

# Innovating Instruction of Malay Grammar through a Word List Program

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## Abstract

The dilemma of teaching and/or learning grammar in a language that is often considered 'dry' and dull often happens not just to students, but also to teachers. One of the factors that contribute to this problem is the lack of appeal that could intrigue students to learn, understand and gradually master the grammar of a language. Consequently, the teaching and learning of grammar which ought to be "alive" will become irrelevant, namely to the new generation of IT literate students. Thus, this study attempts to present a new method of teaching and learning grammar, taking into account the interests and preferences of students who are quite familiar to the world of information technology. If previously the teaching and learning of grammar, particularly the grammatical system, was closely related to the description of rules (right and wrong) and formulas (rules) with the aid of grammar and dictionary, the new method proposed will expose students to a computer software program based on the list of words that can assist students in understanding the grammar system more comprehensively, effectively and interestingly. For a start, this study will show how the antconc word list program enables students to understand the complex meaning of a particular lexeme selected from the corpus. Students will then learn to produce sentences from the complex meanings which they have identified from the word list program.

**Keywords:** teaching techniques, grammar systems, antconc word list program, the complexity of meaning, corpus data, language grammar, computer-based instruction, synonymous lexis

## 1. Introduction

The grammar of a language is crucial to its understanding as the grammatical system is the key to mastering the language skills. A sound knowledge of language grammar not only helps the users recognize whether the sentences/phrases are correctly used but also enables them to use the language precisely. Mastery of grammar in language skills at the school level will allow the students to keep up with their lessons better and effectively (Melebek, 2010). Recognizing the importance of grammar, the Malaysia Ministry of Education (1981) has laid strong emphasis on this aspect in the school curriculum (primary and secondary) so that at the end of the school term, students can utilize Malay language in tandem with the development of their age and also master the language to prepare them for higher education and future employment. Nevertheless, the process of teaching and learning grammar is not to be taken lightly. The process has often been considered 'dry' and boring since grammar is also integrated with other aspects and taught using the inductive approach. Through this approach, students are normally asked to memorize specific formula and later, are provided with some written/verbal exercises based on their understanding of the grammar formula learned. This type of teaching and learning process makes the teaching and learning of grammar unattractive and dull. The monotonous teaching and learning exercise is further compounded when students are made to memorize formulas that are abstract in nature and that only demonstrate universal features which, therefore, make the leaning of grammar (the study of grammar) become increasingly difficult, complicated and no longer engages the students' interests (Asmah, 2009).

## 2. Computer Aided Teaching and Learning Approach (*Computer-Based Instruction*)

The use of the right, riveting and up-to-date (contemporary) technique is vital in the teaching and learning of a language grammar. This is mainly because the right techniques will enable the students, in particular, to utilize

the limited time available for the understanding of the important aspects of grammar. In order to do this, Hamzah (2010) proposes that language teachers adapt their teaching techniques by mobilizing the technology which can help stimulate and encourage students to interact and think critically and creatively in the process of learning grammar. One such example of technology aids in teaching and learning grammar is the use of computer and relevant software. According to Cirswell (1989), the use of computer-based instruction can facilitate the delivery of materials and encourage students' active participation. This notion is supported by Gagne, Briggs and Wager (1992) and Rosenberg (2000) who assert that computer has its advantage as a technology teaching aid and is much needed in the process of teaching and learning.

The questions are, what are the suitable techniques and how can these techniques be applied in the teaching and learning of grammar through the use of Computer-based Teaching and Learning approach (Computer-based Instruction). Hence, this pilot study attempts to introduce a new technique in teaching and learning grammar, taking into account the interests and preferences of students who are familiar to the world of information technology. In general, this study will concentrate on the use of word list program that is antconc software which is free and easily accessible from Google search engine (Laurence Anthony's Website, 2000). The antconc software is used to analyse the corpus-based language data derived for free from the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka database system (Melayu P. R. P., & Pustaka, 2012) under the sub-corpus of textbooks to obtain language information such as identifying the linguistic formula from language in use, ascertaining the differences of meaning and displaying the dynamic characters of a sentence.

