



MALAYSIAN JOURNAL OF LEARNING AND INSTRUCTION

<https://e-journal.uum.edu.my/index.php/mjli>

How to cite this article:

Ramasamy, Raganeswari., Mariam Mohamad., Sanmugam, Mageswaran., & Hooi Chee Mei. (2025). Effectiveness of mobile learning in narrative writing at secondary schools. *Malaysian Journal of Learning and Instruction*, 22(1), 140-156. <https://doi.org/10.32890/mjli2025.22.1.8>

EFFECTIVENESS OF MOBILE LEARNING IN NARRATIVE WRITING AT SECONDARY SCHOOLS

¹Raganeswari Ramasamy, ²Mariam Mohamad, ³Mageswaran Sanmugam
& ⁴Chee Mei, Hooi

^{1,2&3}Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia

⁴Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, Malaysia

²Corresponding author: mmohamad@usm.my

Received: 1/12/2023

Revised: 30/3/2024

Accepted: 17/10/2024

Published: 31/1/2025

ABSTRACT

Purpose – Mobile learning has several applications that can be advantageous in the field of education. They play a significant role in technology assisted learning. Employing mobile learning in teaching writing skills offers communication, collaboration, and fun learning. It also creates a conducive learning environment among the students. Integration of mobile learning in teaching writing skills allows educators and students to enter the digital era, as the technology used in teaching and learning writing skills via mobile learning is more effective than the conventional approach.

Methodology – The mixed-method research design was used to analyse the effectiveness of integrating mobile learning for Form 4 students in Malaysia when they are learning narrative writing skills. A pre-test and a post-test were used to gather quantitative data, while participant observation and focus group interviews were used to collective qualitative data.

Findings – The findings elucidated that the students were able to develop their narrative writing skills by using mobile learning as there was an improvement in the post-test when compared with the pre-test.

Significance – This study has recommended that mobile learning should be included in teaching various types of writing skills in Malaysian national schools, and appropriate writing materials could be created via mobile learning. Future researchers would need to create a specific writing application which can be employed via mobile learning to enable students to improve in their overall writing skills. This could be a non-conventional teaching method that could be used in the future.

Keywords: Form 4 students, mobile learning, narrative writing skills, non-conventional teaching method, technology assisted learning.

INTRODUCTION

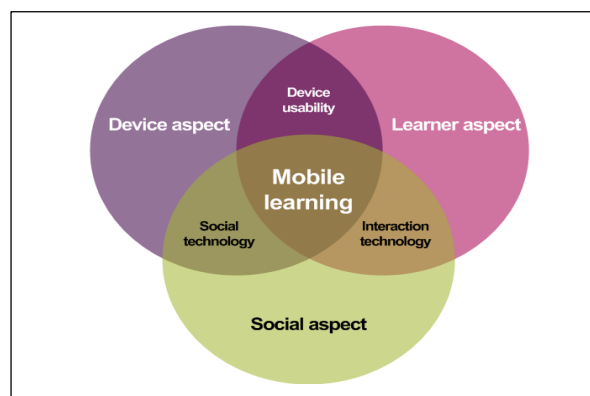
English is the most widely spoken language all over the world and it has been used in Malaysia for many decades. As a matter of fact, it has become the second official language of the nation (Hashim, 2020). Nearly all families incorporate English in their daily life to carry out their routines even though it is not the first language in every household. Apart from that, Aziz and Kashinathan (2021) have pointed out that the Malaysian government has stressed the importance of learning the English language competently among its citizens. Consequently, there are many programs that have been created in Malaysia to improve the proficiency level of the English language among the students (Afip et al., 2019). There are four major skills in the English language which students need to master in their school life, such as reading, speaking, listening, and writing. Nevertheless, the majority of students found that the writing skill is the most difficult skill to master and therefore, they need to be firmly guided by their language teachers (Nguyen, 2019). Students face problems in their narrative writing skills no matter whether they are from a cluster school or a normal school. Muliani et al. (2019) revealed that students had major difficulties in constructing ideas and writing a narrative essay. Students were also unable to organize their ideas in good sentences and paragraphs even though they possessed many ideas. Apart from that, the lack of ideas among students made their story less interesting. This resulted in them scoring a low mark in their narrative essays (Siddek & Ismail, 2021).

Moreover, students were unable to develop an essential storyline to write the narrative essay due to their lack of vocabulary knowledge. Vocabulary is a basic part and an important element to be learned by students (Sari & Aminatun, 2021). Vocabulary knowledge is also a benchmark for the acquisition of the other English language skills as it helps readers to comprehend the meaning of words used (Ambarwati & Mandasari, 2020). The reality on the ground is that, students in Malaysia have difficulties in language learning because the English language is their second language (Kumaran & Krish, 2021). This causes them to have difficulties in developing their storyline meaningfully and interestingly (Siddek & Ismail, 2021). Students in Malaysia demonstrate difficulties in constructing compound and complex sentences which involve dependent and independent clauses. They are even unable to construct simple sentences (Morthy & Aziz, 2020).

For this study, the Framework for the Rational Analysis of Mobile Education (FRAME) is applied. Koole (2009) instituted the FRAME model as a system to investigate the advantages, as well as the difficulties involved in planning and conveying mobile learning. Figure 1 shows the FRAME model with the essential different aspects for successful mobile learning.

Figure 1

Koole's FRAME Model (2009)



LITERATURE REVIEW

Mobile Learning

Mobile learning is the use of mobile technology to ease learning anytime and anywhere (Caudill, 2020). Playing almost the same role as other information and communication technology (ICT) devices, mobile phones make distance or virtual learning conceivable as they are open and easily accessible whenever there is the need to use them. The vast majority of users also can manage the cost of owning such devices, as well as the internet services required. As a matter of fact, mobile device users are higher in number when compared with computer or laptop users. Thus, it is significantly the best approach to integrate mobile learning in the English as a Second Language (ESL), or English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom (Al-Shehab, 2020).

