The Effectiveness of I-Stable Technique for Teaching English Grammar in Primary Classrooms

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ABSTRACT

Grammar serves as the foundation of language learning, enabling learners to communicate effectively by understanding and applying linguistic structures. However, many young learners find grammatical concepts, particularly verb tenses, challenging to grasp. This study investigates the effectiveness of the i-Stable technique in enhancing comprehension among Year 4 pupils learning the simple present tense. Utilising a mixed-methods research design, this study incorporates the action research through pre- and post-test to measure learning outcomes. Additionally, semi-structured interviews were also conducted to gather pupils' perception on the i-Stable instructional method. Findings reveal that the i-Stable technique significantly improves students' motivation by fostering an engaging and participatory classroom environment. Pupils exhibited increased accuracy in their use of the simple present tense, as evidenced by improved test scores. Furthermore, student feedback indicates that the i-Stable technique offers them interactive learning, visual learning, self-regulated learning, and scaffolding, contributing to making grammar learning more enjoyable and accessible. This study highlights the importance of innovative teaching strategies in grammar instruction, particularly for young learners who may struggle with traditional, rule-based approaches. By demonstrating the potential of the i-Stable technique to enhance grammatical competence and learner engagement, the findings contribute valuable insights for educators seeking to implement more effective and motivating grammar instruction methods.

Keywords- i-Stable, Grammar Learning, Simple Present Tense, Instructional Method, ESL Learners

INTRODUCTION

Grammar is a fundamental aspect of language learning, providing learners with the necessary structure to communicate effectively. Among various grammatical elements, the simple present tense plays a crucial role in everyday communication, allowing speakers to express habits, general truths, routines, and scheduled events. For young learners, mastering the simple present tense is essential for developing both written and spoken language skills (Guo & Wang, 2020). However, teaching grammar, particularly tenses, to young learners requires engaging and interactive methods to ensure effective learning and retention (Lutfiyah, Sadikin, Fuady, Hidayat & Frandikta, 2022)

Despite the importance of grammar in language learning, many young learners face challenges in acquiring grammatical structures, particularly the simple present tense. Common difficulties include understanding subject-verb agreement, differentiating between singular and plural verb forms, and applying the tense correctly in various contexts (Sartika, 2020). It is because, in many primary classrooms, traditional grammar teaching methods often rely on rote memorization, repetitive exercises, and teacher-centred instruction (Aman, 2020). While these approaches provide some reinforcement, they may not adequately engage students or support meaningful understanding. As a result, many pupils struggle to grasp grammatical concepts, leading to difficulties in language use and a lack of motivation to learn (Cushing, 2018). In addition, according to

Supriyanto (2023), many pupils perceived grammar lessons as tedious and difficult, which leads to decreased motivation and engagement. A lack of effective instructional strategies further exacerbates this issue, making it challenging for teachers to cultivate a positive learning environment (Marlina & Sulastri, 2023). Research suggests that structured, interactive, and engaging techniques can enhance grammar acquisition and motivation (Rozhenko & Morozova, 2024), yet many primary classrooms continue to rely on outdated teaching methods.

Hence, the i-Stable technique has been introduced as a potential solution to these challenges, offering a more structured and engaging way of teaching grammar. The i-Stable technique has been known as an innovative instructional approach designed to enhance student engagement and comprehension in grammar learning. By incorporating step-by-step guidance, interactive exercises, and structured activities, the i-Stable technique aims to make grammar lessons more accessible and enjoyable for young learners. While the i-Stable technique shares some superficial similarities with traditional substitution tables, it is fundamentally distinct in both design and pedagogical purpose. Substitution tables typically offer a statis format where learners replace lexical or grammatical items within a fixed syntactic structure. These are often used for pattern drilling and rote practice, emphasizing form over communicative meaning. In contrast, the i-Stable technique is a dynamic, learner-centered scaffold that facilitates sentence construction through interactional support. Rather than following a rigid template, i-Stable presents learners with adaptable frames that respond to context-specific needs. It also incorporates real-time feedback and prompts that guide learners toward metacognitive reflection, helping them internalize syntactic structured while maintaining communicative intent. This approach promotes autonomy and engagement, encouraging learners to explore syntactic variation within meaningful contexts.

