

# JOURNAL OF COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

## Perceptions of Language Teachers and Parents on Writing Module and Online Learning Platforms in Evolving Students' Writing Skills

Raganeswari Ramasamy<sup>1\*</sup>, Mariam Mohamad<sup>1</sup>, 3Mageswaran Sanmugam<sup>1</sup> & Hooi Chee Mei<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Centre for Instructional Technology and Multimedia, University of Science, Pulau Pinang, Malaysia

<sup>2</sup>Department of Modern Languages, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, Selangor, Malaysia

\*Corresponding author: raganes\_87mr@yahoo.com; ORCID iD: 0000-0001-8435-2713

### ABSTRACT

Technology resources play an imperative role in the education system in this digital era. The Ministry of Education of Malaysia (MOE), through Shift 7 from the Malaysian Education Blueprint, elucidated the need to apply Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to improve the quality of the learning system. This present study explores the perceptions of language teachers and parents concerning the usefulness of incorporating writing modules, online learning platforms and mobile learning to develop upper secondary students' writing skills at Malaysian National Secondary Schools. It was a qualitative research design in which the data were collected through semi-structured interviews with the participants. The findings revealed that language teachers and parents considered writing modules, online learning platforms, and mobile learning environments to be vital resources for developing students' writing skills. The language teachers and parents viewed the approachability of technology resources, their interactive features, and their capability to provide immediate feedback for students in developing their writing skills. Generally, this study emphasised the usefulness of writing modules, online learning platforms and mobile learning as additional resources. This study also indicated the implication of considering technologies from both language teachers and parents to develop students' writing skills. In addition, this study emphasised that future researchers could use appropriate instructional models to create writing modules and proper behaviour theories to design online writing activities. This will motivate the students to practise writing skills via technology resources.

**Keywords:** language teachers, mobile learning, online learning platform, parents, writing module

**Received** 5 May 2024 **Accepted** 4 August 2024 **Published** 27 January 2025

### Introduction

In this globalised world, technology is important in facilitating teaching and learning processes. Teaching the English language by incorporating technology resources is not a new concept or practice for language teachers worldwide (Katemba, 2020). The last two decades witnessed the worldwide creation of information and communication technology (ICT), which is progressing rapidly; henceforth, it has penetrated the field of education. The global implementation of ICT into education, focusing on the potential of new technological tools, has often been introduced to revolutionise conventional teaching and learning. The different uses of technology support teachers to expand their delivery of instructions. As a result, the students' level of understanding and comprehension increased (Shah, 2022).

In Malaysia, the National Educational Blueprint (2013-2025) has also specified the importance of developing ICT in the teaching and learning process in the present curriculum system (Musa, 2021). Hence, Shift 7 of the National Education Blueprint noted the implication of ICT in improving the excellence of learning, which provides Internet access and a virtual learning atmosphere (Azar & Tan, 2020). Furthermore, integrating technology tools in learning is a fundamental element as it helps students to increase their enthusiasm and foster their problem-solving skills, as well as to enable them to think critically, which is parallel to the alteration brought by the latest technologies upon our world (Tengler et al., 2021).

In the English learning process, students are required to master all four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. For all the skills, students encounter a significant problem in writing skills when compared with the other three skills (Rahman et al., 2020). This indicates that language teachers would need to apply different approaches to teaching writing skills, and one of the approaches is using technology tools. Abulhul (2021) mentioned that utilising technology resources to teach writing skills is essential, and it could arouse students' attention, compared with retaining conventional teaching methods in this digital era. Besides that, the Ministry of Education, through the Education Blueprint (2013-2025), illustrated the importance of technology-based teaching and learning in the schools' national curriculum (Musa, 2021). Consequently, there are various types of technology resources available nowadays, such as implementing online learning platforms and mobile learning.

The alteration of mobile learning (m-learning) has been gaining momentum in Malaysia in recent years (Bujang et al., 2020). This means that m-learning provides benefits in the education field. Most researchers (Abd Samad et al., 2021; Azar & Tan, 2020; Ng et al., 2020) specified the same advantages mobile learning provides. Moreover, an online learning platform is a portal for educational purposes and resources that allow students to carry out their learning process. It helps students to discuss with their lecturers, teachers, and friends when doing their assignments. Besides that, it could be employed as a platform for students, teachers, and parents to monitor the students' development (Fansury et al., 2020).

In addition, using technology resources helps parents consistently monitor and guide their children in the education system. Annamalai (2021), Bhamani et al., (2020), as well as Kanapathipillai and Narayanan (2021), mentioned that parents could be included in the online environment to observe and encourage their children to progress well in their learning. On top of that, parents have become another important variable in students' online learning activities (Herwin & Dahalan, 2022). This shows that when parents put more effort into using technology and follow the instructions given by their teachers, it helps the students to develop in their online learning. Moreover, parents' understanding of technology usage plays another important factor in a positive learning process for students.

After evaluating the past studies and the two preliminary studies which were conducted before carrying out the treatment phase and interview in the current study, it shows that perceptions from language teachers and parents are needed in improving students' narrative writing skills through the integration of narrative writing module, online learning platform and mobile learning in Malaysian National Secondary Schools. Therefore, this study was carried out to identify the following objectives:

- a) To analyse the perceptions of language teachers and parents' involvement in the integration of narrative writing modules, online learning platforms and mobile learning environments in nurturing narrative writing skills
- b) To analyse the challenges of language teachers and parents' involvement in the integration of narrative writing modules, online learning platforms and mobile learning environments in nurturing narrative writing skills

After identifying the research objectives, the following research questions were created:

- a) What are the perceptions and challenges by language teachers of using narrative writing modules, online learning platforms and mobile learning in nurturing narrative writing skills?
- b) What are the perceptions and challenges by parents of using narrative writing modules, online learning platforms and mobile learning in nurturing narrative writing skills?

Overall, this study aims to investigate the usefulness of using an appropriate writing module, online learning platform, and mobile learning environment to enhance the writing abilities of upper-secondary students in Malaysia. Thus, perceptions from language teachers and parents are needed to bring changes to the Malaysian education system and nurture writing abilities among students using technologies.

