

Utilising *Grasia* to Increase Pupils' Motivation and Participation in Grammar Lesson

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Abstract

Grammar lessons can be dull especially when the lessons are conducted in a one-way interaction where pupils are required only to listen and absorb the information conveyed by the teacher. This lacklustre teaching practice should be changed. This research was intended to create a new way of teaching and learning grammar which is a transition from boring drilling towards exciting grammar lesson. Employing Action Research design, this research aimed to test a new method of teaching and learning grammar which is using *Grasia* (Grammar through Tarsia) in English language grammar lesson. The respondents of the research were from primary and secondary school pupils. 19 pupils from two primary schools in Daro and Lubok Antu, as well as, 21 pupils from a secondary school in Baram district were chosen as participants through convenient sampling method. The data of this research were obtained through teacher observation questionnaire and self-assessment survey which were carried out before and after *Grasia* was implemented in grammar lesson. The findings indicated a positive outcome among the participants after teaching and learning session through *Grasia*. This finding is fundamental to give an insight to all the teachers that a change is needed in order to carry out a fun and meaningful grammar lesson. *Grasia* provides alternative methods for teachers to introduce grammar items in a fun and engaging way rather than chalk and talk lesson.

Keywords

Puzzle, Drilling, Grammar, Participation, Motivation, Engaging

1. Introduction

In view of current development in globalisation, mastering English language has an indispensable skill for people. Thus, it is very important for people to learn the language. In any learning context, both teachers and pupils play important roles in order to make the lesson become engaging. Engaging lesson requires pupils to actively participate in the class. Nevertheless, we often hear from academic discussion that pupils do not actively participate or become passive in the class especially during grammar lesson.

To most Malaysian pupils, learning English grammar is an arduous task. Suppiah, Subramaniam, and Subrayan (2011) stated in their research that this is especially true in national schools in Malaysia. Malaysian pupils speak English as their second or third language, but to pupils from lower-income families, English is only spoken at school during English lesson. Thus, teachers are responsible to make their lessons interesting and they have to consider their pupils' different learning styles when planning their lessons and preparing the materials. This is supported by Rahamat et al. (2011) where the development of teaching and learning materials is part and parcel of improving the delivery of knowledge from teachers to pupils. This is agreed by Chun & Yunus (2016) where teachers play important roles in ensuring learners attain their second language alongside their first language and/or mother tongue.

Abdullah & Shah (2015) indicated that globalization has placed English to a very important position in Malaysia's education. The mastery of Content and Learning Standards in the Malaysia English Language curriculum contributes to the pupils' acquisition of the 21st Century Skills. The curriculum has been designed to produce pupils who will be proficient in the language as well as to help them acquire the language, so that they can apply it in their daily lives, to further their studies and work purposes. This is supported by Ien, Yunus, & Embi (2017), pupils who undergo primary schooling will be literate and be given a strong foundation in the language so that they can progress towards language proficiency at the secondary level. Thus, educators should have various methods in their repertoire to ensure that they deliver their lessons well and to ensure that their pupils learn and master the content of the lesson. To check their pupils' content mastery, teachers usually employ questionnaire and quiz. Often, those questionnaire and quiz are administered at the end of the lesson. Nonetheless, this might be too common. Thus, Grasia was introduced to ensure engaging grammar lesson where teachers are able to create puzzles using various templates using Tarsia Formulator to ensure collaborative and interactive teaching and learning in the classroom which is in line with 21st-century teaching and learning.

1.1. TARSIA

Tarsia is an offline software where the puzzle templates are available for the users to insert texts and pictures along the side of the shape. It will generate the

templates for the users to create, print out, save and change customised jigsaws, dominos activities and other variety of rectangular card sort activities in order to supports language learning activities. **Figures 1-9** below are the interface from the software.

1.2. GRASIA

In order for pupils to be interested in learning English language, they must have good vocabularies to understand the language. Vocabulary is the foundation of learning language, so proper grammar will help them to understand English as second language since all languages follow grammatical patterns. This is supported by **Chen, Maarof, & Yunus (2016)**, in language learning, in order to be expert in all skills, pupils must have well-built vocabulary knowledge.

