







The use of PowerPoint in developing multimedia-based teaching and learning materials for learning Arabic Language

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Abstract

Microsoft PowerPoint was one of the Microsoft Office applications developed by Microsoft since 1990 and has been used widely for disseminating information and presenting reports. PowerPoints are normally produced in slides to be projected on the screen or whiteboard for the audience to see. However, the strengths of PowerPoint go beyond slide presentation. This study aims to discuss the role of PowerPoint in the teaching and learning besides identifying its usage in the development of a multimedia-based module. Interviews were conducted with four respondents who have used the PowerPoint-based module learning material. The respondents are students from Sultan Zainal Abidin University who enrolled in Arabic for beginner course. Feedbacks from students are evaluated to determine whether or not the PowerPoint-based module enhances their understanding in their learning. Despite its presence, not all educators take advantage of the benefits offered by PowerPoint which go beyond a static presentation to include elements of text, picture, graphic, animation and audio. The findings from this study indicate that materials produced by PowerPoint help enhance learner understanding. Therefore, its huge potentials can be explored further to produce multimedia-based teaching and learning materials.

Keywords: PowerPoint; multimedia; teaching and learning; Arabic language; learner understanding

1. Introduction

The teaching and learning process has undergone rapid changes due to the technological advancement. Hence various teaching and learning materials are produced using available applications in the Microsoft Office. Millions of users of the Microsoft Office have benefitted from its application for documents, multimedia materials and statistics. In addition to Word, Excel and One Note, there is PowerPoint which was developed by Dennis Austin and Bob Gaskins and formerly used by Forethought Inc. PowerPoint has become one of the most utilised applications besides Word and Excel (Hermawan, 2019). PowerPoint is normally used as a tool for slide presentation even though its usage can be further explored. The program is attractive, user friendly and convenient for use in teaching and learning (Suratman, 2009).

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1.1. Research questions

This study aimed to obtain initial feedback from students on Arabic language materials developed using power point. The research question is:

- a. How is Arabic language material developed using power point?
- b. What is the usability of Arabic language materials developed using powerpoint?

2. Functions of PowerPoint

PowerPoint can be used to prepare slides in a more attractive and effective way which includes the integration of multimedia elements like texts, graphics, animation and video. It offers ready-to-use templates based on themes, colours or effects which users can easily select according to their needs. Attractive materials can be produced by PowerPoint if its usage is optimised. PowerPoint can also convert files to the pdf version hence making the presentation materials more manageable due to the small size. Generally, PowerPoint which offer multimedia elements will create content that is interesting, fun, leaving out the boring elements (Osman & Hamzah, 2020). According to Sabri et.al (2019), in order to make learning process effective, the use of user -friendly tools and applications are required so that it is suitable for all.

3. PowerPoint in Teaching and Learning

PowerPoint is widely used by educators at the school or tertiary levels in the teaching and learning process due to several factors. PowerPoint is the common application that comes with the Microsoft Office package hence making it accessible to most computer users. It is widely used because it is user-friendly with brief display, simple and easy-to-understand menu and various language system besides the usual Roman system.

The PowerPoint content is continuously upgraded in line with the current technology so it can compete with the sophisticated and paid application. All it takes is for the users to be more creative in exploring its functions that go beyond mere slide presentation by including the animation, audio or voice recording and video production. According to Hana Damayanti (2015), those functions are seldom used because users are not aware of such menu and animation features besides having less exposure to PowerPoint usage itself. Hence users should be more proactive to explore all the functions available to optimise the usage. Asri (2016) also states that the low usage of PowerPoint among teachers is attributed to their being less skillful in computer and having less understanding in the functions of PowerPoint. There are several studies on how PowerPoint-based materials can help enhance learner understanding. A study by Ngin Wei Haw (2012) reports on the effectiveness of such materials in improving learner understanding besides increasing learner interest in the subject. Findings by Salleh (2007) also indicate higher learner achievement in a class that used PowerPoint during the teaching and learning process. A study by Hashim, Norshida, Saleh et. al (2016) also supports the effectiveness of PowerPoint as a tool to improve learner understanding.

