

**VOCABULARY LEARNING AMONG YOUNG  
ESL LEARNERS USING TABLET-BASED  
DIGITAL STORYTELLING**

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**UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA  
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**VOCABULARY LEARNING AMONG YOUNG  
ESL LEARNERS USING TABLET-BASED  
DIGITAL STORYTELLING**

by

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

ESL	English as a Second Language
ICT	Information and Communication Technology

**PEMBELAJARAN PERBENDAHARAAN KATA DI KALANGAN PELAJAR  
MUDA ESL DENGAN MENGGUNAKAN PENCERITAAN DIGITAL  
BERASASKAN TABLET**

**ABSTRAK**

Kajian ini memberi tumpuan kepada rekapipta dan pembangunan aplikasi penceritaan digital pada tablet untuk membantu pembelajaran perbendaharaan kata di kalangan pelajar muda ESL Malaysia yang berusia 11 tahun. Selain itu, sikap, pilihan dan motivasi pelajar muda dalam menggunakan aplikasi penceritaan digital pada tablet untuk mempelajari perbendaharaan kata telah dikenal pasti. Oleh kerana penggunaan aplikasi penceritaan digital pada tablet menggalakkan pembelajaran pada waktu selepas sekolah dan pembelajaran tidak formal di luar kelas, ia adalah penting untuk melihat sikap ibu bapa dan persepsi ibu bapa terhadap penggunaan aplikasi penceritaan digital pada tablet di kalangan pelajar muda ESL dalam mempelajari perbendaharaan kata. Oleh yang demikian, kajian kes kualitatif telah digunakan sebagai rekabentuk kajian ini. Temu bual, pemerhatian dan dokumentasi telah dijalankan untuk mendapatkan maklum balas terperinci dan mendalam daripada pelajar dan ibu bapa. Hasil dapatan daripada kajian ini juga dapat mencerminkan kebaikan dan keburukan dalam pembelajaran menggunakan aplikasi multimedia interaktif ini pada tablet di kalangan pelajar muda. Walau bagaimanapun, dalam usaha untuk mengkaji keberkesanan aplikasi penceritaan digital pada tablet dalam membantu pembelajaran perbendaharaan kata di kalangan pelajar, Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test telah digunakan dan berdasarkan keputusan yang dikira oleh Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test, ia menunjukkan peningkatan yang ketara dalam skor pasca ujian



pelajar. Ini menunjukkan bahawa aplikasi penceritaan digital ini telah mencapai objektifnya untuk membantu dan meningkatkan penguasaan perbendaharaan kata pelajar. Tambahan pula, dapatan daripada kajian kualitatif juga mendedahkan bahawa kedua-dua pelajar dan ibu bapa bersikap positif terhadap penggunaan aplikasi ini. Pelajar dilihat mempunyai motivasi yang tinggi dalam pembelajaran dan lebih berminat untuk menggunakan aplikasi pembelajaran ini untuk pembelajaran perbendaharaan kata. Oleh itu, ini jelas menunjukkan bahawa aplikasi penceritaan digital yang ini bukan sahaja merupakan satu bahan pembelajaran yang berkesan dalam membantu pembelajaran perbendaharaan kata, tetapi ia juga mampu menarik minat dan memberi motivasi kepada pelajar dalam pembelajaran perbendaharaan kata. Impak pembelajaran bahasa dan faedah dalam menggunakan aplikasi penceritaan digital menunjukkan bahawa aplikasi penceritaan digital ini mampu memupuk kemahiran pelajar untuk pembelajaran abad ke-21.

