

**THE INFLUENCE OF A DIGITAL COMIC TOOL ON WRITING
ANXIETY AND PERFORMANCE OF MALAYSIAN ESL
LEARNERS**

FAUSTINA ROBERTS

**FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA
KUALA LUMPUR**

2016

**THE INFLUENCE OF A DIGITAL COMIC TOOL ON WRITING ANXIETY
AND PERFORMANCE OF MALAYSIAN ESL LEARNERS**

FAUSTINA ROBERTS

**DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ENGLISH AS A
SECOND LANGUAGE**

**FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA
KUALA LUMPUR**

2016

ABSTRACT

Writing is one of the difficult language skills causing anxiety among learners. Findings of a study conducted by Nesamalar, Saratha and Teh (2001) had revealed that many Malaysian ESL learners have poor writing skills. Hence, this study is geared towards investigating if Malaysian ESL learners experience writing anxiety, and if yes, what are the levels and causes of their writing anxiety. Since the Malaysian Education System recognises the need to incorporate Information and Communications Technology (ICT) into the teaching and learning procedure, this study also aims to explore the influence of a digital comic tool on the writing anxiety and writing performance of Malaysian ESL learners. This study takes on mixed method research design and adopts the experimental approach with a pre-test and post-test design. The qualitative data is obtained through focus group interviews. A total of 36 students who experienced high level of writing anxiety, determined through the Second Language Writing Inventory Scale (Cheng, 2004), took part in this study. The students were assigned into two groups, which are the control and experimental group. During the treatment phase, students in the Control Group (CG) wrote their narratives using pencil and paper while students in the Experimental Group (EG) used an online digital comic tool. The findings of this study revealed the levels of writing anxiety among the Malaysian ESL learners as well as the causes of writing anxiety. Factors that had caused writing anxiety are; *writing is perceived a difficult skill, having low self-confidence in writing, inappropriate teaching methods, time pressure, lack of feedback, and lack of topical knowledge*. This study also revealed the influence of both writing approaches on the students' writing performance in areas such as context, sentence fluency and word choice. The students in the Experimental Group (EG) outperformed the students in the Control Group (CG). Last but not least, the students from the Experimental Group

(EG) revealed that using the digital comic tool during writing as *interesting, motivating, increases their creativity, a good visual aid tool, increases their confidence, vocabulary and reduces their mental block.*

University of Malaya

ABSTRAK

Penulisan adalah salah satu kemahiran yang sukar serta menyebabkan kebimbangan di kalangan murid. Hasil kajian yang dijalankan oleh Nesamalar, Saratha dan Teh (2001) telah menunjukkan bahawa kebanyakan murid yang belajar Bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa kedua di Malaysia lemah dalam kemahiran menulis. Oleh itu, kajian ini bertujuan menyiasat sama ada murid Bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa kedua di Malaysia mempunyai 'kebimbangan menulis', dan jika ya, apakah tahap dan punca-punca kebimbangan menulis mereka. Berlandaskan Sistem Pendidikan Malaysia yang menyedari manfaat mengintegrasikan penggunaan teknologi komunikasi maklumat ke dalam prosedur pengajaran dan pembelajaran, kajian ini juga bertujuan untuk mengkaji pengaruh komik digital ke atas prestasi dan tahap kebimbangan menulis murid-murid di Malaysia. Kajian ini mengambil pendekatan eksperimen dengan pra-ujian dan reka bentuk ujian pasca. Data kualitatif diperoleh melalui temu bual secara berkumpulan. Seramai 36 pelajar yang mengalami tahap kebimbangan menulis yang tinggi, yang ditentukan melalui Skala Inventori Penulisan Bahasa Kedua (Cheng, 2004), telah mengambil bahagian dalam kajian ini. Murid-murid telah dibahagikan kepada dua kumpulan, yang merupakan kumpulan kawalan dan kumpulan eksperimen. Semasa kajian dijalankan, murid-murid dalam Kumpulan Kawalan menulis penulisan mereka dengan menggunakan pensil dan kertas manakala murid-murid dalam Kumpulan Eksperimen menggunakan alat komik digital. Dapatan kajian ini menunjukkan tahap kebimbangan menulis di kalangan murid-murid di Malaysia dan juga punca kebimbangan menulis mereka. Faktor-faktor yang telah menyebabkan kebimbangan menulis mereka adalah; menulis dilihat satu kemahiran yang sukar, mempunyai keyakinan diri yang rendah, kaedah pengajaran yang tidak sesuai, tekanan masa, kurang maklum balas, dan kurangnya pengetahuan sesuatu topik. Kajian ini

juga menunjukkan pengaruh kedua-dua pendekatan ke atas konteks, hukuman ayat dan pilihan perkataan. Prestasi murid-murid dalam Kumpulan Eksperimen melebihi pelajar dalam Kumpulan Kawalan. Akhir sekali, murid-murid dari Kumpulan Eksperimen menunjukkan bahawa menggunakan alat komik digital adalah menarik, meningkatkan motivasi menulis, meningkatkan kreativiti mereka, merupakan alat bantuan visual yang baik, meningkatkan keyakinan dan perbendaharaan kata mereka dan mengurangkan ketidaklancaran mereka penulisan Bahasa Inggeris.

University of Malaya

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to those who have helped in many ways in completing my dissertation. First and foremost, I would like thank God for granting me good health and mental strength to complete this dissertation in time.

Secondly, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Ng Lee Luan for her guidance, time spent and her deep and profound suggestions in helping me complete my dissertation. I would also like to thank my first supervisor, Dr. Karunakaran Krishnamurthy for his interest in my topic and kind words of encouragement.

Besides my supervisors, I take this opportunity to thank the students, parents, the school management and the teachers involved in my study for their willingness and cooperation rendered throughout the course of my study.

Last but not least, I thank my parents, siblings, my fiancé and my friends for their endless support. Without all of you in my life, I would have not been able to achieve the goals I have set in my life.

Faustina Roberts

January, 2016

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iii
ABSTRAK.....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	viii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xiii
LIST OF TABLES.....	xiv
LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS.....	xv
LIST OF APENDICES.....	xvi

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0	Introduction.....	1
1.1	Purpose of the Study.....	2
1.2	Background of the Study	
1.2.1	Lack of Writing Skill among Malaysians.....	3
1.2.2	Factors that Influence the Success of Writing Skills.....	4
1.2.3	Anxiety and Second Language Learning.....	6
1.2.4	Use of ICT in Malaysian Classrooms.....	7
1.3	Objectives of the Study.....	8
1.4	Research Questions.....	9
1.5	Research Hypotheses.....	9
1.6	Significance of the Study.....	10
1.7	Scope and Limitations.....	10
1.8.	Summary.....	11

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0	Introduction.....	12
2.1	Individual Differences in English Language Acquisition.....	12
2.2	Krashen’s Affective Filter Hypothesis.....	12
2.3	Mayer’s Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (2001).....	14
2.4	Writing Anxiety.....	15
2.4.1	What are the causes of writing anxiety among learners?.....	16
2.4.1a	Fear of Evaluation.....	16
2.4.1b	Low English Proficiency.....	17
2.4.1c	Teaching and Learning Methodologies.....	18
2.4.1d	Insufficient or Lack of Feedback.....	19
2.4.1e	Low-Self Confidence.....	19
2.4.1f	Lack of Topical Knowledge.....	20
2.4.2	What are the effects of writing anxiety on learners?.....	20
2.4.2a	Avoidance.....	20
2.4.2b	Poor Writing Quality.....	21
2.4.2c	Pressure and Fear of Writing.....	22
2.4.2d	Low writing grades.....	22
2.4.2e	Slow Vocabulary Acquisition.....	23
2.5	Comics.....	24
2.6	Digital Comics.....	24
2.7	Benefits of digital comic tools in the classroom.....	24
2.7.1	Motivating.....	25
2.7.2	Encourage Collaborative Learning.....	25
2.7.3	Good Visual Aid.....	26

2.7.4	Good Publishing Medium.....	26
2.7.5	Help Learners Cope with Writing Anxiety.....	26
2.7.6	Produce Quality Writing.....	27
2.7.7	Enjoyable Writing Process.....	27
2.7.8	Increases Creativity.....	28
2.8	Previous Research on the use of Digital Comic Tools in the Classroom.....	28
2.9	Summary.....	30

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.0	Introduction.....	31
3.1	Participants, Setting and Topic of Writing Task.....	31
3.1.1	Participants.....	32
3.1.2	Setting.....	32
3.1.3	Topic.....	32
3.2	Pilot Study.....	33
3.3	Research Instruments.....	34
3.3.1	Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI).....	34
3.3.2	Stripgenerator.....	35
3.3.3	Scoring Rubric for Composition Writing.....	38
3.3.4	Focus Group Interviews.....	38
3.4	Research Design.....	39
3.5	Data Collection Procedure.....	42
3.5.1	Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI).....	42
3.5.2	Focus Group Interviews.....	42
3.5.3	Pre-test.....	43

3.5.4	Treatment.....	43
3.5.5	Post-test.....	47
3.6	Data Analysis.....	47
3.6.1	Writing Anxiety Levels.....	48
3.6.2	Pre-test/Post-test Scores.....	48
3.6.3	Data Transcript for Focus Group Interviews.....	48
3.7	Summary.....	51

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0	Introduction.....	52
4.1	Research Question 1.....	52
4.2	Research Question 2.....	54
4.2.1	Difficult Skill.....	55
4.2.2	Low Self Confidence.....	56
4.2.3	Teaching Methodology.....	57
4.2.4	Time Pressure.....	57
4.2.5	Lack of Feedback.....	58
4.2.6	Lack of Topical Knowledge.....	59
4.3	Research Question 3.....	63
4.3.1	Pre-test Statistical Analysis for the category of Context.....	64
4.3.2	Pre-test Statistical Analysis for the category of Sentence Fluency.....	65
4.3.3	Pre-test Statistical Analysis for the category of Word Choice.....	66
4.3.4	Post-test Statistical Analysis for the category of Context.....	68
4.3.5	Post-test Statistical Analysis for the category of Sentence Fluency.....	69
4.3.6	Post-test Statistical Analysis for the category of Word Choice.....	70

4.4	Research Question 4.....	73
4.4.1	Enjoyable and Interesting.....	76
4.4.2	Motivating.....	76
4.4.3	Good Visual Aid.....	76
4.4.4	Increases Vocabulary Knowledge.....	77
4.4.5	Reduces Mental Block.....	78
4.4.6	Increases Creativity.....	79
4.4.6	Increases Confidence.....	79
4.6.7	Caveat.....	80
4.5	Summary.....	83
 CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION		
5.0	Introduction.....	84
5.1	Summary of the Research.....	84
5.2	Theoretical Implication.....	88
5.3	Research Implication.....	89
5.4	Pedagogical Implication.....	90
5.5	Recommendations for Future Research.....	91
5.5.1	Participants.....	91
5.5.2	Gender.....	91
5.5.3	Language Areas Tested.....	91
5.5.4	Topic.....	92
5.6	Conclusion.....	92

