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THE USE OF PLOTAGON AS A CREATIVE DIGITAL MEDIA ING ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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abstract

This study explores some alternative activities using Plotagon as media to teach English skills in English language teaching (ELT) contexts. Plotagon is a video creator application allowing users to make interactive and attractive video materials in the form of storytelling animation. This paper employed a narrative review to explore and synthesize literature relevant to the use of Plotagon as an interactive media tool for teaching English skills. A narrative review, characterized by its qualitative and interpretative approach, was selected to provide a comprehensive overview of existing studies and practical insights without the rigid protocols of a systematic review. This findings particularly highlight how to use Plotagon to make teaching and activities more interactive in and beyond the classroom. Furthermore, Plotagon is potential to enhance not only teachers but also students' creativity. The substitution augmentation modification redefinition (SAMR) model is also applied to describe how Plotagon is used in different levels of teaching and learning activities. Thus, this paper is expected to contribute practically to the teachers' development and innovation especially in English language teaching contexts.

INTRODUCTION

Starting the early of the twenty-first century, the introduction of the internet in the form of world wide web systems has greatly altered the language educational practices. The internet facilitates learners accessing to any information. In addition, various portable devices such as laptops or smartphones as well as interactive software applications provide learners with opportunities to learn ubiquitously in any time and any place (Cárdenas-Robledo & Peña-Ayala, 2018). Furthermore, the popularity of blogs and social media as digital platforms provides the learners with opportunities to access virtual learning environment, express their ideas, and share information easily. This opportunity promotes the role of digital media as not only delivery but also interactive or collaborative tools (Selwin, 2017). It means that the learners can use digital technology not only to acquire knowledge but also disseminate their knowledge.

Technology, as media, is one of the important aspects in teaching. It helps teachers support teaching from preparation, presentation, and assessment. Furthermore, the use of media could help teachers to be more creative in teaching as it allows them to design a variety of teaching and learning activities (Alivi, 2022). In teaching and learning contexts, the use of multimedia could motivate students in learning as encourage interactive learning environment (Alivi, 2022; García-Sánchez, 2012). This is due to the contribution of multimedia to provide learners with visual and audio cues to assist them with better comprehension and stronger sense of learning participation experiences (Lotherington and Jenson, 2011; Alivi, 2022; Harmer, 2015).

Particularly in language teaching and learning, such as English language teaching (ELT), the use of multimedia could provide students with easy access to authentic materials. Shadiey et al. (2018) suggested the use of authentic materials to give students learning environments with real-life context resources. For instance, the internet enables students to access resources from across the world especially posted by the native English speakers. The students could choose the material form (for example, videos from YouTube or images from Instagram) according to their learning preference (Alivi, 2022; Watkins and Wilkins, 2011; Hsu, et al., 2008). The use of multimedia from digital or online platforms, therefore, could support students' independent learning beyond classroom as they could access it ubiquitously.

Literature shows that the use of multimedia could give positive impacts for students' learning performance and motivation (Mayer, 2014; Alivi, 2022; Jusoh and Jusoff, 2009; Al-Khalidi, et al., 2022). Jusoh and Jusoff (2009) indicated that the use of multimedia technologies such as PowerPoint slides, the internet, and video was reported fun and interactive by the students, as well as promoting students' creativity and collaboration in the video making process. Furthermore, Mayer (2014) states that the use of video animation made students easier to comprehend complex concept of materials from the assistance of verbal and pictorial presentation. Moreover, Alivi (2022) students requested teachers to use particular technologies like YouTube and Kahoot in learning activities as the students felt the use of these technologies could help them better in understanding materials.

Plotagon, an animated movie maker, is a potential multimedia to use in teaching. It is considered an interesting application to support teachers' material preparation (e.g. designing their own video materials) or give students' video creation project. Plotagon allows users to create videos in the form of a movie-like animation which the users could select or design their own characters; manage the gestures, movements, and positions; as well as set the locations, dialogues, and story plots. Plotagon is also easily accessed, in which, the users could download and play it on either mobile phones or desktops.