## **Literature Review**

### **Benefits of online learning platform integration in writing development**

The usage of online learning platforms gained momentum in Malaysia during the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, even though teachers and parents faced several problems as the usage of online platforms was at the beginning stage. Besides that, before COVID-19, the usage of online platforms was rare in Malaysian national schools. However, after the declaration of the endemic, when the schools are reopened as usual, the usage of online learning platforms is getting less. This happens due to various factors. Consequently, continuous motivation is provided by the researcher for teachers and parents to use online learning platforms in the teaching and learning process, as it has numerous benefits. Thus, teachers would need to use technology resources to teach writing skills and arouse students' attention. Besides that, applying technology tools would motivate students to complete their exercises (Tanrikulu, 2022). Teachers are encouraged to use new teaching approaches to teach writing skills rather than conventional teaching approaches.

Desa et al., (2019) discovered that using an online learning platform has a positive impact on improving students' subject-verb-agreement instruction. Yunus et al., (2019) carried out their research to determine how far the use of online learning platforms could foster writing essays. The results showed that using an online learning platform increased the number of correct written sentences and strengthened students' paragraph writing to form an essay appropriately. Apart from that, Shafie and Mahadi (2019), as well as Shazali et al., (2019), conducted research to identify the usefulness of online learning platforms. The results of both studies indicated that using online learning platforms had a positive impact on constructing proper sentences, organisation or paragraph writing, as well as practising grammar and vocabulary activities. Additionally, students could show a positive attitude by using the technology platform to practise their writing skills.

Yuk et al., (2019) incorporated an online learning platform to enhance paragraph writing. The results from the post-test illustrated the development of their writing skills, and the findings from the questionnaire also revealed that most of the students liked using the online learning platform in their writing activities. Another study was conducted by Yuk and Yunus (2021) on using the Edmodo platform. Yuk and Yunus's (2021) study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of an online peer-feedback strategy by using the online learning platform at the pre-writing stage to improve the students' writing performance. The mean scores of the pre-test and post-test demonstrated a significant improvement in the students' writing ability. Apart from that, a study by Lim and Tan (2022) on practising descriptive writing. Lim and Tan's (2022) study aimed to investigate how students felt about the online learning platform, its features and the challenges they encountered in using it in a writing class. Lim and Tan's (2022) study showed that due to the availability of feedback and easy access to learning resources, students had favourable impressions of learning through the online learning platform.

### **Assistance of mobile learning environment in writing skills**

The Ministry of Education, through the Education Blueprint (2013-2025), highlighted the importance of technology-based teaching and learning in the schools' national curriculum (Musa, 2021). Teachers are anticipated to implement technology resources in their classroom teaching (Azar & Tan, 2020). This 21st century has opened more opportunities for educationists to plan and implement ICT-based lessons

and use technology in teaching and learning. This will help make the progression more significant and help students use resources such as media and the Internet to improve their learning (Yates et al., 2021). Besides that, technology has affected parents positively as they can monitor their children's progress virtually. Technology has helped grow e-learning, mobile and distance learning (Karim et al., 2020). There are several benefits of implementing mobile learning in the current education system. In Malaysia, the adoption of m-learning has been gaining momentum in recent years rapidly (Bujang et al., (2020). Most researchers (Abd Samad et al., 2021; Azar & Tan, 2020; Ng et al., 2020) remarked that there are some advantages provided by m-learning. Implementing m-learning in the present context is beneficial as it reduces the use of lecture halls, tutorials and classrooms. Henceforth, students do not need to bring their materials because they are online and can be accessed anywhere, anytime.

Some studies were conducted in Malaysia about using m-learning to teach writing skills to students. Some studies have been conducted in the Malaysian context about using m-learning to teach writing skills at primary, secondary, post-secondary, and tertiary levels. However, as mobile technology is a new teaching platform in the Malaysian context, many studies in Malaysia focus on tertiary levels compared to Malaysia's National Secondary and Primary Schools. Abd Karim et al., (2020) conducted research with which the purpose was to analyse the application of m-learning technologies through mind mapping applications for augmenting writing performance among students from Malaysian universities. The study results showed that the students had positive feedback regarding their writing skills background, mobile technologies application background, and mind mapping applications background. Moreover, Ng et al., (2020) conducted another study. The study aimed to examine a guided learning approach towards mobile devices and explore the performance of language students who were guided in the usage. The results revealed that students who received guided language activities by utilising mobile devices had higher levels of language performance than control group students. The findings could help the researcher carefully plan all the writing activities so that the students can practise writing correctly.

Besides that, Stalin and Tan (2020) conducted their study to examine the implementation of Snapchat to enhance primary school English as a Second Language (ESL) students' sentence creation of personal information through pre-writing and post-writing assessments. The outcomes illustrated that most students improved sufficiently in writing simple sentences of personal information by using the Snapchat application on mobile devices. Stalin and Tan's (2020) study disclosed that students could use mobile devices to practise different types of sentences. Furthermore, Abd Karim et al., (2021) conducted research in which the study aimed to analyse the application of m-learning technologies through mind mapping applications for augmenting writing performance at Malaysian universities. The results of the study showed that the students had positive feedback regarding their writing skills background, mobile technologies application background, and mind mapping applications background.

### **The usefulness of writing module incorporation in nurturing writing skills**

Abdelmohsen et al., (2020) investigated the usefulness of developing a writing module to enhance students' writing ability. The findings revealed that students with the writing module progressed tremendously in their post-test compared to the control group. Moreover, a few themes are applied in the writing module to enable students to practise narrative writing skills. Students cannot improve their narrative writing skills without proper guidelines and themes. This is because Suhaimi et al., (2019) research included a narrative writing theme to enable students to improve their narrative writing skills, and doing so showed a positive impact.

Another study was conducted by Syam (2020) to investigate the need to develop a writing module to enable the participants to progress in their writing skills. The Analyse, Design, Develop, Implement, and Evaluate (ADDIE) model was used to create the writing module. The module results indicated that it was created appropriately with 75 per cent of the students fully agreed, and 25 per cent agreed with the materials accessible in the module. Moreover, when developing a writing module, creators would need to use the proper instructional model to implement the module accordingly with the students. This would enable the students to follow the instructions to practise their writing skills.