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: Krashen’s Affective Filter Hypothesis.....	13
Figure 2.2: Mayer’s Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (2002).....	14
Figure 3.1: The Interface of Stripgenerator.....	36
Figure 3.2: Choosing the Frames and Panels.....	37
Figure 3.3: Choosing of the Characters, Beings or Items.....	37
Figure 3.4: Creating Digital Comics.....	38
Figure 3.5: Design of the Study.....	41
Figure 4.1: Causes of Writing Anxiety Among ESL Learners with High Levels of Writing Anxiety.....	54
Figure 4.2: Perception of Learners on the use of Stripgenerator.....	74
Figure 5.1: Summary of Findings.....	85

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1: Data Analysis.....	50
Table 4.1: Summary of Descriptive Statistics of SLWAI.....	53
Table 4.2: Pre-test Statistical Analysis for the Category of Context.....	64
Table 4.3: Pre-test Statistical Analysis for the Category of Sentence Fluency.....	65
Table 4.4: Pre-test Statistical Analysis for the Category of Word Choice.....	66
Table 4.5: Post-test Statistical Analysis for the Category of Context.....	68
Table 4.6: Post-test Statistical Analysis for the Category of Sentence Fluency.....	69
Table 4.7: Post-test Statistical Analysis for the Category of Word Choice.....	70

LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

MOE: Ministry of Education

ESL: English as Second Language

ICT: Information and Communications Technology

UPSR: *Ujian Pencapaian Sekolah Rendah*

CALL: Computer Assisted Language Learning

SLWAI: Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory

CG: Control Group

EG: Experimental Group

KSSR: Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah

L2: Second Language

University of Malaya

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI).....	93
Appendix 2: Consent Letter for Parents or Guardian (Permission for Research with children)	95
Appendix 3: Scoring Rubric.....	97
Appendix 4: 1 st Focus Group Interview Questions.....	98
Appendix 5: 2 nd Focus Group Interview Questions.....	99
Appendix 6: 1 st Focus Group Interview Transcript.....	100
Appendix 7: 2 nd Focus Group Interview Transcript.....	107

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

The learning of a second language is not an easy task for most ESL learners. The success rate of learning a second language depends on a few factors that either accelerates or impedes the second language learning. In Malaysia, Bahasa Malaysia is the medium of instruction of the country while English becomes the second language. At present, English is taught at all primary and secondary national schools.

However, despite having to learn English in the primary and secondary school levels, many Malaysian students still struggle to learn the language (Begum, 2005). Nunan has (2003) pointed out the reality of the deteriorating standards of English among Malaysians. Since English is one of the languages widely spoken in today's world (Akinwamide, 2012), the Malaysian Ministry of Education (MOE) is taking the required steps to ensure that the English language curriculum in Malaysia contributes to the mastery of the language. The success in doing so would enable easy access to information and knowledge. For this very reason, the importance of English is often highlighted and stressed by the Malaysian government.

Hence, in efforts to enhance the English language skills especially among Malaysian primary school students, the curriculum centralises its syllabus on a modular approach. The syllabus covers the listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Nonetheless, more emphasis is given to the writing component since it is deemed as a basic skill that all Malaysian students should master (Ministry of Education, 2000).

The emphasis on the mastery of writing skills is mainly due to the lack of writing skills among Malaysian ESL learners. Many Malaysian students still struggle to learn the language especially when it comes to writing skills (Begum, 2005). In support of the claim

made by Begum (2005), the findings of a study conducted by Nesamalar, Saratha and Teh (2001) revealed that many Malaysian ESL learners have very poor writing abilities. Chitravelu, Sithamparam and Teh (2005) also pointed out that writing is a skill most Malaysians students are weak in.

In essence, there are many issues and concerns related to writing which inhibits the performance and abilities of a learner. According to Zhang (2001) and Hilleson (1996), activities that demand productive skills out of learners create a considerable amount of anxiety in them. Researchers found writing anxiety to be a major cause that inhibits writing performance among ESL learners. Al-Ahmad (2003) stressed that writing anxiety is a problem faced by many ESL learners. Moreover, Salem (2007) witnessed a decline in the writing performance of ESL learners who executed high levels of writing anxiety.

Thus, based on the claims above, it would seem that the presence of writing anxiety causes the decline in writing performance among ESL learners. This could also possibly be one of the reasons behind poor writing skills among Malaysians. In hoping to uncover the reasons behind this worrying phenomenon, the following section of this chapter will delineate the purpose of the present study.

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The evidence of writing anxiety among ESL learners has led to the need to study the presence of writing anxiety among Malaysian ESL learners. In line with the Malaysian Education system's emphasis on the mastery of writing skills, this study aims to find out if Malaysian ESL learners experience writing anxiety, and if yes, the levels of their writing anxiety. This study is also keen on identifying the causes of writing anxiety among learners with high levels of writing anxiety.

Since the Malaysian Education System recognises the need to incorporate the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) into the teaching and learning procedure, this study investigates the influence of using a digital comic tool on the writing anxiety and writing performance of Malaysian ESL learners. Last but not least, this study uncovers the perception of learners with high levels of writing anxiety on the use of a digital comic tool during the writing process.

By unveiling the purpose of this present study, the following section of this dissertation will highlight the background of the study.

1.2 Background of the Study

1.2.1 Lack of Writing Skill among Malaysians

The School Examination (UPSR) report for the year 2004 stated that majority of Malaysian students are still lacking in the mastery of the English writing skills (Ministry of Education, 2005). Samuel and Bakar (2006) reported that the writing levels of UPSR pupils in guided compositions are below satisfactory.

The lack of writing skills are not only prevalent among students but also among Malaysian adults. A study conducted by Nair et. al (2012), revealed that the lack of writing skill is also evident among Malaysian graduates in the job sector. Nair et. al (2012) highlighted the inadequacy in writing skill and the overall lack of English proficiency among fresh graduates seeking for job opportunities. A total of 64.2% of total scores obtained through the administration of the questionnaire from the study by Nair et. al reveals that fresh graduates do not have good writing skills that could cater for the need at the work place.

Due to the lack of writing skills among Malaysians, the Ministry of Education (MOE) has taken great interest in the planning of the English language syllabus in Malaysia.

The Ministry has been taking necessary steps to improve writing skills and the overall English competencies of Malaysians. The recent unveiling of the *Ujian Pencapaian Sekolah Rendah* (UPSR) (The Rakyat Post, September 28,2015) examination under the *Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah* (KSSR) syllabus is an example. The examination places great emphasis on the English writing skills. To add on, with the additional teaching and learning time allocated for English under the “Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025” (MOE, 2012), the Ministry hopes that the English language competencies of Malaysians will be elevated.

The various steps taken by the Ministry of Education reflects on the importance of having the ability to write and express oneself effectively in English. Undoubtedly, the competence one has in English is essential in today’s world. The importance of writing skill is seen in various aspects of life. David (2001), Cai (2001) and Dovey (2010) believe that writing skills would help students, especially at higher levels of education, as well as in their professional career. Tan and Miller (2008) credit the ability to write as a form of social communication. Hence, having to master the art of writing is indeed a prerequisite for success.

With evidence proving the significance of writing skills, factors that may contribute to the success of writing skills should therefore be investigated.

1.2.2 Factors that Influence the Success of Writing Skills

Learning English is a difficult task for ESL learners due to the interference of their first language. The presence of different language characteristics between the first and second language, has lead to Malaysian ESL learners having difficulties in mastering a second language successfully. In terms of writing skills, there are many hurdles that learners need to overcome in order to become a successful writer. Due to the need to

understand the factors that influence the success of writing skills among ESL learners, various studies such as Lim (2013), Yaakub and Rahim (2004), Siti Hamim (1998), Norrizan Razali (1992), Kara (2013) and Latiff (2007) have looked into this area.

The factors that influence the success in writing can be easily classified into internal and external factors. The external factor that plays a major role in the success of writing skills are often shouldered by English teachers themselves. English teachers' role and the methodologies employed in the development of writing skills among learners are often highlighted. A study conducted by Lim (2013) revealed that teaching methodologies and approaches towards writing contributes to the success in the language skill. Lim (2013) proposed that teachers should look for ways that can help learners become expert writers.

Additionally, Yaakub and Rahim (2004) have acknowledged the role of English teachers that act as a contributing factor to the success of writing skills among learners. They suggested that teachers should assist learners throughout the writing process by giving sufficient time for them to write and rewrite. Providing constructive feedback to the learners with regards to their writing will in return create successful writers. Siti Hamim (1998) believes that teachers' intervention throughout the writing process is more meaningful rather than only at the final stages of writing.

Besides the role of English teachers and the methodologies employed in the development of writing skills, internal factors such as aptitude, learning strategies, attitudes and motivation towards writing also influence the success of language learning. Many past studies have dwelled on the impact of internal factors that contributes to the success in the mastery of language skills (Norrizan Razali, 1992). Dornyei (2001) holds an opinion that internal factors such as learner's motivation and attitudes towards second language learning plays a huge role in learner's involvement in the writing classroom. He believes that being aware of learner's affective factors when it comes to learning a language

skill helps ignite learners' motivation. Therefore, it is logical to assume that, both internal and external factors contribute to the success of writing skills.

While the internal and external factors mentioned above contribute to the success of writing skills, Kara (2013) revealed that these factors have led to the potentiality of writing anxiety. Latiff (2007) through the findings of his study agrees that English writing is an anxiety driven skill. For that reason, contributing factors which influence or dampen the success of writing skills among learners should be addressed tactfully.

1.2.3 Anxiety and Second Language Learning

Anxiety and second language learning are often studied as these two aspects matter in the learning of a second language. In the Malaysian context, anxiety in language learning is an area widely researched by researchers among which include Darmi and Albion (2012), Daud et. al (2005) and Nur Shidrah et. al (2006). These researchers uncovered the answers to issues governing success in second language learning.

For instance, a study conducted by Darmi and Albion (2012) found Malaysian ESL learners experience anxiety when learning a second language. When it comes to writing anxiety, many ESL learners are of no exception (Al-Ahmad, 2003). Since writing anxiety is a problem encountered by many ESL learners (Al-Ahmad, 2003), there is a need to understand the contributing factors to this worrying phenomenon among Malaysian ESL learners. The factors that contribute to writing anxiety among ESL learners will be addressed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation.

Nevertheless, apart from looking at internal and external factors that contribute to writing anxiety, researchers like Galea (2002) and Ziden et. al (2011) have highlighted the importance of instructional approaches such as the use of Information Communications Technology (ICT) in the classrooms. The following section of this chapter will look into the

use of ICT in the Malaysian classrooms.