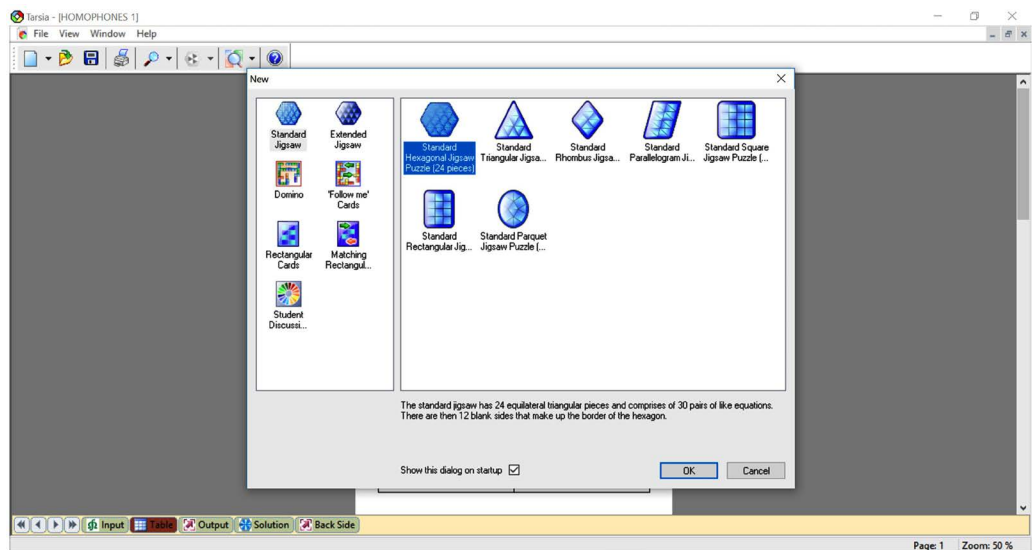


Figure 1. Puzzle template options.

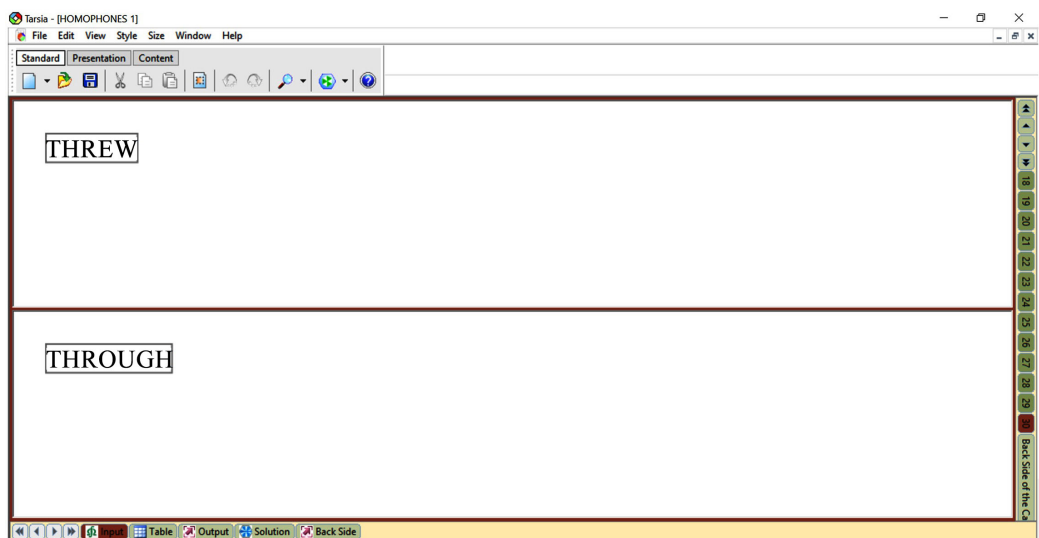


Figure 2. Insert words.