Abdelmohsen (2020) conducted a study similar to Syam's (2020), using the ADDIE model as a guideline for preparing a writing module. Abdelmohsen's (2020) study aimed to create and evaluate a module to improve students' writing, cooperation, and critical thinking (2C). The results showed that the students' mean scores on the pre-test and post-test differed statistically significantly. It was also discovered that the module had strong reliability and validity.

In Malaysia according to Yunus et al., (2020) conducted a study to identify the usefulness of incorporating a writing module to teach writing skills to students at the primary level in Malaysia. The assessment results revealed that the use of 'The Write Stuff' was useful to promote fun and active learning and enhance students' collaborative participation and dedication in completing the tasks at hand. Furthermore, another study was conducted by Yunus et al., Singh (2021). Their study indicated that to create a writing module, researchers or creators of the writing module would need to include the element of creativity, as students in Malaysia cannot construct their essays by including the element of creativity. It made their essays to be less interesting. Including the element of creativity in writing modules could be a form of guideline for the teachers to emphasise the importance of creative writing for the students in Malaysia.

After identifying the past studies, the researcher identified the gaps between the previous studies and the present study. While the incorporation of technology in writing instruction has gained momentum globally, Malaysian teachers', as well as parents' perceptions and practices remain inadequate in Malaysian National Secondary Schools in the following aspects, such as the need for technology efficacy, adapting learning technologies in writing skills, the role of technology in providing real-time feedback and socio-economic factors. Previous studies focused on general technology use in students' contexts but not on the need for technology efficacy and adapting learning technologies, specifically in writing skills, for language teachers and parents. Additionally, more future studies could be carried out with the language teachers and parents in Malaysia to get their perceptions on implementing online learning platforms in developing writing skills in Malaysian National Secondary Schools. Moreover, there is a gap in the socio-economic factors from the previous research, which did not thoroughly investigate how socio-economic factors intersect with technology self-efficacy and adaptive learning technologies with language teachers and parents.

Besides that, current literature mainly focuses on implementing technology in educational settings. There is a lack of teachers' and parents' perceptions of integrating a writing module, an online learning platform, and a mobile learning environment in terms of writing skills. Thus, this study addresses this gap by investigating the perceptions of teachers and parents in Malaysia concerning the perceptions and challenges associated with integrating technology into writing instruction. By identifying these aspects, the study intends to inform policymakers, educational technologists, and teachers to develop targeted interventions and support mechanisms to promote the effective use of technology to improve writing skills for Malaysian students.

## **Methods**

### **Research design**

A qualitative research method was applied in this study to identify the participants' perceptions of the usefulness of the narrative writing module, online learning platform and the importance of mobile learning. This study followed a survey research design to explore teachers' and parents' perceptions and challenges regarding the usefulness of writing modules, online learning platforms, and mobile learning.

### **Sampling**

A purposive sampling method was implemented in this study to obtain the findings from the language teachers. Three language teachers from two different schools teaching Form 4 English subject in Malaysia were chosen. They have different teaching experiences in terms of years of service. One of them is a paper evaluator of Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) English 1119/1 in Malaysia, another teacher is the Head of the English Department, and the third teacher has been teaching the English subject for 25 years. Besides that, the convenience sampling method was used to choose 12 students' parents from

the two schools. A qualitative research method design was employed in this study, as shown in Table 1:

**Table 1**

*Qualitative research method paradigm*

Method	Instrument	Data Analysis Technique	Participant
Qualitative approach	Semi-structure interview	Determined themes	3 language teachers and 12 parents

Furthermore, Table 2 and Table 3 show the participants' information. Their identity would not be revealed due to ethical considerations. Hence, participants' anonymity and confidentiality were sustained by using a coding technique. The three language teachers were coded as Language Teacher 1 to Language Teacher 3, while the 12 parents were coded as Parent 1 to Parent 12.

**Table 2**

*Participant demographics (language teachers)*

Language Teacher	Education Level	Teaching Experience (English)
Language Teacher 1	Bachelor's Degree	20
Language Teacher 2	Bachelor's Degree	23
Language Teacher 3	Bachelor's Degree Master's Degree	25

**Table 3**

*Participant demographics (parents)*

Parent	Age	Occupation
Parent 1 from Group 1	45	Teacher
Parent 2 from Group 2	49	Teacher
Parent 3 from Group 3	54	Manager
Parent 4 from Group 4	49	Executive Officer
Parent 5 from Group 5	56	Teacher
Parent 6 from Group 6	47	Technician
Parent 7 from Group 7	42	Housewife
Parent 8 from Group 8	48	Lecturer
Parent 9 from Group 9	45	Technician
Parent 10 from Group 10	51	Housewife
Parent 11 from Group 11	45	Clerk
Parent 12 from Group 12	50	Teacher

## Research instrument

Two sets of interview questions were prepared by the researcher in this study. The first was for interviewing the language teachers, and the second was for the parents. 16 and 10 questions were prepared for the language teachers and parents, respectively. The questions were created based on the

research questions in this study. Therefore, the questions were based on the usefulness of the narrative writing module, online learning platform and mobile learning and the need for parental involvement.

### **Data collection methods**

Before conducting the interview session, some related past studies (Kanapathipillai & Narayanan, 2021; Laili & Muflihah, 2020; Siddek & Ismail, 2021; Stalin & Tan, 2020) were analysed and evaluated to construct the interview questions to be relevant to the present study. After preparing the interview questions, the researcher requested three qualitative experts to evaluate the interview questions. Upon feedback provided by the three qualitative experts, necessary changes were made to the interview questions before conducting the interview. After the final confirmation of the interview questions, the interview sessions were conducted with the participants. The interview sessions were conducted separately for the language teachers and parents using Google Meet. All the participants were requested to attend the interview session individually. The purpose of individual interviews with the participants was to enable the researcher to gather more input. Each interview session was conducted for 20 minutes.