1.2.4 Use of ICT in Malaysian Classrooms

The advancement of Information Communications Technology (ICT) in today's technological world has brought about the awareness on the benefits of using ICT in learning. In Malaysia, the Ministry of Education has outlined three main plans in response to the use of ICT to better facilitate learning (Ministry of Education, 2003). The first plan encourages students to use ICT to bridge the technological gap that exists especially between schools. The second plan emphasises the use of ICT to support and facilitate learning. While, the third plan encourages the use of ICT to enhance productivity, effectiveness and efficiency of a particular institution. This includes the use of ICT in the planning and preparations that goes hand in hand before carrying out a lesson.

With the three major plans outlined by the Ministry of Education, the importance of using ICT in the classrooms are well defined by the government. Studies such as Ziden et. al (2011) and Melor Md Yunus et. al (2009) were conducted to explore the use of ICT in teaching and learning in the Malaysian context.

For example, Ziden et. al (2011) has studied the use of ICT among school teachers in Malaysia. The findings revealed that teachers found the use of ICT to be very useful not only in facilitating teaching and learning, but also in preparing learners with various learning needs. Galea (2002) also believes that ICT enhances teaching and learning. The use of ICT in her study increases the quality of teaching and learning by helping learners achieve the intended lesson objectives. The findings of these studies solidify the positive outcomes of the use of ICT in the Malaysian classrooms.

In line with the aforementioned, this study therefore hopes to investigate the influence of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) on the writing skills of

Malaysian ESL learners. With a detailed introduction on the background of the study, the objectives of the present study are outlined below.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

With the need to further understand the issues that govern the success of writing skills among Malaysian ESL learners in particular the primary school learners, this study is designed to investigate if Malaysian ESL learners experience writing anxiety, and if yes, what are the levels of their writing anxiety. Secondly, this study plans to identify the causes of writing anxiety among the Malaysian ESL learners who experience high levels of writing anxiety.

Besides, this study will also focus on finding out if there are any significant differences in terms of scores of the learners with high level of anxiety between the control and experimental group. The comparison of scores are made in terms of context, sentence fluency and word choice before and after the treatment phase. These three writing areas are chosen as errors in context, sentence fluency and word choice can impact students' writing performance.

Leech (1994) believes that learners' word choice or also referred to as vocabulary errors affect the quality of the learners' overall written work. Moreover, Huy (2015) points out that often times students major problem when it comes to writing is having insufficient vocabulary. Culham and Swing (2011) also acknowledge that achieving writing fluency is indeed not an easy task. Learners having to write within the context is indeed a challenging task. Therefore, with those concerns raised when dealing with writing, the three writing areas are chosen in hoping to help learners improve their writing performance through the methodology employed in this study.

Lastly, this study is geared towards understanding the perceptions of the learners on the use of a digital comic tool during the writing process which would further add depth to the findings of the present study. The following section of this dissertation will outline the research questions that represent the essence of the study.

1.4 Research Questions

- RQ 1: Do Malaysian ESL learners experience writing anxiety? What are the levels of their writing anxiety?
- RQ 2: What are the causes of writing anxiety among Malaysian ESL learners with high levels of writing anxiety?
- RQ 3: Does the use of a digital comic tool affect the scores of learners with high levels of writing anxiety in terms of context, sentence fluency and word choice?
- RQ 4: What are the perceptions of the learners with high levels of writing anxiety on the use of a digital comic tool during the writing process?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

With reference to RQ3, which relates to the inferential statistics, the hypotheses and null hypotheses are:

H_1 : there is a significant difference in scores before and after the treatment in the experimental group in terms of context

H_0 : there is no significant difference in scores before and after the treatment in the experimental group in terms of context

H_1 : there is a significant difference in scores before and after the treatment in the experimental group in terms of sentence fluency

H_0 : there is no significant difference in scores before and after the treatment in the experimental group in terms of sentence fluency

H_1 : there is a significant difference in scores before and after the treatment in the experimental group in terms of word choice

H_0 : there is no significant difference in scores before and after the treatment in the experimental group in terms of word choice

1.6 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will provide a useful guide for English language teachers on the use of a digital comic tool to enhance the writing skills of ESL learners especially in areas such context, sentence fluency and word choice.

Not only that, the perception of the learners on the use of a digital comic tool during the writing process will be useful in revealing which aspects of the tool are deemed useful. In aiming to reduce writing anxiety and improve the writing skills of learners, the present study will benefit ESL learners in today's modern age as it seeks to understand how the use of ICT can improve writing skills and reduce writing anxiety of learners.

1.7 Scope and Limitations

The current study is only confined to the targeted ESL learners in Malaysia chosen for the purpose of this study. It consists of a small population, thus the findings cannot be generalised to other ESL learners besides the learners whom are specifically selected for this study. One should also not generalise the findings obtained through this study to other

contexts.

1.8. Summary

Besides revealing the purpose and objectives of the present study, this chapter has highlighted the issues and concerns in the learning of a second language among Malaysian ESL learners especially on writing skills. The following chapters of this dissertation will look at other elements that makes up the present study. Chapter 2 comprises of a detailed literature review governing the present study where else Chapter 3 consists of the methodology employed to yield the findings of this study. The findings obtained will be presented in Chapter 4 followed by discussions in reference to the findings gathered through the methodologies employed. Finally, the conclusions of this study will be put forward in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter is divided into three major sections. The first section of this chapter consists of the theoretical frameworks of the present study. The second section will define key terms and provide relevant content towards the subject matter of the study. Finally, the last section of this chapter will highlight the relevant studies on the use of digital comics in the teaching and learning of writing.

2.1 Individual Differences in English Language Acquisition

Learners acquiring a new language go through trials and tribulations that either makes learning meaningful or dreadful. Many studies have proven that learners' individual differences play a crucial role in the acquisition of a language, as every individual differs from one another.

Individual differences are defined as personal attributes that applies to everybody and differ by degree (Dörnyei, 2005). Motivation is one example of individual differences that contributes to the success of English language acquisition. Motivation plays a major role in the success of language acquisition and is often linked to learning anxiety. Since the focus of this study is on writing anxiety, the motivation that one has towards writing could affect the degree of writing anxiety in a learner. In light of this, the following part of this chapter will outline the theoretical frameworks of the present study.

2.2 Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis

Acquiring a second language does not come easy for many ESL learners. With various components that contribute to the success of acquiring a second language, Krashen

highlights a number of ‘affective variables’ that play a facilitative role in second language acquisition. Among the ‘affective variables’ which are closely related to the present study, includes motivation, self-confidence and anxiety.

According to Krashen (1987), learners who are highly motivated, possess self-confidence, good self-image and low levels of anxiety are learners who are more likely to be successful when it comes to second language acquisition. In contrast, learners who are lacking in motivation, self-esteem and demonstrate high levels of anxiety ‘raise’ the affective filter and create a ‘mental block’ that prevents language acquisition. Krashen therefore believes that language acquisition is dampened when the filter is ‘up’. Figure 2.1 visually represents Krashen’s Affective Filter Hypothesis.

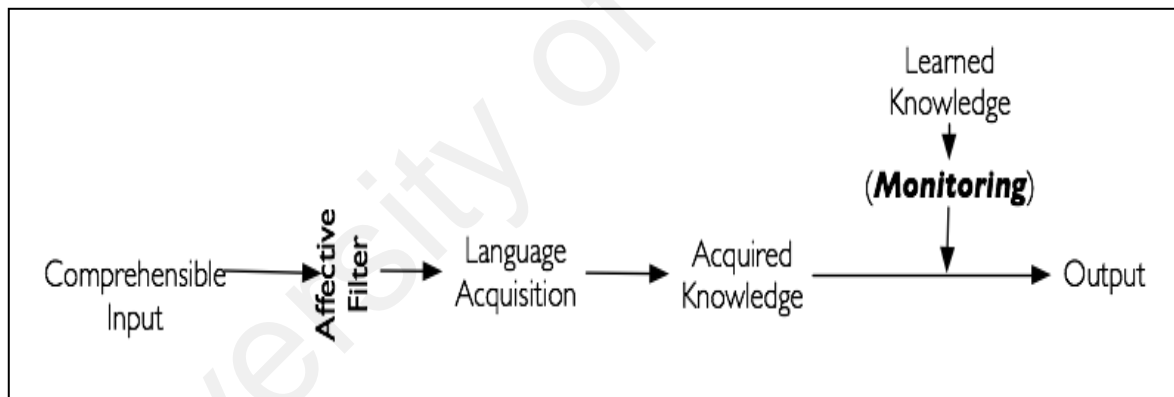


Figure 2.1: Krashen’s Affective Filter Hypothesis

The importance of motivation in learning and the consequences of anxiety in successfully acquiring a language or skill are clearly defined through Krashen’s Affective Filter Hypothesis. Since this study focuses on writing anxiety and the study on the influence of a digital comic tool on the writing anxiety and writing performance of Malaysian ESL learners, this theory will guide the discussion of the findings obtained.

2.3 Mayer's Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (2001)

The second theory that relates to this study is the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning by Richard Mayer (2001). This theory is a cognitivist learning theory applied specifically for multimedia learning. This theory is relevant as the components that make up this model foreground the understanding of the present study. The multimedia related principle of this theory asserts that learning is much more successful when words and pictures compliment each other.

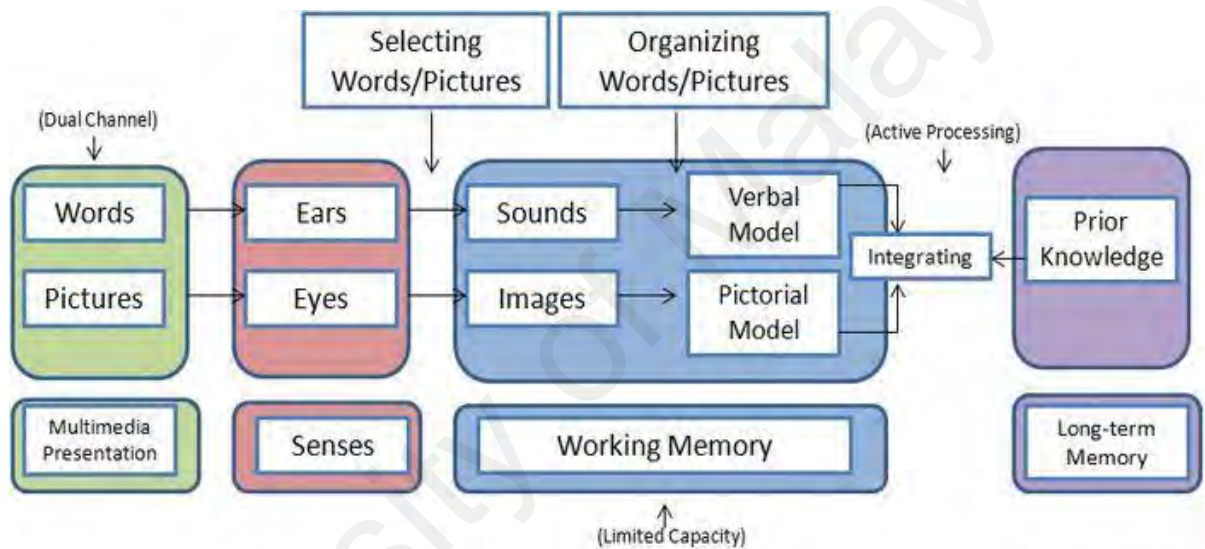


Figure 2.2: Mayer's Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (2001)

The Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning places great emphasis on five cognitive processes when it comes to multimedia learning. The five cognitive processes include 1) choosing suitable words from a given text, 2) choosing of appropriate images, 3) making suitable connections of words into appropriate spoken discourse, 4) arranging set of images to form clear understanding of the intended outcome, and 5) incorporating pictures and words to match their schemata.