While previous studies have explored various interactive and student-centred approaches to teaching grammar (Cushing, 2018; Rozhenko & Morozova, 2024; Aman, 2020; Sartika, 2020), there is a lack of research focusing on the application of the i-Stable technique in grammar instruction to young learners. By addressing these gaps, this study aims to provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of the i-Stable technique in enhancing grammar learning among pupils. The findings will contribute to the development of more engaging and effective grammar teaching strategies in education. Hence, the present study intends to address the following research questions:

1. What is the effectiveness of i-Stable technique to motivate year 4 pupils to learn Simple Present Tense?

2. How the i-Stable technique help to enhance year 4 pupils' comprehension of Simple Present Tense?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Grammar Learning in Primary Education

The simple present tense plays a crucial role in early language learning as it allows young learners to communicate about routines, habits, and general truths (N & Shetty, 2023). Mastery of fundamental tense is essential for developing communicative competence, as it forms the foundation for later grammatical structures and more complex language use (Nunan, 1999), However, traditional methods of grammar instruction often rely on rote memorization and mechanical drills, which may not align with the cognitive and developmental needs of young learners (Bozorgian, Fallahpour & Muhmmadpour, 2022). These methods typically emphasise explicit rule explanation and repetitive exercises, which may not cater to the natural language acquisition processes of children (Bozorgian et al., 2022).

Research suggests that young learners acquire grammar more effectively through meaningful interaction and contextualized learning rather than isolated rule-based instruction (Loewen & Sato, 2018). Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emphasises the importance of learning grammar through interaction, meaningful input, and authentic use of language, which has been shown to facilitate better retention and application of grammatical structures (Savignon, 2007). When grammar is taught in an engaging and interactive manner, learners are more likely to retain and apply grammatical structures in real communication (Pinter, 2016). This approach aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, which highlights the role of social interaction in cognitive development and language learning.

Despite the recognized importance of grammar, many traditional classroom approaches focus on repetitive exercises that emphasise form over function. This approach can result in passive learning and low motivation among students (Kavandi & Kavandi, 2016). Moreover, research indicates that such decontextualized drills may not effectively transfer to communicative use, leading to a gap between grammatical knowledge and practical application (Kavandi & Kavandi, 2016).

In contrast, research has shown that incorporating communicative activities, storytelling, games, and interactive techniques can enhance both engagement and comprehension of grammar concepts in primary teachers (Savignon, 2007). Techniques such as task-based learning (Ellis, 2017), storytelling (Wright & Dunsmuir, 2019), and drama-based language learning (Luo, Ismail, Ahmad & Guo, 2024) have been found to provide meaningful context for grammar acquisition. These methods create a dynamic and immersive environment that fosters active participation and deeper cognitive processing.

One approach that aligns with this pedagogical perspective is the i-Stable technique, which integrates structured exercises with engaging activities. By blending controlled practice with communicative tasks, this method promotes active learning and contextual application of the simple present tense. The i-Stable technique is designed to bridge the gap between form-focused instruction and communicative practice, ensuring that learners develop both accuracy and fluency in using the simple present tense. Through interactive tasks and scaffolded learning, young learners can internalise grammatical structures in a natural and meaningful way, ultimately leading to improved language proficiency and confidence in communication.

Motivation in Language Learning

Motivation plays a crucial role in language acquisition, influencing learners' engagement, persistence, and overall success (Nurhidayah,2020). Studies in second language acquisition (SLA) highlight that motivated learners are more likely to invest effort, seek out opportunities for practice, and develop a deeper understanding of the language (Teravainen-Goff, 2022; Ibrahim Kadau, 2024). Various factors contribute to motivation, including intrinsic and extrinsic elements, social influences, and the perceived value of the language being learned (Liu & Dong, 2024).

Interactive and engaging strategies have been widely recognized for their ability to enhance motivation. Gamification, which incorporates game-like elements such as rewards, competition, and challenges, has been shown to make learning more enjoyable and immersive (Sailer & Homer, 2019). By providing immediate feedback and fostering a sense of achievement, gamification can sustain learner interest and encourage active participation (Landers, 2014). Similarly, structured approaches like i-Stable offer a framework that promotes consistency and goal-setting, which are essential for maintaining motivation over time. These techniques not only improve student enthusiasm but also contribute to better retention and long-term success in language learning. Therefore, fostering motivation through well-designed instructional strategies is essential for maximizing language acquisition outcomes.