Based on the study by Ansari and Khan (2020), it was found that about 90 per cent of students below 18 years old gained access to websites and mobile technology since mobile learning was viewed as generally suitable for helping them to progress in school when compared with the use of other ICT types. As a result, it supported the transition to flexible learning brought about by educational advancements. Albeit the utilization of cell phones in educating and learning has not been smooth in the past, recent technological advancements have made powerful applications easily available, such as Vlearn, Kahoot! Quizziz, Telegram, WhatsApp, and Google Classroom have been enhancing learning with straightforward, fascinating and viable substance (Kamal & Aziz, 2021). Apart from that, the interactive features which are available in mobile phones have enabled students to practice and develop their writing skills compared to the traditional writing practices in the classroom (Nazari et al., 2021).

Integration of Mobile Learning in Teaching Writing Skills

There are numerous types of mobile devices available in the digital era which could be used by students to practise their writing skills. With plenty of mobile applications waiting to be adopted, students can undergo the learning process more efficiently in the new virtual learning environment. Yunus et al. (2019) had conducted their study to explore the potential of mobile learning in teaching academic writing skills among students. The study revealed that mobile learning could be integrated into academic writing by using it with several writing methods which have shown certain pedagogical advantages when applied in the mobile learning platform. Another similar study by Jassim and Dzakiria (2019) also employed the mobile learning platform to foster student writing skills. The findings seem to suggest that mobile phones can effectively and effortlessly be applied as an educational aid to teach writing skills because mobile phones provided the appropriate stimulation to encourage students to learn writing skills.

Therefore, mobile learning has become well accepted as the fundamental platform for students to practice their writing skills during their free time with their peers even after school hours. In light of this development, the present study would like to address the following research questions:

- 1) Is there any significant effect on students' narrative writing scores in pre-test and post-test after the implementation of mobile learning in practising narrative writing skills?
- 2) Is there any significant difference on students' narrative writing scores in pre-test and post-test at two schools after the implementation of mobile learning in practising narrative writing skills?
- 3) What is the effectiveness of implementing mobile learning to practise narrative writing skills?
- 4) What are the students' perceptions of the challenges of integrating mobile learning to practise narrative writing skills?

METHODOLOGY

Sample

A convenience sampling method was employed. There were a few factors about the language teachers and students which had to be considered before they were allowed to take part in the study, such as the availability of mobile devices, whether they be android or iOS supported devices. The study treatment which involved activities from a specially prepared student module was uploaded to the Google Classroom platform on a weekly basis and the module was based on different themes. Two secondary schools in two different states were selected to participate in the study. The selection was based on the criterion that their students were using mobile devices in their daily life, and they were keen to avail themselves for this research. The sample consisted of 55 Form 4 students from two different schools in Malaysia. This study was a comparison study of a cluster school and a normal school.

Research Instruments

In this research, the students would need to improve their skills in identifying main ideas and organizing their main ideas into a few paragraphs by following the elements of a plot. Moreover, additional narrative writing practices were uploaded to the Google Classroom to enable the students to do more practice to improve in their grammar and vocabulary features that were related to writing narrative essays. Both quantitative and qualitative data were utilized in this study. For quantitative, data collection the pre-test and post-test were used while participant observation and focus group interview were used for collecting the qualitative data.

Pre-test and Post-test

In this study, the first method used to collect data was by administering the pre-test. It was conducted before the treatment. The purpose of carrying out the pre-test was to identify the students' ability to write their narrative essays individually. After the treatment, which was the use of mobile learning to learn narrative writing elements for eight weeks, the students were required to sit for their post-test to determine whether there was any improvement in their narrative writing skills. This was also done to examine whether the use of mobile learning in developing narrative writing elements in the treatment was effective among the students. Hence, the quantitative data collections were used to answer the first and second research questions in this study.

Participant Observation

The treatment of the study lasted for eight weeks. The Google Classroom group was created to enable the students from both schools to take part in an online platform. The students used the Google Classroom platform via their mobile devices to do their assignments. During this phase, the language teachers were requested to observe the students' progress and activities. Subsequently, a fieldnote checklist was created to answer the third research question. The objective of conducting the participant observation in this study was mainly to observe the students' ability to use their mobile devices to complete the assigned narrative writing activities among their group members.

Focus Group Interview

The last method to collect the data from the students was by using the focus group interview. This method was used to answer the fourth research question. The interview was carried out to ask each group about their responses on the effectiveness of mobile learning in developing narrative writing skills. There was a total of six groups for each school. Each group was given about 10 to 15 minutes to take part in the interview session via Google Meet. There were 17 interview questions.

Data Collection Procedures

The researcher had explained to the participants that in the treatment phase they would take part in the study for a total of 10 weeks. During the first week, the language teachers from both schools conducted the pre-test. After collecting their pre-test narrative essays, the language teachers marked the essays. The following weeks, from Week 2 to Week 9, the students worked in their small groups via the Google Classroom by using their mobile devices to do all the given activities. They used their mobile devices, such as the smartphone, tablet, notebook, or laptop to take part in the treatment in this study. The observation was done outside of class time via a participant observation checklist that was created to enable the language teachers from both schools to evaluate and check the students' progress and their ability to complete the given narrative activities when interacting in the Google Classroom platform within a learning environment using mobile phones. In Week 10, the students were required to sit for their post-test. After the post-test, the same language teachers marked their essays and gave the marks to the researcher. Finally, a focus group interview session was conducted among the students.