Considering one of the primary objectives of this study is to explore the influence of a digital comic tool on the writing performance of Malaysian ESL learners in terms of

context, sentence fluency and word choice, Mayer's Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (2001) would add depth to the findings of this study. Figure 2.2 presents the components that make up the Mayer's Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (2001).

This model will aid in extrapolating the mechanism during the writing process in this study, which involves the use of a digital comic tool. In line with the focus of the study, it is also deemed important to delineate what is 'writing anxiety'. The next section will explain this.

2.4 Writing Anxiety

Worde (1998) points out that most second language learners experience writing anxiety. Various studies suggest that the majority of second language learners find writing, a skill that is difficult to master (Latiff, 2007). There are a few definitions to the term writing anxiety. According to Spielberger (1983), anxiety itself, is a psychological and physical response to threat with a constant accompanied feeling of pressure. Daly and Wilson (1983) later refer writing anxiety to a situation which involves an individual avoiding scenarios which involves writing or evaluation.

Chastain (1988), on the other hand, defined writing anxiety as "uneasiness or fear that is caused by the anticipation of something threatening". On a more recent note, Hassan (2001) concludes that writing anxiety is linked to the avoidance towards writing which is coupled by some form of evaluation. Many researchers are now becoming aware of this alarming phenomenon that hinders the abilities of ESL learners to acquire the second language writing skills. Second language learners who feel apprehensive towards writing often fear of not being able to express themselves in their writing, as well as anxious of the way their writing would be evaluated.

Therefore, Al-Ahmad (2003) reports that writing anxiety is inevitably a problem faced by many ESL learners and should be addressed accordingly to reduce the anxiety faced by learners. The following section of this chapter will discuss the causes of writing anxiety in order to better understand the nature of writing anxiety among ESL learners.

2.4.1 What are the causes of writing anxiety among ESL learners?

Writing involves both the cognitive and emotional competencies of ESL learners, which makes writing a complex and difficult skill. Based on a number of researches that have been conducted, there are several causes that contribute to writing anxiety. These causes of writing anxiety are revealed in the sub-sections below.

2.4.1a Fear of Evaluation

According to Dr. Brown (2006), one of the major factors that contributes to writing anxiety among learners would be the fear of evaluation. Horwitz et. al (1986) has also discussed the fear of evaluation in situations involving second language writing. Horwitz et. al (1986) found that having learners' writing evaluated and having the fear of making no progress in their writing created a feeling of anxiousness as well as avoidance towards the writing task given.

To add on, findings from studies conducted by Holladay (1981), Leki (1999), Zhang (2011) and Singh & Rajalingam (2012) also revealed that the fear of evaluation is one of the causes of writing anxiety among ESL learners. Learners who are judged upon how their ideas are elaborated, the range of vocabulary used, development of arguments and the overall aesthetic quality of their writing makes the writing process demanding. Hence, the evaluation process has a great impact and may negatively influence many ESL

learners.

2.4.1b Low English Proficiency

Besides the fear of evaluation being the major cause of writing anxiety among second language learners, previous researchers have revealed that low proficiency in the English language has contributed immensely to writing anxiety. ESL learners who are less proficient in the English language often find themselves nervous when having to write in English. Their incompetencies in the language had caused them to experience writing anxiety.

According to Arnold (1999), learners proficiency level and language competencies influence their ability when it comes to writing. Hyland (2003) argues that learners who have an inadequate knowledge in grammar and vocabulary often find themselves struggling to express themselves in English. This causes learners to experience writing anxiety. A study that was conducted by Zhang (2011) among ESL Chinese majors revealed that 83% of the learners admit that their linguistic difficulties has resulted in them experiencing writing anxiety.

In addition, a study that took place in Malaysia by Nor Shidrah et. al (2006) and another by Daud et. al (2005), also highlighted that learners with low English proficiency are seen to be more apprehensive towards writing. Their incompetencies in the language as well as their insufficient knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary has caused their writing anxiety. Other studies also confirm that lack of linguistic knowledge to be a contributing factor (Latif, 2007 and Ganschow & Javorsky, 2000).

2.4.1c Teaching and Learning Methodologies

To add on, studies have exposed teaching and learning methodology associated with writing to be another contributing factor of writing anxiety. A study by Suleiman (1983) cited in Rabab'ah (2005), points out that poor curriculum design coupled with unsatisfactory teaching and learning methodologies had brought about the rise in writing anxiety among ESL Arab learners.

Zughoul (1987) who had the opportunity to study the syllabus and analyse the teaching and learning methodologies adopted in the middle Eastern country, was also in support of Suleiman's findings. Zughoul further claims that the lack of balance in the curriculum mainly in terms of the language component had caused the rise of writing anxiety among the ESL learners in the country.

Apart from that, Hassan (2001) identifies authoritative teacher centered product based teaching as a possible cause of writing anxiety amongst learners. Previous studies have pointed out that poor teaching and writing methodologies employed by teachers contribute to writing anxiety among learners.

Therefore, in order to overcome writing anxiety among learners, Leki (1999) proposed a non-threatening approach to teaching writing. Baxter (1987) suggested that in efforts to achieve success in teaching of writing skills, teachers should incorporate student-centered learning environment, use concrete materials and instructional tools to increase learners' interest as well as adopt free-writing techniques. Student centered learning approach will indirectly allow learners to express themselves in order to overcome their writing anxiety.

2.4.1d Insufficient or Lack of Feedback

Besides teaching and learning methodologies, some researchers also revealed that insufficient or lack of constructive comments with reference to learners' writing has caused most learners to lose interest in writing. Zhang (2011) claims that the feedback received by students was not adequate and effective enough for them to improve their writing skills. This had led them to avoid writing. Kara (2013) too acknowledges the importance of teacher's feedback. The students in her study denounced that not receiving any comments on their writing had contributed to their failure and anxiety in writing courses. Thus, it is important for teachers to provide learners with the means to improve their skills and interest in writing by providing constructive comments. The comments received will provide opportunities for learners to become better writers.

2.4.1e Low-Self Confidence

Cheng (2002) has also argued that having low self-confidence in second language writing may also account for writing apprehension among ESL learners. Hyland (2003) believes that lack of confidence in second language writing is due to learners' not having adequate grasp of vocabulary and grammar. This causes frustration when learners are required to express themselves in the written form appropriately and correctly (Hyland, 2003). Findings of a study conducted by Zhang (2011) among Chinese English majors also found students' low self-confidence a factor that had caused writing anxiety among the English majors. Hence, students' confidence level contributed to one of the causes of writing anxiety among learners.

2.4.1f Lack of Topical Knowledge

Lastly, learners' lacking in schemata or prior knowledge on a specific topic could also be seen as a possible cause for writing anxiety among learners. Learners who are given a topic to write would experience considerable amount of tension and apprehension especially having to deal with a topic or a subject that they are unfamiliar with. Such conditions that occur within the second language classroom influences the quality of the writing tasks. (Bachman & Palmer, 1996).

Learner's schemata acts as abstract knowledge structures consisting of large amounts of information (Yekovich & Yekovich, 1993). Anderson (2005) believes that the information stored acts as cognitive constructs to form a meaningful system. Therefore, lack of schemata on a given topic promotes writing anxiety among learners. They would not be equipped with the sufficient knowledge to write, which in return impacts their writing ability. Hence, lack of topical knowledge largely contributes to writing anxiety.

Undoubtedly, it can be concluded that, if writing anxiety is not detected and treated, there will be adverse effects on the learners' writing skills. The effects of writing anxiety among learners are presented below.

2.4.2 What are the effects of writing anxiety on learners?

Undeniably, writing anxiety has brought serious effects on learners. The effects of writing anxiety are organised in 5 major themes as below.

2.4.2a Avoidance

With reference to past literature, Cheng (2002) advocates that one of the major effects on learners who suffer from writing anxiety is that many of these learners avoid

taking writing courses or careers that involve writing. Due to their negative experience and unresolved issues related to writing anxiety, many learners avoid any circumstances that puts them in devastating situations.

According to Faigley, Daly and Witte (1981), learners who suffer from writing anxiety often avoid writing and consider writing to be unrewarding and punishing. To support the two findings above, Daly and Miller (1975), concluded that learners who experience writing anxiety are unwilling to write and take up any courses that would require any form of writing. Previous findings have acknowledged the fact that writing anxiety causes learners to avoid writing. Therefore, Matthews (2006) has proposed a non-threatening learning environment to encourage writing among learners who suffer from writing anxiety.

2.4.2b Poor Writing Quality

In addition, learners who experience low writing anxiety tend to write more compared to highly anxious writers. It is found that less anxious learners' word count and the overall writing quality tend to be higher compared to anxious writers. According to Book (1976), learners who are less anxious when it comes to writing, seem to write three times more which includes the usage of nouns, pronouns, adjectives and propositions compared to highly anxious learners. Hassan (2001) in his study entitled "The Relationship of Writing Apprehension and Self-Esteem to the Writing Quality and Quantity of EFL University Students" revealed that learners who are highly anxious wrote less in comparison with learners who are less anxious.

Findings gathered by Faigley, Daly and Witte (1981) were also in line with the findings of Hassan (2001). Both findings have concluded that writers with high levels of

writing anxiety did not produce lengthy pieces of writing and possess limited writing fluency in comparison to low anxious writers. This happens due to the emotional factor that takes place during the writing process. Writing anxiety is therefore closely linked to psychological effects (Cheng, 2004). Learners who experience writing anxiety are constantly affected by their negative and anxious attitudes towards writing.

