USING COHESIVE DEVICES TO DEVELOP STUDENTS' EMAIL WRITING SKILL THROUGH P.I.T.C.H

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Abstract — **This research is conducted with the aim to enhance students' writing skills in order to produce better essay especially in e-mail writing. This technique is developed to assist the students to increase the mark in Paper 2 English Subject (1119/2) among low achiever students to pass the subject. The respondents are among Form 5 students (age 17 years old) who were chosen based on their mid-term examination in July 2022. They obtained marks between 0-2 for Organisation (email writing, Section 1). Early surveys found that their failures were due to the respondents' inability to answer the email writing part effectively because they are unaware of the importance of using cohesive devices (discourse marker) in email writing. Students are more familiar with the use of high frequency devices (conjunctions). P.I.T.C.H is an acronym made up of 5 cohesive devices which are "Personally I think, In my opinion, Therefore, Clearly and However". By remembering this acronym, it effectively helps students in remembering cohesive devices that should be used in their email. The acronym is exposed to the students in their early stages of learning because it is catchy enough for them to remember in order to motivate them to use in their email writing. Based on the pre-test and post-test, students' achievements increased with the use of P.I.T.C.H technique. Furthermore, as the acronym becomes more familiar with the students, it was observed that they have confidently incorporate it when they sat for their speaking assessment. This shows that teaching and learning sessions that repeatedly use P.I.T.C.H technique is able to increase students' language skill not only in their writing assessment but in their speaking assessment as well.**

Keyword– Email, English Language, Cohesive Devices

I. INTRODUCTION

English 1119 (Paper 2) Malaysia Education Certificate consists of three parts. Students will have to answer different essay genres for each part. The focus of this research is specially to ensure the use of cohesive devices using P.I.T.C.H in part 1, e-mail writing. As for information, 20 marks ares allocated for this section (5 marks for content, 5 marks for communicative achievement, 5 marks for organisation and 5 marks for language). Each part should be scored well because it will affect their overall marks

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

This research was done due to the Post-Mortem analysis where it was found that students failed to answer essay question in section 1 (Mid Term examination 2022) because they did not use cohesive devices correctly.

Instead, students tend to use basic high frequency connectors (common conjunction) such as, 'and', 'next' compared to the use of cohesive devices like 'Therefore' and 'In my opinion' which actually would help them to gain higher marks based on the most recent marking scheme of Malaysia Education Certificate 2021. Students were still unfamiliar to the usage of cohesive devices. The respondents were asked individually and based on the response, the students either did not understand or they never knew the use of cohesive devices in the essay writing.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

English Language is important for L2 students to master because it is used widely as a communication tool at a global level. However, one of the most difficult skills to teach in English Language is writing. In presenting ideas in writing, students should be encouraged to make sure that their text flow through a sequence of sentences (Gailea, Syafrizal & Ai Hafipah, 2018). Learning to write a proper email has become part of school assessment that students has to master to prepare them for their future career as well.

Ewald (2016) mentioned that email is a frequently used communication tool in academic settings. Students should realise that learning to write a proper email is not only part of the assessment of their examination. It is a necessary skill to master once they start working. Therefore, it is important to understand the difference between academic email and private email (Sumeyye, 2021). Jeyaraman (2023) reported that an intern, who requested for leave for a particular day, had only 'filled' the application on the subject tab and stating their return date in the body tab in only one sentence. Evidently, learning to use appropriate cohesive devices will produce better writing product.

This is stated by Gailea et al (2018) in their writing that there are four contributions in using cohesive devices; (1) keeping track of the participant, (2) enhancing logical connection between part of texts, and (3) engaging the readers to the core argument of the text, (4) avoiding repetition and redundancy.

"Personally, I think, In my opinion, Therefore, Clearly and However" are the five cohesive devices chosen for the students to apply in their writing. This catchy acronym was created to enable students to remember cohesive devices easily.

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IV.   METHOD

P.I.T.C.H is an acronym that is developed to be used for all upper form students and for the purpose of this study, 40 students were chosen to see the effectiveness of this technique because they failed to obtain high mark for essay part 1 (email) in pre-test. In this study, question from section 1 was given to students as pre-test and post-test instruments. During their English lesson, the teacher introduced the acronym P.I.T.C.H and explains the function of each cohesive devices in order for students to understand the usage of each cohesive devices in their writing. Then, students are required to use at least three cohesive devices appropriately every time they write an email. At the end of the lesson is the evaluation of each student's writing product to assess student's understanding in using cohesive devices. Students were taught the usage of P.I.T.C.H for five months before a post test was given to assess the students' understanding in using cohesive devices in their writing.

V.   FINDINGS

The pre-test and post-test scores for Organization part were analyzed. Based on the findings, the overall result for the 40 respondents shows a significant increment. The average achievement for the Organization in the pre-test result was 2/5. However, after the post-Test, it can be seen that most of the respondents were able to obtain 5/5 score for Organization.   Clearly, there was a significant difference between pre-test and post-test result. Through P.I.T.C.H technique as well, students become motivated and interested in writing essay even though they are among the low achievers' students.

TABLE I: COMPARISON OF MARKS
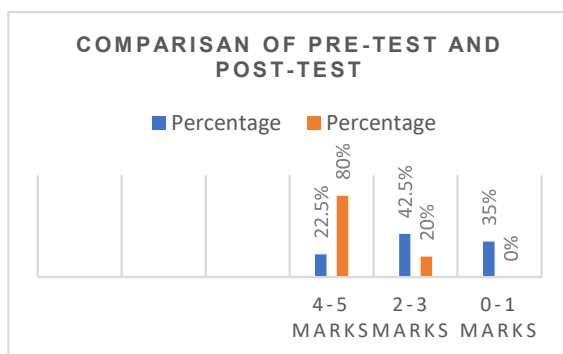
VI.   DISCUSSION

The findings show that there was a significant difference between the results of students for pre-test and post-test after five months of intervention. Since the respondents selected are among the low achiever students who are rarely interested in writing especially email, so P.I.T.C.H technique really helped them to be motivated and interested in writing email. The technique required the students to memorize the cohesive devices initially and understand the function of each cohesive devices in the e-mail. As a result, it is important to take an approach like memorizing few selected cohesive devices to be integrated in their e-mail writing so that the students able to score high marks (5/5) for Organization. Furthermore, the teachers observed the students using P.I.T.C.H during the speaking assessment as well. The acronym has made them feel more confident to speak in English during the assessment.

VII.   CONCLUSION

Based on the research, P.I.T.C.H technique not only give significant impact to the students but to the teachers as well. One of the effects is, the teachers realized that to be able to produce great writing, the students should be able to master accurate writing technique, and one of the examples is through the use of cohesive devices. After the students were exposed to P.I.T.C.H, the research has found that P.I.T.C.H is an effective technique and is easy to remember. Furthermore, the students were able to master P.I.T.C.H technique in email writing in a short time as it is fast to learn and effective. Last but not least, the students become more confident to use P.I.T.C.H not only in their essay writing but they can also use it in their presentation or in the speaking assessment SPM 1119.

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