check for updates

USING 'THE WRITE STUFF' MODULE TO ENHANCE THE WRITING SKILLS OF ESL PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Check for updates

Melor Md Yunus[1]
Khairah Nuraishah Haleman[2+]
Yazid Junaidi[3]
Ashairi Suliman[4]

[1,4]Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Malaysia.
[1]Email: melor@ukm.edu.my Tel: +60192644401
[4]Email: ash860629@gmail.com Tel: +60138239609
[2]SK Batu 10, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Malaysia.
[2]Email: knuraishah@gmail.com Tel: +60148858370
[3]SK Hua Hin English, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Malaysia.
[3]Email: yazidbinjunaidi@gmail.com Tel: +60138732654

(+ Corresponding author)

ABSTRACT

Malaysian Ministry of Education (MOE) puts a significant emphasis on improving the proficiency level of English language among students by developing numerous English programs. However, the outcomes are undesirable with the amount of investment put in. It is evident in the Primary School Evaluation Report 2018 where 25.45% of National School students failed the English language writing paper. The high percentage of failure indicates their ineptitude in writing skills. The exam-oriented learning culture has caused teachers to resort to traditional rote-learning and memorization methods which lead to meaningless teaching and no output. Hence, this study introduced a writing module, 'The Write Stuff' based on Project-based Learning techniques to enhance students' writing skill. This mixed method study collected data from sixty students of two different schools. Survey questionnaires, content analysis and pre-test and post-test were used in the data collection. The results of the evaluation show an increment in students' mean scores in the post-test which indicates that student writing skills were improving. The results also show potential use of 'The Write Stuff' to promote fun and active learning, as well as enhancing learners' collaborative participation and dedication in completing the tasks in hand.

Contribution/ Originality: The study contributes to the existing literature of project-based learning approach in enhancing the acquisition and development of writing skills among the primary school ESL learners. It also provides ideas to teachers to promote fun and active learning as well as incorporating technology in classroom.

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's globalization era, English language is undeniably one of the most common languages spoken worldwide. According to Thirusanku and Yunus (2012) English language is considered to be the lingua franca of the modern world. Since English language is gaining its popularity and with the help of developing technology, it is not a surprise that most scientific research and academic papers are published in English (Roa, 2019). According to Devlin (2019) English is the most used language online by content which means that it has become a major mediator for delivering or sharing information. For a non-native English speaker country, mastering English language provides a greater access to knowledge and opportunities for economic growth. Malaysia has always shown its effort and interest in making its citizen multilingual by maintaining English as its second language.

315

Despite the emphasis given to the teaching and learning of this language, English language performance amongst the Malaysians has remained insufficient and lacking proficiency. It was evident in the Primary School Evaluation Test (UPSR) 2018 where 25.45% out of 329,024 students failed in the English language writing paper in National School (Malaysia Education Ministry, 2019). It is the highest percentage of failure amongst the other subjects which indicates the students' ineptitude in writing skills. One of contributing factors for the high percentage of failure is some teachers are still practicing the traditional methods of rote-learning and memorization (Azman, Shuraimi, & Yunus, 2018) despite the growing emphasis on promoting student-centered learning, value-based education, and holistic evaluation of students' achievements.

Although some changes have been made to make the evaluation more holistic, education in Malaysia currently is skewed towards examination. The exam-oriented learning culture has forced many teachers to maintain the traditional teaching methods in preparing the students for examinations to achieve top results academically (Zamri & Azmi, 2015). However, the emerging technology demands more than just memorizing skills from the Generation Z, who is tech-savvy and prefers social interaction through social media over direct contact with people (Hashim, 2018) to survive in the thriving economy. Hence, it concludes that the traditional teaching method of rote learning and memorization are no longer relevant. Teachers are required to transform their pedagogy practices accordingly to the evolving technology (Melor Md Yunus, 2018) to better equip the students with the skills needed to thrive in the 21st century and the 4th Industrial Revolution (4IR).

Chong and Yunus (2019) suggest that the most effective state to acquire knowledge is when a learner is aware of his needs and acts autonomously in his own learning. This key learning component is much reflected in Project-based Learning (PBL) approach. PBL has been used in teaching and learning process across multiple levels of education in various countries (Kavlu, 2015) including Malaysia. Syarifah and Emiliasari (2018) believes that learners will develop skills such as language and social skills, as well as increasing creativity, motivation, and collaborative learning through the implementation of PBL in the classroom.

Hence, this study introduced The Write Stuff, a writing module that exercised the key features of the PBL. This writing module was designed to create fun, safe, and active learning environment which practised 21st century learning activities. Upon completing the writing module, students were expected to have produced and published a storybook on an online bulletin board. The aim of conducting this study was to investigate the effect of 'The Write Stuff' writing module in the form of Project-based Learning (PBL) in enhancing Malaysian ESL primary school students' writing competencies which include these five aspects; fluency, form organization, grammar, mechanics, and vocabulary.

The study aimed to answer the following research questions:

1) Is there any significant difference between students' writing scores in pre-test and post-test?
2) What are the students' attitudes towards English language after the treatment?
3) What are the students' perceptions on the writing module after the treatment?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Writing Skills

Writing skills are important as they indicate the students' ability and success in learning English (Said et al., 2013; Syarifah & Emiliasari, 2018). They are also regarded as important skills to master for any English as a Second Language (ESL) learner as they are comprehensive skills that help bolstering vocabulary, grammar, thinking and planning (M.M. Yunus & Chan, 2016; Melor Md Yunus, Salehi, & Nordin, 2012). According to Praba', Artini, and Ramendra (2018) writing can be best described as a cognitive skill that involves learning, understanding, applying and synthesizing new knowledge. Being triggered cognitively, writing helps to inculcate creative and critical thinking.

Walker and Ríu (2008) as cited in Syarifah and Emiliasari (2018) state that many language learners are lacking confidence and interest in writing. Firmansyah (2015) also asserts that language learners are not having adequate skill and ability to generate ideas when writing. This is due to the nature of the monotonous teaching and learning approaches used by teachers in examination-eccentric education systems. The efforts become more challenging as academic tasks become more difficult. Mat and Yunus (2014) suggest that it would be best for teachers to create a safe environment for the language learners to learn the language at their own pace (Azam, Fadhil, & Yunus, 2019).

2.2. Project-Based Learning

Project-based Learning (PBL) has been recognised to be effective in the 21st century education based on the idea that learners gain both knowledge and skills by experiencing and solving real world problems (Kavlu, 2015). David Snedden was among the pioneers who created PBL (Beckett, 2006), which was further developed by William Heard Kilpatrick, John Dewey's student, who focused on the need for students to have a purposeful activity later in the early 1900s (Beckett, 2006). In PBL, students make connections between their newly acquired knowledge and prior knowledge and are able to apply them to similar setting (Kavlu, 2015).