Many studies have discussed the use of Plotagon in teaching, especially its contribution in language teaching such as for improving speaking (Kurnia, et.al., 2023; Mudinillah and Nurfadilah, 2022), listening (Baihaqi and Ramadhani, 2023; Salma, et.al., 2022), or writing skills (Alwasilah, 2019; Gámez and Cuellar, 2019). In an action research study in Colombia, Gámez and Cuellar (2019) found that students improved their English writing skills from creating digital stories using Plotagon. The students reported that the writing activities increased their vocabulary mastery as they enjoyed the learning process from the video creation. Similarly, in a survey study in Oman to 70 undergraduate students, Al-Khalidi et. al. (2022) reported that the students responded positively to the use of Plotagon in learning activities as it could improve their language competence especially vocabulary and writing. The students also felt that they could comprehend the materials better from the Plotagon application. Furthermore, Kurnia et. al. (2023) conducted a case study in a university in Indonesia to look into the Plotagon use in teaching English speaking. The study indicated that students become more active and confident in practicing speaking English from the use of Plotagon in their learning activities. Thus, this paper aims at proposing some alternative activities how Plotagon is used to give students' creative and interactive activities in ELT.

In this digital era, teachers are required to have technological competence. More specifically, teachers are expected to improve their skills for technological pedagogical content knowledge or TPACK. TPACK is a framework introduced by Mishra and Koehler (2006) pointing out that teachers' competence should be not limited only on their subject area mastery (i.e. content knowledge) but the ability to teach the subject area using appropriate technologies (i.e. pedagogical knowledge) applied in creative pedagogical approaches such as teaching methods

and strategies (i.e. pedagogical knowledge). The teachers' technological knowledge, however, is not expected only on the technology technical skills but more on the creative use to select and adjust the technology potency in teaching different subjects and contexts. Thus, technology has a role to support teaching to attain higher students' engagement in the learning process (Alivi, 2019; Niess, 2011).

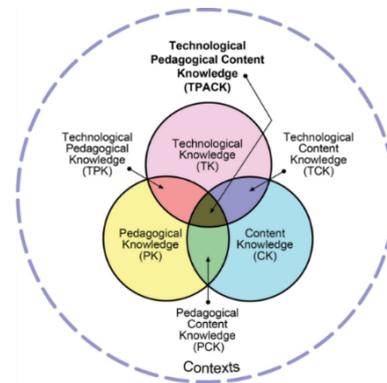


Figure 1. The TPACK Framework (Mishra and Koehler, 2006)

The TPACK framework is considered important in teaching knowledge development especially on the context of teachers' continuing professional development (CPD) as it introduces a new expectation standard of teachers' competences responding to technology innovations. Many previous studies suggested CPD applications should focus on TPACK as most of them still focused on discrete knowledge of the TPACK, for instance, trainings on the pedagogical improvement or technical operation of new technology (e.g. Alivi, 2022; Gamlo, 2014; Ghamdi, 2015). Literature also suggests that the successful CPD on TPACK should be carried out on a regular and long-term basis (Rienties et al. 2013; Alivi, 2022; Wallinger, 2016). In Australia, Oakley and Pegrum (2015) conducted a four-year longitudinal study on formal CPD to teachers at a university focusing on TPACK and SAMR frameworks. In the following study, two teachers showing the most significant change in their attitude toward technology use in teaching were interviewed. They reported that the training had altered their pedagogical beliefs, affecting the change in the way they teach. Moreover, they became more active to improve their TPACK abilities from informal networking learning (i.e. sharing teaching experience with colleagues).