Data Analysis Procedures

In this present study, the data were collected using both quantitative and qualitative methods. A marking rubric based on the writing rubrics in Brown (2007), Jacobs et al. (1981) and Wong (1989) was created for marking purposes. The rubrics contained four elements, which were on the main idea or content, organization or plot, grammar, and vocabulary. Each element scored five marks. Therefore, the maximum mark possible was 20. Besides that, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 was utilized to obtain the quantitative results. On top of that, the paired samples t-test was used to classify the difference between the two mean scores of the same group so as to show the significant effect of using mobile learning in practicing narrative writing skills. Additionally, to test the significant differences of implementing mobile learning in practicing narrative writing skills on the samples involving two schools from different states, an independent sample t-test was conducted. The value 0.5 was set for the significance range for both essays.

On the other hand, to collect qualitative data, participant observation and a focus group interview were carried out. All the qualitative data were analyzed thematically. As there were two schools from two different states involved in this study, they were coded as School A and School B. There were six groups for School A which were coded as Group 1 to Group 6, and six groups for School B which were coded as Group 7 to Group 12. The groups were thus, coded as Group 1 to Group 12. There were 25 students from School A and they were coded as Student 1 to Student 25. In contrast, there were 30 students from School B and they were coded as Student 26 to Student 55.

In this study the themes for participant observation came from both predetermined and determined themes. The predetermined themes were identified by using the created checklist for participant observation. After that, the determined themes were identified from the field note reports which were provided by the language teachers. Field notes when observing the students' work during the treatment were taken from Week 2 to Week 9. Thereafter, the predetermined themes and determined themes were finalized. On the other hand, the determined themes were created from the outcome of the focus group interview in this study. Lastly, the themes were derived from the sub-codes and codes to identify the main themes in this study.

FINDINGS

Significant Effect and Significant Difference between the Students' Narrative Writing Scores in Pre-test and Post-test After Implementation of Mobile Learning in Practicing Narrative Writing Skills

Pre-tests and Post-tests

In this present study, the first research question was to evaluate both the students' pre-test and post-test essays from School A and School B (see Table 1).

Table 1

Scores from the Pre- and Post-tests of School A and School B

School	Mean (Upon 20)		N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
	Pre-test	Post-test			
School A	9.88	16.12	25	2.33	.47
School B	8.33	13.53	30	2.05	.41

The results showed that the students from both schools had improved in their narrative writing because there was a difference between the pre-test scores and post-test scores. The pre-test score for School A was 9.88 and post-test score was 16.12. This shows that the difference was 6.24. Nonetheless, the pre-test score for School B was 8.33 and post-test score was 13.53 with a difference of 5.20.

From Table 1, it can be seen that for School A, the students' post-test showed $M = 16.12$, and $SD = 2.04$, and the pre-test showed $M = 9.88$, and $SD = 2.33$. In contrast, for School B, the students' post-test showed $M = 13.53$, and $SD = 2.67$, and the pre-test showed $M = 8.33$, and $SD = 3.06$. Therefore, the results in Table 1 show that post-test scores were relatively higher than the pre-test scores for both schools.

Moreover, the significant mean difference between the participants' scores in the pre-test and post-test essay provides the answer to the second research question (see Table 2).

Table 2

Paired Samples T-Test Results of School A and School B

School	Mean Difference (Upon 20)	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
School A	-6.24	-14.67	24	.00
School B	-5.20	-17.06	29	.00

Note. *Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)

From Table 2, School A demonstrated that the mean difference of 6.24 between the pre-test and post-test scores was statistically significant, $(24) = 15$, $p = .00$, while for School B which showed a mean difference of 5.20 between the pre-test and post-tests' scores was statistically significant, $(29) = 17$, $p = .00$.

Tables 3 and 4 illustrate that the students' post-test scores for each aspect were comparatively higher than their pre-test scores for both schools.

Table 3

Scores of the Pre- and Post-Tests of School A (N = 25)

Pair	Dimension	Mean		Std. Deviation	
		Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test
1	Main idea	2.60	4.52	.71	.65
2	Organization	2.48	4.40	.65	.65
3	Grammar	2.32	2.32	.63	.51
4	Vocabulary	2.48	3.76	.65	.66

Table 4

Scores of the Pre- and Post-Tests of School B (N = 30)

Pair	Dimension	Mean		Std. Deviation	
		Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test
1	Main idea	2.47	3.77	.97	.73
2	Organisation	2.07	3.57	.91	.73
3	Grammar	1.77	3.03	.73	.67
4	Vocabulary	2.03	3.17	.72	.79

Paired samples t-test reveals the mean difference between the pre- and post-test' scores. Tables 5 and 6 show the SPSS version 25 output for these assessments.

Table 5

Paired Samples T-Test Results of School A

Pair	Dimension	Mean		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Pre-test	Post-test			
1	Main idea	-1.92		-12.64	24	0.00
2	Organisation	-1.92		-13.67	24	0.00
3	Grammar	-1.12		-9.33	24	0.00
4	Vocabulary	-1.28		-10.43	24	0.00

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)

Table 6

Paired Samples T-test Results of School B

Pair	Dimension	Mean		T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Pre-test	Post-test			
1	Main idea	-1.30		-10.14	29	0.00
2	Organisation	-1.50		-14.36	29	0.00
3	Grammar	-1.27		-13.32	29	0.00
4	Vocabulary	-1.13		-12.23	29	0.00

Note. * Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)

The findings show that all the mean differences between the pre-test and post-test scores for each aspect was statistically significant for School A and School B. For School A, the differences between the pre-test and post-test scores were as follows: for main idea [$t(24) = -12.64, p = .00$], for organization or plot [$t(24) = -13.67, p = .00$], for grammar [$t(24) = -9.33, p = .00$], and for vocabulary [$t(24) = -10.43, p = .00$]; while for School B, the differences between the pre-test and post-test scores were as follows: for main idea [$t(29) = -10.14, p = .00$], for organization or plot [$t(29) = -14.36, p = .00$], for grammar [$t(29) = -13.32, p = .00$], and for vocabulary [$t(29) = -12.23, p = .00$], all scores were statistically significant since the significant value, p was less than .05. The effect size was analyzed to examine the effect of the mobile learning among the students via the Google Classroom platform (see Tables 7 and 8).