### **Interview protocol development phases**

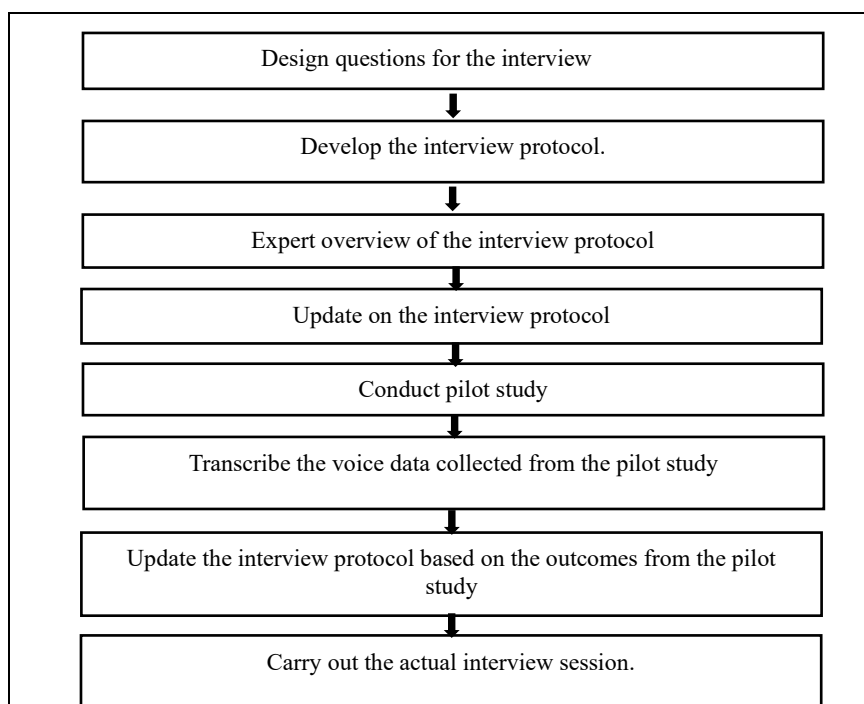
The qualitative research method was chosen for data collection and analysis to investigate the usefulness of narrative writing modules, online learning platforms and mobile learning and the perceptions and challenges that language teachers and parents face in this study. The data was collected using the qualitative research method in this study to receive in-depth feedback from both language teachers and parents on the importance of implementing technology and a writing module at the Malaysian National Secondary Schools. The data would be essential to bring changes for the language teachers to teach writing skills to Malaysian National Secondary students. For context purposes, an interview was selected as an approach to data collection. The progress of the interview protocol included the design, development, and conduct of the interview, as displayed in Figure 1.

The first phase would be the creation of interview questions. The interview questions were created based on the explanation by Roberts (2020), in which the questions created would need to answer the research questions encompassing the explorations that were associated with the objective not only to collect information but also to emphasise the actions. The set of questions was developed to answer the research questions in this study. The interview questions were created based on McNamara (2017), in which the phrases of the interview questions were planned to be open-ended and neutral, and one question would be asked at one time. Moreover, the sequence of the questions was also based on McNamara (2017).

After developing the questions, the second phase was the interview protocol. The interview protocol was created based on suggestions by Castillo-Montoya (2016), Creswell and Poth (2017), as well as Jacob and Furgerson (2012). The interview protocol was implemented as the main guide in each interview session with the participants. The next step was requesting the qualitative expert reviewers to check the interview questions. Three qualitative expert reviewers checked the interview questions. Besides that, the questions were evaluated by peer reviewers. Two language teachers who did not participate in the study helped check the interview questions. Based on the qualitative expert and peer reviewers, some changes were made before the data were collected. The changes were in the interview questions' clarity and wording. Lastly, a pilot test was conducted to identify the questions' clarity before the interview.

**Figure 1**

*Phases of interview protocol development and validation*



The purpose of identifying and applying a proper interview protocol was to clearly define the objectives and goals of the interview. Therefore, the researchers could carefully select the criteria for conducting an interview. In this study, the interview was conducted with the language teachers and parents. Moreover, the interview guide was used in this study to enable the researcher to use appropriate interview questions that could be asked to solicit information that would be relevant to the study. The questions for the interview were developed based on the theories and models discussed in this study, the pilot study of interview results, the careful synthesis of the literature review, the discussion with the supervisory committee, and the expert reviewers' feedback. Qualitative expert reviewers checked the interview questions. These qualitative reviewers possess more than 10 years of teaching experience. The purpose of requesting more than one party to evaluate the interview question was to ensure the validity of the questions to answer the research questions. Besides that, the researcher did this to avoid bias in reviewing the questions. Nevertheless, the researcher identified limitations in this study, as only three language teachers and 12 parents were interviewed from the two schools. Other than that, there could be more open-ended questions to gauge more responses from the language teachers and parents.

The interview guide of this study encompassed two main sections, namely, demographic information of the participants and open-ended questions. The demographic questions included the participants' background information related to their family (age, education level and occupation of the family members). The second part of the interview guide included open-ended and semi-structured questions on the needs of narrative writing module, online learning platforms and mobile learning, and language teachers' and parents' perceptions and challenges of applying different approaches in nurturing narrative writing skills.

Before conducting the interview session with the participants, arranging the schedule, location and technology requirements was pertinent. In this study, all participants were given the appropriate schedule and the Google Meet link to join the interview. During the interview session, the interview was recorded, and notes were taken.

## **Data analysing methods**

After the interview sessions with the participants were completed, the outcomes were analysed based on the determined themes. The themes determined from the interview outcomes were identified using the NVivo software version 12. The sub-codes and codes were identified first before finding the main themes from the interview outcomes from both language teachers and parents.

## **Findings and Discussions**

The extracts from the interview were transcribed verbatim. The participants provided their responses and the responses. Sixteen interview questions for the language teachers and 10 questions for the parents were constructed. Three language teachers and 12 parents were interviewed to obtain their responses. After the interview sessions, the responses were transcribed, and the outcomes were divided into a few common themes.

### **Findings from the Language Teachers**

#### **Needs of the narrative writing module**

The language teachers gave feedback that it was a good start for implementing prepared materials with appropriate themes for writing narrative essays. This shows that the teachers could follow it rather than teach the students without any sources via technology. Abdelmohsen et al. (2020) and Syam (2020) indicated that writing modules enabled students to improve their writing skills. Moreover, Suhaimi et al. (2019) noted that creating a narrative module with appropriate themes is significant because it helps students practise narrative writing with proper themes or topics. This allows the students to choose their favourite topics to make their story more engaging, and it would create a positive impact on students, letting them know that writing a story is not a difficult task.