PBL provides effective and conducive learning environment in accordance with the students' learning needs while producing products that benefit students in real contexts (Bell, 2010). Implementing PBL in ESL classroom also provides opportunity for fun and productive atmosphere for students to improve their English skills (Bell, 2010). Students have ample opportunities to practice to learn English skills through completing a project. Usually a project will start with reading and listening skills where students need to get input. By the end of the project, students would be tested on their writing and speaking skills as they are required to write their ideas and present their end products. Another benefit of implementing PBL mentioned by Bell (2010) is improving the ability to work cooperatively since the project is completed together in a group. Cooperative learning aims to maximise the students' learning through social support they obtained from their group members, and also increases the level of understanding and reasoning (Chong & Yunus, 2019). With the implementation of PBL, students have better understanding of the subject and have greater motivation for learning as well as gaining competencies in language skills (Bell, 2010).

2.3. Effects of Project-based Learning on Writing Skill

It has been broadly agreed that the implementation of PBL in teaching ESL classrooms brings learners a lot of benefits. According to Kavlu (2015) PBL has been integrated into language education parallel to the increasing interest in student-centred learning, autonomous learning, and collaborative learning. Bell (2010) suggests that PBL can possibly be an alternative to be used in solving problem in writing. Similarly, a study conducted by Díaz Ramírez (2014) observes that there was improvement in learners' writing abilities and precision through the implementation of PBL. The study conducted by Ratminingsih (2015) concludes that PBL allows EFL learners to resolve their problems in writing collaboratively through interaction and discussion. Furthermore, Hasani, Hendrayana, and Senjaya (2017) in their studies concerning the implementation of the PBL and its effects on students' writing skills conclude that the learners' writing skills have improved. The notion is further supported by Aghayani and Hajmohammadi (2019) where they argue that PBL helps learners to enhance their writing ability in a collaborative environment.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

This study employed the mixed method approach focusing on collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data. In this study, quantitative data was addressed as core and dominant while the qualitative data provided supplementary data.

317

3.2. Samples

This study recruited sixty students using the purposive sampling method. There were thirty male and female participants from Year Five of two different National Schools involved in this study. The criteria to choose the sample were a) Exposure to English language learning for at least four years; b) Score of at least C in their mid-term English examination; c) Must possess or have been using a laptop at home.

3.3. Research Instruments

The data obtained from the results of the study were classified into two parts: qualitative and quantitative. The content analysis method was utilized to analyze the qualitative data obtained from student' writing samples while quantitative data was collected from survey questionnaire and a pre-test and a post-test.

3.3.1. Survey Questionnaire

The survey questionnaire was adapted from Ngersawat and Kirkpatrick (2014) to identify participants' views toward learning English language by giving twenty-six-items questionnaire on their perceived experiences of their English language proficiency and writing abilities after the implementation of the treatment. Sixteen items addressed the participants' attitudes towards English language while ten items were about their perception on the use of The Write Stuff writing module. All the items in the survey questionnaire were designed using a five-point Likert response scale of Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Not Sure (NS), Agree (A), and Strongly Agree (SA). Taking into consideration of the wide range of students' English language proficiency levels, the researchers decided to include emojis to represent the five-point Likert scale. There was also a Malay language translation of the questionnaire to help the research participants to fully understand the intended meaning of the questionnaire.

3.3.2. Content Analysis

Content analysis is a highly flexible research method that has been widely used in qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method research. For the purpose of this study, the researchers followed the recommendations of Roller and Paul (2015) where they defined content analysis as "the systematic reduction of content, analyzed with special attention to the context in which it was created, to identify themes and extract meaningful interpretations of the data" (p.232). In this study, scripts from both pre-test and post-test were analyzed and coded into categories. The categories were the five writing aspects evaluated namely grammar, fluency, form organization, mechanics, and vocabulary. The scripts from both tests were used as examples to support the descriptive data. Pseudo names were used to refer to students' scripts. Based on John Anderson's analytic scoring (Hughes, 2013), fluency analyses were done to measure the consistency in choice of structures and vocabulary that helped to ease reader's comprehension. Meanwhile, form organization analyzed the progression of ideas of writing and mechanics focusing on punctuation and spelling in writing.

3.3.3. Pre-test Post-test

The main data of the study was garnered from the pre-test and post-test. A pre-test-post-test design is an experiment where measurements are taken both before and after a treatment (Dimitrov & Rumrill Jr, 2003). The design means that the researchers are able to see the effect of some type of treatment on a group. In this study, it was used to investigate the effect of using The Write Stuff writing module in enhancing students' writing skill and to assess the students' competency in English language. The pre-test and post-test were administered before and after the implementation of the treatment. The tests were in the form of instruction in which the students were intended to develop a short narrative based on the pictures and words provided. The writings produced by the students from both tests were assessed using John Anderson's Analytic Scoring in Testing for Language Teachers (Hughes, 2013). The data garnered were then used to find out if there were any improvement made on the five

writing aspects, namely fluency, form organization, grammar, mechanics, and vocabulary, in participants' test result before and after the implementation of the treatment.