# VOCABULARY LEARNING AMONG YOUNG ESL LEARNERS USING TABLET-BASED DIGITAL STORYTELLING

## ABSTRACT

This study focused on the designation and development of the digital storytelling application on tablet to aid vocabulary learning among the 11-year-old Malaysian ESL learners. In addition, the young learners' attitudes, preferences and motivations in using this digital storytelling application on tablet to learn vocabulary were identified. As the use of this digital storytelling application on tablet promotes after-school-hour and out-of-the-classroom informal learning, it is crucial to examine the parents' attitudes as well as the parents' perception towards the use of this digital storytelling application on tablet to learn vocabulary among the young ESL learners. In this regard, qualitative case study was being employed as the research design of this study. Interviews, observations and documentation were conducted in order to elicit detailed and in-depth responses from the learners and the parents. Findings from the study were also able to show the benefits and drawbacks of using this interactive multimedia learning application on tablet in learning among the young learners. Nevertheless, in order to examine the effectiveness of the digital storytelling application on tablet in facilitating vocabulary learning among the learners, the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test was performed on the learners' pre-tests and post-tests, and there were significant improvements shown in the learners' post-test scores. This shows that the digital storytelling application developed has achieved its objective in aiding and improving the learners' vocabulary mastery. Furthermore, findings from the qualitative study also revealed that both the learners and the parents felt positive

towards the use of this application. Learners were highly motivated in learning and preferred to use this learning application for vocabulary learning. Thus, this clearly shows that this digital storytelling application developed is not only an effective learning material in facilitating the learning of vocabulary, but it is also able to attract and motivate learners' interests in vocabulary learning. The language learning impacts and benefits identified from the data also shows that this digital storytelling application is able to foster learners' skills for the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

The English language is a very important language, being used internationally in this era. The role of English language has been expanding so greatly that English language has been taught and learned as a second language in countries such as Singapore and Malaysia and as a foreign language in countries such as Japan and Korea (Katsuyama, Nishigaki & Wang, 2008). English language is one of the core subjects which have been put into emphasis in the education field in Malaysia.

English language is so widely used in Malaysia especially in the education system and social communication as the English language is known as the second language here (Badrul Hisham & Kamaruzaman, 2009). In Malaysia, English language also plays an important role in social media, politics, business, employment and tourism (Mohd Faisal, 2004; Theyy & Mildred, 1999). Although English language is being taught and learned as a second language in Malaysia (Ministry of Education, 2003), learning and mastering the English language are still very important as “English is a compulsory subject in all primary and secondary schools in line with its status as a second language in Malaysia” (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 2001). As English language is being learned by the learners for eleven years from Year One to Form Five, these learners are expected to possess high level of proficiency in the English language (Norlida, Munirah, Anna Christina,

Amir Yazid, 2004). However, studies done by Andrew (2006), Mohd Faisal (2004) and Norlida et al. (2004) showed that the Malaysian learners' acquisition of the English language is still below satisfactory even though learners have been learning the language for at least eleven years of formal education. In order for the learners to achieve a good level of mastery of the English language proficiency for learners, the learning strategies and appropriate English language learning materials are very important. The learning strategies and learning materials employed and used by the learners in the learning of the English language aids to shape and motivate the learners to learn the language.

Vocabulary learning is one of the essential language skills to be learned and mastered in the learning of the English language. In the English language, sentences are made up of vocabularies, in order to convey meaning and to be comprehensible to the other English language users. In order to achieve fluency, vocabulary skill needs to be mastered by the learners. According to Wilkins (1972), "without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed". Wilkins (1972) emphasized on the importance of mastering the vocabulary skill in the English language. This is supported by Harmon (2002) and Rupley, Logan & Nichols (1999) who posited that the vocabulary skill is needed for the English language learners to make meaning and interpretation of the English sentences, the higher their (the English language learners) mastery of the vocabulary skill, the better they can interpret meaning from the sentences. Decarrio (2001) also found out that most of the studies carried out by the English language researchers and experts recently, are mostly focused on the importance of vocabulary skill in the English language. Mastering the English language vocabulary proves to be difficult,

especially in memorizing new, long and seldom used words. Qian (2002), Mezynski (1983) and Anderson & Freebody (1981) said that the main difficulty of in comprehending an English text is to infer meaning of the new words presented in the text. A learner will need to understand 2000 English common words at least in order to read a text fluently (Nation, 1990). Nation (2001) also posited that in order to achieve comprehension in reading an English text, one needs to possess at least 95% of English words. In addition, according to Lin (2002) and Segler, Pain & Sorace (2002), a lack of vocabulary leads to misunderstanding, misinterpretation and inability to comprehend an English text. Thus, possessing vocabulary skill in the English language is very important as vocabulary is the basic skill to acquire in order to understand and infer meaning from English sentences. Without the vocabulary skill, meaning is unable to be inferred from the sentences. Hence, language learning failed to be achieved.

