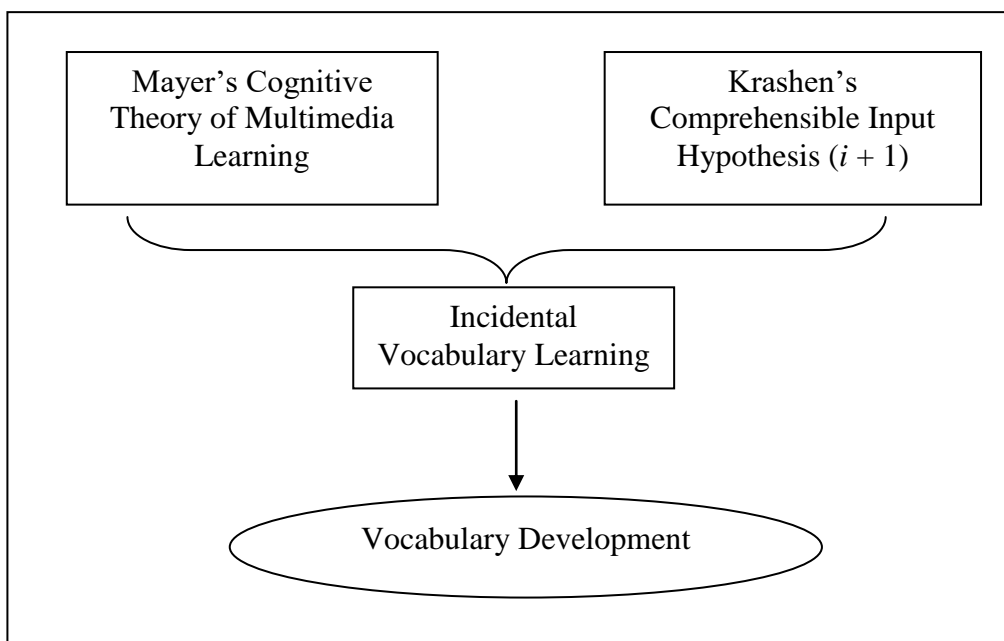


Figure 1.2 Theoretical Framework

The figures above illustrate Conceptual and Theoretical Framework of this study in which show the relationship of the variables and the theories related. In this study, the Incidental Vocabulary Learning occurs during the Quasi-Experiment employed. The participants were exposed to the English-subtitled movie clips in which Mayer's Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning and Krashen's Comprehensible Input Hypothesis were occurring. According to Mayer (2014), multimedia in which in this case is the English-subtitled movie clips, present elements such as videos and texts as well as additional contexts in learning vocabulary. Krashen's Comprehensible Input Hypothesis explained when the participants were able to learn the vocabulary through meaningful contexts during the exposure of the movie clips. At the end, by analyzing the students' vocabulary gain scores, vocabulary development of the students was seen.

1.6 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

1.6.1 Vocabulary

Vocabulary is all the words that a person knows and uses in a particular language.

In this study, the targeted vocabulary refers to the chosen 15 words of the pre-test and post-test taken from the themes embedded in the latest curriculum specification for Form 1 students – or in short, taken from the Form 1 Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Menengah (KSSM) provided by the Ministry of Education, Malaysia (2016). The list is based on the Common European Framework of Reference and the words are categorized in certain areas.

1.6.2 Vocabulary Development

Vocabulary development refers to the facilitation of vocabulary acquisition in building up the vocabulary knowledge or repertoire (Sibanda & Baxin, 2018).

The development of vocabulary in this study was measured by analyzing the pre-test and post-test of the experimental and control group. The instrument that was used is the Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS) originally developed by Wesche and Paribakht (1996). This scale measured the development of vocabulary depth varying from unfamiliarity of words to word recognition to the ability of word usage according to context (Harkio & Pietilä, 2016; Teng, 2014). Further description of the instrument is explained in Chapter 3.

1.6.3 ESL Students

English as a Second Language or ESL students are learners who learn English as their second language. For Malaysians, English is a language that is used for communication other than Malay language.

In this study, ESL students are students in a public school in Kuala Lumpur whom were chosen as participants and respondents.

1.6.4 Movie Clips

Movies clips are split versions of moving or motion pictures which were recorded and published to the public to be watched in cinemas and television.