3.3.4. The Write Stuff Writing Module

The Write Stuff is a writing module which emphasizes on learning writing skills through cooperative learning. This module is designed to promote fun, interactive, and student-centered learning. At the end of this module, students are expected to have shared a storybook in an online bulletin board. It is suggested that the module is to be done in a group of four. Each student is assigned a role to avoid free ride and task monopoly by any group member. To ensure high-level of interest and motivation throughout the project, students were given the liberty to list out the topics in which they were interested to write about.
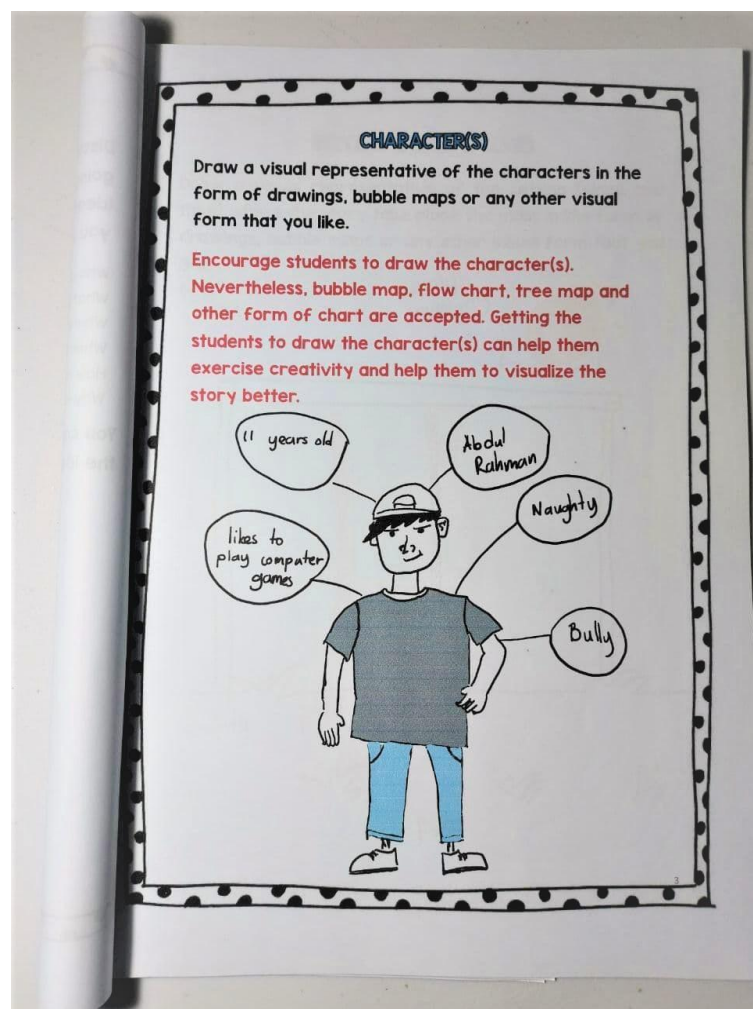

Figure-1. Example of the visual representative of the character.

There were four learning steps in this module. The first learning step was planning. Planning is an important part of writing as it always helps the writer to think clearly about the written topic. At this step, the students are required to brainstorm ideas for the characters involved, settings, and plot for the story as shown in Figure 1. Instead of traditionally jotting down notes on the module, students are required to draw their characters and the settings of the story. It is up to their creativity on how they want to organize their drawing. Notes can be written on the drawing to help make better understanding of their visual representative. Students are then required to

319

complete the flow chart for the plot. Ample time was given to the students to visualize their ideas and lay down as many details of the story as possible. This information was very much useful in the next three learning steps.

The second learning step is shown in Figure 2. Students were required to write simple sentences based on the information that they had discussed during the first learning stage. The teacher demonstrated by writing simple sentences before letting the students work on their own.

Figure 3 shows the third learning step of the module. This step was editing and paraphrasing the compound the simple sentences constructed in step two by using suitable conjunctions. Students were encouraged to add in adverbs and adjectives appropriately into their sentences. Furthermore, the students were also required to rearrange their sentences and write them in paragraphs.
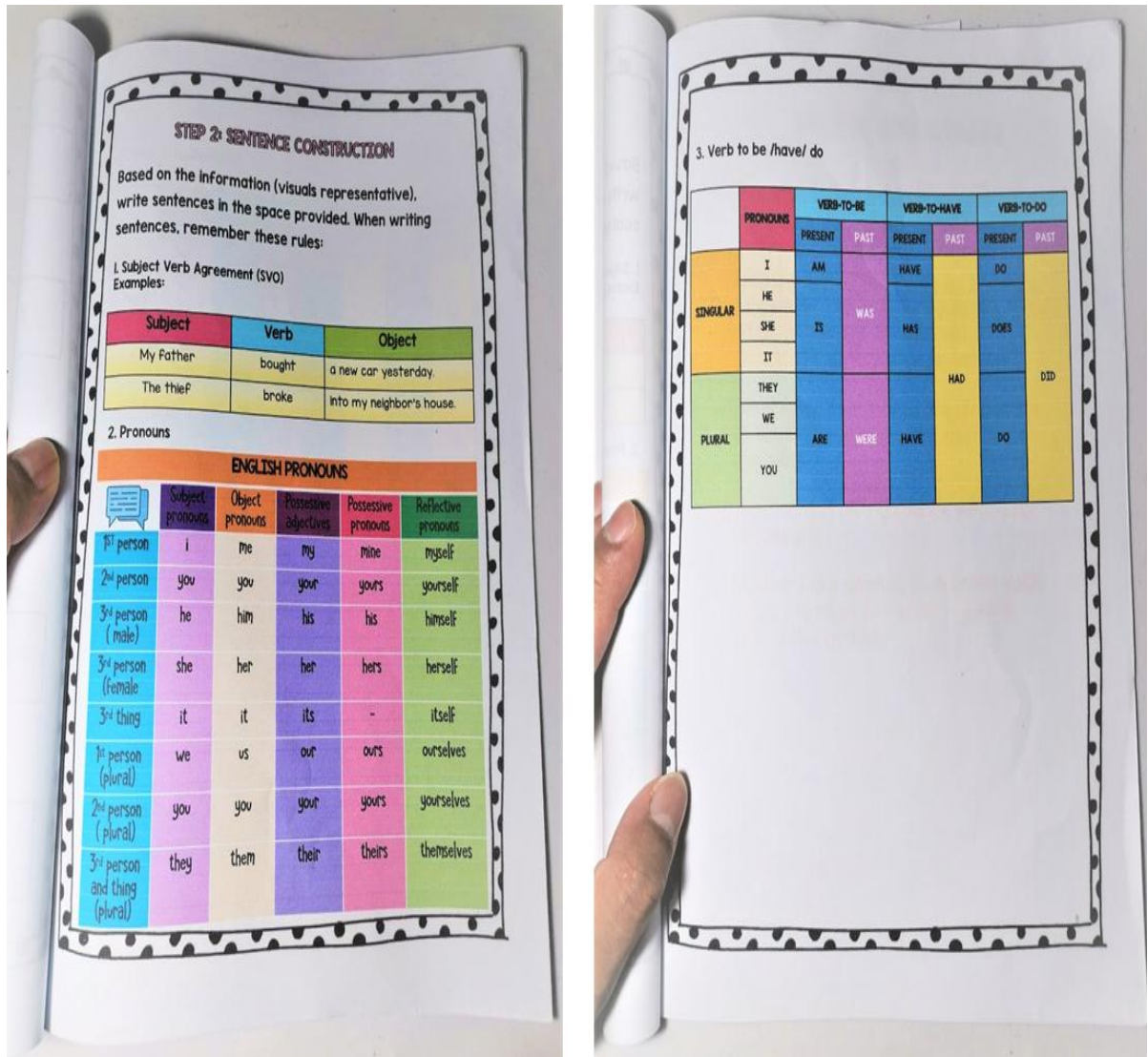