### 3. Review of the Literature

Numerous studies on the teaching and learning of grammar using the Computer-Based Instruction have been conducted. However, most of the studies analyse the relationship between the computer and the teacher and the learning and teaching process. Some of the studies include those carried out by Moersch (1995), Stallard (1998), Ertmer (1999), Hokanson and Hooper (2004), Ghani, Siarap, and Mustafa (2006), and Yahya and Roselan (2007). The need to adopt, generate and extend studies that examine the relationship between the computer and the teachers and the teaching and learning process is commendable. These studies reveal various important findings, specifically on the teachers' abilities and mastery in utilizing computers as effective teaching aides in classroom teaching and learning process and its effects on the students. Nevertheless, the importance of effective techniques that the teachers can employ in teaching, namely the use of computer-aided teaching aids in teaching Malay as a subject, cannot be overlooked.

Most of the studies that examined computer-aided teaching techniques were conducted on technical subjects, for instance, mathematics, science, chemistry and physics. Kosnin and Lin (2010) study, for instance, explored the effectiveness of computer-aided teaching of mathematics using *Geometer's Sketchpad* (GSP) software. Mokhtar (2004) study paid attention to the aspect of module development for computer-aided teaching software for the subject of biology. Quite a number of studies have looked at the use of computer software in teaching and learning Malay language in schools, however, the focus of most of these studies were specifically on language and linguistics. Louw (1993), Stubbs (1995), Sinclair (1996) and Abdullah (2000), Awal (2003), Baharudin (2003), Tendahl (2006) and Yusuf (2010) were among those who have dealt on the said topic.

A review of previous studies demonstrate that there is a huge gap that needs to be bridged, in particular, on the teaching and learning techniques that are based on technology teaching aids for Malay language subject. This interdisciplinary study (combination of studies on linguistics which are beneficial for education) will examine the latest techniques that can be mobilized in the teaching and learning of Malay language (specifically grammar) by using the word list software grammar and corpus-aided data analysis.

### 4. Method and Theory

The present study is based on content analysis. It will analyse several issues concerning the language system, such as text reconstruction (building phrases, clauses, and sentences), the numerous uses of lexis and lexis meaning, collocation between lexis, and the examination of the dynamic characteristics of a particular lexis by using the antconc word list software program. The research data were obtained from Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka database system under the sub-corpus of textbooks (DB3). This pilot study centres on the complexity of meaning for synonymous lexis for "mengupas" and "mengopek". Each of the two words (for instance "mengupas" which literally means "to peel, husk or shell for, to take skin off fruits") will be processed using the antconc software to identify its dynamic characteristics and will then be compared with its synonym (for example "mengopek" which literally means "to take the skin off, to cut a fruit open, to split a fruit"). The analysis will be further supported by applying the frame semantics theory propounded by Fillmore (in Fillmore, Petruck, Ruppenhofer, & Wright, 2003). According to this theory, the information of lexis is better understood by referring to the conceptual

structure that forms its basis and prompts its usage. Therefore, the dynamics of lexis can be preceded by providing information on the elements or domains that form the basis of its conceptual structure. There are significant differences, for instance, between the characteristics of the objects which form the subjects of “mengupas” and “mengopek” lexis. Similarly, the manner or method of the two lexis occurs also differ. These two aspects; what and how, are the elements or domains which can be utilized to distinguish the use of both lexis.

### 5. Approaches, Methods, Strategies and Techniques

Teaching and learning practice in the classroom gives prominence to several important aspects that are related to its implementation procedures such as the approaches, methods, strategies, and techniques. All four of these procedures must be implemented correctly and on the right target groups. If one of these procedures is inappropriate, the objectives of teaching and learning can lead to irregularities. For example, if the strategies, approaches, and methods are carried out correctly, but the technique is loose, there will be flaws in the process of achieving the target or the objective of teaching and learning (Killen, 2006). Figure 1 demonstrates a schematic representation of the teaching and learning approaches, methods, strategies, and techniques of aided grammar word list program.