Literature highly associates the concept of teachers' teaching competence in with SAMR models as an evaluation of how teachers should select and use technology in teaching. According to Cummings (2014), SAMR aims to 'facilitate the acquisition of proficiency in modern consumer technologies and software for both staff and students with the hope of promoting 21st century skills'. The SAMR model is designed by Puentedura (2006). It has four hierarchy levels consisting of Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, and Redefinition (SAMR) – the order is from the lowest to the highest. In the Substitution level, 'technology acts as a direct tool substitute, with no functional change'. The higher level, Augmentation, defines technology as 'a direct tool substitute, with no functional improvement'. In the third level, Modification, 'technology allows for significant task redesign'. Redefinition, as the highest level, expects teachers to use technology 'for creation of new tasks, previously inconceivable'. Furthermore, the function of substitution and modification levels is as 'enhancement', referring the role of technologies to improve students' learning experience. Meanwhile, the modification and redefinition have functions as 'transformation', as the use of technologies in these levels

encourage students to experience transformation reconstruction processes from redesigning and creating learning products or resources in the teaching and learning activities.

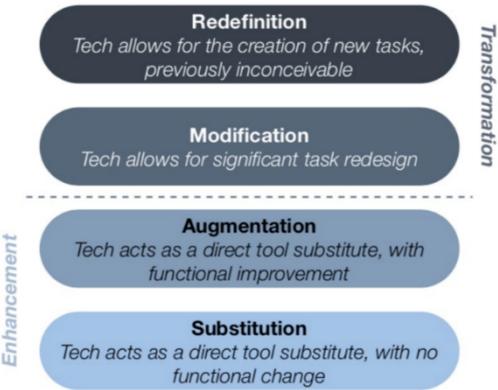


Figure 2. The SAMR Model (Puentedura, 2006)

The idea of the SAMR model is similar to Bloom’s Taxonomy, a framework to evaluate learners’ cognitive skills (Bloom, 1956; Alivi, 2019; Anderson and Krathwohl, 2001). There are six cognitive domains defining the lowest to the highest order critical thinking based the complexity of learning activities. The initial domains cover knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (Bloom, 1956). Then, it was revised by Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) replacing the terms from nouns into action verbs, eliminating synthesis, and putting ‘create’ as the most complex domain. The revised hierarchy includes remember, understand apply, analyse, evaluate, and create. In the application, the main purpose of Bloom Taxonomy framework is to give teachers guidance how they should design learning activities to make students have higher critical thinking in learning. If teachers give students with more activities in ‘create’ levels, they implicitly also experience the other five lower cognitive domains (i.e. from remember to evaluate) as it is the most complex one. The SAMR Model and Blooms’ Taxonomy emphasis that the higher the activity level, the more student-centered it is. This means that the technology use and the activity designed in the lowest levels, ‘Substitution’ in the SAMR Model and ‘Remember’ in the Bloom Taxonomy is inclined to apply instruction-based activities, i.e. teacher-centred (Chell and Dowling, 2013; Rehman and Aurangzeb, 2021).

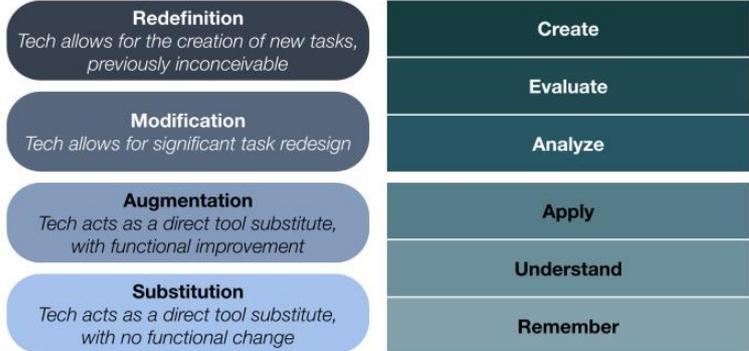


Figure 3. The SAMR Model and Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy (Puentedura, 2014)

Likewise, the SAMR model also acts as a guidance for teachers to design students’ learning activities with assistance of technology. The application of the SAMR model is considered interrelated with the Bloom Taxonomy (Alivi, 2019; Rehman and Aurangzeb, 2021; Puentedura, 2014). When teachers use technology for particular teaching and learning purposes,

they should think how they use it to provide students with higher critical learning activities. Therefore, the connection of the SMAR model and Bloom Taxonomy into is made into four classifications. The Substitution use applies 'Remember' cognitive domains. The Augmentation level promotes the 'Understand and Apply' levels. Then, the use of technology in the 'Modification' level includes the 'Evaluate and Analysis' thinking process. The highest one, the application of 'Redefinition' expects teachers to design activities using technology to attain 'Create' involving students' higher order thinking skills.