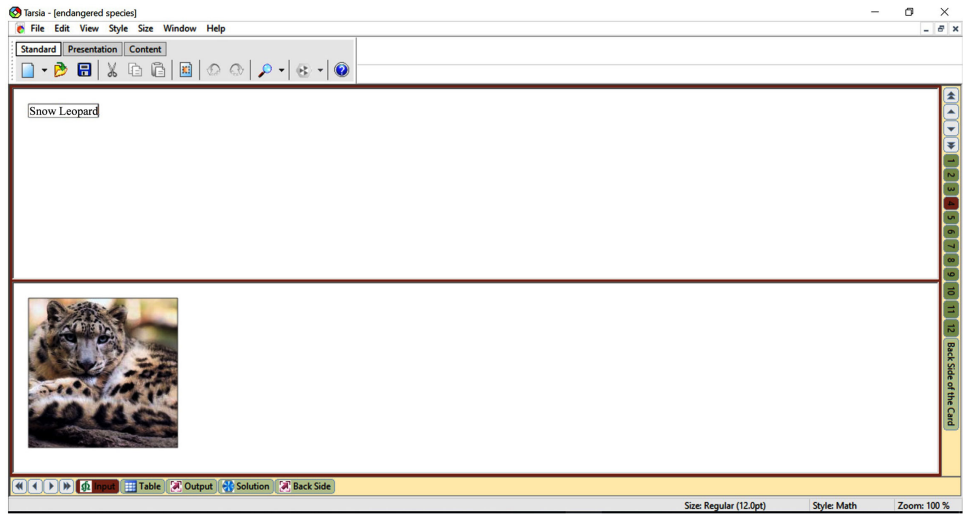


Figure 3. Insert words and pictures.



Figure 4. Words table.



Figure 5. Words and pictures table.

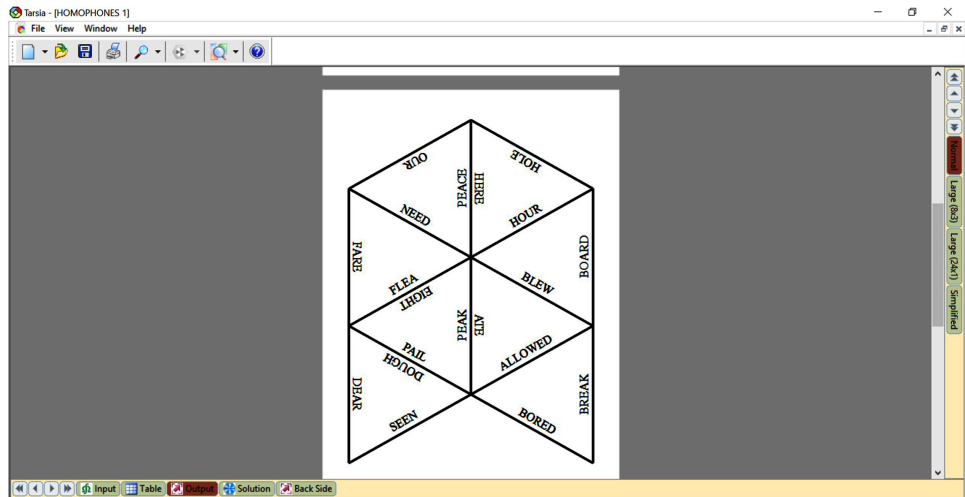


Figure 6. Words output.