Table 7

Effect Size (Test of Between-Subjects Effects)-Dependent Variable: Overall Marks of School a Post-test

Source	Type III of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	.00 ^a	000
Intercept	6496.36	1	6496.36	1549.21	.00	.99
Error	100.64	24	4.19			
Total	6597.00	25				
Corrected Total	100.64	24				

Note. a. R Squared = .000 (Adjusted R Squared = .000)

Table 8

Effect Size (Test of Between-Subjects Effects)-Dependent Variable: Overall Marks of School B Post-test

Source	Type III of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	.00 ^a	000
Intercept	5494.53	1	5494.53	768.03	.00	.96
Error	207.47	29	7.15			
Total	5702.00	30				
Corrected Total	207.47	29				

Note. a. R Squared = .000 (Adjusted R Squared = .000)

From Tables 7 and 8, it can be seen that the effect size was the result of the partial Eta squared. Note that the effect size is very large as the partial Eta is .99 for School A and .96 for School B. This means that 99 per cent for School A and 96 per cent for School B, the change in the overall marks for post-tests among the students was caused by the mobile learning via the Google Classroom platform. After each school comparison was done, data between School A and School B were compared as is shown in Table 9.

Table 9

Comparison of the Pre-test and Post-test between School A and School B

	School	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-Test	A	25	9.88	2.33	.47
Total	B	30	8.33	3.06	.56
Post-Test	A	25	16.12	2.05	.41
Total	B	30	13.53	2.67	.49

There were two types of schools selected in the current study. School A is a cluster school in a district in the state of Penang, while School B is a normal school which is located in in a district in state of Kedah. The students in School A exhibited problems in writing skills. This was shared by their language teacher, who explained that the students had a similar language background. Therefore, their language teacher proposed that they would need some continuous writing practice to improve their writing skills before they sit for the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) examinations the following year. In School B, the students' language proficiency level varied. Their language teachers were of the view that their students would need close supervision to enhance their writing abilities as they were struggling hard in

developing their writing skill, as compared to the other three language skills. As the students were weak in their writing skills, it resulted in their overall grade in English to drop drastically.

Table 9 displays the results that show that the students from both schools managed to improve in their narrative writing skills in their post-tests, but students in School A progressed better than students in School B. The mean difference for School A and School B is 6.24 and 5.20, respectively. The significant difference between the achievement scores of School A and School B in the students' narrative essays was also examined (see Table 10).

Table 10

Independent Samples of T-test of School A and School B

		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference								
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Dif.	Lower	Upper
Pre- test Total	Equal variances assumed	.41	.53	2.08	53	.043	1.55	.75	.05	3.04
	Equal variances not assumed			2.13	52.64	.038	1.55	.73	.09	3.01
Post- test Total	Equal variances assumed	.44	.51	3.96	53	.000	2.59	.65	1.28	3.90
	Equal variances not assumed			4.06	52.66	.000	2.59	.64	1.31	3.87

Table 10 shows that the overall scores for pre-test for School A ($M = 9.88$, $SD = 2.33$) were slightly higher than that of School B ($M = 8.33$, $SD = 3.05$). Similarly, the overall scores for post-test for School A ($M = 16.12$, $SD = 2.05$) were slightly higher than among the students of School B ($M = 13.53$, $SD = 2.67$). The results of the independent samples t-test were as follows: $t(53) = 3.96$, $p = .000$, 95 percent CI [1.28, 3.90]. Since the significant value was lower than alpha at the .05 level of significance, it could be concluded that there was a significant difference between the achievement scores of School A and School B in the students' narrative essays.

The Effectiveness of Implementing Mobile Learning to Practice Narrative Writing Skills

Participant Observation

The purpose of carrying out the participant observation was to determine whether the students were able to progress in their narrative writing skills by using mobile learning among their group members after school hours. It was done in order to answer the third research question in this study. The participant observation consisted of 10 items. Five scales, which were "very frequently (VF)," "frequently (F)," "occasionally (O)," "very rarely (VR)," and "never (N)" were used in the observation. The scales were a representation of the time spent by participants when they are trying to complete their task. In other words, for the scale of "very frequently," a participant would spend more than 15 minutes to tackle the task. The time taken for the scale "frequently" was 11 to 15 minutes, the scale "occasionally" was six to 10 minutes, the scale "very rarely" was one to five minutes, and the scale "never" was 0 minutes. The language teachers from both schools conducted the participant observation for each group for eight weeks. They would need to tick an appropriate scale according to the students' ability. After that, the feedback from the checklist from Week 2 to Week 9 from both schools were evaluated, and the findings were compared based on the similarities and differences from both schools.

The findings show that Groups 1 and 5 from School A, as well as Groups 9 and 10 from School B were similar when compared with the other groups. In Week 1, students from Groups 1, 5, 9, and 10 only managed to communicate and collaborate occasionally when using their mobile devices. They used less than 10 minutes to do their narrative writing tasks. Besides that, since they used only a little bit of time to discuss, they did not do much discussion before completing their exercises which the researcher was able to find out from the comment box. Moreover, they were unable to complete their grammar and vocabulary tasks critically and creatively as they did not spend much time when using their mobile devices to discuss the given tasks among their group members. In addition, they had problems providing their feedback and uploading the worksheets as they were unsure about certain features when using their mobile devices.