Hence, it is important to identify one's learning strategy or learning material which enables learners to learn vocabulary effectively. Failure and ineffectiveness of using the conventional way of learning using the textbook, blackboard/whiteboard, and chalk in the ESL teaching and learning causes the educators and learners alike to resort to alternative teaching and learning approaches which are more creative, by utilizing images, songs, animations, videos and even movies as their teaching and learning materials (McGill, 2010; Orlova, 2003; C. Kelly, L. Kelly, Offner & Vorland, 2002; Burt, 1999; Tatsuki, 1998). Creative learning materials are able to provide entertainment and present novelty in ESL learning to the learners. Moreover, these materials are believed to be more engaging to the learners which are able to

engage learners to language learning. Consequently, it will be able to arouse learners' interest in learning the language.

In this era of technology, the introduction of technology in the educational setting is popular among the educators and learners. Besides being able to cater to various learning styles and strategies, the use of technology is also believed to be able to provide novelty, innovative, interesting and fun learning setting to the learners. Moreover, the use of technology promotes independent learning, a situation in which the learners are able to take charge of their own learning autonomously, without the help of educators. However, the effectiveness of the integration of technology in the classroom is highly dependent on the engagement of the learning activities to the learners. According to Trilling and Hood (1999), technologically oriented activities introduced to the learners must be able to engage the learners into learning, in a different and better way, which will not be able to achieve utilizing the traditional learning activities. Herrington et. al. (2003) stated that a successful and effective learning is often based on the engaging factor of the learning activities to the learners, the higher the degree of engagement, the more successful and effective the learning will be.

## **1.1 Issues regarding the learning of the English language in Malaysia**

### **1.1.1 The learning of English Language in Malaysia**

English is an international language, widely used and spoken by people worldwide. Hence, mastering and being able to use the language effectively are very

important, especially in places where English is a second language, for instance, Malaysia (Gills, 2002). According to the Malaysia Government Official Portal (2012), English is made as one of the compulsory subjects to be taught and learned in schools in Malaysia, thus, most of the Malaysian learners are exposed to the learning of the English language up to eleven years from Primary 1 up till Form 5. It is important for the Malaysian learners to be proficient in the English language as it helps to secure a place in the universities and one of the most important criteria in seeking a job (Nich, 2005; Ball & Chik, 2001). In 2012, the Malaysia's Ministry of Education has launched a new Blueprint on the National Education emphasizing on the importance of mastering the language. This indicated that the government is placing high importance and great emphasis on mastering the English language among the Malaysian learners and upgrading the status of the language in Malaysia.

The English language was first used extensively in schools in Malaysia in the 1970s after the language was being widely used by the media. Then, the New Economic Policy (1971-1990) implemented has decided to retain the use of the English language as the second most important language after Bahasa Malaysia – the main language of instruction to be used in the country, internationally and for economic purposes. The teaching and learning of the English language has been put into importance as it was written in the English language syllabus that “in keeping with the National Education Policy, English is taught as a second language in all government-assisted schools in the country at both the primary and secondary levels of schooling.” (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 1995, p. 1). Furthermore, in 2011, the new education policy, “Memartabatkan Bahasa Melayu Memperkukuhkan Bahasa Inggeris” (MBMMBI) is being introduced to enhance and strengthen the



teaching and learning of the English language in the Malaysian classrooms among the educators and learners alike in order to aid the learners in mastering and achieving proficiency in the English language to communicate globally and to explore the world.

