Using MYTT To Enhance Rural Primary School Pupils' Learning on Simple Past Tense

Patrick Duffy Bayuong[1] & Angela Felix Arip[2]

[1]Sekolah Kebangsaan Long Busang, D/A Pejabat Pendidikan Daerah Belaga, Jalan Dian Ding, 96900 Belaga, Sarawak, Malaysia, [2]Pejabat Pendidikan Daerah Belaga, Jalan Dian Ding, 96900 Belaga, Sarawak, Malaysia.
Email: g-79278130@moe-dl.edu.my

Abstract
Grammar is essential in the teaching and learning of the English language due to its core function for learners of this language in both their speech and writing. Nevertheless, some primary school learners in rural areas in Sarawak, Malaysia are challenged with the learning of tenses to the fullest due to inadequate language learning supports. Therefore, an innovation called MyTT was developed and it aimed to enhance primary school pupils' learning on simple past tense at the simple sentence level. Action research was conducted to explore the effectiveness and usability of this innovation. A total of 24 Primary 4 pupils regardless of gender from a rural area national primary school in Belaga District, Sarawak was selected as the sample (purposive sampling) in this action research. They were given two sets of worksheets, each at pre-test and post-test, and a set of questionnaires at post-test. The results illuminated that there were increments in pupils' usage of verbs in sentences, correctly and appropriately. Based on the survey conducted on the pupils, the data implied that most pupils gave a positive perception towards MyTT in enhancing their usage of verbs in sentences. MyTT template will benefit English language teachers in their teaching of simple past tense at simple sentence level to their learners.
Keywords: Effectiveness and Usability, MyTT, Rural Primary School, Simple Past Tense, Simple Sentence Level, Teaching and Learning

Introduction
Learning English as second language (ESL) requires the learners to acquire a prime knowledge of English grammar because this knowledge adds a dimension to one's understanding of grammar, enables them to evaluate the grammar rules (Klammer et al., 2013) or takes control the manner in which words are placed together to bring meaning in different contexts. Celce-Murcia et al (2014) claimed that grammar is used purposely to make meaning. This is due to the logical justification that the language learners use their grammar knowledge to express and present themselves to the others so that they can be seen or understood especially in written form. In order to write at sentence level, it is a necessary for the language learners to understand Subject-Verb Agreement (SVA). In SVA, the verbs must agree with the subject and vice versa. Most importantly, the verbs must be written in the correct tenses based on the

meaning(s) which the sentences intend to convey. The order of the elements such as subject, verb and complement are crucial to be put together in the right order for the sentence to get its meaning delivered successfully. This statement is corresponded with Chitravelu et al (2005) as they stated that grammar knowledge enables the language learners to organise words orderly to convey ideas and intention successfully. Harmer (2012) came up with almost similar point of view in which he stated that the successfulness of sentence that the language learners make depends on a number of elements that they put in the correct order.

Statement of Problem
Previous studies have shown that English language learners were having problems regarding SVA because of the interference of their L1. In their study, Surina and Kamaruzaman (2009) claimed that learners of L2 (English language) in Malaysia have problems in SVA. Siti and Mohd (2010) shared the similar thought that Malaysia ESL learners are having difficulties in SVA due to the reason that their L1 (Bahasa Malaysia) does not have rules regarding SVA and this explains why most of L2 learners have problems in their writing. Harmer (1988) in Chitravelu, Sithamparan and Choon (2005) pointed out that the interference from the learners' mother tongue is one of the reasons why learners of English language find English grammar is complex and confusing.

Issues in English Grammar Learning at School
Throughout a duration of four months teaching English to these 24 Primary 4 pupils, the English teacher realised that the pupils were having some grammar learning issue which has affected their performance in writing sentences with action verbs in the correct tenses. Two major reasons were identified: The interference of their mother tongues (Kenyah and Penan), and poor knowledge on grammar rules for tenses. Some order of words in the sentence in their mother tongue are differ from the one in English language sentence thus making these pupils writing the sentence, incorrectly. Apart from that, very little of them know the grammar rules and how to apply them in sentence writing with the correct tenses. In addition, they have lack of vocabulary on action verbs which is one of the important parts of a sentence. All issues mentioned above has affected the sentences they pupils have written – they did not convey the intended meanings.