2.4.2c Pressure and Fear of Writing

Learners who experience writing anxiety according to Spielberger (1983), experience constant accompanied feeling of pressure. This could be a possible reason why learners who experience writing anxiety often avoid having to deal with writing. This could be due to the fear of having to go through the emotional and psychological threat in response to completing a writing task. Hence, Betancourt and Phinney (1988) conclude that ESL learners who suffers from writing anxiety would reveal a more negative and anxious attitude towards writing compared to non-anxious writers.

2.4.2d Low writing grades

To add on, Powell (1984) along with Fowler and Ross (1982) had confirmed that due to ESL writers' negative and anxious attitude towards writing, writing grades tend to be lower among high anxious learners. Chai (2006) in the study entitled 'Writing plan quality: Relevance to writing scores among pupils in Grade 4,7 and 10', confirms that there was a statistically significant relationship between writing quality and writing scores. The quality of writing is reflected when writers are required to write narratives and on descriptive topics which involve their personal feelings and experiences (Faigly, Daly and Witte, 1981). The quality of message encoded is considerably poor among highly anxious writers. In retrospect, it is deemed important to seek corrective measures to help learners overcome

writing anxiety.

2.4.2e Slow Vocabulary Acquisition

Last but not least, MacIntyre and Gardner (1998) claim that learners who are anxious and experience high levels of writing anxiety acquired vocabulary at a much slower rate compared to learners with low writing anxiety levels. The negative aspect of writing anxiety which affects the learning process can also be best described using the model proposed by Tobias (1979). This model describes the effect of writing anxiety on learning specifically in three stages which are Input, Processing and Output. These three stages are believed to interplay with one another where the mastery of a certain skill is concerned.

Therefore, when anxiety takes control of the learning process during the input and processing stage, the output, which is the students' writing is affected, and this impacts the development of vocabulary knowledge. With evidence proving the detrimental effects of writing anxiety, many educators and researchers are highly motivated to study the impact of technology in helping learners cope with writing anxiety.

With the advancement of technology, many educators are opting to integrate technology as part of the teaching and learning process as it offers many positive outcomes to both the learners and educators. Melor Md Yunus et. al (2009) and Maimun Aqsha Lubis et. al (2009) hold the opinion that the use of technology creates an engaging teaching and learning environment. In fact, many researchers believe in the potential benefits of using Information and Communications Technology (ICT) when it comes to learning, especially technology such as digital comics.

Therefore, the next section of this chapter will provide a detailed account on the definition of comics and digital comics along with a review of studies on the use of digital comics as a computer assisted language learning (CALL) tool to help learners with writing anxiety.

2.5 Comics

Oxford Dictionary (2000) defines comics as an art comprising of a set of images in a fixed sequence which aims to tell a story. According to Harvey (2001), comics are narratives through pictures in which words within speech bubbles contribute to the meaning of the comic. Comics are typically printed on paper as the text is presented to supplement the images.

2.6 Digital Comics

Digital comics, on the other hand, are comics that are created on a computer or comics that are published digitally. Digital comics are produced with digital comic tools. They can be in the form of web comics, online comics, e-comics or Internet comics.

Digital comics are becoming more and more popular due to technology advancement and are widely used and explored in today's world. Therefore in this study, the influence of a digital comic tool on writing anxiety and writing performance of Malaysian ESL learners in terms of context, sentence fluency and word choice are analysed in order to find out if the inclusion of digital comics aid the writing process.

With the availability of Information Communications and Technology (ICT) in the classroom, the use of digital comics as a computer assisted language learning (CALL) writing tool began to receive the attention of instructors and researchers. The following section of this chapter will highlight the use of digital comic tools in the English learning classroom.

2.7 Benefits of digital comic tools in the classroom

Technology is rapidly changing the traditional language classrooms. Digital comics are seen as an alternative pathway to literary composition in language classrooms these days. In today's technological world, many educators prefer using ICT as part of their teaching and learning platform. It offers a lot of advantages, which create an appealing

learning atmosphere (Melor et. al, 2009). Lyga and Lyga (2004) confirm that teaching via static texts is considered boring and not practical these days. Hence, the benefits of digital comics in the classroom are presented below.

2.7.1 Motivating

Writing is a difficult skill for many learners especially for those who are learning English as their second or even third language. To make matters worse, low achieving language learners tend to lack motivation and the interest to learn and write in English. In situations like this, Faulkner (2009) strongly supports the notion whereby the use of digital comic tools in the classroom helps to increase learners' interest and motivation to write. Zimmerman (2010) asserts that working with digital comics can turn a frustrating learning process into an enjoyable one. Due to the nature of comic tools, learners find their writing experience a pleasant one. The visuals present in the tool guides learners as they create their story. Hence, act as a motivating tool.

2.7.2 Encourage Collaborative Learning

Secondly, using digital comics as an educational tool provides opportunities for learners to work collaboratively. According to Zimmerman (2010), digital comic tools encourage learners to use the language therefore indirectly allowing learners to develop their language skills. With the inclusion of digital comic tools, educators can use it during a writing lesson and allow learners to develop their writing skills. This will also make writing lessons more interesting. With the use of digital comic tools, educators can creatively put what is learnt into practice. Not only that, the tool also provides helpful visual aid to the learners.

2.7.3 Good Visual Aid

Bledsoe (2010) in his study entitled “Comic Life in Education” has reported that many students claim that they do not know what to write when a writing task is given to them. They claimed to have the ideas but do not know how to put their ideas into words, and turn their ideas into a well written piece of composition. In his study, students frequently ask if they could supplement their thoughts with images. This shows that students are reaching for images to support their ideas. With the use of digital comic tools, learners can complement their thoughts with images. This aspect of the tool allows learners to complement their thoughts with images needed when learning to write in English. Besides, digital comic tools also provide a good publishing medium for learners.

2.7.4 Good Publishing Medium

Bledsoe (2010) also admits that with the use of digital comic tools, students experience a new medium for publishing. Their work can be easily printed out, emailed or published for the reading pleasure of others including their parents. Bledsoe stated that students equipped with these skills would be able to successfully produce podcasts, movies and digital stories. Hence, with the ability to produce and publish works of their own, learners are given the opportunity to explore the language in an interesting manner. Undeniably, when learning becomes interesting, learners would be able to cope with the writing anxiety faced.

2.7.5 Help Learners Cope with Writing Anxiety

Zimmerman (2010) has pointed out the fact that using digital comics during the writing process helps learners cope with their writing anxiety. As mentioned earlier, with the use of digital comic tools in the classroom, educators are able to create a

non-threatening learning atmosphere (Blake, 2008). This creates space for learners to explore the language, which leads to the mastery of the language in a much shorter period of time. Besides helping learners cope with writing anxiety, digital comic tools encourage learners to produce quality writing.

2.7.6 Produce Quality Writing

Goldberg, Russel and Cook (2003) point out that learners who work with a computer to write are believed to be more involved and prompted in their writing. They also produce writings that are of great quality and longer in length. Russel and Cook (2003) also claim that students that used ICT in learning to write not only increases their interest in the writing process, but also produce writing that is greater in length and higher in quality. Previous studies conducted by Pennington (2004) and Sullivan & Pratt (1996) also revealed students' writing quality being improved with the use of computers. In return, writing lessons become enjoyable and interesting as well.

2.7.7 Enjoyable Writing Process

Chilcoat (1993) believes that comic is a form of art that students enjoy. He believes that with the opportunity given to students to create their own comics, they would explore the use of dialogue, acquire various vocabulary and be better equipped with non verbal communication. Chilcoat also points out that creating a comic book would create an enjoyable learning experience for the learners. This aspect would encourage students to be responsible for their own learning and helps enliven a classroom. A study conducted by Lutfifati (2011) found that the use of comic strips during the teaching of writing had created an enjoyable learning experience for the students in her study. Blake (2008) concludes that computer assisted language learning (CALL) writing tools does offer a less stressful

learning option for learners. Last but not least, CALL writing tools increase the creativity levels of learners too.

2.7.8 Increases Creativity

In the process of creating their comics, learners will also have the opportunity to be creative. Gardner (1999) holds the opinion that in the process of designing comics, students expand their visual-spatial intelligence. Pennington (2004) agrees that with the use of computer assisted language learning (CALL) writing tools, learners exhibit creativity when producing their writing. Clearly, with the nature of the CALL tools, learners would be able to increase their creativity.

The evidences discussed above proved the benefits of digital comic tools in the teaching of writing. The last section of this chapter will highlight previous research conducted on the use of digital comic tools in the classroom.

2.8 Previous Research on the use of Digital Comic Tools in the Classroom

In Malaysia, a study was conducted among 30 teacher trainees in University Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) by Melor Md Yunus et. al (2009). The study entitled “*Using Digital Comics in Teaching ESL Writing*” aimed to explore the teacher trainees’ views on the use of digital comics in teaching ESL writing to low achievers. In order to collect the needed data for the study, a questionnaire was distributed which required the teacher trainees to reveal their perception on the use of digital comics in teaching writing.

Findings of the study indicate that majority of the teacher trainees (83.3%) were in favour of the use of ICT in the teaching of writing. They agree that ICT had helped motivate low achievers to write. The teacher trainees also admit that with the use of digital comics in the classroom, learners are not only motivated to write but they also found

learners' writing to be creative. In addition, 80% of the teachers agreed that with the use of digital comics in the classroom, learners are able to utilise their multiple skills. On the whole, the study concluded that two third of the teacher trainees found digital comics easy to use and agreed that the unique features of digital comics attract learners to write.

Another study by Megawati and Anugerahwati (2012) entitled '*Comic Strips: A Study on the Teaching of Writing Narrative Texts to Indonesian EFL Students*' was conducted among 31 students to study the implementation of comic strips to improve students' ability in writing narrative texts. The findings of this study revealed that the use of comic strips improved students' ability in writing narrative texts. The mean scores of the writing aspects include content, organisation, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics, and were found to have improved with the use of comic strips. Furthermore, the attitudes of the students towards writing also improved by the end of the study. The students reported to be more confident in writing and admitted that the comic strips have helped them during the writing process.

Similarly, a study entitled '*Improving Writing Skill of the Eight Graders Through Comic Strip*' by Hamidah et.al (2015) was conducted to investigate if at all the use of comic strip was effective in improving eight graders' narrative writing skills. The researchers carried out a pre-experimental research design which involved a pre-test and post-test. The study looked at two elements of writing which are mechanics and grammar. The comparison of scores obtained from the pre-test and post-test revealed that the writing skills of the students in this study have improved. The percentage of students' errors in terms of grammar and mechanics before and after treatment phase was significantly reduced. Therefore, this study has also proven that the use of comics have improved learners' writing skills.

Last but not least, another study was also conducted by Lutfifati (2011) entitled *'Using Comic Strips to Improve the Eight Grade Students' Ability in Writing Narrative Texts at SMPN 9 Malang'*. This study involved 26 students who had problems writing sentence grammatically, choosing appropriate pictures with words and developing ideas. The study intended to investigate if the use of comic strips would be a good alternative strategy for teaching narrative writing. The results of this study, indicate that the students' scores in terms of organisation, language use and spelling improved throughout the study. The students also found the implementation of comic strips in the classroom to be interesting and had helped them to develop their ideas.