The Primary School Standard Curriculum (KSSR) was introduced and officially implemented in Malaysia in 2011 as it aims to reconstruct, restructure and to enhance the current curriculum as an effort to enable the learners to acquire the sufficient knowledge and skills to face the learning challenges in the future (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2012). According to the Deputy Prime Minister, who was also the Minister of Education,

“Our goal and the purpose of the education system, is to equip our students holistically to allow them to succeed in the 21st century, with all of the opportunities and challenges that this new era presents. In order to compete with the best in the world, our education system must develop young Malaysians who are knowledgeable, think critically and creatively, have leadership skills and are able to communicate with the rest of the world”

(Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 2012c, p.viii)

KSSR categorised primary school learning into two level : Level I and Level II. Level I is for Year 1, 2 & 3 and was introduced in 2010/2011 while Level II is for Year 4, 5 & 6 and was introduced in 2014. KSSR serves as a guideline which provides the standards of the content and learning set to be achieved by the learners in a specific period and level in learning. Content standards are defined as the standards which the learners should be able achieved in the given time frame for the knowledge, skills and values. On the other hand, the learning standards are indicators

of the quality and achievements of the education to be quantified by each content standards – Reading, Writing, Arithmetic and Reasoning, designed to cater for the development of communication, spirituality, attitude and values, physical and aesthetic development, and science and technology (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 2010). The Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia (2010) also added that the KSSR employs varieties of approaches in the teaching and learning process, including games and learning outside of the classroom setting.

In the classroom setting, the English language is formally taught and learned as a core subject and the second language (L2) in all the public schools with a total of five periods of lesson per week. According to Mohd Sofi (2003), despite introducing Bahasa Malaysia as the main medium of instruction and language to be used in all the public schools, the government also stressed on the status of the English language as the second language. Hence, English language is being made as the core and the compulsory subject in all primary and secondary school in Malaysia. Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia (2001) emphasized on the ministry's aim of helping the learners to achieve proficiency in the English language in order to prepare the learners to acquire knowledge and meeting their needs.

However, the standard of the English language has been deteriorating even though the language has been taught and learned as a second language nationwide over the years. English is not being used or learned in other subjects taught in school, except for the language lesson itself.. Hence, this leads to problems and difficulties in learning and mastering the English language even though it is being learned as the second language (L2) in Malaysia. The English language is not being exposed and

used enough by the learners to master the language. Besides the English language lessons in school, learners seem to have no or little reasons to be using the language in their daily lives. This is mentioned by Nalliah and Thiyagarajah (2002, p. 439) that “Although English language has been accorded the status of a second official language in Malaysia, it is only second to Bahasa Malaysia in importance for all official purposes and it is not second language to the definition in applied linguistics”. The use of the English language for official purposes and learning is still scarce that its status as the second language is debatable. According to Dean (1991), authorities such the politicians, parents and teachers have been voicing their concerns towards the standard and proficiency of the learners at all level of educations – primary, secondary and tertiary level learners. As expressed by Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad (1991) on the poor results of the learners in the English language subject of the national examination, Tun Dr Mahathir was afraid that the country might lose out economically and difficulties in progressing in the field of industrial an technical due to the low proficiency of the learners’ English language.

### **1.1.2 Vocabulary Learning in Malaysia**

According to Hornby (1995), vocabulary is defined as the list of words accompanied by their meanings. On the other hand, Neuman and Dwyer (2009) defined vocabulary as “words we must know to communicate effectively, words in speaking and words in listening” (p.385). Vocabulary does not only meant a single word, it can be meant for more than a single word, for instance, like father-in-law, and guard house, which express a single idea but are more than a single word. Hence, it is more appropriate to refer to these as vocabulary ‘items’ rather than vocabulary

'words'. Furthermore, according to Burns (1972), vocabulary is defined as group of words used by certain people, certain profession or a certain class of people. Vocabulary is also said to be the core to a language which is crucial for language learning (Zimmerman in Coady & Huckin, 1997). Hence, with all the definitions above on vocabulary, it can be concluded that vocabulary is the words needed to convey messages and meaning from one end to another. Thus, it is very important to have competency in vocabulary learning.