Based on their Classroom-Based Assessment Reports for English language Primary 3 by the end of year 2021, it was found that 13 pupils from this class are still at Performance Level 1 and 2. As referred to the Standard Document for Curriculum and Assessment for English Language (National Primary School) in Standard Curriculum for Primary School or Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah (KSSR), pupils at Performance Level 1 are hardly able to plan, draft and write an increased range of simple sentences even with a lot of supports from the teacher (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2018). Meanwhile, pupils at Performance Level 2 can plan, draft and write an increased range of simple sentences but with a lot of supports from the teacher (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2018).

Therefore, this study served as a platform to identify the effectiveness of MyTT in enhancing primary school pupils' learning on simple past tense. Specifically, the following are the objectives of this study.
1) To identify the effectiveness of MyTT to learn simple past tense.
2) To identify pupils' perception towards the usage of MyTT to learn simple past tense

3) To identify pupils' perception towards the usage of MyTT by the teacher to teach simple past tense

Related Literature
Teaching and Learning of Grammar
Larsen-Freeman (2001) stated that learning of grammar is about knowing the rules and know how to apply them. He further explained that to give learners the rules is one way of teaching the form; however, grammar is about much more than form, and the teaching of grammar is poorly served if learners are simply given rules. Therefore, the language teachers as noted by Harmer (2012) must have knowledge and deep understanding on grammar system because the learners would have the expectation that their teachers can explain simple grammar concept to them. In addition, English language teachers also need to be knowledgeable and mindful of the learning strategies for learning grammar they use to further improve learners' ability on applying English grammar throughout their learning process (Mahalingam & Embi, 2017).

Azar (2007) highlighted that inductive and deductive approaches are intermingle, and she claimed that both approaches helped students to learn grammar better. Inductive approach is an approach that aims at teaching a set of skills (Kelly, 1969) in which examples of language or a number of sample sentences containing the target forms are first given to the learners then followed by the grammar rules. The teachers guide the learners to derive the rule for themselves (Chitravelu et al., 2005; Harmer, 2012). Deductive approach on the other hand requires the teachers to teach the language structures Kelly (1969), provide explanation or teach grammar rules Harmer (2012), and teach patterns and generalization Chitravelu et al (2005) then followed by the necessary language skills or practice in the application of the grammar rules. Surina and Kamaruzaman (2009) also proposed this approach in order to help ESL learners to produce good pieces of writing.

Shin and Crandall (2014) addressed that teachers need to keep the language at the level of the young learners and to this concern, they pointed out that teachers should simplify the grammar in the teaching material that they plan to use in the teaching and learning process. The simplification of grammar is important to be kept at the young learners' language level. According to Harmer (2012), teaching should not focus much on grammatical accuracy but rather on appropriacy where the language used is suitable or appropriate at learners' language level and for a particular context or situation. The inclusion of a variety of controlled and guided writing activities helps teachers to teach language structure or grammar to the young learners (Shin and Crandall, 2014).

Teaching of English Verbs
Teaching verbs to primary school pupils requires English teachers, as noted by Declerck (2006) to be mindful in making dissimilarity between "tense" and "time". Declerck refers "time" as an extralinguistic category which means it does not involve or beyond the bounds of language, and to this reason, "time" presents unaccompanied of language. Meanwhile, "tense" according to Declerck, is relating to language or a linguistic concept. It is due to the reason that "tense" indicates the structure taken by the verb to pinpoint the situation referred to in time. Learning of grammar requires the learners to apply the grammar knowledge throughout the learning process.

Unfortunately, there were pupils who seemed not to have much knowledge and skills in applying the grammar knowledge or rules they have learned. In grammar as knowledge, Taylor (2016a) has stated that mastery relies on the capability to evoke and apply the rules correctly. In grammar as a skill, Taylor (said) further added that mastery is determined by the active usage of language in tasks and contextualised communicative events. As a consequence, from the mix-up, the learners have written the verb wrongly and it differed from the intended meaning. In a different situation, there are learners who could produce correct forms on exercises and tests, but consistently make errors when they try to use the language in context.

Surina and Kamaruzaman (2009) suggested that the exercises in SVA should be given to L2 learners to ensure they master in SVA. Tafida and Okunade (2016) recommended teachers to make their learners more sensitive to SVA in the input that surrounds them. They also recommended that the teachers to cover a wide range of language teaching right from the lower level in order to ensure the students are instilled with the correct usage of SVA. Chong and Yunus (2019) put forward that teachers need to place sufficient attention on improving learners' comprehensive knowledge of SVA in the English language through effectual teaching approaches in order to deal with problem related to SVA among language learners.