METHOD

This paper carried out a narrative method to review and summarise specific research area supporting the research topic. The narrative review is presented in a qualitative approach and considered as an unsystematic approach (Green et al., 2006) as the process is to summarise literature focusing on a particular topic only and does not aim to analyse and classify studies to generalise the accumulative knowledge (Pare and Kitsiou, 2017).

In particular, this paper describes how Plotagon could be used as an interactive media to teach English skills in different activities according to the SAMR models. Therefore, the narrative method was helpful to summarise literature concerning teaching activities using Plotagon, specifically focusing on English language teaching, to support its successful application in teaching. Nonetheless, the description of teaching activities using Plotagon was subjectively proposed in this paper to illustrate alternative and potential teaching activities for English language teachers. The foundation of the description was based on personal comprehension and knowledge on the SAMR model concept and application.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Plotagon is widely proposed to be applied in project-based learning (PjBL) activities (e.g. Alwasilah, 2019). The PjBL activities promote students' higher critical thinking and creativity as students are given flexibility to design and create the project concept according to their personal interest (Boholano, 2017; Grant, 2011). In Alwasilah (2019) study, the use of Plotagon in a project-based learning was applied in teaching writing narrative on English Literature subjects. In collaborative activities, the final product of the students' writing project was to create a 5 minutes animative video, in which they collaboratively wrote the story plots and gave cross feedback. The result of the study reported that students gave positive views on the application as they felt it fun and could improve their literacy in multiple aspects not only in language components but also video editing.

In SAMR Model, the application of PjBL activities is placed at Redefinition levels as it promotes students to create a learning product and become creative in their learning process. The following table shows some examples of how Plotagon could be applied in teaching in accordance with levels activities in the SAMR Model.

Table 1. The application of Plotagon in the SAMR Model

SAMR Levels	Taxonomy Bloom Levels	Potential Activities
Substitution	Remember	Teachers download <i>Plotagon</i> videos from YouTube (or create one) to substitute supporting materials (e.g. presentation slides or textbooks) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students only watch the videos as examples
Augmentation	Understand Apply	Teachers download <i>Plotagon</i> videos from YouTube (or create one) to substitute supporting materials (e.g. presentation slides or textbooks) and add more activities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students watch the videos as examples. • Teachers give some quizzes or discussions from other technology (e.g. Google form, Kahoot, Quizzes) as follow up activities to check students' understanding related the video content (listening skills). • Teachers asks students to present their opinion or explanation from their answer in the quiz in either spoken (speaking skills) or written (writing skills) forms.
Modification	Evaluate Analysis	Teachers download <i>Plotagon</i> videos from YouTube (or create one) to substitute supporting materials (e.g. presentation slides or textbooks) then ask students to modify by evaluating or analysing the video content, then make a report in spoken forms (e.g. video records, or presentation, etc.) or written forms (e.g. an essay). This could be designed for either individual or group projects.
Redefinition	Create	Teachers ask students to create <i>Plotagon</i> videos in certain topics related to the materials (either individual or group). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students could do research about the material they will present in the video. • Students could design the concept of how they will present the content using Plotagon. • Students could record their voice and give subtitles or scripts as well in the video.

In the Substitution level, 'technology acts as a direct substitute, with no functional improvement'. The higher level, Augmentation, defines technology as 'a direct substitute, with no functional improvement'. In the third level, Modification, 'technology allows for significant task redesign'. Redefinition, as the highest level, expects teachers to use technology 'for creation of new tasks, previously inconceivable'.