According to Barcroft (2004), to use a language fluently and grammatically perfect are highly dependent on learners' knowledge on the language and vocabulary competency. Second language (L2) proficiency is believed to be highly dependent on learners' vocabulary competency as the larger the vocabulary knowledge of the learners, the more proficient the learners are in the language as compared to learners with limited vocabulary knowledge (Meara, 1996). Beside, according to Carrell and Eisterhold (1983), in order to activate the learners' schemata in reading a language text, providing the learners with the appropriate vocabulary in the text would be very useful in activating the learners' schemata in reading the text. Hence, this indicated how important in having high competency in vocabulary in second language (L2) learning.

The learning of vocabulary is one of the many problems or difficulties faced by the learners in English language learning. According to Nation (2001), the inability of the learners to be proficient and competent vocabulary users poses difficulties to the learners to learn the language effectively. Vocabulary is not only the most important element to be mastered in order to be able to learn and use the

English language effectively, but it is also the language element which learners commit most errors on (Segler, 2001). Even though learning and mastering the vocabulary is very important by looking at its vital role in contributing to effective English language learning, the learning of vocabulary has never been put into emphasis and importance in the English language teaching and learning process. Other English language elements and skills such as grammar, reading, writing, speaking and listening are put into higher priorities than vocabulary. Vocabulary is expected to be able to be self-acquired by the learners with their own effort. Hence, it can be observed that there were no emphasis on the teaching and learning of vocabulary in the language classroom. This is evident as study conducted by Fauziah Hassan and Nita Fauzee Selamat (2002) showed that of all the nine language activities used in the study to investigate the frequency of use of language activities in the ESL classrooms, vocabulary activity was ranked at number four. In another study done by Teh Chee Seng (2004) showed that vocabulary activity is ranked to be one of the lowest in the list of preferred learning activities of the learners. As posited by Low (2004, cited in Zulfa Zakaria, 2005), the learning of vocabulary is less emphasized and less preferred by learners are also due to the limited exposure to the language, inability to make English language learning an interesting activity and the negative perception towards the learning of the English language.

In addition, a study conducted by Azadeh Asgari and Ghazali Mustapha (2012) on a group of Teaching of English as a Second Language (TESL) university learners in Malaysia also found out that Malaysian university learners usually use dictionary and guess meaning from context in learning vocabulary. Learners also stated that they also learned from media such as television in learning vocabulary,

which requires low level of mental processing. This echoes the findings from the study done by Noor and Amir (2009) who found out that dictionary is the commonly used vocabulary learning strategies by the learners in Malaysia. According to Noor and Amir (2009), one of the reasons that dictionary is the commonly used vocabulary learning strategies among Malaysian learners is because learners are always asked to use dictionary when learning vocabulary in the Malaysian classroom.

Furthermore, Naginder Kaur, Nor Hayati Othman and Muhammad Kamarul Kabilan Abdullah (2008) conducted a study to examine the perspectives of the teacher on the Malaysian's tertiary level learners' lexical competency, opined that learners are very dependent in vocabulary learning. Learners depend on the lecturer in learning vocabulary, making very little effort in their vocabulary learning. Hence, learners take very little responsibility in their learning, learning is still very much teacher-centred. This implies that high possibility of vocabulary learning only takes place in the learning classroom, only with the presence of an educator.

In another study done by Frankie Subon (2013) on the vocabulary learning strategies among the Malaysian's Form Six learners, found out that most of the learners possessed neutral attitudes towards the learning of vocabulary in the classroom whereas minority of the learners displayed positive attitude. Findings from this study revealed that learners who possessed positive attitudes were more willing to employ multiple strategies to learn vocabulary as compared to those who possessed neutral attitudes towards the learning of vocabulary. Besides, this study also identified the problems faced by the learners in learning vocabulary. Learners expressed that the main problem in learning vocabulary is the inability to learn

different meanings of a word in one setting. They found it difficult to comprehend and learn a new word if the word has multiple meanings.