Research Design
This study employed a practical action research design (Mills, 2011) through pre-test and post-test, and questionnaire. Pre-test, post-test and questionnaire were employed in this study because they are the appropriate methods of collecting data to serve the aim of this study.

Action Research Model
According to Creswell (2012), teachers identify teaching and learning issue(s) in their own classroom so they can make improvement(s) on learners' learning and their or professional performance. By employing a practical action research design, this study used Action Research Spiral model by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988). The study went through both spirals in this model to get the intended results.

Respondents
This study involved 24 Primary 4 Pupils (10 years old) in a rural primary school in Belaga District, Sarawak, Malaysia. All these 24 respondents (10 males and 14 females) are from Orang Ulu community and their mother tongue (L1) are Kenyah and Penan. All of them were studying in the same class and they were being taught by the same English teacher.

The Instruments
MyTT
MyTT was designed carefully in order to address the potential of it in enhancing primary school pupils' learning on simple past tense. After a series of teaching on this grammar item (simple past tense) the teacher (in the context of this study: the researcher) distributed this MyTT to the respondents to complete (pre-test). The teacher then collected the MyTT from the respondents to be checked. A list of grammar errors was found and noted. The teacher conducted another series of grammar lessons by applying both inductive and deductive

method aimed at improving the errors the respondents had made earlier. Then, the respondents were required to complete MyTT again (post-test). A set of seven verbs (five regular and two irregular verbs) were chosen to be used in pre-test and another set for post-test purposely to serve the objectives of MyTT in this study.

Questionnaire

A set of questionnaires was designed to identify pupils' perceptions on MyTT. This questionnaire was developed through discussion by the researchers with reference to past studies. The questionnaire consists of three sections namely Part A, Part B, and Part C. Part A is meant to collect data on demographic profile of the respondents. Meanwhile, Part B is meant to collect data on respondents' level of perceptions towards the use MyTT to learn Simple Past Tense. Part C is meant to collect data on respondents' level of perceptions towards the use of MyTT by teacher to teach Simple Past Tense. Both Part B and Part C adopted four-point Likert scale (1: Strongly Disagree, 2: Disagree, 3: Agree, 4: Strongly Agree) to assess respondents' responses for each item. The total items for this questionnaire is 28. All respondents were required to answer the questionnaire.

Reliability of Instrument

The reliability test, Cronbach's Alpha developed by Lee Cronbach in 1951 is used to see how closely related items in the questionnaire used in this study as an instrument to collect reliable data. The alpha coefficient for the twenty-seven items (excluding the gender) is .835, suggesting that the measurement items are reliable and consistent. Therefore, the items have relatively high internal consistency.

Data Analysis

Data from this study were analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Data collected from MyTT were analysed to determine its effectiveness in enhancing pupil's usage of simple past tense verbs in sentences. The difference in results between pre-test and post-test were recorded as a proof that there were increments in pupils' improvement in writing correct sentences. Meanwhile, the findings from the questionnaire in pre-test and post-test were compared to identify pupils' perception towards MyTT.

Analysis and Findings

Findings on the Usage of MYTT in Pre-test and Post-test

Range of mean scores and descriptors in Table 1 will be referred closely in the discussion on level of effectiveness on MyTT in this study.

TABLE 1

Distribution of level of effectiveness of MyTT by mean scores

Range of mean scores	Descriptors
0-0.19	Weak
0.2-0.39	Less effective
0.4-0.59	Moderate
0.6-0.79	Effective
0.8-1.0	Very effective

Table 2 shows the findings on correct sentences in positive statement taken from the pre-test. 54.2% (n=13) of the pupils wrote sentences by using verb "close", "cook" and. "play"

correctly. This illuminates that most pupils could apply grammar rule 1, 2 and 3 to write sentences in simple past tense. This is probably due to the reason that these three grammar rules are the easiest grammar rules for simple past tense for them to remember and apply. Meanwhile, 50% (n=12) of the pupils were able to apply grammar rule (simple past tense) 7 correctly. It indicates that they have written the sentences with action verb "cut" in simple past tense forms correctly. One of the possible reasons to this is they did not need to change the form of the verb. Only 10 pupils (41.7%) managed to write the sentences by applying grammar rule 4, 5 and 6. Pupils' written work have shown that some of the remaining pupils wrote "fryed", "joged", and "eated" as the simple past form for the verb "fry", "jog" and "eat", respectively. This evidenced that these pupils, although the grammar rules are provided in MyTT, they did not aware of them. The mean score (0.48) of correct sentences in positive statement (Pre-test) indicates that MyTT is at moderate level of effectiveness as referred to Table 1.