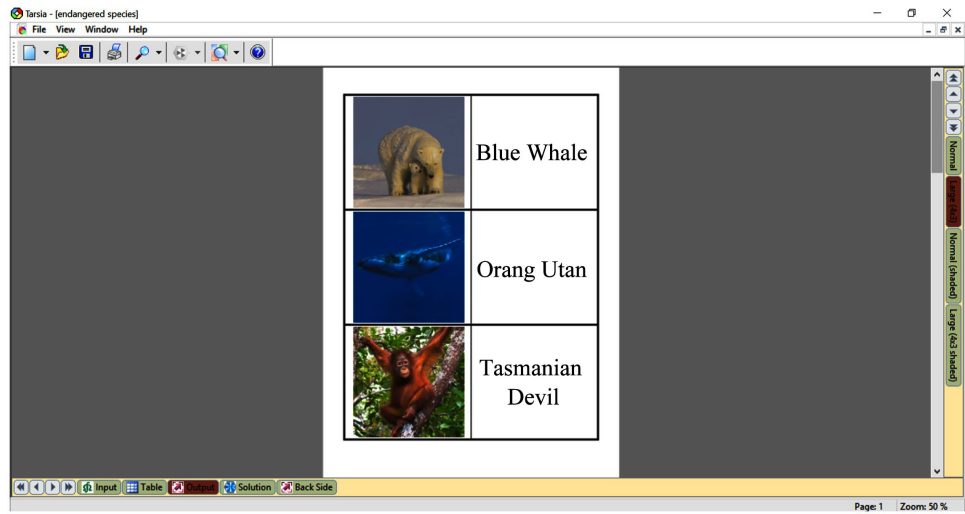


Figure 7. Words and pictures output.

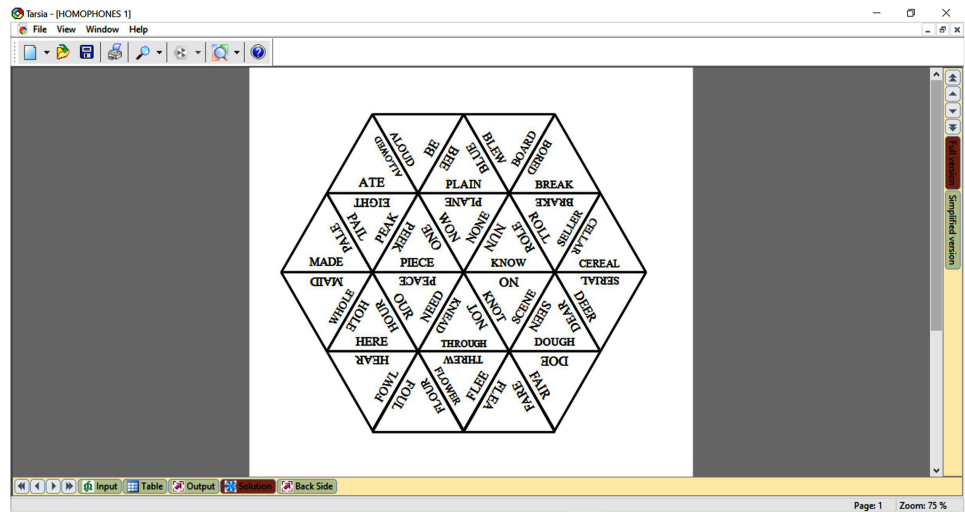


Figure 8. Solution.