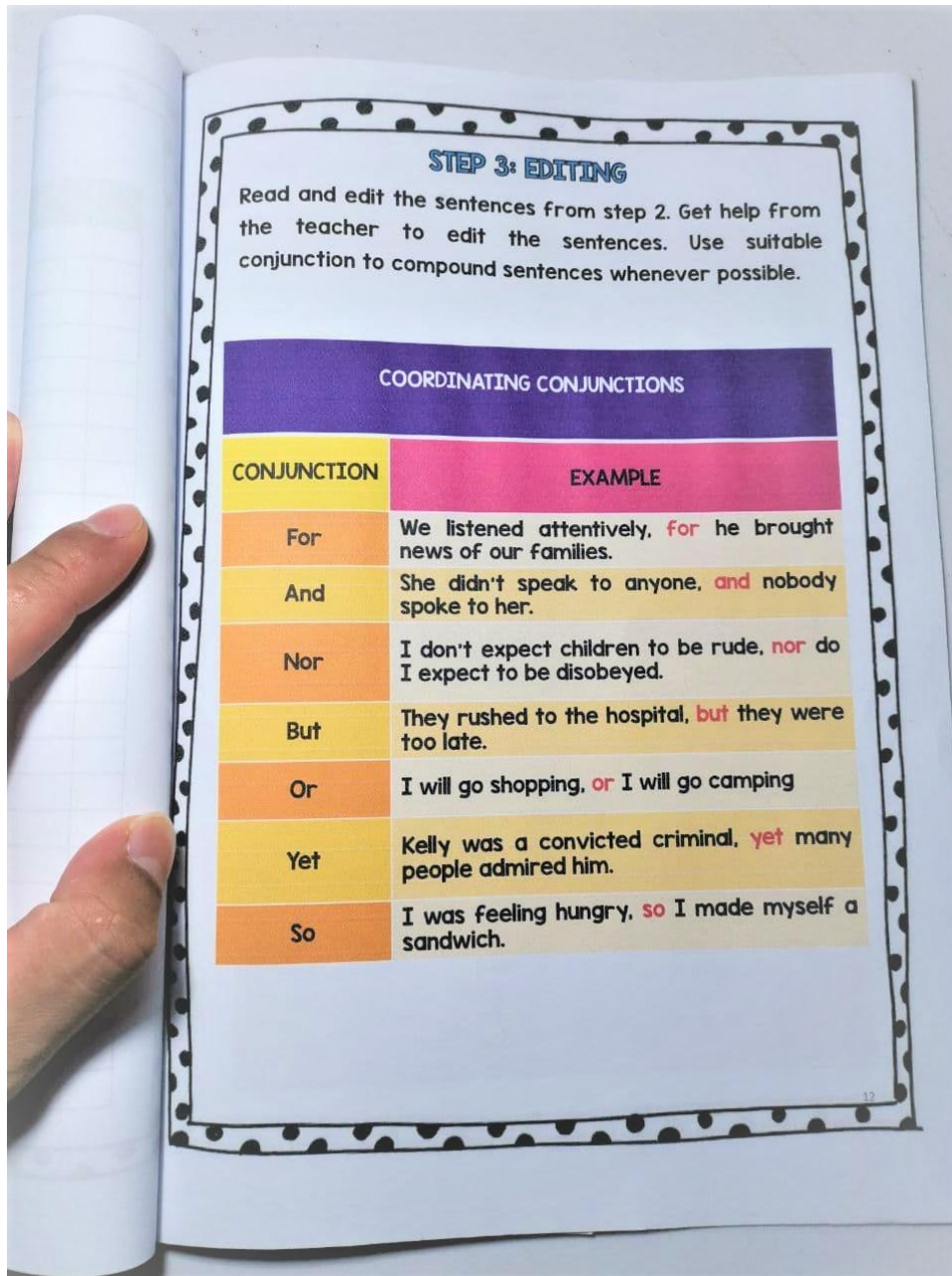**Figure-2.** Notes on pronouns and tenses are included in the module.

Figure-3. Notes on conjunction are included to help with constructing compound sentences.

The fourth and final learning step of this writing module was creating a storybook on mystorybook.com and share it on The Write Stuff online bulletin board (https://padlet.com/thewritestuff/) as shown in Figure 4.

3.5. Procedures

The students were given the pre-test to obtain preliminary data at the beginning of the study before the treatment was conducted. The Write Stuff writing module was introduced as treatment and implemented within the time frame of six weeks. Students received treatment twice a week with one contact hour per session. Four sessions were needed for the students to complete one storybook. In the first session, students worked in a group of four and brainstormed ideas for their storybook according to the topic. The second session required the students to focus on constructing sentences from the information they had gathered in the first session.
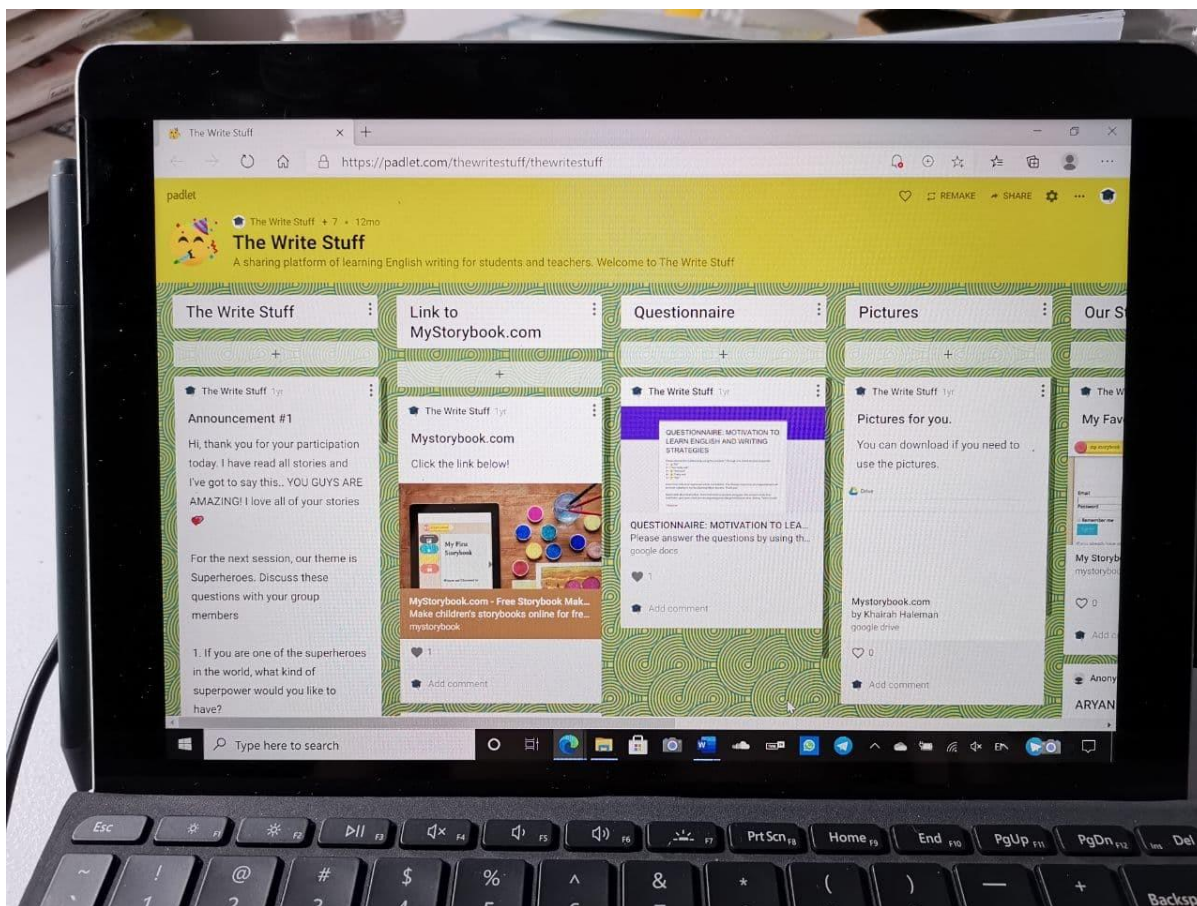
Figure-4. The Write Stuff online bulletin board.