TABLE 2
Frequency (percentage) and mean of correct sentences in positive statement (Pre-test)

Verb	Grammar rule	close Singular	close Plural	cook Singular	cook Plural	play Singular	play Plural	fry Singular	fry Plural	jog Singular	jog Plural	eat Singular	eat Plural	cut Singular	cut Plural	Mean
	Rule 1	13 (54.2)	13 (54.2)													
	Rule 2			13 (54.2)	13 (54.2)											
Regular verb	Rule 3					13 (54.2)	13 (54.2)									
	Rule 4							10 (41.7)	10 (41.7)							0.48
	Rule 5									10 (41.7)	10 (41.7)					
Irregular verb	Rule 6											10 (41.7)	10 (41.7)			
	Rule 7													12 (50)	12 (50)	

Keys
Rule 1: Add "-d" to the root word verb that ends with vowel "e"
Rule 2: Add "-ed" to the root word verb that ends with a consonant
Rule 3: Add "-ed" to the root word verb that ends with "vowel + consonant y"
Rule 4: For a root word verb that ends with "consonant + y", omit "y" and add "-ied"
Rule 5: For a root word verb that ends with "consonant + vowel + consonant" rewrite the final consonant, then
     add "-ed"
Rule 6: Change in spelling of the root word verb
Rule 7: No change in spelling of the root word verb
*These keys are applied to Table 4.

Table 3 shows the findings on correct sentences in negative statement taken from the pre-test. Data collected as shown in Table 3 has provided a finding in which the numbers of pupils wrote correct sentences in positive statements (Pre-test) and negative statements (Pre-test) are similar. A reasonable justification for this finding is the pupils did not need to change the form of the verbs in their sentences. They only wrote "did not" and verbs in their root word form as written for them in MyTT. The other parts of the sentences such as the subjects or subject pronouns, and the complements are remained the same with what have been written in positive statements (Pre-test). The mean score (0.48) of correct sentences in negative statement (Pre-test) indicates that MyTT is at moderate level of effectiveness as referred to Table 1.

TABLE 3
Frequency (percentage) and mean of correct sentences in negative statement (Pre-test)

Verb		close		cook		play		fry		jog		eat		cut		
	Grammar rule	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Mean
Regular verb	Rule 1	13 (54.2)	13 (54.2)													
	Rule 2			13 (54.2)	13 (54.2)											
	Rule 3					13 (54.2)	13 (54.2)									0.48
	Rule 4							10 (41.7)	10 (41.7)							
	Rule 5									10 (41.7)	10 (41.7)					
Irregular verb	Rule 6											10 (41.7)	10 (41.7)			
	Rule 7													12 (50)	12 (50)	

Key:
Rule 1 – Rule 7: Use root word verb
This key is applied to Table 5

Table 4 shows the findings on correct sentences in positive statement taken from the post-test. The verb "bake" came up with the highest number of pupils (n=17) (70.8%) who could use it in their sentences, correctly. This signifies that these pupils were able to apply grammar rule 1 in writing their sentences with verb "bake" in its simple past tense form.

Table 4

Frequency (percentage) and mean of correct sentence in positive statement (Post-test)

Verb		bake		water		enjoy		carry		hug		make		hit		
	Grammar rule	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Mean
Regular verb	Rule 1	17 (70.8)	17 (70.8)													
	Rule 2			16 (66.7)	16 (66.7)											
	Rule 3					16 (66.7)	16 (66.7)									
	Rule 4							14 (58.3)	14 (58.3)							0.65
	Rule 5									15 (62.5)	15 (62.5)					
Irregular verb	Rule 6											16 (66.7)	16 (66.7)			
	Rule 7													16 (66.7)	16 (66.7)	

The finding shows that 16 pupils (66.7%) were able to apply grammar rule 2, and 3 in writing their sentences. A logical explanation for this similar number of pupils is these two grammar rules required the pupils to write the similar suffix which is "-ed" to the root word verb "water" and "play" in their simple past tense form. Apart from grammar rule 2 and 3, grammar rule 6 and 7 also came up with 16 pupils who could write sentences with verb "make" and "hit" by applying them, correctly. In this study, 16 is considered as a high number based on the academic performance of the respondents. The best justification for this finding is that the verb "make" can be used in two ways which the pupils are familiar with such as to show someone is making things as in "Ali made a kite" or preparing food as in "Ali made the sandwich". Based on pupils' written work, it was found these 16 pupils wrote the article "a" and "the" after the verb "hit" then followed by an object such as "car", "door" and "table". Although it seemed simple, the pupils have shown that they were able to apply the grammar rule.