The table summarises the potential teaching and learning activities with the support of Plotagon as creative teaching media. The presented activities are proposed for teaching English

language skills subjects, however, may be applicable to be applied in any discipline areas. In details, the Substitution level expects teachers to substitute the function manual teaching tools with digital tools. For instance, teachers replace the use of whiteboards to PowerPoint slides for presentation or explaining materials. Another substitution example is teachers ask students to use Ms Words to write instead of paper and pens. Altering the face-to-face to remote learning environment using Zoom or Google meet is also considered at the substitution level if the teachers do not use any other apps functions but meeting only. The use of Plotagon in the Substitution level is when teachers use it only for presentation purposes, by selecting or downloading Plotagon videos on YouTube (to show examples) related to the teaching materials, without giving any follow-up activities for students responding to the videos.

The Augmentation expects teachers to integrate technology in teaching similar to the Substitution with some upgrade activities. The use of technology in this level does not only replacing manual to digital tools but also apply more functions for teaching purposes. For instance, teachers use Zoom not only for meeting, but also using some apps functions to support teaching such as 'Share Screen' for presentation or 'Breakout Room' for students' collaboration. Likewise, the use of Plotagon does not merely for presentation but there are follow-up activities for students after watching the Plotagon videos to check students' understanding to the materials. The follow-up activities could give students' some questions related to the videos for discussion or collaborative function.

In the Modification level, teachers are expected to integrate technology in teaching to have students doing 'evaluate and analysing' thinking skills. For instance, teachers could use presentation slides (e.g. PowerPoint) to show images or videos (e.g. Plotagon or other videos) for students to analyse and discuss. The discussion activities carried out using technologies could be at the Augmentation or Modification levels depending on the levels of thinking skills given on the instructions. If it the discussion is to only check the students' comprehension without higher analysis thinking process, it is considered in the Augmentation level. In the Modification level, the technology integration also demands students to have more learning tasks. For example, after analysing the video or material content, the students are asked to reexplain by presenting the discussion result into an infographic, or slides presentation. In this activity, students will carry out a modification process, as they have to redesign the concept what to present and how to present according to their comprehension on the material from their analysis.

The technology integration in the Redefinition level expects teachers to design learning activities for students to create something. The activities demand high creativity for students. This also encourages students fully engage in the learning process as they produce a new material. In the use of Plotagon, students are not only audiences but creators. In the Redefinition level, teachers certainly also carried out a sort of preceding activities such as presentation, collaboration before asking the students to create a Plotagon video. This is because students should understand the material first before they create the new one with their own design and concept. This creation activity is considered having the highest order thinking skill as students will do research about the content, make outline what they will present, decide what types of characters, story plots, and settings which all of the process require repeating analysis and evaluation to come up with the decision.

CONCLUSION

The use of multimedia is considered important in teaching to facilitate teachers designing a variety of learning activities for students. Plotagon as multimedia could be an alternative teaching tools or resources, particularly in ELT to create a fun and active learning environment. This paper, therefore, is expected to give teachers new insight of how they should improve their teaching performance, using technology. They could select and adjust the different types of technology (including Plotagon) in different activities adjusting the learning objectives, students' needs and environment conditions considering the SAMR Model and Blooms Taxonomy. Nonetheless, the successful application of technology use in teaching to achieve certain the frameworks' levels is also dependent on the resources condition in the institution, teachers, and students (Alivi, 2022; Abdullah et.al., 2014; Rehman and Aurangzeb, 2021). The challenge may limit teachers to design technology-based activities at the lower levels (e.g. Substitution). However, as technology is one of teaching tools to support teaching, teachers should be creative to design fun, active, and interactive learning activities as well as trying to carry out student-based approaches to encourage students' engagement and critical thinking, regardless the media type.

Furthermore, the rapid development of technology and the higher demand of technology use in public may affect educational policy reformation, deliberating the significance of technology to be included in any education aspects. Hence, it is important for educational policy makers both in the institution or government levels to support the students' need by focusing on teachers' development by providing formal training (i.e. focusing on TPACK) and improving the resources. In addition, setting up explicit policy may be also required, particularly for institutions with high-established resources, to encourage teachers upgrading their TPACK both formally and informally (Alivi, 2022) to improve teaching performance.

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