For this study, movie clips were 5-minute clips from a movie called “Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs”. These clips were played to the participants using a projector from a laptop.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY (ICT) IN EDUCATION

In the 21st century, it is inevitable that information and technology has been a significant part of our everyday life. ICT has played many direct and indirect roles in many situations such as entertainment, professional requirements in workplaces and more importantly in education.

In the recent International Conference on ICT and Post-2015 Education in which a number of Ministers of Education from various countries attended, one of the preambles of the conference is for the need to equip education with ICT in order to strengthen the education system by 2030 (UNESCO, 2015). In recent years as well, it can be seen that many countries have acknowledged the importance of ICT in education in order to increase the development of their respective countries.

In the Belgium education system, one of its national strategies includes inculcating the use of ICT in different levels of institutions. There have been researches and trainings regarding the utilisation of ICT and the Belgian government has been supporting the primary and secondary levels with computer hardware (European Schoolnet & University of Liège, 2013). In Finland, whose education system is regarded as one of the best in the world. The role of ICT has been acknowledged as significant. In a book published by The Finnish National Fund for Research and Development entitled *The Challenges of ICT in Finnish Education*, ICT has been incorporated into the system from pre-primary to tertiary education (Lehtinen & Sinko, 1999).

In Malaysia, the first and biggest initiative to implement ICT in education is the establishment of Smart Schools which was launched in 1997. The Ministry gave provision for computer laboratories for schools to reduce the digital literacy gap between national regions. Hence, it can be seen that the government has taken steps to develop ICT in education in order to achieve Vision 2020 even before the implementation of the latest blueprint (Raman & Mohamed, 2013). Based on the latest Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013-2025, one of the shifts that the Ministry of Education is trying to make in the system is to “leverage ICT to scale up quality learning across Malaysia” (p.E-20, Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2013). The Ministry explains in the blueprint that ICT needs to be omnipresent in schools in order to achieve a system of quality. It means that a successful education system is an education that enables ICT to be integrated efficiently into lessons. The ministry also mentioned that success means to be able to use ICT meaningfully and that there should be no divide between the urban and rural areas in the use of ICT.

Since the implementation of the blueprint, there had been a number of researches done on the use of ICT by teachers in primary and secondary schools. One of the most prominent researches found was conducted on the teachers’ perception regarding ICT integration and the level of ICT usage among the teachers themselves (Umar & Hassan, 2015). In this research, the number of samples was 2661 teachers representing the entire population of school teachers in Malaysia. Despite positive views on the use of ICT and how ICT improved their teaching, teachers’ integration of ICT was still at a low level. The results also showed the low level of ICT usage at the pre-integration level such as preparing lessons or finding resources online. This was unfortunate as even after 20 years of promoting ICT usage. The main reason behind the low level of ICT integration was due to time constraint. The majority of the

teachers agreed that they did not have enough time to conduct lessons using ICT as the tools were not readily available in the classroom. Each classroom is not equipped with ICT devices, therefore, they need time to acquire the tools to bring it to the classroom.

Despite the positive perceptions from the teachers on ICT usage, they themselves had either low or just satisfactory level on the use of ICT in teaching different language skills such as literature, reading and writing. An example of another research was a case study on ICT integration in teaching writing in secondary school context (Yunus et al., 2013). Based on the interview of four English teachers in Kuala Lumpur in the case study, the teachers agree that using ICT in writing improves vocabulary and meaningful learning for their students. However, they felt that it was difficult to manage the classroom when using ICT and that the students tended to use short forms in their writings. There have also been a few studies on ICT and English literature. One of them is done in the state of Sarawak focusing on secondary school teachers (P. Shah & Empungan, 2015). The level of ICT used by the teachers was satisfactory.

Nonetheless, it is still paramount to integrate ICT in education in this 21st century. Regarding this issue, UNESCO conducted an Asia-Pacific Ministerial Forum on ICT and Education in February 2017. Based on the report, teachers were required to have sufficient skills on using ICT as it helped improve students' learning experiences to better achieve the learning outcomes and provided students with greater access to knowledge (Kim, 2017). This statement could be depicted by a few studies conducted in Malaysian schools.

A research was conducted in Selangor by Ziden, Ismail, Spian, and Kumutha (2011) to investigate the relationship between the use of ICT and students'