Verb 'hug' appears to be the second lowest number of pupils (n=15) who could use it in writing their sentences by applying grammar rule 5, correctly. A major error found in other 9 pupils' written work was the verb "hug" was written as "huged" and "hugied" in its simple past tense form. Perhaps, grammar rules 5 is a bit complex for the pupils to remember and apply. Grammar rule 4 appears to be the lowest number of pupils (n=14) who could apply it in writing sentences with verb "carry". The suffix "-ied" was applied incorrectly to the verb "carry". It was evidenced when there were a few pupils wrote "carryied" in their sentences. Also, it was identified that the pupils write "carryed" in their sentences. Again, the pupils did not aware of the grammar rules provided in MyTT.

Table 5

Frequency (percentage) and mean of correct sentence in negative statement (Post-test)

Verb		bake		water		enjoy		carry		hug		make		hit		
	Grammar rule	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Mean
Regular verb	Rule 1	17 (70.8)	17 (70.8)													
	Rule 2			16 (66.7)	16 (66.7)											
	Rule 3					16 (66.7)	16 (66.7)									
	Rule 4							14 (58.3)	14 (58.3)							0.65
	Rule 5									15 (62.5)	15 (62.5)					
Irregular verb	Rule 6											16 (66.7)	16 (66.7)			
	Rule 7													16 (66.7)	16 (66.7)	

Table 5 shows the findings on correct sentences in negative statement taken from the post-test. Data collected as shown in Table 5 has provided a finding in which the numbers of pupils wrote correct sentences in positive statements (Post-test) and negative statements (Post-test) are similar. A reasonable justification for this finding is the pupils did not need to change the form of the verbs in their sentences. They only wrote "did not" and verbs in their root word form as written for them in MyTT. The other parts of the sentences such as the subjects or subject pronouns, and the complements are remained the same with what have been written in positive statements (Post-test). The mean score (0.65) of correct sentences in negative statement (Pre-test) indicates that MyTT is at effective level of effectiveness as referred to Table 1.

Overall, the mean score (0.65) of correct sentences in positive statements (Post-test) and negative statements (Post-test) indicates that MyTT is at the effective level of effectiveness as referred to Table 1. The increment in mean score (0.17) illuminates that there was an improvement in pupils' sentence writing performance by using MyTT.

Findings on Pupils' Perception towards the usage of mytt to learn simple past tense
Table 6 shows the findings on pupils' perception towards the usage of MyTT to learn simple past tense. Item 11 denoted the highest mean score (3.50) with equal number of pupils agreed (n=12) and strongly agreed (n=12) with it. Since this MyTT focused only on simple past tense, the pupils could write four sentences with a verb. This great value (3.50) is supported with the increment in mean score of correct sentences in both positive and negative statement from pre-test to post-test. It is also corresponded with the equal numbers of correct sentences in both positive and negative statements respectively in pre-test and post-test as tabulated in Table 2, 3, 4 and 5. Item 7 and 13 appeared to be items with the second highest and similar mean score (3.42). The pupils liked using MyTT because they could use it as a guidance to write sentences that convey the intended meaning. Therefore, it showed that this MyTT is useful for them to write sentences. The primary aim of putting together the

words in a sentence is to convey the information the users intended to. Item 1, 2, 4 carried mean scores of 3.29, 3.00 and 3.29 respectively. This signified that most of the pupils have positive perceptions towards the usage of MyTT to learn simple past tense. Also, these values corresponded with the objectives of this study.

Table 6
Frequency, percentage and mean of pupils' perception towards the usage of MyTT to learn simple past tense