All in all, vocabulary is essential to be mastered by the learners. This is because vocabulary is needed to convey meanings from one person to another. According to researches conducted by Hema Rosheny Mustafa, Noridah Sainb and Noor Zainab Abdul Razak (2012) and Zuraina Ali, Mukundan, Roselan Baki and Ahmad Fauzi Mohd Ayub (2012), Malaysian learners displayed great interest in learning vocabulary in the ESL classroom when technology is put into use. Thus, vocabulary mastery requires one's great interests, needs and motivation in learning the words in a language and plays a very crucial role in effective language learning.

### **1.1.3 The Incorporation of Technology in English Language Learning in Malaysia**

The Malaysia's government has been making effort in incorporating the use of technology into education since the implementation of the computer system. This echoed the Malaysia's National Philosophy of Education which aims for "developing the potential of individuals in a holistic and integrated manner, so as to produce individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally, and physically balanced and harmonious". In order to achieve the aims of the National Philosophy of Education and incorporating the use of technology into classroom, the existing education system needs to be revamped and transformed. Hence, the Smart School Project was implemented by the Malaysia's Ministry of Education. According to the Malaysia's Ministry of Education, in order to introduce and incorporate the use of

technology into the classroom, computers would be provided to the schools and training would be provided to the educators on how to teach using the technological devices. Besides, electronic books for e-learning were also designed and developed in aiding the use of technology in the classroom learning.

In the effort of incorporating technology into the classroom, the Ministry of Education has been putting a lot of effort in designing and developing technological tools in aiding classroom teaching and learning. It is hoped that the use of this technological tools is able to transform the traditional classroom to a modernised, technological classroom which is able to serve its best in learning. The incorporation of the use of technology serves as a catalyst to effective learning, to achieve better educational outcomes. It is believed that the incorporation of the use of technology into the classroom is able to make learning more interesting, stimulating, and motivating to the learners. Incorporating technology into classroom learning is also believed to be able to cater to the different needs and learning styles of the learners to achieve optimal learning outcomes. In addition, the use of technology in the learning classroom is able to promote student-centred learning and independent learning where learners are given more autonomy and responsibility into their own learning. With the incorporation of technology into the learning classroom, it is highly aimed to be able to cater to all the different learning styles of the learners by providing them different learning strategies, to create a different, more stimulating and motivating learning atmosphere to the learners and to engage learners to more critical and creative thinking skills activities. The use of technology in the classroom is also hoped to be able to transform a traditional classroom which focuses on memorization and drilling activities to a modernised classroom which is able to stimulate critical,



creative and higher order thinking skills among the learners. Hence, the use of e-books, blogs and podcasting in the means of learning in the technology incorporated learning classroom.

There are changes made to the English language curriculum and assessment over the years and the changes are still on-going till today. In 2011, 1BestariNet programme was launched by the Malaysia's Ministry of Education, aiming to provide all the public schools in Malaysia with technological-related equipments such as chromebooks, internet connectivity and virtual learning environment. The main objective of this programme is to incorporate ICT into the education system – the teaching and learning classroom, as an effort to enhance learners' learning outcomes. The incorporation of ICT in the teaching and learning classroom leads to Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs), a platform where educators and learners are involved in the teaching and learning process virtually. VLEs make learning more interactive and flexible where learning can be carried out at anytime, anywhere, out of the classroom and after-the-school-hour, in order to facilitate learning. In order to enable VLEs among the educators and learners, forum, blogs and chatrooms, are created where educators and learners will be able to interact, communicate and to share learning materials (Ministry of Education, 2013).

The Malaysia Education Blueprint (MEB) 2013-2025 was launched by the Ministry of Education in September 2013, with the aim to revise the education system and in producing more critical thinkers within the next thirteen years as to “ensure that students not only learn how to use ICT but are able to leverage it effectively to enhance their learning (Ministry of Education, 2013). As stated in the

Malaysia Education Blueprint (2013), there are three waves in integration ICT into Malaysia's education system. The first wave has been initiated from 2013-2015, focussing on providing the basic necessity of integrating ICT in the classrooms by providing internet connectivity in the school, educate the educators on the use of ICT and both the educators and learners have access to the ICT tools. The second wave is scheduled to be initiated on 2016-2020, focussing on practicing and make the best use of the ICT in the education system, whereas wave three for 2021-2025, will be focussing on the full implementation of ICT use in the education system and to ensure that the use of ICT is a part of our education system.