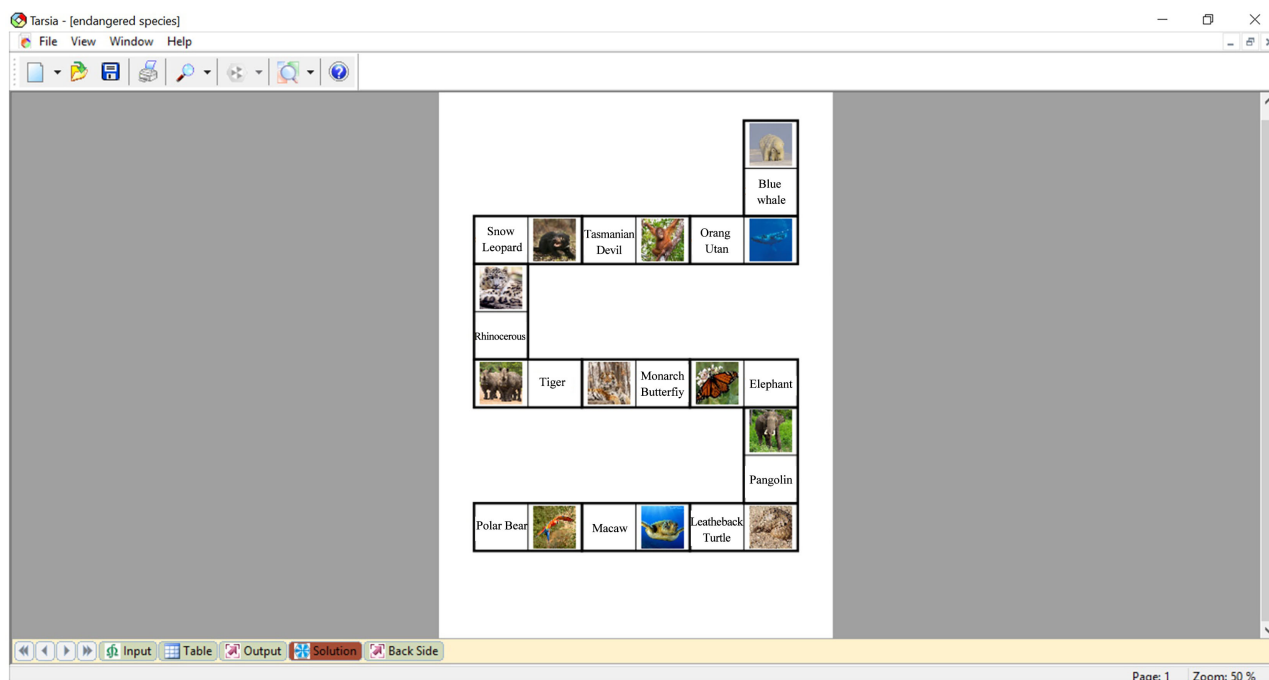


Figure 9. Suggested solution.

Grasia is a term coined by the researchers which means Grammar through Tarsia. Therefore, it is hoped that Grasia will help language learners, teachers, and even parents to enhance grammar teaching and learning towards fun and meaningful lesson. Utilising Grasia in grammar lesson helps teachers to provide a non-threatening environment for pupils to learn grammar better and in an entertaining way. Thus, it will increase the participation of pupils in learning grammar. According to [Mustapha, Rahman, & Yunus \(2010\)](#) quality class participation refers to pupils showing evidence of personal awareness of concepts discussed in class and this requires some interaction frequency.

By providing non-threatening environment for pupils to learn grammar, it will increase their motivation to learn the grammar as well as the English language. Grasia will enhance them to take responsibility of their own learning because in order to complete the puzzle, they must comprehend the grammar itself. Being able to complete the Grasia will increase their motivation towards learning the grammar. [Mat & Yunus \(2014\)](#), stated that motivating the pupils should be a primary concern of teachers as it is the key factor to help pupils improve their proficiency.

1.3. Collaborative Learning, Motivation & Participation

In 21st century classroom, educators are required to cater to pupils' different learning styles, hence, educators are advised to employ 21st century teaching and learning strategies. One of the strategies is collaborative learning. Findings from a research done by [Law et al. \(2017\)](#) stated that collaborative learning may enhance pupils' engagement in learning where pupils showed a high level of moti-

vation, effort and interest when lessons are conducted through collaborative learning in the classroom. This is supported by Madut & Yunus (2016) stated that the use of innovative materials in ESL classroom benefit the teachers to bridge the gap between the classroom knowledge and pupils' participation in the classroom. Thus, it is will be beneficial for both teachers and pupils when innovation is being used as the tool to acquire the knowledge. Moreover, innovation helps learners to learn in fun yet meaningful way. Grasia provides alternative methods for teachers to introduce grammar items in a fun and engaging way rather than chalk and talk lesson. This paper aims to explore the use of Grasia in teaching grammar, particularly in terms of group level of motivation and participation before and after applying Grasia.

2. Material and Methods

2.1. Research Design

Research design for this study is a collaborative action research. This study adapted Kemmis and McTagget action research model. A collaborative action research is an action research conducted by two or more teachers who shared the same problem (Ferrance, 2000). As for this study, a collaborative action research had been done by 3 teachers from different schools who shared the same problem on pupils' motivation and level of participation in grammar lesson. These teachers were chosen because they are teaching in schools where internet access is limited. Nevertheless, they have to make their lesson interesting to ensure their pupils are highly engaged in the lesson which is hoped to help the pupils to retain and understand the lesson (Figure 10).

2.2. Respondents

The study was conducted at two primary schools and a secondary school in Sarawak, Malaysia. 19 pupils from two primary schools in Daro and Lubok Antu, as well as, 21 pupils from a secondary school in Baram district were chosen as participants. 6 pupils are 9 years old, 13 are 10 years old and 21 pupils from the secondary school are 13 years old. The respondents were chosen using convenient sampling method. This is because they are the closest to the researchers.