Furthermore, the language teachers indicated that students would need proper instructions and some examples to be followed, and the narrative writing activities could be divided according to their level to receive better knowledge. This was acknowledged by Language Teacher 1 and Language Teacher 2. They explained:

*I asked my students, and they responded well. They found it was helpful. However, they said the instructions for each activity should be longer so that they can follow them to complete their tasks. It would need more extended instruction but not too long. Examples could be provided for them.*  
(Language Teacher 1)

*I suggest the researcher prepare the module according to students' beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels. This is only my suggestion for improvement.*  
(Language Teacher 2)

Apart from that, using a writing module would assist students in being focused on each element of narrative writing skills compared to classroom activities, as teachers could not drill all the aspects before students write their essays. Hence, using the module enabled students to slowly understand each aspect of narrative writing skills, such as learning to differentiate between main ideas and plot elements. Aside from that, it would be pertinent for the students to learn how to use proper grammar and vocabulary features. Using the module was vital as students would be able to know the step-by-step guidelines to nurture them to write their narrative writing skills. In addition, when teachers use technology to train their writing skills, they would need to provide writing materials or modules so that students would not feel bored using technology to practise their writing skills (Abdelmohsen et al., 2020).

### **The usefulness of online learning platform**

The three language teachers mentioned that they would need to follow the students' trends in the teaching and learning process. Henceforth, using an online learning platform was easy, convenient and fun for the students. Besides that, the classroom activities were insufficient for the students to improve their narrative skills. This is because they would need prolonged guidance to arouse their interest in improving their narrative writing skills. Moreover, if they face problems in their learning process, they can ask their teachers or friends immediately, compared to conventional teaching methods (Fansury et al., 2020). They specified that:

*The students could apply the knowledge they had learnt in the following month's examination. They found it interesting and did not need to drag themselves to join the Google Classroom daily. The only limitation was that they did not have time, and it was difficult to gather the group members as everyone was busy with tasks. If they could gather, they could finish their worksheets without any problem.*

(Language Teacher 1)

*Whenever I entered the class, when I asked: "How is your treatment?" the students said they could follow the instructions to complete their worksheets. They were happy to use Google Classroom via mobile devices to learn narrative writing skills as they would sit for their SPM next year. They learned more through the activities. When I observed their work, I could see they were doing their tasks accordingly, even though they tended to make mistakes. Before the treatment, they had a problem identifying the main ideas and plot, but after the treatment, they could finally differentiate the main ideas and plot, even the weak ones.*

(Language Teacher 3)

### **Advantages of mobile devices in the writing process**

The three language teachers revealed that using mobile devices to teach students writing skills was essential, as students preferred using mobile devices to write their essays. Furthermore, using mobile devices was helpful as they could resolve their problems. The students could carry out their learning process anytime and anywhere. They could also discuss and collaborate with their members for narrative writing activities. Additionally, mobile devices could be a good platform for practising writing for low-confident students. Their views were supported by the previous studies by Jassim and Dzakiria (2019) and by Naim et al., (2020). According to the language teachers,

*I think the main reason the students liked using the mobile device was because it was easy to use their gadgets. The second reason is that they prefer typing with their peers nowadays. We had to follow their style as long as knowledge would be delivered to them.*

(Language Teacher 1)

*I would say that using mobile devices could be a good platform for students who are very shy to contribute ideas in classrooms. Therefore, by using technology, they might not feel neglected, and they have room to communicate and collaborate with their friends virtually.*

(Language Teacher 3)

### **Needs of parents' involvement**

The teachers welcomed the parents' involvement in online learning platforms as it would make them alert of their children's development in narrative writing skills. It would help them to guide their children accordingly by giving support and sending them for extra coaching classes if their children were weak in writing skills (Annamalai, 2021). In addition, students would fear utilising their technology platform for other purposes when their parents were involved. However, parents would not provide any negative

comments on online learning platforms when monitoring their children's progress (Bhamani, et al., 2020; Kanapathipillai & Narayanan, 2021). They elaborated that:

*Parents could be involved to see their children's progress, but not too much of their involvement could be done, such as maybe one or two times a week to not burden them.*  
(Language Teacher 1)

*I could say that parents would need to be involved, too. This is because nowadays, everyone is considered technology-savvy or has their own mobile devices, so it would be better to involve the parents. They could help and motivate their children to do better, or students would fear that they could not use their gadgets properly. However, parents should not provide unnecessary comments, which could cause problems.*  
(Language Teacher 2)

*I think using technology platforms was one of the good ways to foster their narrative writing. Parents' involvement would be needed, for sure, as it helped improve the students' writing skills, and the students would be more serious about doing their tasks using the technology platform.*  
(Language Teacher 3)

### **Challenges of using technology tools**

The language teachers mentioned the experiences of utilising technology resources to teach narrative writing skills to the students. Before the treatment, they had felt reluctant to apply technologies as there were no proper writing modules and instructions. They also faced technical issues and a weak Internet connection. After participating in the treatment in this study, they managed to use the writing module and followed the instructions to guide their students. Tze Pheng et al., (2021) explained that proper guidance on using technology and adequate writing materials would enable teachers to integrate them into their teaching process to teach writing skills. However, they requested continuous technical support to enable them to utilise technology in teaching writing skills. This means that technology implementation in the education field is growing. Therefore, language teachers need to provide appropriate educational and technological tools, resources, and facilities for the delivery of lessons and training to utilise technology resources (Chun & Yunus, 2023). Besides that, they will need a stable Internet connection to observe and evaluate students' writing exercises in the future. This finding is supported by Ng and Yunus (2021), who emphasised that teachers need proper technology facilities to facilitate their students' using technology.