No.	Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
1	I like to learn simple past tense by using MyTT.	0	0	17 (70.8)	7 (29.2)	3.29
2	I can write sentence by using MyTT, correctly.	0	7 (29.2)	10 (41.7)	7 (29.2)	3.00
3	I am confident to write sentence in English by using MyTT.	0	10 (41.7)	10 (41.7)	4 (16.7)	2.75
4	I improve my writing skill by using MyTT.	0	0	17 (73.3)	7 (29.2)	3.29
5	I believe MyTT is one of the best tools for me to practice writing.	0	3 (12.5)	16 (66.7)	5 (20.8)	3.08
6	I use MyTT as a guidance to write sentences in simple past tense.	0	0	16 (66.7)	8 (33.3)	3.33
7	I like using MyTT because it helps me to write sentences that convey intended meanings.	0	0	14 (58.3)	10 (41.7)	3.42
8	I am confident to correct my friends' English grammar errors on MyTT	2 (8.3)	7 (29.2)	10 (41.7)	5 (20.8)	2.75
9	I can understand simple past tense easily by referring to the grammar rules in MyTT.	0	7 (29.2)	12 (50)	5 (20.8)	2.92
10	I can learn grammar rules when writing sentences in MyTT.	0	5 (20.8)	17 (70.8)	2 (8.3)	2.88
11	I can write many sentences with one verb by using MyTT.	0	0	12 (50)	12 (50)	3.50
12	I use MyTT because it is easy to use.	0	5 (20.8)	13 (54.2)	6 (25)	3.04
13	I use MyTT because it is useful to me.	0	0	14 (58.3)	10 (41.7)	3.42
14	I want to practice writing with other verbs by using MyTT.	0	2 (8.3)	19 (79.2)	3 (12.5)	3.04
15	I want to introduce MyTT to my friends from other schools.	0	4 (16.7)	17 (70.8)	3 (12.5)	2.96

Although all pupils agreed and strongly agreed with item 1, 4, 6, 7, 11 and 13, some of them have confidence issues in using MyTT to write sentences. This clearly explained the lowest and similar mean score (2.75) denoted by item 3 and 8 as tabulated in Table 6. 41.7% (n=10) of the pupils were not confident to write sentences in English by using MyTT and 37.5% (9) of the pupils were not confident to correct their friends' English grammar errors on MyTT. Despite of these confidence issues, most of them shared two similar thoughts; 1: MyTT is easy to use (n=19) (79.1%) and 2: They believe MyTT is one of the best tools for them to practice writing (n=21) (87.5%). Interestingly, almost all pupils (n=22) (91.7%) wanted to practice writing sentences with other verbs by using MyTT and 20 of them (83.3%) would love to introduce MyTT to their friends from other schools. These two great positive perceptions are

probably the strong justifications for the high mean score denoted by item 13. Mean scores of lower than 3.00 denoted by item 9 (2.92) and 10 (2.88) were probably because the low performance level achievers thought they have difficulties to understand simple past tense (n=7) and to learn its' grammar rules (n=5).

Table 7 shows the findings on pupils' perception towards the usage of MyTT by teacher to teach simple past tense. All items denoted mean scores of higher than 3.00. Item 6 and 10 came up with the highest and similar mean score (3.71). They were aware of the opportunity to write sentences that they have when using MyTT. Item 10 represented the teaching instruction related to grammar that the teacher used to teach simple past tense (with closed reference to SVA) by using MyTT. The high mean score for item 11 evidenced that the grammar-based justification approach introduced by the teacher was applied by the pupils. A parallel finding was observed in Robinson and Feng's (2016) in which they stated that grammar instruction affects language learners a lot in helping them to write better. Although item 12 has the lowest mean score (3.08), all pupils shared a similar thought that their teacher has successfully benefited MyTT to explain a new or an unfamiliar verb.

Table 7
Frequency, percentage and mean of pupils' perception towards the usage of MyTT by teacher to teach simple past tense

No.	Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
1	The teacher explains MyTT clearly.	0	3 (12.5)	6 (25)	15 (62.5)	3.50
2	The teacher guides me to use MyTT.	0	0	14 (58.3)	10 (41.7)	3.42
3	The teacher is able to use MyTT to teach.	0	0	10 (41.7)	14 (58.3)	3.58
4	The teacher teaches by using MyTT in fun ways.	0	3 (12.5)	15 (62.5)	6 (25)	3.13
5	The teacher teaches by using MyTT in interesting ways.	0	3 (12.5)	15 (62.5)	6 (25)	3.13
6	The teacher gives a lot of opportunity for me to write sentences by using MyTT.	0	0	7 (29.2)	17 (70.8)	3.71
7	The teacher conducts fun learning activities using MyTT.	0	3 (10)	15 (62.5)	6 (25)	3.13
8	The teacher corrects my errors in sentences in MyTT immediately.	0	0	9 (37.5)	15 (62.5)	3.63
9	The teacher encourages me to discuss with my friends when using MyTT.	0	3 (33.3)	6 (25)	15 (62.5)	3.50
10	The teacher reminds me to highlight the subject, subject pronouns and verb in the sentence to increase understanding.	0	0	7 (29.2)	17 (70.8)	3.71

| 11 | The teacher encourages me to explain and justify my sentences in order to increase understanding. | 0 | 0 | 16 (66.7) | 8 (33.3) | 3.33 |
| 12 | The teacher uses MyTT to explain a new or an unfamiliar verb. | 0 | 0 | 22 (91.7) | 2 (8.3) | 3.08 |