Frog VLE is a VLE platform created specifically for the use and interaction of educators, learners and parents. Frog VLE is an effort under the Malaysian Education Blueprint launched by the Ministry of Education (2013), to ensure that all government schools are equipped with internet connectivity and the ability to access to internet at high speed, anytime and anywhere within the school compound. However, the implementation of Frog VLE was not without problem. YTL Communications, the company which is responsible to equip all the government schools with the high speed internet connectivity and provide the Frog VLE platform to all educators, learners and parents failed to do so within the given time frame (Panirchellvum, 2014). YTL Communications failed to equip all government schools with the high speed internet connectivity and Frog VLE. Some schools have none or slow internet connectivity. Hence, in response to the failure of YTL Communications in implementing all the required facilities, Malaysia's Ministry of Education urged the educators to use both traditional and ICT for teaching purposes and not solely on the ICT (Ng, 2014).

However, the third objective which is to provide chromebooks to the schools in order to enable educators and learners have access to the ICT tools has been fulfilled. All the schools have been provided the number of chromebooks promised. Each school is provided with 40 chromebooks which enables 1 to 1 usage of the chromebook for one lesson for each class, on a sharing basis. Educators and learners are only use the chromebook for lessons in the computer lab. The access to the chromebooks only allows one class at a time. The chromebooks were provided to the schools as to ensure that there will be enough chromebooks to be used by both educators and learners in the classroom teaching and learning. Learning is believed to be more effective if each of learners were provided with the hands-on experiment.

Although there are initiatives from the Malaysia's Ministry of Education in incorporating ICT into our education system, the rate of using ICT in classroom teaching is still low. This may due to the failure in implementing all the basic necessities of integrating ICT in the classroom. Moreover, the school authorities and the educators should have, first identify the best learning methods and materials which will benefit their learners better, with the ICT facilities provided by the government.

According to Lam and Lawrence (2002), the use of technology in the classroom's learning is able to provide learners with the autonomous learning styles which can be provided by the educators. Learners will have more authority in their learning, more responsibilities and be able to engage in learning which best suited to themselves. The use of technology is said to be able to enhanced learners language

skills in language learning. The use of technology also utilises multimedia such as images, graphics, audio and video which makes language learning to be more interesting and attractive to the learners. Moreover, according to Lin (2009) and Lacina (2004), the incorporation of technology into the language classroom not only helps in making language learning more effective, interesting, attractive and stimulating, it also helps to enhance the learners' motivation and confidence in language learning.

As an effort to incorporate technology into the language learning, beside utilising the learning website available online, learning courseware is also a technology deployment for the teaching and learning purposes in the English language learning (Samuel and Abu Bakar, 2007; Abdullah, 2006; Cloke and Sharif, 2001). In addition, English language learning content are being broadcasted through Educational TV (ETV) and EduWebTV ( EduWebTV Official Website). Siraj (2004) found out that besides these two channels in broadcasting the video with educational content, there are also several channels or portals to be used for language learning purposes such as E-Pelajar, my schoolnet and Portal Pendidikan Utusan. Mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) is also being utilized for language learning, being a part of the effort to use technology for teaching and learning purposes. According to Vavoula (2005, p. 11), mobile learning is “any sort of learning that happens when the learner is not at a fixed pre-determined location, or learning that happens when the learner takes advantage of the learning opportunity offered by mobile technologies”. MALL is very different from the traditional way of language learning as MALL has the ability to increase learning opportunities with its mobility (Kukulaska-Hulme, 2009). Hence, MALL is able to bridge the gap between formal

and informal learning as mobility offers more flexible informal learning opportunities (Wong & Looi, 2010). Bridging the gap between formal and informal language learning provides the students opportunity to be independent and responsible for their learning (Barrs, 2012). MALL, including language teaching and learning using the tablet computers, has mainly transform the conventional and traditional language classroom into a mobile platform, content and input of the learning are delivered in a new way - more convenient, more natural and more accessible to the learners.