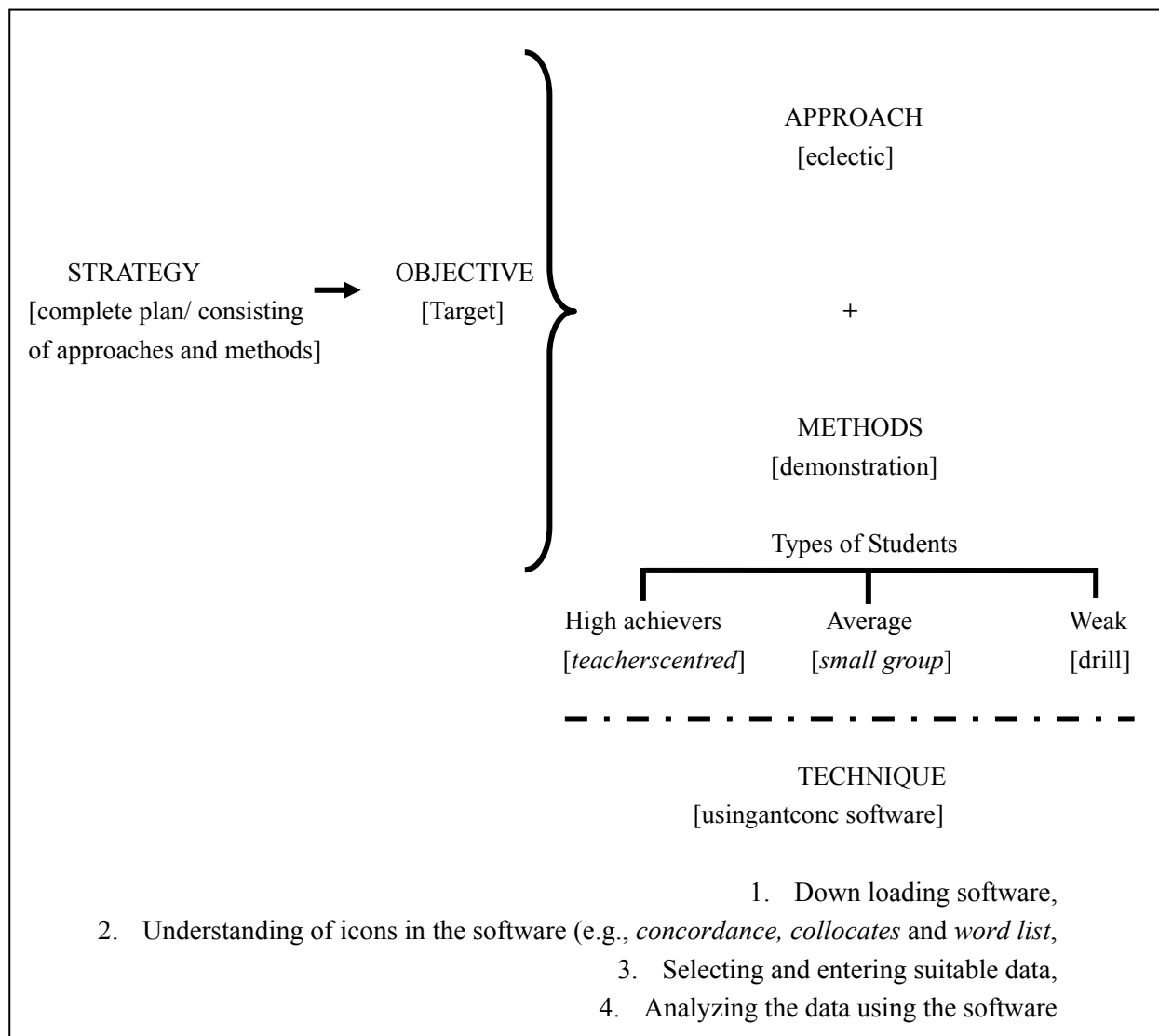


Figure 1. Schematic representation of approaches, methods, strategies, and techniques of teaching and learning aided grammar word list program