The aforementioned studies seem to indicate the benefits of using comics in the teaching of writing. Inevitably, the various aspects of a comic had helped learners with writing difficulties and writing anxiety achieve success in writing.

2.9 Summary

With evidences proving the wonders of ICT, many educators these days are taking advantage of ICT not just for themselves but integrating it in the teaching and learning process. Learners who learn using ICT will develop both technology related skills as well as language skills (Melor, 2007). Based on a number of studies highlighted in this chapter, that focuses on the integration of ICT in teaching and learning, the findings of these research are in favour of the use of ICT in teaching and learning. Hence, the benefits of using ICT in the classroom are undeniable. The next chapter will reveal the methodology employed in order to answer the research questions of the present study.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter will show parts related to the (1) methodology of the present study, (2) sample selection, (3) procedure and instruments used to gather the data for the study, and (4) procedures employed for data analyses. Firstly, the present study aims to find out if Malaysian ESL learners experience writing anxiety and the levels of their writing anxiety. Secondly, this study aims to reveal the causes of writing anxiety among Malaysian ESL learners. It also intends to study the influence of digital comic tool on writing anxiety and performance of the learners along with their perception on the use of a comic tool during the writing process.

In order to achieve the aims outlined, this study takes on a mixed method research design by adopting both qualitative and quantitative methods. According to Creswell and Clark (2011), a mixed method research design is a procedure that involves collecting both qualitative and quantitative data within a study to further understand a research problem. The combination of both qualitative and quantitative data yields “a very powerful mix” (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Hence, the quantitative approach of this study is derived from a true experimental research design with a pre-test and post-test design. While, the qualitative data is obtained through focus group interviews carried out with the Malaysian ESL learners to further support the findings of the present study. The next section of this chapter will describe the participants, setting, and topic of writing task.

3.1 Participants, Setting and Topic of Writing Task

3.1.1 Participants

A total of 79 Malaysian ESL students, aged eleven, took the Second Language

Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) (Cheng, 2004) questionnaire (Refer to Appendix 1). The results of the questionnaire indicated 36 students experience high levels of writing anxiety, 28 students experience moderate levels of writing anxiety and the remaining 15 students experience low levels of writing anxiety. In line with the objectives of this study, the 36 students who were found to experience high levels of writing anxiety were selected to take part in this study. These students with high writing anxiety levels were chosen to evaluate the impact of the treatment phase. They were homogeneous in terms of their anxiety levels and were divided equally and assigned randomly into two groups; Control Group (CG) and Experimental Group (EG).

The students were composed of 3 different races which make up the main races in Malaysia. They are the Malay, Chinese and the Indians and English is their second language. The students were categorised as intermediate English language learners based on their March 2015 school-based examination results. They obtained scores ranging from 65-79 out of 100 which puts them in the intermediate category. Up to the date of this study, these students have been going through formal education at the current school for the past 5 years, since the age of 7.

3.1.2 Setting

The present study was conducted in an urban school in the city of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. For this study, the school library, the computer lab and a Year 5 classroom were used to gather the needed data. A consent letter (Refer to Appendix 2) was given out to the students' parents prior to this study.

3.1.3 Topic

The topic 'My Best Vacation' was chosen for the writing task in this study as it is similar to one of the topics assigned under the Year 5 *Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah* (KSSR) English syllabus which is "Going Places". This topic will be tested at the end of the

Year 5 school-based examination. At the time this study was conducted, the students had not learnt this topic thus making it suitable for this study. The writing task “My Best Vacation” is therefore deemed appropriate for the students’ present level.

In addition, a pilot study was conducted prior to conducting the present study. According to Porta (2008), a pilot study is defined as “A small-scale test of the methods and procedures to be used on a larger scale”. The fundamental purpose of conducting a pilot study is to examine the feasibility of the approaches that is intended to be used in a larger scale study. With an understanding on the purpose of conducting a pilot study, the following section of this chapter will provide details of the pilot study conducted and the changes made.

3.2 Pilot Study

A total of twenty, 10 year old, ESL students took part in the pilot study. The students sat for the Second Language Writing Inventory (SLWAI) questionnaire, underwent two separate one-to-one interviews, a pre-test followed by a treatment phase and a post-test. A few changes as stated below were made after the administration of the pilot study. The changes made are listed below.

- i. The 20 students in the pilot study were given a 20 minutes time frame to complete the questionnaire. As a result, they were found to be restless when completing the questionnaire within the stipulated time. Therefore, in the present study, students were not imposed with a time frame to complete the Second Language Writing Inventory (SLWAI) questionnaire. This was to enable the students to complete the questionnaire without the constraints of time.

- ii. Besides, the students who took part in the pilot study sat for the SLWAI questionnaire for the first time. They were unfamiliar with the “Likert-Scale” scoring system used in the questionnaire. For that reason, a detailed explanation was given to students in the present study on how to complete the questionnaire with examples in order to facilitate understanding.
- iii. The computers used during the pilot study needed constant updating. This interfered with the treatment phase among students in the experimental group. This problem was relayed to the teacher who is in charge of the Computer Lab to ensure the computers were well maintained and updated on a regular basis during the present study.
- iv. Last but not least, one-to-one interview sessions held with the students during the pilot study were not fruitful. The students were very shy when sharing their opinions and views on the causes of their writing anxiety as well as their perceptions on the use of a digital comic tool during the writing process. Hence, in the present study, focus group interviews were conducted to gather the needed data from the students.

As listed above, those were the changes made with reference to the present study. The next section of this chapter will reveal the research instruments used to yield the findings of the study.

3.3 Research Instruments

3.3.1 Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI)

The Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) (Refer Appendix 1) was used to identify if Malaysian ESL learners experience writing anxiety and to evaluate

the levels of their writing anxiety. The questionnaire (Cheng, 2004) consists of 22 items in which the items are graded on a Five-point Likert-Scale ranging from 1 which is strongly disagree to 5 which is strongly agree. The 22-item writing anxiety inventory is reported to achieve an internal consistency of Cronbach coefficient α of 0.91 thus making it suitable to be used as an instrument to measure students' writing anxiety (Cheng, 2004). This questionnaire had been used in many studies. Some of the researchers who have used the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) include Negari & Rezaabadi (2012), Foroutan & Nordin (2011), Zhang (2011) and Rezaei & Jafari (2014). The questionnaire was also used by these researchers to establish the level of anxiety as indicated in the present study.

3.3.2 Stripgenerator

An online digital comic tool known as 'Stripgenerator' (Refer Figure 3.1) is used to evaluate the influence of a digital comic tool on the writing anxiety and writing performance of the Malaysian ESL learners. This tool is used during the treatment phase with students from the Experimental Group (EG). Stripgenerator is used in this study to produce comic strips digitally. This online digital comic tool offers a range of unique characters, beings, objects, shapes and speech bubbles. One can scale them, rotate, add colours and more (Refer Figure 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4). This particular online digital comic tool is chosen because it is user-friendly and does not involve any cost. There is no need for registration as well.

Besides, this tool can be used as long as there is the availability of the Internet without any installation. This not only saves time but also ensures hassle-free usage of the tool. Stripgenerator allows students to print out their comic strips once they are done, share them with others by publishing their comic strips or just saving them in their computers. As

such, this tool is chosen as one of the research instruments. Figures 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4 showcase the online digital comic tool ‘Stripgenerator’ used in the study.

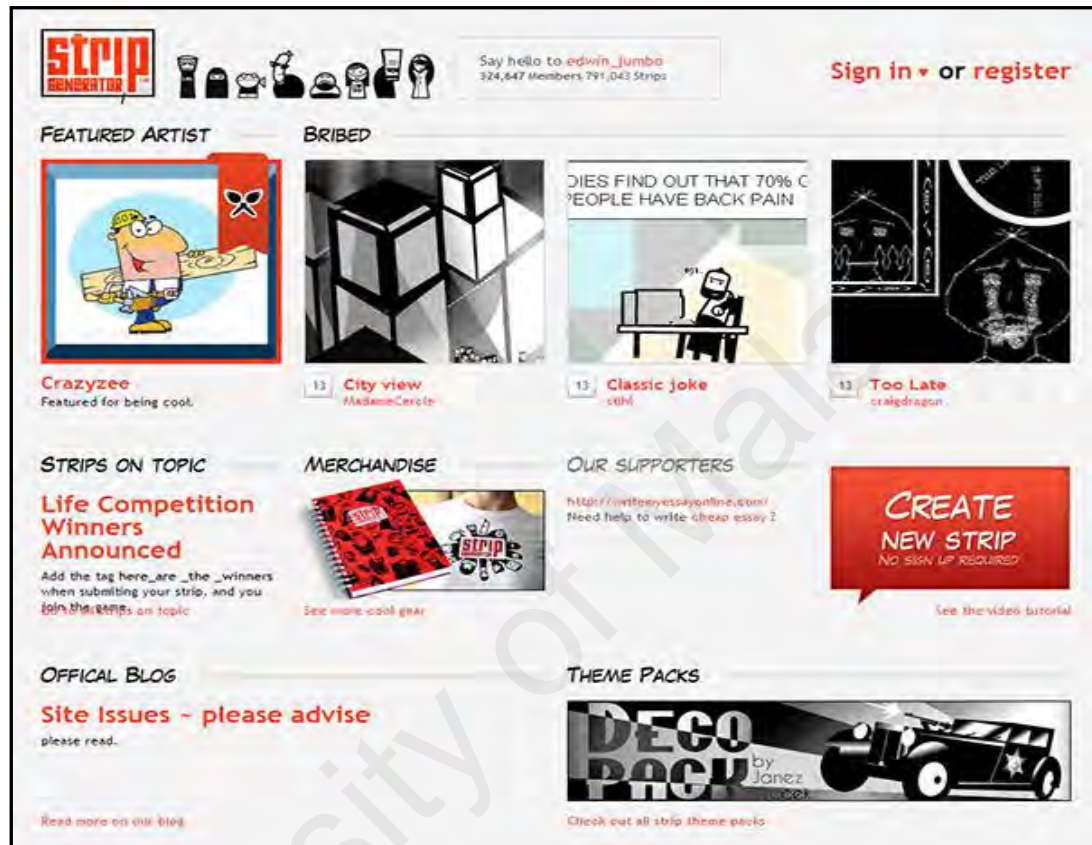


Figure 3.1: The interface of ‘Stripgenerator’

With reference to Figure 3.1, to create online digital comics using ‘Stripgenerator’, users are required to log into <http://stripgenerator.com/>. The user-friendly interface of ‘Stripgenerator’ allows one to create their comics by clicking the big orange box that states ‘CREATE NEW STRIP, NO SIGN UP REQUIRED’.