*I could take part in the treatment phase without any hustle due to the proper instructions, which were already included in the narrative writing module.*  
(Language Teacher 1)

*The only problem I encountered was the weak Internet connection, which prevented me from observing my students' work at night.*  
(Language Teacher 2)

*In my opinion, using a created writing module to guide students was essential. It helped me to provide more writing activities appropriately, and I did not need to think of preparing additional materials for my students.*  
(Language Teacher 3)

### **Findings from the parents**

#### **The usefulness of online learning platform**

Most parents stated that students were keen on using their new technology platform in the learning process. Applying it to narrative writing skills would be useful and interesting rather than using long-established teaching and learning pedagogies (Senin et al., 2021). In addition, using technology

platforms enabled students to collaborate with their group members (Agaton & Cueto, 2021; Azlan & Yunus, 2020). According to the parents,

*It is essential to use technology platforms. I could say it is the students' basic necessities. It would be easy to connect with their friends to carry out their discussion.*

(Parent 2)

*I think this application helps all the students to share their ideas and find more information very quickly to help them write their essays. It is easy, too, when compared with the old method. Now, everyone is online, and they are able to have discussions with their friends, too.*

(Parent 5)

### **Advantages of mobile devices in the writing process**

The parents elucidated that the students' use of mobile devices in the current context of the learning process would be important and beneficial. This helped them to proceed with learning anytime and anywhere. It was quicker for the students to gain knowledge when compared with conventional methods, and it was very easy for them to find information if they were unsure or had any difficulties in their writing process. This is supported by Chen et al., (2019). The parents mentioned that:

*The mobile device really helped my son as it could save his time, and there was no need to meet face-to-face when compared with traditional methods. It would be a plus point to use technology tools.*

(Parent 1)

*I could see that using technology platforms could create independent learning as the students could use their phones to search for anything related to their studies.*

(Parent 9)

### **Benefits of parents' involvement**

Most parents agreed that they could be given an opportunity to join the online learning lessons to observe their children's short-term and long-term progress. Aside from that, it helped them to keep track of their children's activities when using the technologies (Gonzalez-DeHass et al., 2022). Moreover, they could help their children to provide ideas when writing, which is supported by Bhamani et al., (2020). However, parents should avoid making any negative comments during the online learning process. They remarked that:

*I think if parents are giving good comments, then yes, I do agree that they need to participate, but they should not give any back comments as this will demotivate them. Thus, I think parents could be involved in seeing their children's progress, grades, and activities on technology platforms.*

(Parent 3)

*Parents could join because it was beneficial. Parents could be included to see their children's progress. If there are any problems, parents can help them. Nevertheless, parents could only provide relevant comments and not hurt the students or their work. It is essential to help and motivate them.*

(Parent 7)

### **Challenges of parents' involvement**

Most parents revealed that time was their only main challenge in monitoring their children's activities using the technology platform. Other than that, they had difficulties providing feedback to their children as they were worried that they might provide the wrong information related to the narrative essays. Some parents stated that their English proficiency was insufficient to guide them (Tajuddin et al., 2022). They explained that:

*I would say the limitation of the time is a challenge. We are working, so we do not have time, so I check my daughter's work at night.*

(Parent 10)

*I do not think I have any challenges, as my daughter was able to do her work. I was able to provide her with enough data connection. The only thing is, sometimes, I could not help as I am not very good at English.*

(Parent 11)

### **Future implementation of writing skills**

Most parents remarked that a grading system could be included, and technologies could be utilised to teach other types of writing skills. Additionally, teachers could print all the activities and essays to help them revise (Abidah, 2023). Moreover, teachers could include some interactive features when teaching the writing process for the students, such as quizzes and games (Hu et al., 2021). Parents also indicated that technologies could be incorporated into classroom teaching. According to them,

*More writing modules could be created for other types of writing skills. That is my opinion. Besides that, more time could be allocated, and more activities could be created.*

(Parent 4)

*In my opinion, teachers could add more exercises in the form of quizzes. In addition, the results of their essays could be displayed or pasted in their exercise books. This is because technology is very advanced, but sometimes errors might happen, and data might be lost; thus, their essays and discussion could be printed or come with other alternatives. Marking assessment tools could be available, too.*

(Parent 12)

Moreover, teachers could include some interactive features when teaching the writing process to the students, such as quizzes and games. According to Parent 5,

*In my opinion, a variety of worksheets could be used. Games and quizzes could also be included.*

(Parent 5)

*Parents indicated that technologies could be incorporated into classroom teaching. In my opinion, I would recommend that our government allow students to use technology devices in their classrooms.*

*It helps them to do better, and they would do better in their examinations.*

(Parent 6)

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Based on the outcomes of this current study, it can be determined that the Ministry of Education (MOE), policymakers and language teachers could implement different teaching approaches to nurture writing abilities for upper secondary students in Malaysia before they sit for their public examination which is Sijil Peperiksaan Malaysia (SPM) in Form 5. Moreover, parents could be included in the online learning platform to regularly monitor their children's progress from anywhere and anytime. It elucidated that students in this digital era are technology-savvy; consequently, they could be allowed to practise learning the writing elements by implementing technology resources. It enabled them to do continuous practices at home with supervision from their parents. Moreover, technology enables students to obtain more rightful information in a short time, which could assist in overcoming their fear of writing skills. Therefore, language teachers must occasionally consider changing their teaching approaches to meet students' needs.

In addition, policymakers and language teachers could deliberate on designing proper writing materials or writing modules that could be integrated into the online learning platform. It explained that using proper writing resources is essential to enable students to practise improving writing skills appropriately. Parents could be included in the online learning platform, which offers numerous benefits to students and teachers. This is because parents can provide extra support and inspiration to their children by participating in their online learning platform. They could improve communication between teachers and students. Parents could also easily discuss with teachers to identify their children's development in writing skills. Another essential benefit of integrating parents into the online platform is increased accountability. When parents are involved in the online learning process, students are more likely to stay focused, and parents are better able to support their children's academic responsibilities.

Further studies would need to be conducted to investigate the possibility of designing appropriate writing materials for students during the online learning sessions, and there could be a proper grading system when using the online learning platform through the mobile application. The grading system would enable the parents to monitor their children's development in writing skills. Educational technologists need to consider creating an appropriate mobile writing application for language teachers, students and parents. Creating a proper mobile writing application for Malaysian Secondary Schools with writing materials and a grading system would enable teachers to continue their lessons after school hours. By doing so, students can practise more at their own pace with their peers, and parents can keep track of their children's development and grades.