Interestingly, there was an equal number of respondents (n=3) who disagreed with three items "Item 4", "Item 5" and "Item 7". Perhaps, these pupils found out or felt that learning by using MyTT was not enough to satisfy their level of fun learning. This could be the best justification for pupils (n=3) who disagreed with item 5 on pupils' perceptions towards the usage of MyTT to learn simple past tense, as presented in Table 6. This high mean score (3.63) carried by item 8 illuminated the importance of immediate feedback by the teacher to the pupils throughout their language learning process. Pupils should be aware of the errors they made to avoid them to repeat the similar errors in the future. Other items illuminated the similar justification since all of them have mean scores of more than 3.0.

Table 8 was carefully prepared to identify the levels of pupils' perception towards both the usage of MyTT to learn simple past tense, and the usage of MyTT by the teacher to teach simple past tense.

Table 8
Distribution of pupils' perception towards both the usage of MyTT to learn simple past tense, and the usage of MyTT by the teacher to teach simple past tense by mean scores.

Range of mean scores	Descriptors
0-0.99	Negative
1.00-1.99	Low moderate
2.00-2.99	High moderate
3.00-4.00	Positive

In order to identify pupils' levels of perception towards the usage of MyTT, the overall mean of the sum of mean scores denoted by each item in each part of the questionnaire were calculated and shown in Table 9 and 10.

Table 9
Pupils' perception towards the usage of MyTT to learn simple past tense

Sum of mean scores	Overall mean	Descriptor
46.67	3.11	Positive

Table 10
Pupils' perception towards the usage of MyTT by the teacher to teach simple past tense

Sum of mean scores	Overall mean	Descriptor
40.85	3.40	Positive

The findings revealed that the pupils have positive perception or attitude towards both the usage of MyTT to learn simple past tense, and the usage of MyTT by the teacher to teach simple past tense. In line with the previous research (Copland et al., 2014), motivating young learners to learn English is one of the challenges in teaching English to them. This is

corresponded with Robin (1957) as he proposed that a good language learning depends on ones' motivation. Briewin et al (2013) somehow stated that the language learners have the motivation to learn grammar using grammar strategies due to its importance in sentence constructions. Similarly, the positive perception or attitude from the pupils in this study signified that they have the motivation to learn simple past tense by using MyTT as their writing tool to write grammatically correct sentences.

Conclusion

With regard to the grammatical errors made by the language learners in their sentence writing, a language teacher must come up with an intervention to overcome them. It is crucial to continue and enhance English language teaching and learning intervention within rural schools in Malaysia. MyTT is one of the interventions that a language teacher can come up with. The findings showed that the pupils have positive perception or attitude towards MyTT. In addition, the overall mean denoted in Table 2, 3, 4 and 5 proved that this MyTT was an effective writing template to be utilised by the language teachers to enhance rural primary schools' pupils' learning on English simple past tense. With regard to the context of Malaysian rural primary schools, this MyTT will fulfil the learning gaps caused by the lack in exposure to English language among the pupils. Both English language teachers and pupils are the beneficiaries of this MyTT. Factors such as development, administration, and reliability of MyTT have been greatly considered by the researchers. In a nutshell, the researchers hopes that the findings and contributions of the study, and recommendations from the researchers will help to improve English language learning, particularly for pupils in rural primary schools in Malaysia who require more supports and opportunities to learn and use the language.

Recommendations

In order to ensure this MyTT is being exploited to the fullest, the researchers highlighted the following recommendations

No.	Recommendations
1.	The language teacher needs to provide sufficient guidance to the pupils especially on the grammar rules.
2.	The language teacher should give ample time to the pupils to do the writing drillings and to discuss the errors in the sentences with grammar-based justifications.
3.	The vocabulary used must suit language proficiency levels of the pupils.
4.	Difficulty levels of language can be increased throughout the writing practices. By doing so, the language teacher can check the pupils' progress and writing performance based on the sentences written by them.
5.	The language teachers can integrate two aspects in writing which are to write correctly and creatively.

