ABSTRACT
Teaching grammar is a process, which has been a problem for many language teachers around the world. The success of English teaching in Malaysia is determined by teachers in the classroom. The aim of this action research was to teach the prepositions of place among Year 4 pupils using i-Face technique through ‘Where can the bee fly?’ activity. Five respondents from a school in Hulu Langat were selected for this action research. This action research was completed in two cycles based on the Kemmis McTaggart’s Model of Action Research. The data was collected through document analysis, observation, and interview. The findings shown improvement in the pupils’ use of the prepositions of place after they were introduced with i-Face technique. Hence, the use of this technique is able to improve the researcher’s teaching in asserting the pupils to use the prepositions of place correctly.

Keywords: Prepositions of place, Interactive activity

INTRODUCTION
The Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dato’ Sri Mohd Najib bin Tun Haji Abdul Razak (2012) in Preliminary Report Malaysia Education Blueprint (2013-2025) stated Malaysia requires a transformation of the education system, lifting achievement for all pupils in order to meet high aspirations in the competitive global environment. This is in line with Shift 2 in Preliminary Report Malaysia Education Blueprint (2013-2025) which stated that every child is proficient in Bahasa Malaysia and English Language. In order to meet this aspiration, it is essential for teachers to be aware of teaching and learning problems in the classroom as to improve the teaching practices and pupils’ academic performance.

The most frequent problem in learning is the misuse of the prepositions of place especially in their writing exercises. This is supported by Fromkin, V. & Rodman, R. & Hyams, N. (2010) who stated that when the students are learning another language such as English, they are either consciously or subconsciously changing the rules about the language. Even though they are accessing universal grammar while learning the new language, they are also applying some rules from their first language (L1) onto the target language (L2), a phenomenon known as learning transfer. The transfer is considered harmful because the prepositions in the Malay language affected meaning in the English language. As a result, the pupils created an imaginary rule based on what he or she thinks the rule is in the L2 (Boquist, 2009). This problem occurred as the pupils cannot understand and apply the prepositions of place rules as they cannot relate it with their first language. They may also need more practice in the use.

The prepositions of place is widely used in both writing and speaking. Therefore, it is essential for teachers to solve the problems in using the prepositions of place by developing the new technique to suit pupils’ learning interest. Instead of relying the techniques of using song and using realia to teach prepositions as practiced by most English teachers, the focus of this study is to solve the problems of learning grammar which is on prepositions of place by using an interactive method named i-Face technique. I-Face technique is an interactive technique where the pupils will interact with their face in learning prepositions. The research question of the action research is as follows:

1. How is the use of i-Face technique suitable in guiding pupils’ understanding on the prepositions of place?
LITERATURE REVIEW

The Current Scenario in Learning English

Friedman, T. (2005) stated that in the competitive world, today's children need creativity, problem-solving abilities and a passion for learning. Most of pupils in school give full attention and active participation in the fun and interesting activities. Besides, Saadiyah Darus (2009) stated that the success of English teaching in Malaysia is determined by teachers in the classroom. Teacher’s practices in the classroom give an impact on the pupils’ motivation and understanding in learning English. Teachers need to be well-trained and creative to perform these challenging tasks in the classroom.

The Understanding of Prepositions of Place

Preposition is defined as part of speech in Traditional grammar (Frank, 1971). It is differ from other parts of speech that (1) each is composed of a small class of words that have no formal characteristics endings; (2) each signals syntactic structures that function as one of the other parts of speech (Frank, 1971). According to (Mark Foley & Diane Hall, 2003) preposition is the relationship between two or more things. It can link noun, verbs or adjectives before the preposition with a noun or pronouns after it.

The use of preposition of place are crucial in both speaking and writing activity. A research indicates that ‘in’, ‘on’, ‘behind’, ‘beside’, ‘in front of’ and ‘under’ are the list of the prepositions of place in the group of commonly used prepositions (Fatima & Zubaida, 2010). The students need to master the basic and commonly used prepositions as they have wide use in our daily life such as during communication. The misuse of prepositions might lead to wrong interpretation of the message and misunderstanding during conversations. It could affect students’ academic performance during examinations.

Although the prepositions of place ‘in’, ‘on’, ‘behind’, ‘beside’, ‘in front of’ and ‘under’ have little meaning on its but they play an important role in a sentence structure because they function as the sentence connectors and connect lexical words (Fromkin.V & Rodman.R & Hyams.N, 2010).

The Teaching of Prepositions of Place

The teaching of prepositions of place using inductive method is a method of encouraging the students learning grammar in a natural way such as discovery learning (Thornbury, 1999). Teacher lets the students experience interactive activity before they proceed with the explanation on the prepositions. The students discover grammar and visualize how the rules work through the activity naturally before the teacher explain the concept to them.