Based on Figure 1 above, it can be concluded that to achieve this objective, appropriate strategy (consisting of

complete planning in terms of approaches and methods) should be developed. The approach deemed most suitable for this technique is an eclectic approach (combining inductive and deductive approaches) with the emphasis on demonstration method. Through this method, students will first be exposed to the procedure using the software and applying the method of identifying the dynamic of lexis. The proposed demonstration method will be followed by detailed method depending on the type of students (high achievers, average and weak).

## 6. Analysis and Discussion

Once students are exposed to methods of handling antconc software, the next most important step to consider is to clarify the method by which this software can help students to understand several language issues based on existing, authentic data. For instance, there is some linguistic information that can be obtained from the corpus data which can explain the complexity of meaning of the lexis “mengupas” and “mengopek”. A more detailed explanation is shown in Tables 1 and 2 below.

Table 1. Linguistic Information on lexis “*mengupas*”

Element	Domain	Example of corpus sentence
CORE	AGENT (the person/doer who does the act of “mengupas” (analyze)  NOUN, PPOPER NOUN, PERSONAL PRONOUN	Malay: <b>Shannon</b> dikatakan mengupas satu gejala sosial dan mengkritik kepincangan yang berlaku dalam masyarakat. Literal translation: <b>Shannon</b> was said to <i>analyze</i> (“mengupas”/peel) a social phenomenon and criticize the malaise which was taking place in our society.
	ITEM (what is the issue examined/peeled (“dikupas”)  Abstract  Concrete – thin skinned object	Malay: Justeru, tulisan ini akan cuba <i>mengupas</i> <b>peranan</b> DP dalam melahirkan MPPB. Literal translation: Hence, this paper will <i>examine</i> the <b>role</b> of DP in establishing MPPB. Malay: Membuat sambal daging harus berhati-hati, bermula dengan memilih daging yang bermutu, <i>mengupas</i> <b>bawang</b> , memerah santan dan mengacau sambal daging yang sudah dicampur santan dan rempah ratus. Literal translation: Be careful when making the meat sauce. Start by selecting quality meat, <i>peeling</i> the <b>onion</b> , squeezing coconut milk and stirring the meat sauce that has been mixed with coconut milk and spices.
PERIPHERAL	INSTRUMENT (equipment used to peel/to analyze (“kupas”)  Something which requires a keen mind	Malay: Dengan menggunakan <b>pisau yang nipis dan tajam</b> , penduduk di beberapa kampung di negeri ini sibuk <i>mengupas</i> kulit buah pala dan mengeringkan isinya sebelum dijual secara borong. Literal translation: By using <b>sharp and thin knives</b> , residents in several villages in the country are busy <i>peeling</i> (“mengupas”) the skin of nutmeg and drying it before selling the entire stock.  Malay: Beliau <i>mengupas</i> isu kontroversi itu dengan <b>minda yang tajam</b> untuk mengelak berlakunya salah faham. Literal translation: He <i>analysed</i> the controversial issue with a <b>keen mind</b> to avoid misunderstanding.
	METHOD (Method of analyzing/ “mengupas”)	Malay: Sehubungan itu, pensyarah perlu mempunyai keupayaan <i>mengupas</i> subjek itu <b>secara ilmiah, objektif dan kritis</b> . Literal translation: With regard to this, lecturers should have the ability to <i>analyze</i> the subject <b>intellectually, objectively and critically</b> .
	PLACE (venue where the discussion/peel (“kupasan” takes place)	Malay: Wartawan wanita pada tahun 1970-an selepas Dasar Ekonomi Baru (DEB) pula berjaya mengupas isu yang lebih mencabar seperti ekonomi, politik dan hubungan antarabangsa <b>dalam seminar</b> yang berlangsung di Kuala Lumpur.