These sentences were then edited and rearranged accordingly in paragraphs in the third session. For the fourth session, each group was required to visualize their narrative in the form of a storybook using mystorybook.com and publish it on 'The Write Stuff' online bulletin board (https://padlet.com/thewritestuff/). Over the period of six weeks, students successfully produced 3 storybooks for each group. At the end of the treatment, the same instrument as the pre-test was carried out to investigate the effect of the writing module on students' writing skill. Survey questionnaire was administered using Google Form a day after the post-test was done. While facilitating the survey questionnaire, the researchers presented themselves in the classroom to provide explanation just in case the students raised questions.

3.6. Data Analysis

The tabulation and analysis of data followed the administration of the survey questionnaire. The data from the questionnaire was analyzed quantitatively. In analyzing the survey questionnaire, the researchers used some reverse coding on some items as they did not show positive direction. Descriptive statistics was used to give an account of the sample. Students' writing samples from pre-test and post-test were used as evidence of progression in the five writing aspects evaluated fluency, form organization, grammar, mechanics, and vocabulary to support the descriptive data.

The pre-test and post-test underwent analytic scoring which required separate score for each aspect of a task. In analytic scoring, students' writings were assessed based on five aspects; fluency, form organization, grammar, mechanics, and vocabulary using John Anderson's Analytic Scoring in Testing for Language Teachers (Hughes, 2013). The researchers utilized the Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS) to process the data. The tests used for the analysis were parametric as the data was normally distributed. Regarding the statistical test, the researchers

322

employed Paired Samples t-test to find out if there were significant differences between participants' pre-test and post-test results after the implementation of the treatment.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

RQ1: Is there any significant difference between students' writing scores in pre-test and post-test?

In order to answer the first research question, pre-test and post-test were carried out to reveal the effects of The Write Stuff's writing module in enhancing students' writing skill. The data from both tests were analyzed based on five aspects of writing: fluency, form organization, grammar, mechanics, and vocabulary. The researchers analyzed the data using writing assessment rubric adapted by Anderson in Hughes (2013). The scores of each aspect were tabulated in Microsoft Excel to get the total scores. The results of pre-test and post-test were then transferred into SPSS to get the mean value, standard deviation, t-value and significance value. The results of the paired t-test of pre-test and post-test are shown in Table 1:

Table-1. Paired – samples t-test of pre-test and post-test.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	Sig (2-tailed)
Pre-test	60	14.73	2.88	-19.185	.000
Post-test	60	18.88	3.58		

A paired sample t-test was conducted to compare the pre-test and post-test results on the students' writing. There was a significant difference in the score between pre-test (mean = 14.73, s.d = 2.88) and post-test (mean = 18.88, s.d = 3.58); (t = -19.19, p = .000). The statistics showed that there was a significant difference in means for the post-test. It means that the students' writing scores improved after they received the treatment. The Sig. value of paired sample t-test is .000 which is less than the significance threshold set at .05 (p = .000 < α = .05). It can be concluded that there was statistically significant effect of the writing module on students' writing performance.

4.1. Students' Progress in the Aspects of Writing

Complimentary to the result of the first research question, students' writing samples were evaluated in five writing categories namely fluency, form organization, grammar, mechanics, and vocabulary. To address the students' progress in these categories of writing, the researchers used mean scores to compare the students' writing performance in the pre-test and post-test. Table 2 presents the findings:

Table-2. Students' mean score in the pre-test and post-test covering aspects of writing.

Aspect	Pre-Test	Post-Test	Gain Score
Fluency	2.47	3.23	0.76
Form Organization	2.82	3.57	0.75
Grammar	3.02	3.48	0.46
Mechanics	3.87	4.65	1.08
Vocabulary	2.57	3.65	1.08

Based on the results of the pre-test and post-test, fluency and form organization showed a decent improvement in which the pre-test mean scores were 2.47 and 2.82 and the post-test mean scores were 3.23 and 3.57. The gain score for both aspects were 0.76 and 0.75 respectively. The gain scores indicate that after receiving the treatment for over six weeks, the students displayed a decent improvement in their writings in the aspect of fluency and for organization.

Meanwhile, in the grammar category, there was a minimal improvement in students' writing mean score from 3.02 to 3.48 with the gain score of 0.46. This is the lowest gain score among the five aspects. Although the treatment had been given for a period of six weeks, the students hardly showed notable improvement on grammar.

Lastly, for vocabulary and mechanics aspects showed satisfying improvement in which the pre-test mean scores were 2.57 and 3.87 while the post-test mean scores were 3.65 and 4.65 respectively. The gain scores for both aspects were 1.08 which is the highest scores among the aspects. The scores indicate that the students improved impressively in the aspect of vocabulary and mechanics after receiving the treatment. Based on these results, it can be concluded that mechanics and vocabulary were the easiest aspects of writing for students to improve on while grammar was the hardest aspect and needed more time of treatment before seeing any notable improvement.