However, this scenario had changed from Week 2 to Week 4 for all the aforementioned groups. This is because the language teachers had explained to their students the procedures of doing their tasks by using the Google Classroom via their mobile devices. Consequently, the students were able to frequently conduct their discussions for completing all the exercises for main idea, plot, grammar, and vocabulary. They were able to spend more than 10 minutes with their group members by using their mobile devices. It enabled them to identify the main ideas and plot accordingly from the given sample essay. Since they were able to spend more time by using their mobile devices to communicate and collaborate among their group members via mobile learning, they were able to think critically and creatively to complete their grammar and vocabulary exercises that were related to narrative writing. However, in doing so, they still committed some minor mistakes for grammar, and vocabulary exercises.

Nevertheless, in Weeks 5 and 6, their participation levels varied. This was because students from Groups 1 and 10 demonstrated that they had participated in their group writing activities via the Google Classroom frequently, while students from Groups 5 and 9 displayed that they had only participated in their group writing activities via the Google Classroom occasionally. This situation occurred because the students from some groups were unable to participate fully as they were involved in extra curriculum activities which had made them unable to use their mobile devices. This scenario had changed from Week 6 to Week 8 as they did not have any other obligations. Thus, they were able to communicate and collaborate very frequently by using their mobile devices to complete all the tasks.

Pertaining to the outcomes of Groups 2, Group 3, and Group 6 from School A, as well as Groups 7 and Group 8 from School B, the trend for Week 1 was the same for all the five groups of both schools, that is, they participated in the treatment occasionally. They spent less than 10 minutes to communicate and collaborate for all the exercises. Hence, they made a lot of mistakes to list the main ideas, and they were unable to find the elements of plot from the sample essay. They were also unable to complete their exercises for grammar and vocabulary. In addition, they had problems uploading their tasks to the Google Classroom platform when engaging in mobile learning. For Groups 2 and 8, the students sent their worksheets via Telegram to their language teachers. Subsequently, their language teachers explained about the treatment one more time before getting the students to complete their tasks in Week 2. From Week 2 to Week 8, the students from these five groups were able to spend more time to complete their tasks. They participated frequently and very frequently which means that they had spent more than 10 minutes or 15 minutes to complete their tasks. Therefore, the students were able to communicate and collaborate among their group members for all the tasks successfully. They were also able to identify the main ideas and elements of the plot from the sample essay.

Aside from that, the findings for Group 4 from School A, as well as Groups 11 and 12 from School B were similar. This was because in Week 1, students from Groups 4, 11 and 12 did not participate in the Google Classroom when using their mobile devices to complete their tasks. This was because these students lacked the motivation to carry out their discussions in the Google Classroom, as they were afraid that they might make mistakes. After Week 1, the language teacher explained again the way to take part in the treatment as the students did not participate well in Week 1. However, despite after the explanation by the language teacher, they still did not perform well in Week 2. This could be because

the students only participated very rarely. Furthermore, they had used other online platforms to do their discussion and they only uploaded the worksheets to the Google Classroom. In Week 3, the students from the three groups started to do their discussions for less than 10 minutes in the Google Classroom. It was found that due to the lack of discussion and collaboration among the group members, they were unable to identify the main ideas and elements of plot appropriately. Nonetheless, this scenario had changed from Week 4 to Week 6 because they were able to spend more than 10 minutes to discuss and collaborate with their group members. Hence, they were able to identify the main ideas and extract the elements of plot from the sample essays given.

Moreover, they were able to complete their grammar and vocabulary tasks and apply their critical and creativity thinking even though they did some mistakes in their exercises. In Weeks 7 and 8, these students were able to participate very frequently. As a result, they were able to identify the main ideas and elements of plot appropriately without any mistakes. The same scenario happened for grammar and vocabulary exercises.

The Perceptions and Challenges of Students When Integrating Mobile Learning to Practice Narrative Writing Skills

Focus Group Interview

After the treatment, a focus group interview session was conducted among the students from both schools to answer the fourth research question. There were 12 groups that had participated in the interview session. There were 17 questions prepared for the students. Extracts from the interview responses were transcribed verbatim. The students provided their opinions and later, the researcher categorized them into common themes.

Benefits of Online Learning Platform

All the students except four students from School A and three students from School B reported that utilizing online learning platform was vital in their learning process. Hence, the majority of the students explained that the learning process for writing skills in the classroom was insufficient due to the problem of time constraint. The majority of the students also noted that practicing one or two essays for narrative writing could not help them to improve themselves during the classroom exercises. The majority of the students from Group 1 to Group 12 concurred that using the online learning platform aided them to foster their narrative writing skills. On the other hand, using the online learning platform was needed according to the students in this study. They stated that some of them were very shy to provide their views or thoughts in their physical classes and were very fearful about asking their teachers and friends some questions.

Nevertheless, the online learning platform encouraged the students to ask some questions, which was very important in helping them to improve their writing skills. Students from Group 11 explained that they enjoyed doing the assignments in this project because they were able to discuss and ask their friends some questions before completing the given exercises. They also shared that when they were in the classroom, they did not have enough time to really sit and discuss each element of narrative writing before writing an essay.

Advantages of Utilizing Mobile Learning

The majority of the students mentioned that practicing narrative writing skills by using mobile learning was very convenient as they were able to practice and complete the given assignments according to their free time after the school hours.