(Boquist, P, 2009) stated that it is not easy to teach prepositions of place, and many textbooks do not do so well either. Most teachers only depend on the textbook to teach prepositions of place. This way may restrict the way prepositions are taught. (Brown, H. D, 2007) placed a strong emphasis on the use of visual materials in carry out the grammatical explanations and graphically depict the grammatical relationships to the students. (Mahmudah, 2011) stated that the students’ problem in learning grammar not only come from the students but also from teachers’ method used in the teaching of prepositions. Therefore, the activity of learning prepositions of place should be learner-centred and offer students to experience ‘learning by doing’ (Thornbury,S. 1999). ‘Learning by doing’ activity gives the pupils more responsibility and involvement in learning.

METHODOLOGY

This study is an action research. The research design employing both qualitative and quantitative methods. It is based on Kemmis Mettagert’s 1988 Action Research Model. It aimed to explore the effect of using interactive technique through the ‘Where can the bee fly?’ activity in teaching prepositions of place.
Participants

The research is conducted to thirty-two pupils from 4 X of a school in Selangor. There were thirty-two participants in cycle 1 and five participants in cycle 2. All the respondents are ten years old. The respondents are from middle class family. They rarely use English to communicate except during English lesson.

The respondents were selected based on their performance in the preposition’s quiz. Twenty-seven pupils were managed to complete the quiz on prepositions of place correctly in Cycle 1 and five respondents got low marks in the quiz prepared by teachers. The five respondents were selected based on their performance in the quiz. The respondents also had disruptive behavior during lesson. Their behaviors affect their understanding of the content and performance in the classroom.

Harmer (2007) in the book entitled The Practice of English Language Teaching stated that the young children, especially those up to the ages of ten learn differently from older children. They have limited attention span; unless activities are extremely engaging. Thus, this research will reveal how the use of i-Face technique could help the participants in learning prepositions of place thus change their attitudes in English lesson.

Research Design

Teaching of prepositions of place in this study is through the interactive technique named ‘i-Face technique’. The pupils will interact with their parts of face throughout the activity. According to Starbuck, D. (2006) the interactive activity could boost students’ understanding as it involves the interaction of students with their friends and teachers in the classroom. In addition, it also involves ‘learning by doing’. The pupils’ memory retention will last longer and cognitively; it could give positive impact on their understanding of the prepositions of place. Erying, J. (2004) stated that the use of realia or ‘3D’ material in the interactive activity make the activity come alive.

In addition, this technique is incorporated with ‘Where can the bee fly?’ activity. It offers pupils with ‘experiential learning’ (Thorburry, S. 1999). The pupils use the ‘bee’ during the activity and interact with parts of face in learning prepositions of place correctly. The use of paper bee as ‘3 Dimensional’ material made activity become interactive so that pupils feel involved with the situation. The activity gives benefits for both teacher and pupils. For teachers, it helps teacher to catch pupils’ interests during learning. In addition, teachers do not have to spend more time in preparing the materials for the activity. For pupils, it helps them to engage in a fun and interactive activity during the ‘Where can the bee fly?’ activity. By engaging in a fun and interactive activity, it could catch pupils’ interest and attention during the learning. This technique may change the view that learning grammar is difficult and boring.

Research Procedure

There are four steps plan of action for each cycle which are plan, act, observe, and reflect. The research completed in two cycles which are cycle 1 and cycle 2. The cycle 2 is the improvement made from cycle 1.

For the plan of action in cycle 1, teacher prepared the time table to guide on the research. The teacher prepared the chart of a face, the paper bee, task sheet for the 32 participants. In the action plan, teacher used the face chart to introduce the prepositions of place. The pupils carried out ‘Where can the bee fly?’ activity using the face chart. Next, in the observation step, the teacher used structured observation, the multiple choice questions and interview. These types of instruments were used to measure pupils’ attitude, their level of understanding. Lastly, the teacher reflects back the process in cycle 1. The teacher realized that the chart was not being used at a maximum rate because the pupils had to take turn to come to the front and used the chart. In addition, the activity was time consuming and the task sheet was not varies as the teacher used multiple choice question which is low in validity.
The shortcomings in cycle 1 guided the researcher to improve and make some changes in the technique for cycle 2. Therefore, in the plan step in cycle 2, teacher improvised the technique to be more pupil centered and practical in use. Teacher substituted the chart of a face with the face. Then, teacher used face to explain the prepositions of place. In the action step, the pupils used their own faces while doing ‘Where can the bee fly?’ activity. In the observation step, the teachers used observation checklist, three types of task sheet ranging from easy to difficult and interview to measure pupils’ attitude and their level of understanding. For the reflection part, the teacher realized that the used of the face was practical because the pupils explored the activity intensively. In addition, the pupils experienced ‘learning by doing’.