4. Methodology

This study aims to look at PowerPoint utilisation in the development of multimedia-based module besides identifying its effectiveness to enhance learner understanding of a subject based on the feedbacks. In this study, the material developed is for learning Arabic Language among students with no basic Arabic. The material incorporated the use of PowerPoint and it has been pilot-tested in the final phase of development.

A total of four students were interviewed to get initial feedback from them on PowerPoint module. The students are first year, bachelor's degree students who are taking an Arabic language course at Sultan Zainal Abidin University.

5. Material Development

A multimedia-based material for the learning of Arabic has been developed with the use of PowerPoint as its base for the storyboard or item development. PowerPoint is chosen by the researcher for its user-friendliness in regard to Arabic characters. Not all applications are Arabic-friendly but PowerPoint allows for Arabic content or writing to be easily created. Besides, PowerPoint is also chosen for its availability in the computer applications besides requiring no Internet access for usage.

During the material development, all functions available in PowerPoint have been optimally utilised by the researcher including the use of pictures, animations, graphics, music, voice recording and finally a video production which incorporated all the aforementioned elements. Most of the graphics are created by PowerPoint in addition to other applications. Users can sketch their own graphics using colours and special effects they want before incorporating animations (which is available from the menu) into the graphics. Users can also readily use the animation menu to decide on the motion, style, duration and waiting time in order to transform their static materials into animation.

The audio for the material includes background music and voice recording which PowerPoint readily offers and the researcher has taken advantage of. One benefit of voice recording through PowerPoint is the recording can be made based on slides and if there is any slip, recording can be done for the affected slide only. Voice recording is helpful to facilitate learner listening skill through the incorporation of read-aloud text for correct pronunciation.

The last step in the material development is a video production through PowerPoint application. A material in a video version is more interesting and can be uploaded into the YouTube to reach a wider audience who is interested in learning Arabic.

In developing the material, adjustments are made based on suggestions from the experts and users like teachers and students. Evaluation and refinement are important procedures in the development of teaching and learning materials to ensure good quality standard.

Figure 1 displays a slide display of a sample material created by PowerPoint with the inclusion of text, graphic, audio and animation.