The i-STABLE

The i-STABLE or mostly known as Interactive Substitution Table is a structured teaching tool designed to facilitate grammar instruction by guiding learners in constructing sentences using predefined word or phrase choices. It consists of a table divided into columns, each representing different grammatical components such as subjects, verbs, objects, and time expressions. BY selecting words from each column, students can form grammatically correct sentences while internalizing syntactic structures and grammatical rules. This method provides a scaffolded learning experience, allowing learners to focus on sentence formation without the cognitive burden of generating sentences independently (Li & Zuo, 2021). Substitution tables are particularly effective for reinforcing grammatical patterns, as they expose learners to multiple sentence variations while maintaining structural accuracy.

Traditionally, substitution tables have been static, appearing in printed worksheets or classroom materials. However, the integration of technology has transformed them into interactive learning tools, enhancing student engagement and participation. Digital substitution tables incorporate features such as drag-and-drop

functionality, clickable options, automated feedback, and gamified elements that make grammar practice more dynamic and accessible. Research suggests that interactive learning environments improve student motivation and retention, as they provide a hands-on approach to grammar learning rather than relying solely on passive rule memorization (Tiansoodeenon & Prasongngern, 2025). Interactive tables also support differentiated instruction by allowing teachers to adjust the complexity of vocabulary and sentence structures based on learners' proficiency.

In addition to grammar reinforcement, the i-Stable also promotes learner autonomy and communicative competence. By experimenting with sentence construction in a guided yet flexible manner, students develop confidence in applying grammar rules correctly (Baronia, 2020). The structured format of the tables also minimizes common grammatical errors by providing clear word choices, reinforcing proper syntax and word order. Moreover, when used in pair or group activities, interactive substitution tables encourage collaboration and meaningful language use, as students engage in discussions and negotiate meaning. Given their versatility, this table can be applied to various aspects of language learning, including tense practice, modal verbs, conditionals, and sentence transformations.

Overall, interactive substitution tables serve as an effective instructional strategy that combines structure and interactivity, making grammar learning more engaging, accessible, and communicatively meaningful.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study used a two-cycle classroom action research model. Cunningham (2008) stated that through the classroom action research, teachers should be the researchers who monitor and analyse the dynamics of students' learning progress and then decided on the intervention based on the theoretical construct to enhance the learning outcomes of the students. This research design is grounded on the basis of teachers' critical observation and inquiry during their involvement to effect the desirable change in the learning progress (Baglin, 2007). An action research design will act as a process of systematic inquiry that enables the researcher to find an effective solution for the real problems encountered in the studied phenomenon (Afify, 2008). Since this study is purposely to examine the effectiveness of i-Stable technique to improve student comprehension on Simple Present Tense, hence this action research emphasizes the i-Stable technique as an intervention used by the researcher to measure the approach in enhancing the students' language proficiency.

Thus, to execute the action research approach, a quasi-experimental design, which is commonly used in educational research when random assignment is not feasible (Gopalan, Rosinger & Ahn, 2020). The quasi-experimental design enables researchers to examine the causal relationship between an instructional technique and learning outcomes in a real-world educational setting while maintaining ethical and logistical feasibility (Gopalan et al., 2020). The study follows a one-group pre-test and post-test design, where the same group of students is assessed before and after intervention to measure changes in grammar proficiency and motivation over time.

By using within-group comparison, this design helps determine the impact of the i-Stable technique on students without the need for a separate control group (Creswell, 2018). It allows for direct observation of individual progress while controlling for potential external variables affecting different student groups (Creswell, 2018). Furthermore, this design reduces ethical concerns associated with withholding instructional benefits from certain students (Creswell,2018).