	Abstract – usually at a formal or semi formal venue	Literal translation: Women journalists in the 1970’s after the New Economic Policy (NEP) also succeeded in discussing challenging issues such as economics, politics and international relations <b>in seminars</b> held in Kuala Lumpur.
	Concrete – usually at a less formal venue, e.g., in the kitchen.	Malay: Bayangkan tidak perlu bersusah payah <i>mengupas</i> kulitnya kerana hal tersebut sudah diselia rapi oleh chef restoran berkenaan. (maklumat konteks memberi fahaman bahawa kegiatan ini berlangsung di dapur restoran) Literal translation: Just imagine that you don’t have to <i>peel</i> its skin as this has already been supervised by the restaurant chef. (The contexts tell us that this activity took place at a restaurant kitchen).
	PURPOSE (product of the study/“kupasan”)  Benefits of collective study for mutual/common interests	Malay: Saya akan cuba <i>mengupas</i> secara terperinci apa sebenarnya yang berlaku di Felda Ulu Tebrau <b>untuk difikirkan bersama</b> oleh peneroka Felda Ulu Tebrau sendiri, rakyat jelata, mahupun pemimpin kita.  Literal translation: I will try to <i>study</i> in detail what has happened at Felda Ulu Tebrau for the Felda Ulu Tebrau settlers, the people and our leaders to <b>think collectively</b> .
TIME (duration taken to discuss/“mengupas”)	Malay: Mereka mengambil masa <b>berjam-jam</b> untuk mengupas isu yang semakin kelihatan rumit itu  Literal translation: They took hours to discuss the issue which was becoming more complicated.	

Table 2. Linguistic Information on lexis “*mengopek*”

Element	Domain	Example of corpus sentence
CORE	AGENT (the person/ doer who does the act of “ <i>mengupas</i> ” (peeling)  NOUN, PPOPER NOUN, PERSONAL PRONOUN	Malay: <b>Emak dan kakak</b> meneruskan kerja-kerja <i>mengopek</i> kerang yang masih berbaki dua bakul besar. Literal translation: <b>My mother and my sister</b> keep <i>peeling</i> the remaining cockles in the two large baskets.
	ITEM (what is being cut/prized/peeled “ <i>kopek</i> ”)  Only for concrete item. The item is usually: 1. something which is hard/sticky 2. Something with hard/thick skin	Malay: Kerja-kerja <i>mengopek</i> <b>batang kayu</b> tersebut berlangsung serentak di ketiga-tiga kawasan. Literal translation: <i>Cutting logs</i> activities were done simultaneously in all the three areas.  Malay: Petua mudah untuk <i>mengopek</i> <b>tiram</b> ialah dengan merendamkannya terlebih dahulu dalam air suam. Literal translation: For oyster to be <i>peeled</i> off easily, soak them in warm water first.  Malay: Abang <i>mengopek</i> <b>buah durian</b> tembaga yang baru luruh pagi tadi. Literal translation: My brother <i>prized</i> open the durian which just dropped this morning.
		Malay: Suatu hal yang perlu diperhatikan ialah proses <i>mengopek</i> semula <b>bahan-bahan tampalan</b> yang sudah melekat kejap di papan-papan kenyataan. Literal translation: Attention should be given to the process of <i>peeling</i> away the <b>patch material</b> that is glued firmly on the notice boards.