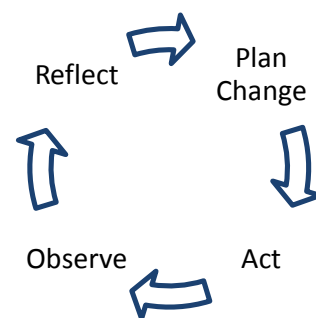


Figure 10. Action research model (Wasilewski, 2010).

Since this research is an action research, it is better to choose respondents who are close to the researcher because the researchers understand their problem and the outcome of the research can be implemented in their classrooms. These respondents were chosen due to the location of their school. The three schools have very limited access to internet networks therefore, the researchers recognized the importance of utilizing offline software to enhance their classroom lesson.

2.3. Procedure

The first stage of this study was planning. During planning stage, aim and the duration of intervention were determined. The material for the intervention and data collecting instrument were prepared at this stage. Prior to the implementation of Grasia in grammar lessons, teachers (researchers) filled in teacher's observation checklist to assess pupil's level of motivation and participation in conventional grammar class. Pupils were asked to fill in pupils' assessment tool to assess their level of motivation and participation in conventional grammar class. The self-assessment tool consists of 3 items for motivations and 3 items for level of participation. Teachers and pupils answered the questions and their responses were recorded. The self-assessment tool is adapted from Standard 4 of SKPMg2 (Malaysia Education Quality Standard 2nd Wave). Standard 4 of SKPMg2 is used by the school administrator to observe the quality of teacher as they conducted their lesson. The questions on motivation are taken from item 4.3.1 of the SKPMg2 Standard 4 scoresheet. Meanwhile, the item for level of participation is taken from item 4.6.1 of the same scoresheet.

The next step of the study was the implementation of Grasia in grammar lessons. Within the span of two months pupils learned grammar items through Grasia. After two months a similar questionnaire was given to pupils to see their level of motivation and level of participation in grammar lesson after using Grasia. Their responses were recorded. Observation was also done and teachers recorded their observation.

Finally, the data was analysed and reflection from the observation and questionnaire were recorded. This is to seek for improvement for the next cycle.

2.4. Data Analysis

The observation checklist and questionnaire were designed using yes and no response. The data collected from observations and questionnaire were analysed using frequency counts for each item. The frequency was converted into percentage.

3. Result

The results obtained from the teacher observation and pupils' self-assessment survey are presented in **Table 1** and **Table 2**.

Based on the data in **Table 1**, it is observed that there is a 100% increase in pupils' participation as well as motivation after the implementation of Grasia in

grammar lesson. Pupils were willing to try to answer, communicate and collaborate with their group members when Grasia is used in the lesson.

Based on **Table 2**, a 33.33% growth is observed in item 1.1. Although the growth rate is quite low, but there is an improvement after Grasia is implemented in grammar lesson. Item 1.2 showed 150% increment. Meanwhile, item 1.3 showed the highest increment which is 500.0%. For item 2.1 the growth rate is a total of 109.91%. Item 2.2 showed an increase of 242.86% and item 2.3 showed an increase of 400.0%. From this analysis, it portrays that Grasia helps to increase pupils' participation in grammar lesson. It increases the pupils' motivation to learn grammar as well.

Table 1. Teachers' observation.

	Statements	Percentage (%)			
		Before		After	
	1.0 Pupils' Participation	Yes	No	Yes	No
1	Pupil participate actively by giving response to the lesson content	0	100	100	0
2	Pupil communicate with each other while completing the lesson activity	0	100	100	0
3	Pupil collaborate while carrying out lesson activity	0	100	100	0
	2.0 Pupils' Motivation	Yes	No	Yes	No
1	Pupils are motivated to communicate with the teacher and their group members during grammar lesson	0	100	100	0
2	Pupil are motivated to collaborate while carrying out lesson activity	0	100	100	0
3	Pupils are interested to learn grammar	0	100	100	0

Table 2. Pupils' self-assessment.