Population and Sample

The population for this study consists of Year 4 pupils from primary schools where English is taught as a second language. The samples include of 100 Year 4 pupils who were selected from four primary schools of urban and suburban locations, ensuring diversity in student backgrounds and learning environments. A purposive sampling method was utilised to select the participants, ensuring that the samples reflects the target population of the young English learners in structured school setting (Creswell,2018). The criterion based selection was also incorporated in selecting the participants based on the following criteria:

- Age range of 9 to 10 years old to maintain consistency in cognitive and linguistic development.
- Similar English proficiency levels, as determined by a preliminary placement test.
- Regular attendance in English language classes to ensure exposure to instructional intervention.

This sampling method is suitable in the present study as it allows researchers to focus on participants who possess specific characteristics relevant to the study (Patton, 2015). This method ensures that the selected students meet the necessary criteria for assessing the effectiveness of the i-Stable technique, thereby enhancing the study's validity (Patton,2015). The students were divided into two equal groups: 50 in the experimental group and 50 in the control group. Prior to the intervention, all students completed a placement test assessing their baseline English proficiency, specifically focusing on grammar skills related to the Simple Present Tense. This was done to ensure that both groups were matched in terms of initial language ability. The experimental group received instruction through the i-Stable technique. This method incorporated interactive substitution tables with the visual In contrast, the control group continued with conventional grammar instruction typically used in Malaysian primary schools.

Ethical considerations were addressed by obtaining parental consent and institutional approval before conducting the study. During the data collection, participants' identities remained confidential, and their involvement in the study was voluntary.

Research Instrument

1)Pre-Test and Post-Test: The present study triangulates two main data collections in deriving the effectiveness of i-Stable technique to enhance students' Simple Present Tense comprehension. This study used the pre and post-test as the primary instrument in data collection. The pre-test and post-test were developed to assess students' grammar proficiency before and after the intervention. The pre-test establishes a baseline, while the post-test measures improvement. The tests consist of multiple-choice questions, sentence completion, and short writing exercises focusing on the simple present tense. These assessments help determine whether the i-Stable technique leads to significant learning gains (Brown, 2004).

A paired sample t-test was conducted to determine whether there was statistically significant difference between students' pre-test and post- test scores after implementing the i-Stable technique. This test was chosen as it allows for the comparison of two related measurements (before and after intervention) on the same group of students, making it possible to assess the impact of the technique on their grammar proficiency (Ross & Willson, 2017). The procedure began with the administration of a pre-test to establish a baseline for students' understanding of the Simple Present Tense. After the intervention period, which involved structured exercises, interactive storytelling, and reinforcement activities using the i-Stable technique, students completed a post-test with the same format to measure their progress. Following the data collection, the pre-test and post-test scores were recorded and checked for accuracy before being analysed using statistical software of SPSS. To ensure the reliability of the test, key assumptions were examined including normality, which was assessed using the Shapiro-Wilk test and visual inspection methods such as histograms and Q-Q plots (Pallant,2020). The paired t-test was then performed to compare the mean scores of the pre-test and post-test, generating a t-value and a p-value to determine statistical significance. The results were then reported in terms of mean scores, standard deviation, t-value, degrees of freedom and p-value, providing a comprehensive evaluation of the impact of the intervention.

2) Semi-Structured Interview: Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather qualitative data on students' perceptions and experiences with the i-Stable technique. These interviews included open-ended questions that allowed students to express their thoughts freely while ensuring consistency in the topics covered (Merriam, 2009) The flexibility of semi-structured interviews enabled deeper insights in shedding lights into how the i-Stable technique facilitates students' comprehension of Simple Present Tense. In order to ensure the consistency in data collection, an interview guide Patton (2015) was utilized. Hence, the interview protocol was structured into four key sections to ensure comprehensive data collection. Section A focused on collecting demographic information such as age , gender, prior English learning experiences to contextualise student responses. Section

B explored participants' perceptions of the effectiveness of i-Stable in enhancing their comprehension of the simple present tense, providing insights into their learning experiences. Section C identified the challenges encountered by students while using i-Stable, helping to understand potential barriers to its effectiveness. Finally, Section D gathered suggestions for improving the i-Stable technique, allowing participants to contribute ideas for enhancing future implementations of the methods. The interviews were conducted among 6 students who were randomly chosen from the groups of students who participated in the pre and post-test. The interviews were conducted using the English language. However, a code switching was also used when the participants needed clarification. The interviews were tape recorded and the pseudonyms were used to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants.