There was a student who remarked that she was able to take part in the discussion with her group members after her tuition, and this had enabled her to utilize her time beneficially. According to her,

I am able to participate in this project according to my own pace, even though after tuition while waiting to go back home, I was able to use my mobile phone to participate in this project, meaning, I was able to use my free time usefully.

(Student 45 from Group 10)

Some students said that the practices in the classroom were not sufficient, nevertheless the mobile learning project had enabled them to spend some time to explore each element of narrative writing in depth. The students continued to elaborate that usually their teachers requested them to write a complete narrative essay individually. However, in this project, one day would be allocated to learn an element of narrative essay.

Furthermore, the majority of the students remarked that using mobile learning was beneficial because when they wanted to find synonyms to use in their essay, they were able to discuss this with their group members. They mentioned that even if they were unable to find the correct synonyms among themselves, they were able to google to get the required synonyms before completing their tasks.

In addition, the students stated that they were glad to take part in this project as it had helped them to learn many aspects of the process of narrative writing. They also elaborated that if they were unable to find the answers, they would be able to search for information by using the Internet. Technology platforms were really helping them to learn better when compared with the conventional learning process.

Challenges of Practicing Narrative Writing Skills

The students also faced a number of challenges as they pointed out that they did not have enough time to take part in the discussions, even though they had a lot of ideas. This was because they had to complete their homework in other school subjects.

Moreover, the big challenge for them was that their available mobile data was insufficient. Thus, it made them unable to join the group discussion. The majority of the students mentioned that they faced the problem of insufficient mobile data and they had to ask their parents to buy additional data for them so that they could join the group discussion.

Furthermore, some of their group members could not join the discussion as they were busy with their extra-curriculum activities, some were even away for more than two weeks. It made them unable to contribute the discussion sessions and therefore, had few or no ideas to solve their individual problems. One of the students shared the problem faced:

Even though we would like to have a long discussion, but we were unable to do it as we needed to complete other homework and get ready for our tuition classes.

(Student 29, Group 7)

Apart from that, due to the poor internet connection, the students had to face the problem of uploading their materials and made them to wait which made them to feel lack of motivation. Student 47 from Group 12 noted that:

As I am staying in my school hostel, I am unable to access to a good internet connection and it made me to take time to upload the worksheets.

(Student 47 from Group 12)

DISCUSSION

This study revealed that the usage of the Google Classroom platform via mobile learning enables the students to communicate and collaborate with their group members after school hours to complete their

assignments. Besides that, the usage of mobile learning enables them to improve the elements of narrative writing skills for identifying the main ideas, organizing the ideas into a few paragraphs by following the elements of plot, as well as using appropriate grammar and vocabulary features to write a narrative essay. Therefore, the findings from this study showed that the usage of mobile learning among upper secondary students were beneficial as they were able to practice and develop their narrative writing skills after school hours. The duration to practice narrative writing skills in the classroom was not sufficient as teachers had to focus on other types of writing and the other three language skills (Moses & Mohamad, 2019). Moreover, the study by El-Sofany & El-Haggar (2020) had indicated that using mobile learning would enable the students to communicate and collaborate among their group members before completing the narrative writing exercises. Henceforth, using mobile learning allowed them to practice each element of narrative writing skill with their peers before writing a complete narrative essay.

Additionally, the analysis of each aspect of narrative essay (main idea, organization or plot, grammar, and vocabulary) was done for both schools (School A and School B) to determine whether the use of the Google Classroom via mobile learning during the treatment to practice narrative writing aspects had significant effects in their post-test when compared with their pre-test. Besides that, the finding from this research has shown that the use of the Google Classroom platform via mobile learning among upper secondary students in Malaysia to practice narrative writing elements, namely the main idea, organization, grammar, and vocabulary was positively affected by the activities from the module. The activities were uploaded weekly to the Google Classroom platform. The students were able to practice each element of narrative writing by using mobile learning during the treatment for eight weeks before writing their essay for the post-test. This finding was also supported in a research by Abdelmohsen et al. (2020), which showed that using a writing module is crucial among the students as they had the chance to practice the writing skills (content, organization, grammar, and vocabulary) step-by-step in order to develop them.

Therefore, this study has recommended that using any online learning platform via mobile learning among students with different levels of language proficiency would assist in developing their narrative writing skills. This was because usually in the classroom, students would be involved in their individual narrative writing task causing them not to have ideas to write. The weak ones would also have difficulties to write. However, by using mobile learning, the students were able to practice the narrative elements with their group members as they communicated and collaborated in the group, making them not to feel shy to provide their opinions. Additionally, the weak ones did not feel scared of doing practices on narrative writing as they were helped by their group members, and every one of them had the option to help one another to finish their tasks.

This study also found that when students spent less time and were unable to manage their time, they felt that they lacked independent study skills which in turn, made their learning sessions to be ineffective (Agustina et al., 2020). However, it was also revealed that they clearly understood the way to identify the main ideas and the elements of plot. In addition, when they were participating very frequently, in that they were able to spend more than 15 minutes, there were vast improvements in their grammar and vocabulary tasks as they did minimal mistakes. This was because they were able to think critically and creatively. This was supported in the study by Syarifah and Emiliarsari (2019) which pointed out that when students were communicating and collaborating to complete their narrative writing tasks, it aided them in the development of their aptitude and imagination captured as a narrative text with multiple focuses, including how they might interpret the point, as well as their insight about story type. This would assist the students to be specific in their social skills, design of text, and language highlight. Jong and Tan (2021), as well as Setyowati (2019) remarked that when students were engaged in the online platform to practice writing skills, it helped them to discuss deeper and more openly.