PERIPHERAL	<p>INSTRUMENT (equipment used to peel/cut/prize “kopek”)</p> <p>The equipment used is suitable with the item peeled/cut/prized</p>	<p>Malay: Pekerja-pekerja kilang sedang <i>mengopek</i> kelapa dari jenis pandan dengan menggunakan <b>pengopek khas</b> untuk mengelakkan kulit kelapa tersebut rosak sehingga boleh mencemarkan gred kelapa tersebut.</p> <p>Literal translation: The factory workers are <i>peeling</i> coconut husks using <b>special equipment</b> to prevent the coconuts from being damaged that it may affect the quality of the coconut.</p> <p>Malay: <b>Kapak kecil</b> digunakan untuk <i>mengopek</i> kulit kayu yang telah dipotong mengikut ukuran standard, sebelum direndam dalam air dalam suhu yang terkawal untuk menjaga mutunya.</p> <p>Literal translation: A <b>small axe</b> is used to <i>cut</i> the bark into standard size before being soaked in water in a controlled temperature to maintain quality.</p> <p>Malay: Ayah <i>mengopek</i> durian dengan menggunakan <b>parang pendek</b> yang sentiasa tersisip di pinggangnya.</p> <p>Literal translation: My father prized open the durian using a short chopper which is always tucked at his waist.</p>
	<p>METHOD (Method of peeling/“mengopek”)</p>	<p>Malay: Jika kulit lokan tersebut tetap keras dan kejam, kerja-kerja <i>mengopek</i> lokan itu mesti dilakukan <b>dengan mengetuknya</b> terlebih dahulu menggunakan besi penuil.</p> <p>Literal translation: If the oyster shell is still hard and firm, <i>peeling off</i> the shell must be done by tapping the shell first using an iron level.</p>
	<p>PLACE (venue where the peeling/“kopekkan” takes place)</p> <p>Usually takes place at an informal venue such as the kitchen, field, home etc.</p>	<p>Malay: Mereka <i>mengopek</i> lokan-lokan tersebut <b>di pelantar</b> sementara menunggu sampan seterusnya datang.</p> <p>Literal translation: They <i>peel</i> the oysters <b>on the platform</b> while waiting for the next boat to come.</p>
	<p>PURPOSE (product of the prize/“kopekkan”)</p> <p>The product of the peeling normally can be used and be enjoyed.</p>	<p>Malay: Kami sekeluarga <b>dapat menikmati rasa</b> pahit-pahit lemak isi durian kunyit setelah abah <i>mengopek</i> durian-durian tersebut sesuai mengutipnya dari kebun.</p> <p>Literal translation: My family and I <b>enjoyed the rich and bitter taste</b> of the durians after my father had <i>prized</i> open the durians after picking them from the orchard.</p>
	<p>TIME (duration taken to cut/“mengopek”)</p>	<p>Malay: Pekerja-pekerja tersebut <b>tidak mengambil masa yang lama</b> untuk menyiapkan kerja-kerja mengopek besi-besi itu.</p> <p>Literal translation: The workers <b>didn’t take long</b> to finish cutting the metal.</p>

Table 1 and Table 2 provide some linguistic information which is described below and which can be exposed to the students. The linguistic information is elaborated in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Comparison of Linguistic Information of “*mengupas*” and “*mengopek*”

No	Linguistic Information	“ <i>Mengupas</i> ” (to peel/analyze/examine /discuss/study)	“ <i>Mengopek</i> ” (to peel/cut/prize)
1	Sentence reconstruction (building phrase, clause and sentence)	<p><b>Phrase</b> – can explain the process of (transitive) verb phrase formation – will be followed by object (consisting of concrete and abstract). Example: to examine the role/to peel onions. Nevertheless due to their creativity, people sometimes manipulate the use of the words resulting in the formula not being adhered to. For instance the examination/study is conducted roughly and is not refined.</p> <p><b>Clause</b> – can explain the process of clause extension to sentence.</p> <p><b>Sentence</b> – can explain the formation process of compound sentences.</p>	<p><b>Phrase</b> – can explain the process of (transitive) verb phrase formation – will be followed by concrete object only. Example: peeling coconut / cutting the bark Nevertheless people sometimes manipulate their creativity in using the words; hence they deviate from the formula. For example: peeling again “<i>mengopek semula</i>”</p> <p><b>Clause</b> – can explain the process of clause extension to sentence</p> <p><b>Sentence</b> – can explain the formation process of compound sentences.</p>
2	Variety of lexis usage	To study/examine/discuss aspects which are abstract in nature (controversial issues) and to peel concrete (onion) things.	Peel/cut/prize (“ <i>mengopek</i> ”) is used for concrete things only such as bark, oyster, cockle, durian, patches.
3	Lexis collocation	Agents are involved (reviewer/expert “ <i>pengupas</i> ”) and there are certain items being studied/discussed/being peeled “ <i>dikupas</i> ”). Both collocations are core information.	Agents are involved (instrument/ “ <i>pengopek</i> ”) and there are certain items being peeled/cut/prized (objects). Both collocations are core information.
4	Dynamic characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If the item discussed/ studied/ examined is abstract, it usually involves important matters such as controversial issues, problems, and role. The discussion/examination will take time, done intellectually, carefully, with purpose, and, in formal or semi formal situation.</li> <li>- If the item is an object, the object usually has thin skin and requires skill to peel. The instrument used must be something that is sharp.</li> </ul>	<p>The object is usually</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- hard</li> <li>- thick</li> <li>- firm</li> <li>- sticky</li> </ul> <p>The peeling/cutting/prizing is done in a short period of time (depending on what is being peeled/cut/prized) using suitable instrument and the peeling/cutting/prizing method is rough (because the physical condition of the object peeled/cut/prized is hard, thick, firm and sticky)</p>