In order to analyse the interviews data, thematic analysis (Clarke & Braun, 2016) was performed to derive the themes and codes in complementing the data from the pre and post-test. These themes and codes further extend the explanation on the extent to which i-Stable technique can improve students' comprehension in Simple Present Tense. Fig 1 below depicts the thematic analysis procedures conducted in this study.

Fig 1. Thematic Analysis Procedures

The process began with data familiarisation, where the researchers transcribed and reviewed the interview recordings multiple times. This was followed by initial coding, where key phrases and concepts related to students' experiences with the i-Stable technique were highlighted. The codes were then grouped into broader themes such as perceived effectiveness, learning challenges, and suggested improvements. These themes were refined through iterative analysis to ensure they accurately represented the participants' perspectives. By triangulating these qualitative findings with quantitative test results, the study provided a comprehensive understanding of the impact of the i-Stable technique on grammar learning.

Data Collection Procedures

The data collection process was conducted in multiple phases to ensure a systematic approach as illustrated in Fig.2 below.

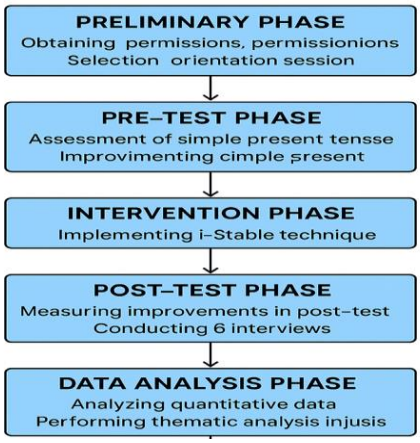

Fig 2. Data Collection Procedures

In the preliminary phase, ethical procedure and necessary permissions were obtained from the school and research unit of the District and Education Department. The participants were then selected based on predefined criteria, and an orientation session was held to familiarise them with the study procedures. An orientation session was conducted to familiarise students with the research purpose and procedures. The data collection process begins with the pre-test. During this phase, all participants completed a grammar assessment focused on the Simple Present Tense. This test served as a baseline to measure students' existing grammar proficiency. The test consisted of multiple-choice items, sentence completion, and short writing exercises. In the intervention phase, the experimentation group received instruction using the i-Stable technique over a six-week period. This included interactive substitution tables with the visual aids that act as a scaffolded tasks to promote deeper understanding of the Simple Present Tense. On the other hand, the control group continued with standard textbook-based instruction and teacher-led grammar drills commonly practiced in Malaysian schools. Following this, the post-test phase was conducted. The same grammar test was re-administered to all participants to identify any improvement in comprehension and application of the Simple Present Tense. Subsequently, six students were also chosen to undergo the semi structured interviews. Finally, in the data analysis phase, quantitative data were analysed using paired sample t-tests to determine statistical significance, while thematic analysis was performed on interview data to identify patterns and insights.

FINDINGS

Effectiveness of the i-Stable Technique in Enhancing Year 4 Pupils' Comprehension of the Simple Present Tense

A comparative analysis was conducted between the experimental group, which received instruction using the i-Stable technique, and the control group, which was taught through conventional grammar methods. The findings revealed a significant difference in learning outcomes between the two groups as depicted in Table 1 and Table 2 below.

Table 1Average Test Scores (Mean Scores) of Both Groups Before and After the Teaching Intervention

Group	Mean Pre-Test	Mean Post-Test	Mean Gain	Standard Deviation (Post)
Experimental	10.94	13.22	+2.28	1.15
Control	10.89	11.45	+0.56	1.43

As presented in Table 1 above, the experimental group demonstrated a notable increase in the post-test scores, with a mean improvement of 2.28 points (from M=10.94 to M=13.22). In contrast, the control group showed a modest gain of only 0.56 points (from M=10.89 to M=11.45). This indicates that while both groups benefitted from grammar instruction, the group exposed to the i-Stable technique achieved a substantially greater enhancement in their understanding of the Simple Present Tense. Furthermore, the experimental group exhibited a lower post-test standard deviation (SD=1.15) compared to the control group (SD=1.45), suggesting more consistent performance among participants in the experimental group.