Figure 3.2: Choosing Frames and Panels

With reference to Figure 3.2, different frames and panels are available for users. One can start assembling their comics after choosing the desired frames and panels. The frames and panels allow users to create their comics in sequence.



Figure 3.3: Choosing Characters, Beings or Items

After choosing suitable frames and panels, users can start selecting a variety of characters, items and objects available that represents their story (Refer Figure 3.3). The wide range of characters, beings and items allow users to supplement their thoughts easily.

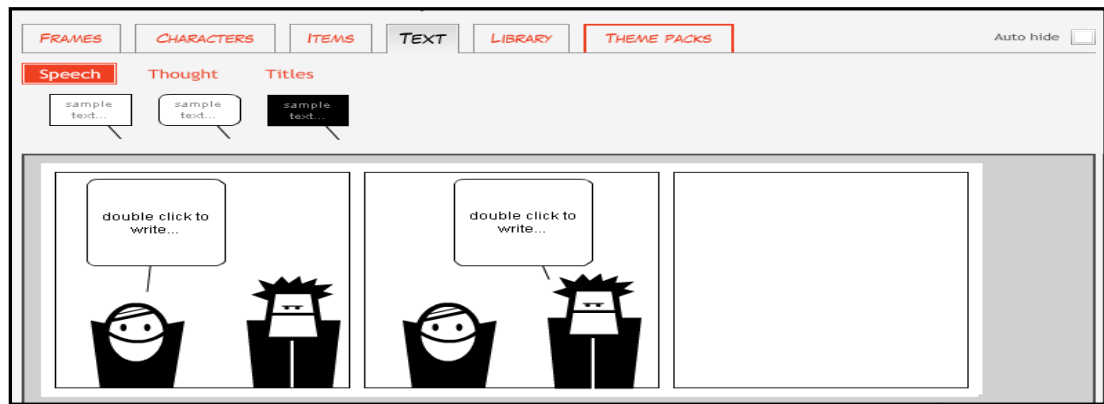


Figure 3.4: Creating Digital Comics

Once suitable characters, beings and items are chosen, users can immediately work on the storyline by adding speech bubbles to their comics (Refer Figure 3.4). The speech bubbles help users to present their stories. After a comic is created, options to save, print and publish are available to all users.

3.3.3 Scoring Rubric for Composition Writing

A scoring rubric for composition writing (Refer Appendix 3) is used in this study to assess students' narratives written during the pre-test and post-test. The narratives written by the students were graded in terms of context, sentence fluency and word choice. The scoring rubric is also used by the English teachers where this study is conducted to evaluate the narratives written by students during the school-based examinations. As students are familiar with the grading system of the school, the scoring rubric is suitable to be used as one of the research instruments for the present study.

3.3.4 Focus Group Interviews

Two separate focus group interviews were conducted throughout the present

study by the researcher herself. Both the interviews took place in a classroom. The purpose and guidelines of the interviews were informed to the students before the interviews were conducted. The questions were read one-by-one by the researcher and the students took turns to share their views and comments. Their responses were audio-tapped and transcribed (Refer Appendix 6 and 7).

The first interview involved all 36 students which aimed to identify the causes of writing anxiety. A total of 3 open-ended questions (Refer Appendix 4) were posed to the students before the implementation of the treatment phase. The second interview on the other hand, was held after 18 students from the Experimental Group (EG) had completed their post-test. The interview involved 4 open-ended questions (Refer Appendix 5) in order to find out the perceptions of students from the Experimental Group (EG) on the use of the digital comic tool employed in the present study.

The focus group interviews were administered to gather the needed data to answer the second and fourth research questions outlined in the present study. The following section of this dissertation will now describe the research design of the study.

3.4 Research Design

In order to achieve the aims outlined, this study adopted the mixed method research design. According to Creswell and Clark (2011), a mixed method research design is a procedure that involves collecting both quantitative and qualitative data within a study to further understand a research problem. The combination of both qualitative and quantitative data yields “a very powerful mix” (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The process of gathering both the qualitative and quantitative data also provides a means of triangulation that ensures a more detailed understanding of the research problem.

For that reason, this study is geared towards obtaining both qualitative and quantitative data to further validate the influence of a digital comic tool on writing anxiety and writing performance of the Malaysian ESL learners. The quantitative data of this study were derived from a questionnaire and scores obtained from the pre-test and post-test. The pre-test and post-test were administered to find out if there are any significant differences in the scores of learners with high level of writing anxiety between the control and experimental group. The scores were compared in terms of context, sentence fluency and word choice before and after the treatment phase. The questionnaire was distributed to the learners to investigate if Malaysian ESL learners experience writing anxiety and the levels of their writing anxiety.

The qualitative data on the other hand, were obtained through focus group interviews. The focus group interviews will help to reveal the causes of writing anxiety among Malaysian ESL learners with high levels of writing anxiety and their perceptions on the use of a digital comic tool during the writing process. The following page will visually describe the data collection procedure of this study.

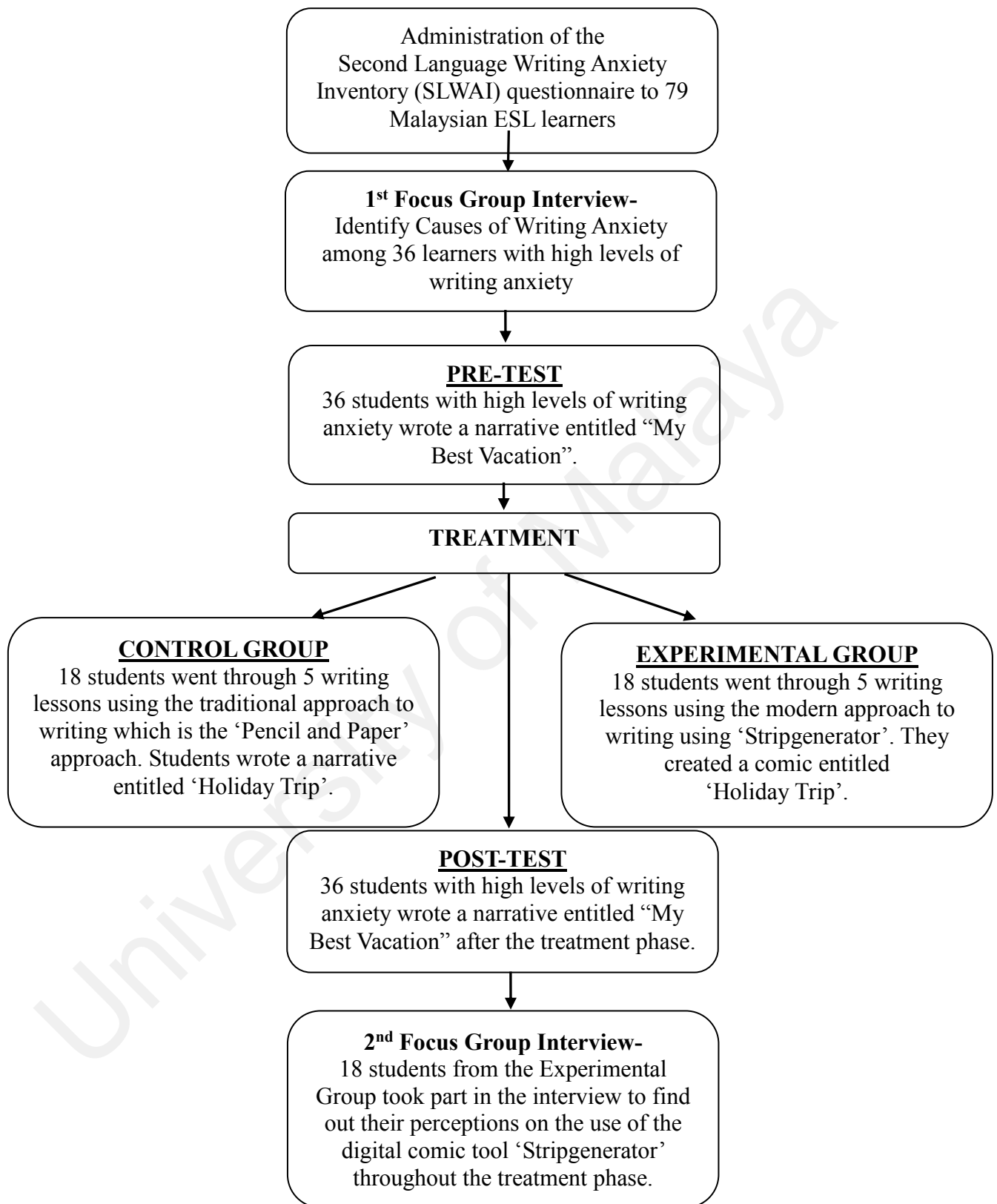


Figure 3.5 Design of the Study

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

3.5.1 Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI)

With reference to Figure 3.5, the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) was given out to 79 Malaysian ESL students for the purpose of identifying students who were experiencing writing anxiety and the levels of their writing anxiety. The students were briefed on the intention of administering this questionnaire and were given a short briefing and guidance in completing the questionnaire before it was administered. Since this is the first time the students encountered a questionnaire that contains Likert Scale, they were not given a specific time frame to complete the questionnaire. This was to ensure the students knew how to complete the questionnaire and to avoid any ambiguity with regards to completing the questionnaire.

3.5.2 Focus Group Interviews

In order to answer Research Question 2 and 4, two separate focus group interviews were conducted (Refer Figure 3.5). This particular data collection procedure involves the process of gathering data from interviews with a group of people (Creswell, 2012). The rationale for conducting focus group interviews in this case was because responses were easily gathered from the students compared to one-to-one interviews due to the nature of the procedure. Creswell (2012) stated that focus group interviews create a non-threatening environment that enable researchers to yield the best information from individuals who are hesitant to provide information.

On that account, focus group interviews were seen as a better option in obtaining responses from the students in the present study. The first focus group interview was conducted with all 36 students to identify the causes of their writing anxiety. The interview consisted of 3 open-ended questions (Refer Appendix 4). The second interview on the other

hand, was held after 18 students from the Experimental Group (EG) have completed their post-test. The second focus group interview consisted of 4 open-ended questions (Refer Appendix 5). These questions aim to find out the perception of the learners on the use of a digital comic tool during the writing process. The responses of students from both the focus group interviews were audio-tapped and transcribed (Refer Appendix 6 and 7) to reveal the causes of writing anxiety among students with high levels of writing anxiety and the students' perception on using a digital comic tool as part of the writing process.