Table 3 above provides some linguistic information which may be disclosed to students to assist them to understand the complexity of meaning and the use of “*mengupas*” and “*mengopek*” lexis. Such information can help students to ascertain the linguistic aspects studied better because the students are free to locate information based on authentic data. In addition, this technique allows teachers to teach the students’ linguistics skills such as analyzing error in sentences, testing the linguistic formula, and explaining the comparative use of the lexis to produce correct sentences that are both correct grammatically and precise with regards to discourse.

## 7. Conclusion

In sum, the process of teaching and learning grammar using the Computer Aided Teaching and Learning approach (Computer-Based Instruction) introduced has proposed a new technique in the teaching and learning of grammar. The new approach takes into consideration the interests and preferences of students who are familiar to the world of information and technology. The technique, that is largely based on the antconc world list software program and the list of words derived from the corpus of the same software, has provided a variety of linguistic information to students particularly on the language system such as text reconstruction (building phrases, clauses and sentences), range of use and meaning of lexis, collocation between lexis, and the dynamic characteristics of lexis. This research hopes to help raise the level of teachers’ mastery in applying the Computer Aided Teaching and Learning approach (Computer-Based Instruction) in the Malay subject, and hence brings a positive impact on the development of students’ learning so that at the end of their school term, the students can use the Malay

language in line with the development of their age, and become better users of the language.

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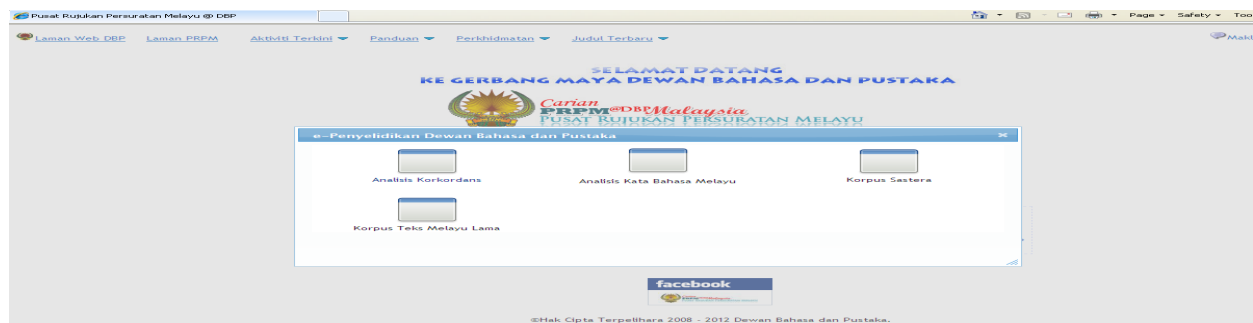
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## Appendix

### 1. Front page of DBP database



### 2. Selection and data search