In order to determine the statistical significance of these differences, an independent samples t-test was conducted as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2 Mean Difference in Post-Test Scores Between Two Groups

Group Comparison	Mean Difference	t-value	p-value	Effect Size (Cohen's d)
Experimental vs Control	1.72	5.48	<0.001	1.10 (Large)

As shown in Table 2 above, the mean difference in post-test scores between two groups was 1.72, with a t-value of 5.48 and a p-value of <0.001. These results confirm that the difference in statistically significant. Additionally,

the effect size (Cohen's d=1.10) indicates a large impact, highlighting the substantial effectiveness of the i-Stable technique in improving pupils grammar comprehension compared to traditional instructional methods.

These findings strongly suggest that the i-Stable technique not only enhances individual grammar performance but also promotes more uniform learning outcomes across the classroom. The combination of statistically significant gains and a large effect size supports the conclusion that the structured, interactive nature of the i-Stable method is more effective than the conventional grammar instruction in assisting Year 4 pupils comprehend the simple present tense.

Additionally, the thematic analysis conducted based on the interviews among Year 4 pupils indicate that the i-Stable technique is effective in motivating Year 4 pupils enhancing their comprehension of the Simple Present Tense. Fig. 3 below presents the themes that arise , extending information on how the i-Stable technique facilitates students' understanding on Simple Present Tense.

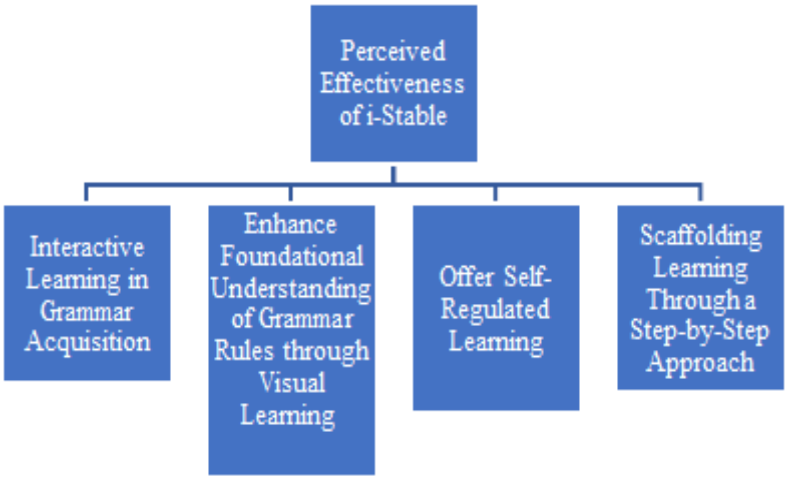

Fig 3. Perceived Effectiveness of i-Stable Technique

Interactive Learning in Grammar Acquisition

One of the most prominent themes identified is that the I-Stable technique provides a platform for students to engage in interactive learning which inadvertently increases the engagement and motivation among students when learning the Simple Present Tense through the i-Stable technique. Pupils expressed enthusiasm about the interactive elements of the technique, which made learning more enjoyable and less intimidating. For example, Pupil A and B stated that,

"I like using i-Stable because it is fun! We get to play and learn at the same time" (Pupil A)

"Before, learning grammar was boring. Now, I feel excited to do the activities…" (Pupil B)

These responses highlight how the i-Stable technique creates a dynamic and engaging learning environment that fosters intrinsic motivation among students. This aligns with the previous research that underscores the importance of interactive learning in enhancing student motivation and engagement. For instance, Ellis (1993) found that learners who participated in game-based grammar instruction demonstrated higher levels of enthusiasm and willingness to engage with grammatical structures compared to those taught through traditional methods. Similarly, Rahman et al. (2018) reported that interactive and student-centered approaches to grammar instruction helped reduce anxiety and promoted a more positive attitude toward learning (Melyntska & Kudelska, 2024). However, while prior studies focused on various interactive methods, such as gamification and task-based learning, the current study contributes new insights by demonstrating how the structured, yet flexible, nature of the i-Stable technique uniquely supports sustained engagement.