Furthermore, content analysis was conducted to elucidate students' writing improvement before and after receiving the treatment. In the category of grammar, the errors were quite apparent in students' writing samples. For example, Alif used subject personal pronoun (she) in the pre-test writing sample, to refer to someone in the sentence. After receiving the treatment, it can be seen that he was able to use the correct object personal pronoun (her) in order to make a reference about someone.

> *"Last holiday Lily and* **she** *family was picnic at the beach."* (Alif school A, pre-test)

> *"Last holiday, Sara and* **her** *family went to the beach for a picnic."* (Alif, school A, post-test)

In terms of organization of the essay, some students were able to express their ideas coherently after receiving the treatment. For instance, Raiyan's writing sample in the pre-test showed that his essay lacked organization and some sentences needed several times of reading for clarification of ideas. When the researchers were analyzing the writing sample, it sparked confusion as in his pre-test writing sample it was unclear whose family went to the beach in the story. Initially, Raiyan wrote that Lily and her family, who were the main characters in his story, went for a picnic by the beach. However, the flow of the story was disrupted as Raiyan included his own experience at the beach from the first-person point of view.

> *"One day, Lily's family are going to holiday. My family are picnic beside the tree. She and brother play with my friends in the beach. She can swan in the beach…She lunch to eat. I would enjoyed the beach that. She want to play but he tired. She want to play again but have time again".* (Raiyan, School B, pre-test)

After getting the treatment, his essay had slightly improved compared to previous writing. Raiyan used first-person point of view to write an essay instead of third-person point of view. According to Hynes (2014), the first-person point of view is commonly used in fiction such as stories and novels. Although there were still many grammatical mistakes in his post-test writing sample, to compare to his pre-test sample, there was clear progression of ideas linked between sentences.

> *"The last holiday, I and my brother are go to holiday go to beach with family. When we are arrive the beach, I go to beach and I go swam. I go swam with my family. That was excited in the beach..."* (Raiyan, School B, post-test)

Furthermore, fluency is about writing style and ease of understanding of the plot. It is also closely connected with structures and vocabulary. Based on the writing samples, there are apparent inconsistencies of structures and inappropriate use of vocabulary in the essays before treatment. Hence, it renders reader's comprehension of the story. For instance, in Richie and Diana's writing samples, both showed inconsistent usage of simple past tense in their essays. Also, it could be seen in Richie's essay that he used the word 'happily' inappropriately in the sentence to describe the feeling of his characters in the story. Meanwhile, Diana used Malay Language word 'same-same' to describe about togetherness.

> *"The holiday yesterday, Finah and his family go to the beach. They are swam at the beach so excited. All they was happily and excited…"* (Richie, School A, pre-test)

> *"…My family picnic at beach and my family bring to swam me excited. My family built same-same built sandcastle…"* (Diana, School B, pre-test)

After being exposed to the treatment, both students showed moderate improvement in their post-test writing samples especially the usage of simple past tense in the sentences. Diana was also able to use 'together' to show that the action was done collectively.

"Yesterday was a public holiday, Fitri and his family go to the beach. They swam at the beach. They swam happily. Everyone so excited..." (Richie, School A, post-test)

"One day, my family join me for holiday. My family and I go to beach. My family and I swam together…" (Diana, School B, post-test)

Besides that, the other two categories of writing that showed significant improvement were mechanics and vocabulary. Before the students received the treatment, majority of their writing samples portrayed limited vocabulary and frequent misused of several words (i.e. *excited* and *happy*) which hindered the expression of ideas in the essay. The students also made frequent mistakes in spelling or punctuation which led to obscurity of the sentences. For instance, in pre-test writing sample, Arissha wrote about her wish of wanting for another holiday so that she could visit the beach again. She knew that 'patience' means the ability to stay calm and wait for something or somebody, but she spelt and used the word incorrectly to describe her feelings. The mistake also appeared in Katrina's writing sample. She used 'nearby' to explain that she went to the beach near her house. However, she misspelled the word.

"I not pantient to come in the beach" (Arissha, school A, pre-test)

"One day holiday, my family went for a picnic nerby the beach…" (Katrina, school B, pre-test)

Meanwhile, in the post-test, Arissha replaced the word 'pantient' to 'hope' while Katrina spelled 'nerby' correctly. Thus, the sentences conveyed the same meaning as in the pre-test.

Table-3. Attitudes towards English language.

No	Items	SD N (%)	D N (%)	NS N (%)	A N (%)	SA N (%)	Mean
1.	I like English class.	-	-	6 (10.0)	7 (11.7)	47 (78.3)	4.68
2.	I want to be good at English language.	-	-	11 (16.7)	6 (11.7)	43 (71.7)	4.55
3.	I learn English as my second language because I have to.	14 (23.3)	-	16 (26.7)	7 (11.7)	23 (38.3)	2.58
4.	I do not have any needs to learn English language.	34 (56.7)	-	10 (16.7)	8 (13.3)	8 (13.3)	3.73
5.	I speak English with my friends and teachers at school.	25 (41.7)	-	13 (21.7)	11 (18.3)	11 (18.3)	2.72
6.	I speak English with my parents and siblings at home.	33 (55.0)	-	13 (21.7)	8 (13.3)	6 (10.0)	2.23
7.	I speak and read English most of the time.	12 (20.0)	7 (11.7)	13 (21.7)	17 (28.3)	11 (18.3)	3.13
8.	I seldom speak and read English.	17 (26.7)	-	13 (21.7)	10 (18.3)	20 (33.3)	2.68
9.	I am not confident to speak with my friends and teachers in English.	16 (26.7)	-	17 (28.3)	5 (8.3)	22 (36.7)	2.72
10.	I want to be able to leave comments or post status on social media in English.	20 (33.3)	-	16 (26.7)	7 (11.7)	17 (28.3)	3.02
11.	I am confident to leave comments or post status on social media in English.	13 (21.7)	-	16 (26.7)	7 (11.7)	24 (40.0)	3.48
12.	English language lessons always involve fun and interesting activities.	-	-	-	11 (18.3)	49 (81.7)	4.82
13.	I ask questions in English.	22 (36.7)	-	14 (23.3	13 (21.7)	11 (18.3)	2.85
14.	I often write in Malay language then translated into English.	10 (16.7)	-	13 (23.3)	6 (10.0)	31 (50.0)	2.23
15	I write for pleasure in my free time in English.	13 (21.7)	10 (16.7)	15 (25.0)	6 (10.0)	16 (26.7)	3.03
16	I write notes, messages, letters or e-mails in English.	16 (26.7)	8 (13.3)	14 (23.3)	12 (20.0)	10 (16.7)	2.87

"We hope we can to go the beach again." (Arissha, school A, post-test)

"Last holiday, my family and I went to beach nearby my village…" (Katrina, school B, post-test)

RQ2: What are the students' attitudes towards English Language after the treatment?