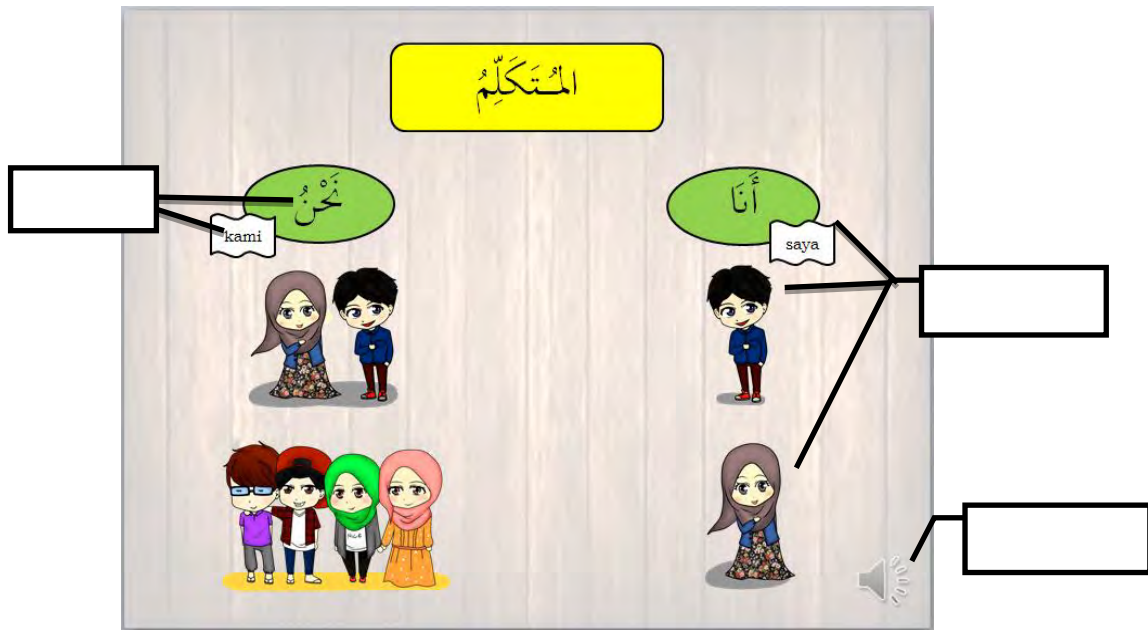


Figure 1. A sample material created by PowerPoint

6. Findings & Discussion

After its development was complete, the material was then pilot-tested among the students to determine its usability in enhancing their understanding. Interviews were conducted among four respondents who have used the learning material.

Student 1 states:

“The video has motion unlike words only. If we read a line, we have to take time to think but a video with words and moving animals or things like that..It’s easier for me to understand” (PLJ_TB_AK_1:5_166-168).

The comment indicates the respondent’s view that video production from PowerPoint has helped him understand the subject content. Another respondent, Student 2 also expresses a similar idea,

“Video helps better. If audio only, we can’t clearly see how a word is pronounced” (PLJ_TB_AK_2:2_99-100).

A video presentation through PowerPoint comes with an audio recorded text which a student can greatly benefit from. Student 3 informs:

I think for those at level 1 in Arabic, may not know how to pronounce words or they don’t understand the meanings but listening to the audio, they can understand better (PLJ_TB_AK_3:3_154-156).

The graphic item included in the video also benefits the students well. According to Student 4,

“With certain graphics we can clearly see, maybe better..that this is for this one..and so on” (PLJ_TB_AK_4:3_109-112).

The feedbacks from the respondents indicate that the material developed by PowerPoint has helped them understand the subject better. This supports the findings by Asri (2016) that PowerPoint-based multimedia facilitates the learning and teaching process besides providing real experience, motivation and attractive presentation.

The use of multimedia in the teaching and learning process can also enhance performance of low achievers (Mayer, 2001). A study by Khairul Nizam, et. al (2014) and Alharbi (2012) indicates that students understand the subject content faster through a video. Muhammad Haron et.al (2010) also

reiterate that a multimedia usage in the teaching and learning process has become a necessity for a more interactive and effective learning.

Harun, Aris, & Tasir, (2001), explain that the use of video can deliver a subject content which otherwise cannot be presented by other medium. Jaffar & Sha'ari, (2016) also state that audio can help reinforce learner listening skills in regard to producing precise Arabic pronunciations.

The findings from this study indicate the multimedia element is important and necessary in the teaching and learning process. Hence researchers have to be well equipped and skilled in producing such materials. PowerPoint is a good choice as it allows for unlimited creativity. In addition, PowerPoint is readily available in the computer, accessible without the Internet connection and user-friendly in regard to Arabic writing system. Hamid's research indicates that students agree that infographics which contain multimedia elements assist them to get better understanding of their study (Hamid, et. al 2020).

PowerPoint is indeed a suitable alternative medium for learning (Turrahmi, Yahya, & Erfan, 2018) and students are more inclined to choose PowerPoint for their learning (Sheeba & Begum, 2017).

7. Conclusion

The study has indicated that PowerPoint is capable of producing multimedia teaching resources and learners also believe that learning through PowerPoint can facilitate their understanding. It is undeniable that PowerPoint has its own unique strengths which are less explored compared to other sophisticated applications. The onus is on the users themselves to be creative so materials developed from PowerPoint can be effective in enhancing learner understanding during their learning process. Therefore, the use of PowerPoint among educators should go beyond the static slide presentation.

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