Research Instruments

Three instruments were used in order for the researcher to conduct this research which are observation checklist, task sheet, and interview questions. Observation provides direct access to the participants’ behaviors and responses during the classroom interaction. Goh (2012) stated that there are many positive aspects of the observations which are flexible, and observational research findings are considered to be strong in validity. The observations were done before and during the implementation of the i-Face technique to observe participants’ responses towards the technique implemented and their achievement during the activity.

The semi-structured interview is more authentic because all of the information is obtained directly from the interviewee. According to Chow and Jaizah (2011), interview is an effective technique to observe pupils’ perceptions, attitudes, values, and opinions. The participants were given opportunities to answer the questions based on how they think and feel using the i-Face technique.

The document analysis was in the form of task sheets. The task sheets ranging from easy to difficult which were the multiple-choice questions, fill in the blanks questions, and error identification questions. Goh (2012) stated that teacher who is able to show pupils’ changes through their artifact have strong evidence to support their conclusion.

Data Analysis Procedure

The data were collected using observation checklist, interview and document analysis. The structured observation had conducted for two times which were before the implementation and after the implementation of the technique in Cycle 1 and Cycle 2. The observation checklist had been ticked by other teacher during the implementation. Then, the interview had conducted to obtain the feedbacks and opinions by the participants about the implementation of i-Face technique. The data from interview were collected before and after the implementation. The document analysis which refer to task sheets were used to measure participants’ understanding on the use of prepositions of place. There were three types of task sheets which are a multiple-choice question, fill in the blanks questions, and error identification questions. The task sheets range from the easy to difficult.
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results gained after the analysis of the pupils’ behaviour, document analysis and interview session. Figure 1 displays the pupils’ behaviours before and after the implementation of the i-Face technique.

Table 1: Checklist before and after the implementation of i-Face technique.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bl</th>
<th>Observed Items</th>
<th>Cycle 1</th>
<th>Cycle 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>P1</td>
<td>P2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pupils well-behaved throughout the lesson. (pay attention, do not disturb friends, listen to instructions)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pupils confident to answer the questions on prepositions of place.</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Pupils ask the questions frequently throughout the lesson.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Pupils answer the exercises given correctly.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on Table 1, the pupils who were not behaved, not confident to answer the questions, and did not manage to answer the questions correctly before the implementation were able to show improvement on their behaviors and performance after the implementation of i-face technique. For example, in cycle 1, pupil 1 did not behave well. He did not pay attention, always disturb friends and did not listen to teacher’s instructions. In addition, the pupil also asked the questions frequently throughout the intervention. Besides, the pupil did not manage to answer the exercises given correctly. However, after the implementation, the pupil was behaved well, confident to answer the questions, and answer the questions given correctly.

The data gained from the document analysis which are the task sheets supported the finding from the observation checklist. This could be seen in Table 2, the participants’ score in cycle 1 and cycle 2.

Table 2: Participants’ Score in Cycle 1 and Cycle 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Participants’ Score in Cycle 1 and Cycle 2</th>
<th>Total Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Multiple-Choice questions</td>
<td>Fill in the blanks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>4/6</td>
<td>6/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>4/6</td>
<td>6/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>3/6</td>
<td>5/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>3/6</td>
<td>5/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>5/6</td>
<td>6/6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table shows the progress of participants’ score in cycle 1 and cycle 2. For the multiple-choice questions in cycle 1, there was one participant who scored the highest mark which was 5 out of 6. There were two participants who scored the lowest marks for multiple choice questions. In cycle 2, all participants scored full marks for the multiple-choice questions. It shows that the participants understand the concept and use of the prepositions of place correctly. Nesamalar Chitavelu, Saratha Sithamparam, Teh Soo Choon. (2005) stated that multiple-choice questions are high in validity. Therefore, the results in cycle 2 shown the use of participants’ own face helped the pupils to score in exercises.
Based on the fill in the blanks questions, there was only one pupil who scored highest mark in cycle 1. The participant still did not manage to score all answers correctly. It shows that the use of face chart was not meaningful in assisting the participants to remember the prepositions of place. However, in cycle 2, all participants were able to score all fill in the blanks questions correctly. It shown that the use of pupils’ own faces really assists the participants to remember the prepositions of place in a better and meaningful way. The participants’ performance in cycle 2 shown a great improvement compared to cycle 1.

The participants’ performance based on the most difficult exercise was the error identification questions. The error identification was the most difficult questions because the participants had to correct the wrong sentences on their own based on the stimulus given which is the picture. Therefore, in cycle 1, all participants scored low marks which were ranging from 2 until 4 correct answers. It shown that the participants did not understand the prepositions of place that being taught to them. After the use of participants’ own faces in cycle 2, all participants were able to score this exercises with high scores. Therefore, this activity could build their confidence level during learning prepositions of place.