One of the MALL is m-learning, mobile learning. Mobile learning (m-learning) is learning carried out through wireless devices such as mobile phones, tablet and iPad as the technological devices are highly portable and can be used for the learning at any location and anytime of the day (Attewell & Savill-Smith, 2005). Learning can be carried out conveniently and instantly only by the touch of the finger. The use of m-learning in our Malaysian classroom is still very low, even though Shih and Mills (2007) expressed that the use of m-learning brings more new learning attractions and interests to the learners. As a result, studies done on the adoption on m-learning in the Malaysia's education setting is still scarce.

Besides, the adoption of m-learning also utilizes other mobile technological devices such as tablets and iPads. These tablets and iPads are also used in m-learning as these technological devices are highly portable. The size and functionality of these devices makes it easy to travel with and convenient to be operated. Hence, these devices support mobile learning in the education setting. A study done on the use of technology in vocabulary learning with five first-graders in a school in New York

using the iPad showed that the use of iPad is able to aid the learning of vocabulary among the young learners (Clark & Luckin, 2013). From this study done by Clark and Luckin (2013), it was found that young learners are able to engage to the learning better with the use of the iPad as iPad provides the exposure to multimedia elements in learning such as visuals and audio.

#### **1.1.4 The Incorporation of Technology in Vocabulary Learning in Malaysia**

As vocabulary learning is one of the main challenges in developing learners' language proficiency, it is important to focus on the learning of vocabulary among the English language learners. One of the ways to attract and interest learners to learn vocabulary is through the integration of technology. Nowadays, vocabulary learning is not limited to only chalk and talk, blackboards and textbooks, but is now extended to the use of multimedia. The use of multimedia through technological devices is not something new to the learners today. Most of the learners have been exposed to the use of multimedia and technological devices which transform their classroom learning to the modernised, autonomous learning. This is because the use of technology utilises images, graphics, audio, video, and colours in educating the learners. Moreover, technology can be accessed so easily without any hassle, in fact, it is the easiest and the most convenient way to learn in this era. As posited by Jacob (2010, p.20), technology provides people "the ability to be continuously connected and to share and exchange ideas and information across time and space using a wide variety of modalities". The use of technology makes learning interactive. Learning is not a passive process anymore. Learners are more active and lively in learning with the use of technology. This is echoed by Brand, Favazza and Dalton (2012) that

technology is able to “facilitate the attainment of learning goals for individuals with wide differences in their abilities to see, hear, move, read, write, understand English, sustain attention, organize, engage and remember (p.134). Learning is never limited with the use of technology.

Furthermore, the use of technology is not bounded to be in the school or classroom; it can be carried out, out of school and classroom setting. Learning can be carried out at home, anywhere the learners want it to be. Gainer and Lapp (2010, p.6) stated that “engaged learning can occur if their outside-of-school knowledge and interest are acknowledged, respected, and used as part of the instructional picture within the culture of the classroom”. Hence, learners are exposed to more learning opportunities with the use of technology in learning. Technology helps in accelerating learning as in transporting the information (Black, 2009; Smythe & Neufeld, 2010). Technology engages learners’ learning to authentic, real-life learning scenario (Padron& Waxman, 1996).

According to Traore and Kyei-Blankson (2011), the use of technology is able to motivate and engage learners to vocabulary learning as learners will be more engaged in learning using highly interactive technological tools. Technological tools can help to enhance and enrich instructional learning activities. Through the use of various features built in the technological tools such as word processors, presentation software, multimedia, and the internet, learners are motivated to learn. The use of technology gives the learners a “sense of freedom, motivation and encouragement they need for learning” (Traore & Kyei-Blankson, 2011, p. 563).