Enhance Foundational Understanding of Grammar Rules through Visual Learning

Participants perceived that the i-Stable technique provides a structured platform that facilitates a theoretical understanding of grammar through visual learning. Pupils affirmed that the integration of visual elements within the learning process helps them contextualize grammar rules, leading to a more profound comprehension of the Simple Present Tense. Traditional grammar instruction often relies on memorization and isolated rule-based explanations, which can be abstract and difficult for young learners to internalize. However, the incorporation of pictures, matching activities, and real-life sentence examples transforms grammar learning into a more concrete and accessible experience. For example, Pupil D's response illustrates this impact.

"I understand better when I see pictures and examples. It helps me remember the rules." (Pupil D)

This statement suggests that visual representation acts as cognitive anchors, allowing learners to associate abstract grammar rules with tangible and familiar contexts. By engaging with images and contextual clues. students are able to decode grammatical structures more effectively. leading to better retention and application of rules. Pupil A's experience further reinforces this perspective, highlighting the role of context-based learning in developing grammatical awareness.

"Before, I just tried to guess, but now I can see how the words change in sentences." (Pupil A)

This reflection demonstrates how visual and contextual learning shifts students from passive guessing to active recognition of grammatical patterns. Instead of mechanically applying rules without understanding their significance, pupils develop a deeper awareness of how verbs change depending on the subject in the Simple Present Tense. These excerpts collectively emphasise that visual learning supports the internalization of grammar rules by creating meaningful associations. Instead of viewing grammar as a set of disconnected rules, pupils link structures to real world examples, making the learning process more intuitive and engaging. This aligns with Liu's (2019) findings on multimodal input in grammar acquisition, which emphasise that students grasp grammatical structures more effectively when they are presented in varied and meaningful contexts. Thus, the integration of visual learning within i-Stable serves as a bridge between theoretical grammar knowledge and practical application, ensuring that pupils not only understand grammar rules but can also use them effectively in real-life communication.

Offer Self-Regulated Learning

Another key finding of the study is that the i-Stable technique plays a crucial role in fostering self-regulated learning (SRL) by providing structured activities that encourage students to monitor their own progress. SRL involves learners taking control of their cognitive, motivational, and behavioural processes to achieve academic goals (Greene, Freed & Sawyer, 2018). The ability to self-reflect and identify areas for improvement enhances metacognitive awareness, which is essential for developing independence in grammar learning. The concept of SRL is widely discussed in the literature, highlighting its importance in education. Anthonysamy, Koo and Hew (2020) emphasised that self-regulated learners are proactive in setting learning goals, selection strategies, and evaluating their progress. Through structured activities embedded in the i-Stable technique, students are given opportunities to engage in these metacognitive processes. This aligns with the findings of Butler and De La Paz (2021), who argue that providing explicit opportunities for self-monitoring enhances learners' ability to regulate their own learning behaviours. Student reflections further support the role of i-Stable in promoting self-regulated learning. Pupil E expressed,

"I can check my answer and see where I went wrong. This helps me learn better" (Pupil E)

This statement demonstrates a fundamental aspect of SRL which is error detection and correction. According to Butler and Winne (1995), self-monitoring and feedback mechanisms are essential components of effective self-regulated learning, as they enable students to recognize errors and make necessary adjustments in their learning strategies (Chou & Zou, 2020). Pupil F stated that,

"When I finish an exercise, I like to look back and find my mistakes". (Pupil F)

This practice of reviewing one's work aligns with the self-evaluation phase of SRL, which is emphasised in models proposed by Zimmerman (2001). By engaging in self-evaluation, students develop a greater sense of responsibility for their learning. leading to improved performance and confidence in their grammar skills. Furthermore, the structured approach provided by the i-Stable technique supports the cyclical nature of self-regulated learning, where students plan, monitor, and reflect on their learning experiences (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2012). The ability to track progress and identify errors fosters a growth mindset, as described by Bai and Wang (2020), encouraging learners to view mistakes as opportunities for improvement rather than failures.