Lastly, future researchers can conduct more studies in Malaysian Secondary National Schools to identify perceptions of technology self-efficacy for improving writing skills among students and language teachers. Moreover, adaptive learning technologies are fundamental; therefore, future researchers can conduct more studies to identify students' difficulties in implementing technologies in writing skills based on their performance, preferences and learning needs. Technology platforms are more affordable than conventional methods. The socio-economic impact of using technology to improve writing skills in Malaysia is pertinent in the future. However, addressing the challenges of accessibility, training, and quality is important to ensure that technology serves as a tool for education. By doing so, the researchers can carry out their studies to identify the problems faced by teachers, students, and parents from rural areas and reduce the challenges of utilising technology in education.

### **Acknowledgement**

I am immensely grateful to my main supervisor (Dr Mariam Mohamad) and co-supervisor (Ts. Dr. Mageswaran Sanmugam), as well as my external consultant (Asst. Prof. Dr. Hooi Chee Mei) for providing helpful feedback to enable me to create interview questions for the language teachers and parents. This has helped me to identify their perceptions of utilising different teaching approaches to teach narrative writing skills at Malaysian Secondary National Schools.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

### **Author Contribution Statement**

All authors contributed to the conception, design, writing and revision of the manuscript.

### **Funding**

This research received no external funding.

### **Ethics Statements**

This journal adheres to the ethical standards set by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

### **References**

- Abdelmohsen, M. M. (2020). The development and validation of a module on enhancing students' critical thinking, collaboration and writing skills. *SAR Journal-Science and Research*, 3(4), 166-177.
- Abdelmohsen, M. M., Abdullah, R., & Azam, Y. (2020). The development of writing module on enhancing the writing skills of Omani general foundation program students. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 19(9), 363-381.
- Abd Karim, R., Adnan, A. H. M., Abu, A. G., Idris, N., & Ismail, I. (2021). Mobile-assisted Mind Mapping (MAMMAT) as a Tool to Support University Students' Argumentative Writing. *International Journal of Interactive Mobile Technologies*, 15(5), 43-53.
- Abd Karim, R., Adnan, A. H. M., Tahir, M. H. M., Adam, M. H. M., Idris, N., & Ismail, I. (2020). The application of mobile learning technologies at Malaysian universities through mind mapping apps for augmenting writing performance. *Advances in Science, Technology & Engineering Systems Journal*, 5(3), 510-517.
- Abd Samad, M. R., Ihsan, Z. H., & Khalid, F. (2021). The use of mobile learning in teaching and learning session during the Covid-19 pandemic in Malaysia. *Journal of Contemporary Social Science and Education Studies (JOCSES)*, 1(2), 46-65.
- Abidah, K. H. (2023). Technology goes to classroom: Learning media application possibilities for writing. *SAGA: Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, 4(1), 65-76.
- Abulhul, Z. (2021). Teaching strategies for enhancing student's learning. *Journal of Practical Studies in Education*, 2(3), 1-4.
- Agaton, C. B., & Cueto, L. J. (2021). Learning at home: Parents' lived experiences on distance learning during COVID-19 pandemic in the Philippines. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education*, 10(3), 901-911.
- Annamalai, N. (2021). Online learning during COVID-19 Pandemic. Are Malaysian high school students ready? *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities*, 29(3), 1571-1590.
- Azar, A. S., & Tan, N. H. I. (2020). The application of ICT techs (mobile-assisted language learning, gamification, and virtual reality) in teaching English for secondary school students in Malaysia during Covid-19 pandemic. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 8(11C), 55-63.
- Azlan, N. A. B., & Yunus, M. M. (2020). Undergraduates student perceptions of social networking sites to improve English writing skills in Malaysia. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 19(3), 329-351.
- Bhamani, S., Makhdoom, A. Z., Bharuchi, V., Ali, N., Kaleem, S., & Ahmed, D. (2020). Home learning in times of COVID: Experiences of parents. *Journal of education and educational development*, 7(1), 9-26.
- Bujang, S. D. A., Selamat, A., Krejcar, O., Maresova, P., & Nguyen, N. T. (2020). Digital learning demand for future education 4.0—Case studies at Malaysia education institutions. *Informatics*, 7(2), Article 13.

- Castillo-Montoya, M. (2016). Preparing for interview research: The interview protocol refinement framework. *The Qualitative Report*, 21(5), 811-831.
- Chen, Y., Mayall, H. J., York, C. S., & Smith, T. J. (2019). Parental perception and English learners' mobile-assisted language learning: An ethnographic case study from a technology-based funds of knowledge approach. *Learning, Culture and Social Interaction*, 22, Article 100325.
- Chun, T. W., & Yunus, M. M. (2023). Factors affecting Malaysian ESL teachers' behavioral intentions for technology use in the post-COVID-19 era. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14, Article 1127272.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. (2017). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage Publications.
- Desa, A. F. M., Embi, M. A., & Hashim, H. (2019). The effects of Instagram-based activities. *Development of Children*, 23(3), 34-41.
- Fansury, A. H., Januarty, R., & Ali Wira Rahman, S. (2020). Digital content for millennial generations: Teaching the English foreign language learner on COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Southwest Jiaotong University*, 55(3), 1-13.
- Gonzalez-DeHass, A. R., Willems, P. P., Powers, J. R., & Musgrove, A. T. (2022). Parental involvement in supporting students' digital learning. *Educational Psychologist*, 57(4), 281-294.
- Herwin, H., & Dahalan, S. C. (2022). Technological integration factors in parental involvement during distance learning. *International Journal of Information and Education Technology*, 12(7), 637-642.
- Hu, X., Chiu, M. M., Leung, W. M. V., & Yelland, N. (2021). Technology integration for young children during COVID-19: Towards future online teaching. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 52(4), 1513-1537.
- Jacob, S. A., & Furgerson, S. P. (2012). Writing interview protocols and conducting interviews: Tips for students new to the field of qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, 17, 1-10.
- Jassim, L. L., & Dzakiria, H. (2019). A literature review on the impact of games on learning English vocabulary to children. *International Journal of Language and Literary Studies*, 1(1), 47-53.
- Kanapathipillai, K., & Narayanan, S. (2021). The relationship between online learning and student's performance in the rural areas in Malaysia-the mediating role of Parent's support. *European Journal of Education Studies*, 8(11), 64-86.
- Karim, R. A., Adnan, A. H. M., Salim, M. S. A. M., Kamarudin, S., & Zaidi, A. (2020). Education innovations through mobile learning technologies for the Industry 4.0 readiness of tertiary students in Malaysia. *IOP Conference Series: Materials Science and Engineering, UK*, 917(1), Article 012022.
- Katamba, C. V. (2020). Teachers' perceptions in implementing technologies in language teaching and learning. *Acuity: Journal of English Language Pedagogy, Literature and Culture*, 5(2), 123-136.
- Laili, E. N., & Muflihah, T. (2020). The effectiveness of Google Classroom in teaching writing recount text for senior high schools. *Journal of Languages and Language Teaching*, 8(4), 348-359.
- Lim, S., & Tan, K. (2022). Teaching descriptive writing via Google Classroom Stream: Perception among Year 6 primary students. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 12(4), 647-657.
- McNamara, C. (2017). *General guidelines for conducting interviews*. <http://managementhelp.org/businessresearch/interviews.htm>
- Musa, S. H. (2021). Something important for special education in Malaysia. *Turkish Journal of Computer and Mathematics Education (TURCOMAT)*, 12(11), 5211-5216.