	Statements	Percentage (%)			
		Before		After	
	1.0 Pupils' Participation	Yes	No	Yes	No
1.1	I participate actively by giving response to the lesson content	30.0	70.0	40.0	60.0
1.2	I communicate with my group members while completing the lesson activity	35.0	65.0	87.5	12.5
1.3	I collaborate while carrying out lesson activity	15.0	85.0	90.0	10.0
	2.0 Pupils' Motivation	Yes	No	Yes	No
2.1	I am motivated to communicate with my group members during grammar lesson	27.5	72.5	80.0	20.0
2.2	I am motivated to collaborate while carrying out lesson activity	17.5	82.5	60.0	40.0
2.3	I am interested to learn grammar	15.0	85.0	75.0	25.0

4. Discussion

Based on the result obtained, it is concluded that there are various benefits seen when Grasia is employed in the grammar lesson. The main benefits that were tested are pupils' level of motivation and level of participation in grammar lesson. It is shown that there is a significant increase in both pupils' level of motivation and level of participation in grammar lesson. Looking at the result where pupils responded that implementation of Grasia helps increase their level of motivation and participation, it is a wonder why teachers still practiced chalk and talk method. [Baleghizadeh and Farshci's study \(2009\)](#) indicated that, teachers are aware that grammar should be taught implicitly and through problem solving activities. However, most of the teachers are doing the exact opposite when teaching grammar in the classroom. Some teachers are concerned about classroom management that they do not practice what they believe in ([Hos & Kekec, 2014](#)). This classroom practice is killing pupils' motivation and decreases their participation because the lesson is carried out one way where pupils are only the receiving end. It is important for teachers to plan lessons where the activities encourages pupils to take part in the lesson because when pupils participate in classroom activities they can gain more knowledge and confidence as well as improve their ability to think ([Mustapha, Rahman, & Yunus, 2010](#)).

Some other benefits that were also observed are the increase in pupils' excitement as well as the increase in their cooperation and collaboration level as pupils have to work collaboratively to solve the puzzle. These changes are observed through classroom observation where it is evident that pupils are more excited to learn grammar compared to when grammar lesson is carried out using chalk and talk technique. When Grasia is employed in grammar lessons, pupils showed more interest and are very eager to learn. They are also able to remember the grammar items much faster. Their motivation to learn also increases. They enjoyed discussing and arguing about the task in their group until they reached the solution. According to [Hesse, Care, Buder, Sassenberg and Griffin \(2015\)](#) the exchange of knowledge or opinions to maximize understanding by a recipient is the communication skill that required in collaborative learning. The lesson also has become more interesting and thus decreases pupils' fear and stress to learn grammar. When pupils feel at ease with the environment they tend to be more willing to participate in the lesson. Considering the impact that Grasia has on grammar lesson, it would be appropriate for future researchers to explore the usage of Grasia in other language skills such as writing, reading as well as speaking.

5. Conclusion

Based on these findings, it is hoped that more teachers will employ Grasia in their grammar lesson. From the study conducted pupils showed a significant increase in level of participation as well as motivation. From this study Grasia is found out to be very potential in promoting fun and meaningful learning. This

type of learning encourages pupils to participate actively in learning because lesson is carried out in a non-threatening way. The finding showed that there is an increase in motivation after Grasia is implemented in grammar lesson. When pupils are motivated to learn, they will take responsibility of their own learning. In addition to that, implementing Grasia in language classroom is in line with 21st century learning where pupils are required to collaborate and communicate effectively. Therefore, a change in grammar lesson atmosphere is imperative as pupils benefit a lot from less fearful learning environment and this in turn, increases their participation in the group discussion as well as their grammar acquisition. For future study on the same topic there are a few suggestions that the researchers would like to offer. First, the respondents of the research should be from one specific proficiency group instead of mix proficiency. By doing so, future researcher can focus on the effect of Grasia in helping the pupils, for example low proficiency pupils, to learn grammar in an interesting way. Secondly, the result might be more credible when the researcher has bigger number of respondents. This could be done by involving more teachers and pupils to take part in the action research. The result from the study would be beneficial for the teachers involved in the research, so do the pupils.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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