Acknoledgement

References

Azar, B. (2007). Grammar-Based Teaching: A Practitioner's Perspective. *The Electronic Journal for English as a Second Language (TESL-EJ),* 11(2): 1-12.

Briewin, M., Naidu, B., & Embi, M. A. (2013). Learners of English as Foreign Language Preference for Grammar Strategies in learning Grammar. *International Journal of English and Literature,* 4(5): 249-253.

Celce-Murcia, M., Brinton, D. M., & Snow, M. A. (2014). *Teaching English as A Second Or Foreign Language* (4th ed.). Boston: National Geographic Learning.

Chitravelu, N., Sithamparam, S., & Choon, T. S. (2005). *ELT Methodology: Principles and Practice* (2nd ed.). Selangor: Oxford Fajar.

Chong, X. T., & Yunus, M. M. (2019). The Effects of Kagan Cooperative Learning Structures in Teaching Subject-Verb Agreement Among Rural Sarawak Learners. *Arab World English Journal (AWEJ),* 10(2): 151-164.

Copland, F., Garton, S., & Burns, A. (2014). Challenges in Teaching English to Young Learners: Global Perspectives and Local Realities. *TESOL QUARTERLY*, 48(4): 738-762. DOI:10.1002/tesq.148

Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research* (4th ed.). Boston: Pearson.

Declerck, R. (2006). *The Grammar of the English Verb Phrase. Volume 1: The Grammar of the English Tense System, A Comprehensive Analysis.* Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Harmer, J. (2012). *How to Teach English?* United Kingdom: Pearson Longman.

Kelly, L. G. (1969). 25 Centuries of Language Teaching: An Inquiry Into The Science, Art, and Development of Language Teaching Methodology 500 B.C – 1969. Massachusetts: Newbury House.
https://archive.org/stream/25centuriesoflan00kell#page/34/mode/2up

Kemmis, S., & McTaggart, R. (eds) (1988). *The Action Research Planner* (3rd ed.). Waurn Ponds: Deakin University Press.

Klammar, T. P., Schulz, M. R., & Volpe, A. D. (2013). *Analysing English Grammar* (7th ed.). USA: Pearson Education, Inc.

Larsen-Freeman, D. (2001). *Teaching grammar.* In M. Celce-Murcia (Ed.), *Teaching English as A Second or Foreign Language* (3rd ed.). Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

Mahalingam, K., & Embi, M. A. (2017). Learning-To-Learn Grammar Module: An Evaluation among Primary ESL Learners. *Journal of Education and Social Sciences,* 6(2): 88-96.

Mills, G. E. (2011). *Action research: A guide for the teacher researcher (with MyEducationLab)* (4th ed.). New Jersey: Pearson/Allyn & Bacon.

Ministry of Education Malaysia. (2018). Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah, Bahasa Inggeris Sekolah Kebangsaan. Putrajaya: Ministry of Education Malaysia.

Robin, J. (1975). What the "Good Language Learner" Can Teach Us. *TESOL Quarterly,* 9(1): 41-51.

Robinson, L., & Feng, J. (2016). *Effect of Direct Grammar Instruction on Student Writing Skills* [Paper Presentation]. Eastern Educational Research Association Annual Conference (Hilton Head Island, SC, Feb 18-20, 2016).
https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED564336.pdf

Shin, J. K., & Crandall, J. (2014). *Teaching Young Learners English: From Theory to Practice.* Boston: National Geographic Learning.

Siti, H. S., & Mohd, M. I. (2010). Analysis of Errors in Subject-Verb Agreement Among Malaysian ESL Learners. *3L The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies*, 16(1): 56-73.

Surina, N., & Kamaruzaman, J. (2009). A Study of Subject-Verb Agreement: From Novice Writers to Experts Writers. *International Education Studies,* 2(3): 190-194.

Tafida, A. G., & Okunade, S. K. (2016). Subject-Verb Agreement Problem among English as Second Language Learners: A Case Study of One Hundred Level Undergraduates of Federal University of Technology, Minna. *International Invention Journal of Education and General Studies,* 2(2): 20-27.

Taylor, T. (2016a). *Teaching Grammar in Context. Part 1: Basic Principles and Concepts – "Doing Grammar"* [Seminar Series]. Saturday Seminar Series in Grammar, Certificate in PDP for Primary and Secondary (Department of English Language Education, The Education University of Hong Kong, 23rd April). https://www.scribd.com/document/515355567/Teaching-Grammar-in-Context-Seminar-Series-2016#