- Naim, I. A. M., Luqman, N. M. A. N., & Matmin, J. (2020). Enhancing students' writing performance in higher learning through Think-Write-Pair-Share: An experimental study. *Asian Journal of University Education*, 16(3), 255-264.
- Ng, M., & Yunus, M. M. (2021). Perceptions and challenges to ICT Use in ESL lessons among Malaysian primary teacher. *Creative Education*, 12(7), 1532-1557.
- Ng, S. F., Azlan, M. A. K., Kamal, A. N. A., & Manion, A. (2020). A quasi-experiment on using guided mobile learning interventions in ESL classrooms: Time use and academic performance. *Education and Information Technologies*, 25(6), 4699-4719.
- Rahman, A. M. A., Azmi, M. N. L., & Hassan, I. (2020). Improvement of English writing skills through blended learning among university students in Malaysia. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 8(12A), 7694-7701.
- Roberts, R. E. (2020). Qualitative interview questions: Guidance for novice researchers. *Qualitative Report*, 25(9), 3185-3203.
- Senin, M. A., Halim, H., & Ali, A. A. E. R. (2021). Online writing task for young learners during MCO: Pupils and parents responses. *Annals of the Romanian Society for Cell Biology*, 4627-4640.
- Shafie, L. A., & Mahadi, R. (2019). Instagram as a digital tool to enhance students' writing skills. *Journal of Communication in Scientific Inquiry*, 1(1), 35-42.
- Shah, S. S. (2022). Teaching and learning with technology: Effectiveness of ICT integration in schools. *Indonesian Journal of Educational Research and Technology*, 2(2), 133-140.
- Shazali, S. S., Shamsudin, Z. H., & Yunus, M. M. (2019). Instagram: A platform to develop student's writing ability. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 9(1), 88-98.
- Siddek, N. A. J., & Ismail, H. H. (2021). Understanding learners' difficulties in narrative writing among Malaysian primary learners. *Asian Journal of Research in Education and Social Sciences*, 3(2), 244-255.
- Stalin, L. T., & Tan, K. H. (2020). Use of Snapchat to enhance primary school English as second language learners in the writing of personal information. *International Journal of English Language and Literature Studies*, 9(4), 330-338.
- Suhaimi, N. D., Mohamad, M., & Yamat, H. (2019). The effects of WhatsApp in teaching narrative writing: A case study. *Humanities & Social Sciences Reviews*, 7(4), 590-602.
- Syam, A. T. (2020). Developing a writing module for the fourth-semester learners of the English department at the State Islamic Institute of Palopo. *Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, 5(1), 17-28.
- Tajuddin, J. M., Nazam, R. A. K. N., & Abu, S. D. A. S. W. (2022). Challenges of online learning faced by working parents in urban areas. *Journal of Contemporary Issues and Thought*, 12(1), 55-64.
- Tanrikulu, F. (2022). Students' perceptions about the effects of collaborative digital storytelling on writing skills. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 35(5-6), 1090-1105.
- Tengler, K., Kastner-Hauler, O., & Sabitzer, B. (2021). Enhancing computational thinking skills using robots and digital storytelling. *Proceedings of the 13<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Computer Supported Education, CSEDU, Online Streaming*, 1, 157-164.
- Tze Pheng, K., Hashim, H., & Ainil Sulaiman, N. (2021). The use of technology in teaching of writing among Malaysian ESL secondary school teachers. *Arab World English Journal (AWEJ) Special Issue on CALL*, 7, 314-330.
- Yates, A., Starkey, L., Egerton, B., & Flueggen, F. (2021). High school students' experience of online learning during Covid-19: The influence of technology and pedagogy. *Technology, Pedagogy and Education*, 30(1), 59-73.

- Yuk, A. C. K., Wui-Xin, F. W., Qin, T. P., & Yunus, M. M. (2019). Using PaW-Modo to Enhance Paragraph Writing. *Creative Education*, 10(2), 429-442.
- Yuk, A. C. K., & Yunus, M. M. (2021). Using Peer-Modo Feedback at the Pre-Writing Stage to Improve Year 4 Pupils' Writing Performance. *Journal of Education and e-Learning Research*, 8(1), 116-124.
- Yunus, M. M., Halem, K. N., Junaidi, Y., & Suliman, A. (2020). Using “the write stuff” module to enhance the writing skills of ESL primary school students. *International Journal of English Language and Literature Studies*, 9(4), 315-329.
- Yunus, M. M., May, T. M., & Mohideen, M. B. K. (2019). Writing essays made easy with Instawrite. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 9(1), 331-344.
- Yunus, M. M., Thambirajah, V., Said, N. E. M., & Singh, C. K. S. (2021). Designing a module as a strategic solution to enhance creativity in the teaching of writing. *International Journal of English Language and Literature Studies*, 10(2), 94-104.