In addition, they did not find a major problem in completing their grammar and vocabulary tasks as they spent more time to discuss with other members in their group. It enabled them to think critically and creatively to complete the grammar and vocabulary exercises. Anggraini et al. (2020), as well as Wahyuni and Febianti (2019) discovered that the group discussions among the students enabled them

to use proper grammar and vocabulary features and the tendency to make mistakes was lesser compared to the individual activities. Apart from that, the students were able using their mobile devices to upload all the worksheets successfully onto the Google Classroom platform. It is clear that web-based learning had created a rousing learning climate, upgraded students' scientific and decisive reasoning abilities, and empowered social communication among educators and students, students and their companions, as well as students and different members (Krishnan et al., 2020). Apart from that, the present study also has recommended that students would need proper writing materials to improve themselves (Nartiningrum & Nugroho, 2020).

In conclusion, it can be said that most of the students had agreed that incorporating online learning platform, such as the Google Classroom would be needed. This conclusion was supported in a study by Putri and Aminatun (2021), in which it was found that using online learning platform would enable students to spend more time to discuss the writing elements, as well as write more comments and opinions which they were unable to do in the conventional classroom. In addition, Yen and Nhi (2021) stated that using online learning platform helped students to take part in their discussion sessions more confidently as they would not feel shy or afraid to share their opinions with their peers. This was also supported by John and Yunus (2019) who remarked that integrating mobile learning to practice writing skills provided the students with more opportunities to improve their writing skills at their own pace. This was also supported by Atawneh et al. (2020) who illustrated that mobile learning could be used to enhance students' collaborative learning, as they could access information and learning materials from anywhere and anytime.

Nevertheless, students faced several difficulties during the treatment using mobile learning. One of the most significant barriers to effective mobile learning was the stability of the internet connections, which hampered their ability to participate fully in the treatment phase. This was concurred by Hasin and Nasir (2021) who stated that students were not able to use the Internet properly due to the fluctuating internet speeds, since the internet services were inadequate it has made them feel demotivated to incorporate online platform in their learning process. Apart from that, another challenge was due to the problem of time constraints. Students were very busy with their packed schedule every day. Therefore, some students could not fully spend their time to communicate and collaborate with their group members to complete the assigned worksheets. This problem has been highlighted by Hasin and Nasir (2021) who mentioned that time constraints were additional hindrance which would constrain the use of ICT in the learning process among students.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that mobile learning is an important tool in education that can help facilitate the effectual teaching of narrative writing skills among language teachers in Malaysia regardless of time and place. It is clear from the findings that students need more practice in narrative writing skills; this was because classroom activities alone were not sufficient for them, they do need more continuous practice to learn each aspect of the skills required to engage in narrative writing. Thus, incorporating mobile learning would be beneficial as students can do their narrative writing exercises after the school hours.

As this study is focused only on the use of mobile learning to enhance narrative writing skills among upper secondary students in Malaysia, there are ample opportunities for future researchers to research other types of writing skills which have also used mobile learning in primary schools, lower secondary schools, and upper secondary schools. Other than that, future researchers should also focus on the motivational aspects of students who are trying to enhance their overall writing skills through the use of mobile learning. On top of that, future researchers could also prepare relevant writing materials which learners could use to practice when using mobile learning. Lastly, future researchers could also emphasise the development of a proper writing application which can be used with mobile learning in Malaysian national schools.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, I would like to express my special thanks and gratitude to the participants of the study. Additionally, I would like to thank my main supervisor, Dr. Mariam Mohamad, my co-supervisor, Ts. Dr. Mageswaran Sanmugam, and my friend, Asst. Prof. Dr. Hooi Chee Mei from a private higher education institution in Malaysia for their unconditional sustenance and motivation to write this manuscript.

REFERENCES

- 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.
- Ahmad Afip, L., Hamid, M. O., & Renshaw, P. (2019). Common European framework of reference for languages (CEFR): Insights into global policy borrowing in Malaysian higher education. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 19(1), 378-393. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2019.1578195>
- Al-Shehab, M. (2020). The role of mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) in enhancing the writing skills of intermediate IEP students: Expectations vs reality. *Language Teaching Research Quarterly*, 20, 1-18.
- Ambarwati, R., & Mandasari, B. (2020). The influence of online Cambridge dictionary toward students' pronunciation and vocabulary mastery. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Learning*, 1(2), 50-55. <https://doi.org/10.33365/jeltl.v1i2.605>
- Anggraini, R., Rozimela, Y., & Anwar, D. (2020). The effects of collaborative writing on EFL learners' writing skills and their perception of the strategy. *Journal of language teaching and research*, 11(2), 335-341. <http://dx.doi.org/10.17507/jltr.1102.25>
- Ansari, J. A. N., & Khan, N. A. (2020). Exploring the role of social media in collaborative learning the new domain of learning. *Smart Learning Environments*, 7(1), 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40561-020-00118-7>
- Agustina, D., Matra, S. D., & Karimah, S. (2020). Challenges of having online learning activities: University students' perspectives. In *INELTAL Conference Proceedings: The International English Language Teachers and Lecturers Conference* (pp.9-14).
- Aziz, A. A., & Kashinathan, S. (2021). ESL learners' challenges in speaking English in Malaysian classroom. *Development*, 10(2), 983-991. <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v10-i2/10355>
- Atawneh, S., Al-Akhras, M., AlMomani, I., Liswi, A., & Alawairdhi, M. (2020). Collaborative mobile-learning architecture based on mobile agents. *Electronics*, 9(1), 1-36. <https://doi.org/10.3390/electronics9010162>
- Brown, J. D. (2007). Multiple views of L1 writing score reliability. *University of Hawai'i Second Language Studies Paper*, 25(2), 1-31.
- Caudill, J. G. (2020). The growth of m-learning and the growth of mobile computing: Parallel developments. *International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, 8(2), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.19173/irrodl.v8i2.348>
- El-Sofany, H., & El-Haggag, N. (2020). The effectiveness of using mobile learning techniques to improve learning outcomes in higher education. *International Association of Online Engineering*, 14(08), 4-18. <https://doi.org/10.3991/ijim.v14i08.13125>
- Hashim, A. (2020). Malaysian English. In K. Bolton, W. Botha, & A. Kirkpatrick (Eds.), *The handbook of Asian Englishes*, 373-397. Wiley-Blackwell.