This section presents the students' attitudes towards English language after the treatment. The distribution of frequency and mean scores of each item is shown in Table 3.

Findings in this section reveal that students showed positive attitudes towards learning of English language. Eight out of sixteen items were of high frequency level with the mean scores ranging from M = 3.02 to M = 4.82. The remaining eight items in Table 3 were grouped under the lower frequency scale with mean scores ranging from M = 2.23 to M = 2.87. The items that showed higher mean scores were 'I like English', 'I want to be good at English language', 'I do not have any needs to learn English language', 'I speak and read English most of the time', 'I want to be able to leave comments or post status on social media in English', 'I am confident to leave comments or post status on social media in English', 'English language lessons always involve fun and interesting activities', and 'I write for pleasure in my free time in English'.

Table-4. Students' perception on the write stuff's writing module.

No	Items	SD N (%)	D N (%)	NS N (%)	A N (%)	SA N (%)	Mean
1.	The writing module helps me and my friends to use appropriate spelling, capitalization and punctuation.	9 (15.0)	-	-	8 (13.3)	43 (71.7)	4.27
2.	The writing module helps me and my friends to notice our English mistakes in writing and use that information to help us do better.	6 (10.0)	5 (8.3)	16 (26.7)	8 (13.3)	25 (41.7)	3.68
3.	The writing module helps me and my friends to brainstorm ideas before writing.	-	-	16 (26.7)	13 (21.7)	31 (51.7)	4.25
4.	The writing module helps me and my friends to edit my writing (word order, grammar, punctuation and spelling)	9 (15.0)	-	17 (28.3)	8 (13.3)	26 (43.3)	3.70
5.	The writing module helps me and my friends to write a good paragraph.	6 (10.0)	6 (10.0)	19 (31.7)	11 (18.3)	18 (30.0)	3.48
6.	The writing module helps me to use appropriate vocabulary in the paragraph.	13 (21.7)	6 (10.0)	17 (28.3)	11 (18.3)	13 (21.7)	3.08
7.	The writing module helps me and my friends to organize our ideas when we write a paragraph.	5 (8.3)	-	11 (18.3)	22 (36.7)	22 (36.7)	3.93
8.	The writing module helps me and my friends to use a variety of sentence structures. (simple, compound and complex.	13 (21.7)	4 (6.7)	4 (6.7)	19 (31.7)	20 (33.3)	3.48
9.	The writing module helps me and my friends to write a good conclusion for an English essay.	12 (20.0)	-	23 (38.3)	11 (18.3)	14 (23.3)	3.25
10.	The writing module helps me and my friends to write quickly in English.	20 (33.3)	-	13 (21.7)	14 (23.3)	13 (21.7)	3.00

Similar findings were reported in other studies (Thang, Ting, & Mohd Jaafar, 2011; Melor Md Yunus & Abdullah, 2011) where their students showed positive attitudes towards the learning of English. It also indicates

that majority of the participants understood the importance of English and had strong desire to be good in English language. The findings also implied that teachers need to create the element of fun and interactive learning environment and include the use of social media platforms as part of the learning process (Aghayani & Hajmohammadi, 2019). On the other hand, the two items in Table 3 with relatively low mean scores were 'I speak English with my parents and siblings at home' (M = 2.23) and 'I often write in Malay language then translated into English' (M = 2.23). The findings implied that the students did not practice English outside classroom which also indicated that parents' involvement in students' language learning process were scarce. In support of the findings, Hiew (2012) explains that unfavorable environment at home caused difficulties to the students to master English language which eventually affect their learning performance. Bidin, Jusoff, Aziz, Salleh, and Tajudin (2009) also finds out that social economic status, parental involvement and individual characteristics also play crucial factors in language learning.

RQ3: What are the students' perceptions on the writing module after the treatment?

This section presents the students' perceptions on the writing module after the treatment. The distribution of frequency and mean scores of each item is shown in Table 4. Based on the findings in Table 4, over 70% of the students could be observed to display positive responses on the use of The Write Stuff writing module in brainstorming and organizing ideas. These items were Item 3 'The writing module helps me and my friends to brainstorm ideas before writing,' (M = 4.25) and Item 7 'The writing module helps me and my friends to organize our ideas when we write a paragraph' (M = 3.93). Greenstein (2012) reiterates that effective collaboration is one way of learning to work together, consider various perspectives and to engage in discussion by listening and contributing ideas. This is supported by Mulligan and Garofalo (2011) as they believe that the benefits of collaborative writing projects contribute to positive students' interaction in the EFL classroom, hence, it helps to lower the anxiety to complete tasks alone and it increases students' confidence.

Furthermore, 56.6% of the students agreed that the writing module helped them to edit their writings in terms of word order, grammar, punctuation, and spelling (M = 3.70). 85% of the students were in favor of Item 1, "The writing module helps me and my friends to use appropriate spelling, capitalization and punctuation." (M = 4.27). These findings reveal that the students were able to identify grammatical, spelling and punctuation errors as they edited their writings. It also showed that the students engaged in problem solving, generated the next courses of action and made changes to the sentences. Praba' et al. (2018) find that writing activity helps to inculcate creative and critical thinking as it activates cognitive skill that involves learning, understanding, applying and synthesizing new knowledge. In addition, 48.3% of students agreed with Item 5 "The writing module helps me and my friends to write a good paragraph." (M = 3.48) whilst 42.6% of students agreed with Item 9 "The writing module helps me and my friends to write a good conclusion for an English essay." (M = 3.25). These findings implied that the students displayed great satisfaction on their writing improvement which could be seen in their post-test results. In general, the data indicates that the writing module is able to enhance their writing skills. Hence, we can conclude that The Write Stuff writing module has positive impacts in enhancing students' writing skills.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that The Write Stuff writing module has positive impact in students' writing performance. Students were performing in writing better when they worked collaboratively with their peers. The flexibility of the writing module can be used across proficiency levels as it provides explanation on steps of writing process. Using the Write Stuff writing module in the classroom creates a fun and active learning environment that enhances students' collaborative participation in completing the tasks. Furthermore, it empowers students' creativity and critical thinking skills in expressing ideas by working collaboratively. Since a topic is treated as one project, it is near impossible for the teachers to cover all topics suggested in the curriculum by Malaysian Ministry of Education (MOE). Therefore, it is recommended for the

teachers to incorporate flipped classroom where some parts of the writing module can be completed outside the classroom. There are several suggestions which can be taken into consideration to make this study more reliable. The Write Stuff's writing module has enormous potential to be used not only at primary level, but also at secondary level. Further studies among different proficiency levels of students and demographic could yield more information on how this writing module could be used to benefit students' learning experience in a holistic way.