Scaffolding Learning Through a Step-by-Step Approach

Another theme emerged presenting the effectiveness of the i-Stable technique is its structured, step-by-step approach, which helps Year 4 pupils gradually build their understanding of the Simple Present Tense. Instead of introducing complex grammar rules all at once, the technique breaks down concepts into smaller, manageable stages, allowing pupils to master each step before progressing to the next. This progressive learning strategy prevents cognitive overload and ensures that students internalize grammar rules effectively. Several pupils expressed that this method helped them feel less overwhelmed when learning grammar.

"At first, I was confused about when to add '-s' to verbs, but the steps helped me understand little by little." (Pupil G)

"Before, I just memorized the rules, but now I learn step by step, and it makes more sense." (Pupil D)

This mechanism aligns with Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) Theory (1978), which emphasizes that learners benefit most when they are introduced to new knowledge within their ability range while receiving appropriate support. Through scaffolded activities, the i-Stable technique ensures that pupils are not left behind and can progress at their own pace.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study highlight the effectiveness of the i-Stable technique in enhancing Year 4 pupils' motivation and understanding of the simple present tense. By integrating structured and interactive learning strategies, i-Stable provided an engaging platform that encouraged active participation, facilitated deeper comprehension, and improved retention of grammatical concepts. Through hands-on activities, collaborative learning, and structured reinforcement, pupils were able to grasp the fundamental rules of the simple present tense more effectively. The results indicate that pupils demonstrated increased confidence and accuracy in using the simple present tense in both written and spoken contexts , as evidenced by their improved performance in assessments, Furthermore, the interactive nature of i-Stable contributed to a more positive learning environment, reducing learners' anxiety and making grammar lessons more enjoyable and meaningful.

Moreover, the study reinforces the significance of incorporating innovative teaching techniques that cater to young learners' cognitive and motivational needs. Traditional methods of grammar instruction, which often rely on rote memorization and passive learning, may not always be effective in sustaining students' interest. In contrast, i- Stable promotes active learning by engaging multiple senses, fostering peer collaboration, and encouraging self-directed exploration of grammatical rules. Teachers should consider adopting i-Stable as part of their instructional approach to make grammar learning more engaging, dynamic, and effective. By doing so, educators can create a more student-centered learning experience that nurtures both linguistic accuracy and communicative competence.

Ultimately, the implementation of i-Stable serves as a promising pedagogical strategy in language learning, fostering both motivation and proficiency among young learners. By bridging the gap between traditional grammar instruction and modern, learner-centered methodologies, i-Stable has the potential to transform the way pupils acquire and apply grammatical knowledge. As education continues to evolve, embracing such innovative strategies will be essential in cultivating confident, capable, and enthusiastic language learners.

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF FOR FUTURE STUDY

The present study consists the sample size that is limited to 100 Year 4 pupils from selected urban and suburban schools in Malaysia. Hence, the purposive sampling may restrict the generalizability of the results to a broader population, particularly pupils from rural or diverse educational contexts. Future studies are encouraged to replicate this research with a larger and more diverse sample to enhance external validity.

Additionally, the duration of the intervention was relatively short, spanning six weeks. While this period provided initial insights into the effectiveness of the i-Stable technique, it may not be sufficient to assess the long-term impact on language retention and sustained motivation. Therefore, longitudinal studies are recommended to evaluate the durability of learning gains over extended periods.

Another limitation lies in the reliance on a quasi-experimental design without full randomisation. Although the design allowed for real-world classroom implementation, it may introduce potential biases due to pre-existing differences between groups. Future research could benefit from employing a randomized controlled trial (RCT) to better isolate the effects of the i-Stable technique.

Furthermore, the study also focused solely on the simple present tense. While this allowed for an in-depth exploration of one grammatical aspect, it limits the understanding of the i-Stable technique's effectiveness in teaching other aspects of grammar. Hence, future research could expand the scope by examining its application in teaching other aspect of grammar. Future research could expand the scope by examining its application in teacher other tenses or grammatical constructs.

Finally, while the study included semi-structured interviews, the qualitative data were collected from relatively small number of participants. Thus, future investigations could adopt a more extensive qualitative approach, including teacher observations, focus group discussion, or classroom discourse analysis to gain richer insights into learner engagement and instructional dynamics.

By addressing these limitations, future studies can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of how the i-Stable technique may be adapted and scaled for broader use in ESL grammar instruction across various educational settings.

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