- Hasin, I., & Nasir, M. K. M. (2021). The effectiveness of the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in rural secondary schools in Malaysia. *Journal of Education and e-Learning Research*, 8(1), 59-64. <https://doi.org/10.20448/journal.509.2021.81.59.64>
- Jacobs, Holly L., Stephen A. Zinkgraf, Deanna R. Wormuth, V. Faye Hartfiel, & Jane B. Hughey. (1981). *Testing ESL composition. A practical approach*. Newbury House.
- Jassim, L. L., & Dzakiria, H. (2019). The effect of utilizing mobile on developing English writing skill. *Opción*, 34(19), 2128-21437.
- John, D. S., & Yunus, M. M. (2019). Students' perceptions on the use of mobile learning to improve writing proficiency in the MUET. *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities*, 27(3), 1481-1492.
- Jong, B., & Tan, K. H. (2021). Using Padlet as a technological tool for assessment of students' writing skills in online classroom settings. *International Journal of Education and Practice*, 9(2), 411-423. <https://doi.org/10.18488/journal.61.2021.92.411.423>
- Kamal, S. S. B. M., & Aziz, A. A. (2021). Utilizing mobile learning in writing skills in ESL classroom. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 11(12), 2206–2220.
- Koole, M. L. (2009). A model for framing mobile learning. *Mobile learning: Transforming the delivery of education and training*, 1(2), 25-47.
- Krishnan, I.A., Ching, H., Ramalingam, S., Maruthai, E., Kandasamy, P., Mello, G., Munian, S., & Ling, W. (2020). Challenges of learning English in 21st Century: Online vs. traditional during Covid-19. *Malaysian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (MJSSH)*, 5(9), 1-15.
- Kumaran, P. N., & Krish, P. (2021). Mother tongue interference in English writing among Tamil school students. *GEMA Online Journal of Language studies*, 21(1), 110-123. [10.17576/gema-2021-2101-07](https://doi.org/10.17576/gema-2021-2101-07)
- Morthy, D. K., & Aziz, A. A. (2020). The use of language games in enhancing ESL learners' sentence construction. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 10(9), 16-32. <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v10-i9/7695>
- Moses, R. N., & Mohamad, M. (2019). Challenges faced by students and teachers on writing skills in ESL Contexts: A literature review. *Creative Education*, 10(13), 3385-3391. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/ce.2019.1013260>
- Muliani, S., Norahmi, M., & Asi, N. (2019). The analysis of difficulties in writing narrative text. *LET: Linguistics, Literature and English Teaching Journal*, 9(2), 112
- Nartiningrum, N., & Nugroho, A. (2020). Online learning amidst global pandemic: EFL students' challenges, suggestions, and needed materials. *English Franca: Academic Journal of English Language and Education*, 4(2), 115-140. <https://doi.org/10.29240/ef.v4i2.1494>
- Nazari, N., Shabbir, M. S., & Setiawan, R. (2021). Application of artificial intelligence powered digital writing assistant in higher education: Randomized controlled trial. *Heliyon*, 7(5), 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2021.e07014>
- Nguyen, L. T. T. (2019). A case study of teacher feedback on Thai university students' essay writing. *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies*, 19(2), 121-138
- Putri, N., & Aminatun, D. (2021). Using Facebook to practice writing skill: What do the students think? *Journal of English Language Teaching and Learning*, 2(1), 45-50. <https://doi.org/10.33365/jeltl.v2i1.852>
- Sari, S. N., & Aminatun, D. (2021). Students' perception on the use of English movies to improve vocabulary mastery. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Learning*, 2(1), 16-22. <https://doi.org/10.33365/jeltl.v2i1.757>
- Setyowati, Y. (2019). Let's listen through WhatsApp: An energizing listening exercise in EFL Class. *Journal of Physics: Conference Series*, 1179(1), 1-5. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1742-6596/1179/1/012052>
- 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.
- Syarifah, E. F., & Emiliasari, R. N. (2019). Project-based learning to develop students' ability and creativity in writing narrative story. *Indonesian EFL Journal*, 5(1), 85-94. <https://doi.org/10.25134/ieflj.v5i1.1627>

- Wahyuni, S., & Febianti, K. (2019). The use of WhatsApp group discussion to improve students' writing achievement. *Indonesian Educational Administration and Leadership Journal*, 1(1), 45-51. file:///D:/Downloads/7601-Article%20Text-17692-1-10-20190909%20(1).pdf
- Wong, H. (1989). *The development of a qualitative writing scale*. Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.
- Yen, T. V. M., & Nhi, N. T. U. (2021). The practice of online English teaching and learning with Microsoft Teams: From students' view. *AsiaCALL Online Journal*, 12(2), 51-57.
- Yunus, M. M., Zakaria, S., & Suliman, A. (2019). The potential use of social media on Malaysian primary students to improve writing. *International Journal of Education and Practice*, 7(4), 450-458. <https://doi.org/10.18488/journal.61.2019.74.450.458>
- Yusuf, Q., Jusoh, Z., & Yusuf, Y. Q. (2019). Cooperative learning strategies to enhance writing skills among second language learners. *International Journal of Instruction*, 12(1), <https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2019.12189a>