In conclusion, the use of The Write Stuff writing module was effective to improve the student's writing skills. The positive results also prove that 21st century learning activities contribute to the improvements of students' writing competencies and scores in examination.

REFERENCES

Aghayani, B., & Hajmohammadi, E. (2019). Project-based learning: promoting EFL learners' writing skills. *LLT Journal: A Journal on Language and Language Teaching, 22*(1), 78-85.

Azam, F. K. K., Fadhil, F., & Yunus, M. M. (2019). Enhancing ESL learners' writing skills via provWrit. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 9*(1), 660–669.

Azman, M., Shuraimi, F., & Yunus, M. (2018). Enhancing English language learning and teaching via Qgram (Telegram and Quizlet) innovation. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development, 7*(4), 435-446.Available at: https://doi.org/10.6007/ijarped/v7-i4/5344.

Beckett, G. H. (2006). *Project-based second and foreign language education: Past, present, and future.* Greenwich: CT: Information Age Publishing.

Bell, S. (2010). Project-based learning for the 21st century: Skills for the future. *The Clearing House, 83*(2), 39-43.Available at: https://doi.org/10.4135/9781506313979.n3.

Bidin, S., Jusoff, K., Aziz, N. A., Salleh, M. M., & Tajudin, T. (2009). Motivation and attitude in learning English among UiTM students in the northern region of Malaysia. *English Language Teaching, 2*(2), 16-20.Available at: https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v2n2p16.

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, 10*(2), 151–164.Available at: https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol10no2.13.

Devlin, T. M. (2019). What are the most-used languages on the internet? Babbel magazine. Retrieved from https://www.babbel.com/en/magazine/internet-language/.

Díaz Ramírez, M. (2014). The impact of project work and the writing process method on writing production. *How, 21*(2), 31-53.Available at: https://doi.org/10.19183/how.21.2.3.

Dimitrov, D. M., & Rumrill Jr, P. D. (2003). Pretest-posttest designs and measurement of change. *Work, 20*(2), 159-165.

Firmansyah, A. (2015). The influence of mind mapping technique and students' attitude toward students' ability in writing a recount text of the eighth-grade students of State Junior High School 45 Palembang. *Ripteksi Education Pgri, 2*(1), 11-18.

Greenstein, L. M. (2012). *Assessing 21st century skills: A guide to evaluating mastery and authentic learning.* USA: Corwin Press.

Hasani, A., Hendrayana, A., & Senjaya, A. (2017). Using project-based learning in writing an educational article: An experience report. *Universal Journal of Educational Research, 5*(6), 960-964.

Hashim, H. (2018). Application of technology in the digital era education. *International Journal of Research in Counselling and Education, 2*(1), 1-5.

Hiew, W. (2012). English language teaching and learning issues in Malaysia: Learners' perceptions via Facebook dialogue journal. *Journal of Arts, Science and Commerce, 3*(1), 11−19.

Hughes, A. (2013). *Testing for language teachers* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hynes, J. (2014). *Writing great fiction: Storytelling tips and techniques.* Chantilly, VA: The Great Course.

Kavlu, A. (2015). Project-based learning assessment methods comparison in undergraduate EFL classes. *International Journal of Social Sciences & Educational Studies, 1*(4), 47−56.

Malaysia Education Ministry. (2019). *Primary school assessment report 2018.* Putrajaya: Malaysia Education Ministry.

Mat, S. S. C., & Yunus, M. M. (2014). Attitudes and motivation towards learning English among FELDA school students. *Australian Journal of Basic and Applied Sciences, 8*(5), 1−8.

Mulligan, C., & Garofalo, R. (2011). A collaborative writing approach: Methodology and student assessment. *The Language Teacher, 35*(3), 5-10.Available at: https://doi.org/10.37546/jalttlt35.3-1.

Ngersawat, S., & Kirkpatrick, R. (2014). An investigation of ACT students' English language problems and their learning strategies in grade 10 bilingual program. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 98*, 1356-1365.Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.03.553.

Praba̍, L. T., Artini, L. P., & Ramendra, D. P. (2018). Project-based learning and writing skill in EFL: Are they related? . *SHS Web of Conferences, 42*(1), 1−6.

Ratminingsih, N. M. (2015). The use of personal photographs in writing in project-based language learning: A case study. *The New English Teacher, 9*(1), 102−118.

Roa, P. S. (2019). The role of English as a global language. *Research Journal of English, 4*(1), 65-79.

Roller, M. R., & Paul, J. L. (2015). *Applied qualitative research design: A total quality framework approach.* New York: Guilford Press.

Said, N. E. M., Yunus, M., Doring, L. K., Asmi, A., Aqilah, F., & Li, L. K. S. (2013). Blogging to enhance writing skills: A survey of students' perception and attitude. *Asian Social Science, 9*(16), 95.

Syarifah, E. F., & Emiliasari, R. N. (2018). Project-based learning to develop students' ability and creativity in writing narrative story. *Indonesian EFL Journal, 5*(1), 85−94.

Thang, S. M., Ting, S. L., & Mohd Jaafar, N. (2011). Attitudes and motivation of Malaysian secondary students towards learning English as a second language: A case study. *The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies, 17*(1), 40-54.

Thirusanku, J., & Yunus, M. M. (2012). The many faces of Malaysian English. *ISRN Education, 2012*, 1−14.Available at: https://doi.org/10.5402/2012/138928.

Walker, R., & Ríu, C. P. (2008). Coherence in the assessment of writing skills. *ELT Journal, 62*(1), 18−28.Available at: https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccm074.

Yunus, M. M. (2018). Innovation in education and language learning in 21st century. *Journal of Sustainable Development Education and Research, 2*(1), 33-34.Available at: https://doi.org/10.17509/jsder.v2i1.12355.

Yunus, M. M., & Abdullah, N. R. K. R. B. (2011). Motivation and attitudes for learning English among year six students in primary rural school. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 15*, 2631-2636.Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.04.160.

Yunus, M. M., & Chan, H. C. (2016). The use of mind mapping strategy in Malaysian University English Test (MUET) writing. *Creative Education, 7*(4), 619−626.Available at: https://doi.org/10.4236/ce.2016.74064.

Yunus, M. M., Salehi, H., & Nordin, N. (2012). ESL pre-service teachers' perceptions on the use of paragraph punch in teaching writing. *English Language Teaching, 5*(10), 138.Available at: https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v5n10p138.

Zamri, M., & Azmi, B. (2015). An overview of Malaysian English language learning strategies. *Frontiers of Language and Teaching, 6*(1), 132 −146.