Based on the overall total marks in cycle 2, all pupils were able to score full marks which were from 15 to 18 for all the task sheets given. Based on the participants’ score, if the participants master the basic and commonly used prepositions, they would be able to improve their speaking and writing performance in the classroom.

The data gained from the interview session supported the finding of the data analysis. During the interview session, the participants were asked to respond to four questions such as listing the prepositions of place, their understanding whether they know how to use the prepositions of place correctly, their feeling during the prepositions of place activity, and their opinions towards the learning of prepositions. The interview session that being conducted before and after the implementation of i-Face technique helped the researcher to identify the effectiveness of the implementation of i-Face technique.

The first interview question was ‘Can you list the prepositions of place?’ Based on the responses given by the participants, there was a participant that did not response anything to the question. The participant kept quiet during the interview session. However, when the same question being asked after the implementation the i-Face technique, the participant could response confidently by listing the prepositions of place correctly. Starbuck, D. (2006) highlighted that the interactive activity could boost pupils’ understanding and hence could improve their performance in the test.

For the second interview question, the researcher asked the participants whether they know how to use the prepositions of place correctly. All participants responded that they did not know and always confused. However, after the implementation of i-Face technique, there was a participant responded “Easy to remember. Especially ‘the bee is in the mouth, it’s scary. Hehe”. These responses supported the observation made whereby after the implementation of the activity, the pupils could focus and pay attention during the lesson. Young learners have short attention span. They could easily be distracted with things around them. Therefore, the interactive activity could catch their attention to focus on the activity.

The third interview question was about their feeling during the ‘Where can the bee fly?’ activity. Before the implementation of i-Face technique, the participants stated that the activity was boring. However, after the implementation, one of the participants responded that the implementation of the technique was effective as the paper bee flies at different parts of face. He could remember them easily. From the response, teachers need to find interesting activity in order to make they remember the prepositions well. (Haliza Hamzah, Samuel, J. N. and Rafidah Kastawi, 2008).

The last interview question was about the participants’ opinion on learning prepositions using i-Face technique. All of the participants responded that it is easy as they could remember the prepositions in a fun way. Therefore, teachers could not blame the participants if they did not perform in learning. Teachers have to reflect their own teaching practice (Mckernan, J. 1996).

Teachers could explore the use of 3D material in teaching prepositions of place. The 3D materials can be used as a stimulus for a creative teaching as it is helpful in stimulating the pupils’ activity (Harmen, J. 2007). Instead of using the pictures or songs as the stimulus, teachers could use the pupils’ body parts as
the teaching aid to explore the prepositions of place in a fun and meaningful ways. Therefore, it both
benefits teachers and pupils in term of accessibility and preparation of materials.

Using face gives the pupils a tactile experience which they rarely experience in the class. The pupils would
be able to relate their learning prepositions of place with their sense of touch. Thus, the pupils would be
able to experience ‘learning by doing’ that later improve their understanding on the prepositions of place
in fun, and non-threatening way.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Teachers should not be panic when dealing with pupils who faced learning problems especially in learning
prepositions of place. If teachers understand and master the pedagogical skills of teaching English, it would
be easier for teachers to innovate an interesting or innovative technique to be implemented in the classroom.

The use of iFace technique through the implementation of ‘Where can the bee fly?’ activity for teaching
prepositions of place is an effort to show that it is possible for teachers to create a learning situation where
the pupils are interested in learning and are successful in doing so. The i-Face technique is applicable for
pupils who experienced difficulty in understanding the prepositions. It provides pupils with an interactive
activity that could strengthen their memory to remember the positions of the bee around the parts of their
faces. It also trains teacher to be more structured in delivering the instructions while teaching. This
technique has improved teacher’s practice on prepositions of place in English primary classroom.

The research questions asked in this research have been answered using the three research instruments
which are observations, interviews, and document analysis. The data was then triangulated to establish the
positive results found on the pupils’ ability to learn the prepositions of place have indeed improved.

SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The use of the ‘i-Face’ technique is effective in improving pupils’ understanding on the prepositions of
place. However, based on the action research that have been conducted, there are still a lot of suggestions
that could make for the further research to ensure the effectiveness of the technique plus to suit the
participants’ needs. One of the suggestions is to improvise the i-Face technique by integrating it with the
songs and poems. Through the use of songs or poems in the ‘Where can the bee fly?’ activity, it will make
the lesson more joyful. Therefore, the pupils will learn in more happening and interesting lesson. The
element of song in learning could aid pupils’ understanding in learning grammar (Starbuck, D. 2006).

In addition, the researcher also planned to use the whole body as to gauge pupils’ understanding on the
prepositions of place. The researcher proposed to improve others prepositions such as across, in between,
above, below, and many more. For example, the pupils could improve their understanding on the
prepositions of ‘in between’ through the sentence of ‘The bee is in between the eyes’. Through this way,
the pupils would be able to remember the prepositions of place better.

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