3.5.3 Pre-test

The 36 students who experience high levels of writing anxiety in the present study sat for a pre-test (Refer Figure 3.5). The students were required to write on the topic "My Best Vacation" between 80-100 words. They were given 35 minutes to write their narratives using pencil and paper. There was no guidance given during the test. The students used their prior knowledge and schemata to write their narratives. After 35 minutes, their compositions were collected and assessed using a scoring rubric (Refer Appendix 3) by two teachers specifically appointed for the purpose of this study. The scores obtained from the pre-test were used to compare with the scores obtained through the post-test. The comparison of scores from both the experimental and control group were carried out in terms of context, sentence fluency and word choice. The findings are to be used to answer Research Question 3.

3.5.4 Treatment

Control Group

The 18 students from the Control Group (CG) went through the treatment phase

where they were taught the writing skills using the traditional method. The researcher, who is the teacher, conducted five lessons each lasting for one hour. The students were taught to write on the topic “Holiday Trip”. The procedure throughout the five lessons for the students in the Control Group (CG) are described below.

Lesson 1:

The researcher informed the students the purpose of the study and what the researcher hoped to achieve by the end of her study. A detailed account of the study was revealed to mentally and physically prepare the students for the present study. After the brief introduction, the researcher began to show pictures of her holiday in order to lead into the writing lesson. The sharing session among students was intended to help them activate their schemata on the topic of vacation. The students took this opportunity to share stories of their holiday.

Lesson 2:

The researcher recapped the previous lesson and revealed features of a narrative essay. The students recapped important details of their holiday by answering simple ‘Wh-questions’. They wrote the questions down in order to help them write their narratives in the next lesson. The researcher also recalled the functions of the ‘Wh-questions’. This was to ensure the students were well equipped with the functions of ‘Wh- questions’ which will act as an aid to complete their narratives.

Lesson 3:

Students during this lesson worked individually to write their narratives using pencil and paper based on the discussion and points discussed during the previous lesson. The

students submitted their first draft to be checked and improvised with the help and guidance rendered by the researcher.

Lesson 4:

During this lesson, the students made the necessary revisions to their first draft as indicated and suggested by the researcher. Pupils were guided throughout this phase in order to benefit from the comments given. Students' writings were submitted to be checked for the second time by the researcher.

Lesson 5:

The students shared their narratives with their friends upon revision made to their writings during this lesson. They were placed in groups. They exchanged and shared their writings with each other.

Experimental Group

The other 18 students from the Experimental Group (EG) went through the treatment phase where they were taught the writing skills using an online digital comic tool. The researcher conducted five lessons each lasting for one hour in the computer lab booked for the purpose of this study.

During this phase, the students were taught to write a narrative entitled "Holiday Trip" using an online digital comic tool called "Stripgenerator". The procedure throughout the five lessons are described below.

Lesson 1:

The researcher informed the students the purpose of this study and what the researcher hoped to achieve by the end of this study. A detailed account of the study was revealed to mentally and physically prepare the students for this study. The students were also exposed to the use of the online digital comic tool which is the “Stripgenerator”. After the brief introduction, the researcher began by showing pictures of her holiday in order to lead into the writing lesson. The sharing session served to activate their schemata on the topic. The students shared their stories of their holiday and exchanged information. The students were also given the time to explore the online digital comic tool, “Stripgenerator”.

Lesson 2:

The researcher recapped the previous lesson and exposed the narrative genre to the students by revealing the features of a narrative essay. Students recapped important details of their holiday by answering simple ‘Wh-questions’. They wrote the questions down in order to help them write their narratives in the next lesson. The researcher also recalled the functions of the ‘Wh-questions’ to ensure the students were well equipped with the functions that acts as an aid to complete their comics.

Lesson 3:

The students worked individually to create their comics based on the discussion and points discussed during the previous lesson. The students submitted their first comic draft to be checked and improvised with the help and guidance rendered by the researcher.

Lesson 4:

During this lesson, the students made the necessary revisions to their first comic

draft as indicated and suggested by the researcher. They were guided throughout this phase in order to allow the students to benefit from the comments given. Their digital comics were submitted again for a second review.

Lesson 5:

In this lesson, the students were given the opportunity to share their comics. They were placed in groups and exchanged reading and sharing their writings with each other in the form of comics.

3.5.5 Post-test

After the treatment phase, all the 36 students sat for a post-test. The students were required to write on the topic “My Best Vacation” as in the pre-test. They were given 35 minutes to write about their best vacation. The students wrote their narratives using pencil and paper. There was no guidance given during the test. After 35 minutes, the students were asked to put their pencils down. Narratives from the students were collected and assessed using a scoring rubric (Refer Appendix 3) by two teachers who also scored the students’ narratives during the pre-test. The scores obtained from the post-test were used to compare with the scores from the pre-test. Both the scores compared, will allow the researcher to evaluate the two teaching and writing approaches in terms of students performance in context, sentence fluency and word choice.

3.6 Data Analysis

This section will outline the procedures and analysis of the data obtained in the present study. This study takes on a mixed methods research design. The analysis of the data gathered involved both the qualitative and quantitative data which are described in

detail below.

3.6.1 Writing Anxiety Levels

The SLWAI questionnaire consists of 22 items and are scored on a 5 Point-Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Students' writing anxiety levels were calculated using the given formula. High scores of above 65 points indicate that students experience high levels of writing anxiety while scores below 50 points indicates low levels of writing anxiety. Scores in between suggest moderate writing anxiety levels. Five statements in the questionnaire (1, 4, 7, 18, 22) however are negatively worded and required reverse scoring before summing up to obtain the total scores. Based on the given formula, the writing anxiety levels of the students were determined.

3.6.2 Pre-test and Post-test Scores

The comparison of the pre-test and post-test scores are carried out using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 22. The scores were analysed using independent T-Test. Independent T-Test was chosen to determine if there is a statistically significant difference between means in the two groups which are the Control and Experimental Group in reference to the two writing approaches employed in this study. The comparison of scores were carried out between students from the experimental and control group in terms of three language areas, which are context, sentence fluency and word choice.

3.6.3 Data Transcription of Focus Group Interviews

Two separate focus group interviews were carried out in this study. The audio recordings of the two interviews were transcribed to provide concrete evidence on the causes of high levels of writing anxiety among the students and the perceptions of learners from the Experimental Group on the use of a digital comic tool in the writing classroom.

The audio recordings were transcribed carefully to make sure students' responses were not left out (Refer Appendix 6 and 7). The responses of the learners from the two focus group interviews are grouped in themes and presented in a bar chart, followed by a detailed analysis of their responses. The next section of this chapter, will provide a depiction of the plan of analysis of this study (Table 3.1).

With reference to Table 3.1, in order to answer Research Question 1, the scores of Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) (Cheng, 2004) are obtained. The causes of writing anxiety among the Malaysian ESL learners with high levels of writing anxiety, which answers Research Question 2, are revealed through a focus group interview. While, Research Question 3 is answered by administering a pre-test and post-test and analysed through a scoring rubric and SPSS T-Test analysis. Lastly, the fourth research question of this study is also answered through the data obtained from a focus group interview.

Table 3.1 Data Analysis

Research Questions	Research Instruments	Data Analysis
<p><u>Research Question 1</u></p> <p>Do Malaysian ESL learners experience writing anxiety? What are the levels of their writing anxiety?</p>	<p>✓ Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) (Cheng, 2004)</p>	<p>✓ SLWAI formula</p>
<p><u>Research Question 2</u></p> <p>What are the causes of writing anxiety among Malaysian ESL learners with high levels of writing anxiety?</p>	<p>✓ Focus Group Interview (3 open-ended questions)</p>	<p>✓ Audio Recording and Transcript</p>
<p><u>Research Question 3</u></p> <p>Does the use of a digital comic tool affect the scores of learners with high levels of writing anxiety in terms of context, sentence fluency and word choice?</p>	<p>✓ Pre-test/Post-test-Narrative: 'My Best Vacation'</p> <p>✓ Stripgenerator</p>	<p>✓ Scoring Rubric</p> <p>✓ SPSS-T-Test Analysis</p>
<p><u>Research Question 4</u></p> <p>What are the perceptions of the learners with high levels of writing anxiety on the use of a digital comic tool during the writing process?</p>	<p>✓ Focus Group Interview- 4 open-ended questions</p>	<p>✓ Audio Recording and Transcript</p>

3.7 Summary

This chapter has provided the information on the methodology, sample description, procedures and instruments employed in the present study. The plan for data analysis are also explained in this chapter to provide explanation on how the data of this study was obtained and analysed. The next chapter, Chapter 4, will reveal the findings from the qualitative and quantitative data analysed in this study.

University of Malaya

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter proffers the results and analysis of the data gathered throughout the implementation of the research procedures in this study. The results and analysis of the data gathered are organised in accordance with the research questions of the study. The qualitative and quantitative data obtained and discussed in this chapter is set to provide an understanding on the influence of a digital comic tool on the writing anxiety and writing performance of Malaysian ESL learners.

4.1 Writing Anxiety Levels

Research Question 1

Do Malaysian ESL learners experience writing anxiety? What are the levels of their writing anxiety?

In order to find out if Malaysian ESL learners experience writing anxiety, the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) was administered. Based on the recommended calculations (Refer Chapter 3, Page 18), students who obtained scores above 65 points would fall in the category of experiencing high levels of writing anxiety. Where else, students who scored below or in between a total of 50 points would be deemed as experiencing low and moderate levels of writing anxiety respectively.

Table 4.1 below summarises the findings of the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) administered to 79 Malaysian ESL learners.

Table 4.1: Summary of Descriptive Analysis of SLWAI

Writing Anxiety Levels	Number of Students	Minimum Scores	Maximum Scores	Mean
High Anxiety	36	66	93	79.06
Moderate Anxiety	28	51	64	58.57
Low Anxiety	15	28	49	39.00

Based on the descriptive analysis of the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) presented above, it can be inferred that Malaysian ESL learners do experience writing anxiety. The findings of this study among 79 Malaysian ESL learners reveal that 36 students experience high levels of writing anxiety, 28 students experience moderate levels of writing anxiety and 15 students experience low levels of writing anxiety.

Hence, the findings of this study are similar to the findings of previous studies where writing anxiety among second language learners are concerned. According to Worde (1998), most second language learners experience writing anxiety. Al- Ahmad (2003) reports that writing anxiety is a problem faced by many ESL learners. The findings of the present study also reveal that Malaysian ESL learners do experience writing anxiety. Thus, writing anxiety does affect ESL learners.

In order to understand what contributes to the writing anxiety faced by the Malaysian ESL learners, those with high levels of writing anxiety determined through the SLWAI questionnaire took part in a focus group interview. The interview was conducted among the 36 Malaysian ESL learners with high levels of writing anxiety. The following section of this chapter will reveal the causes of writing anxiety among Malaysian ESL learners.

4.2 Causes of writing anxiety

Research Question 2

What are the causes of writing anxiety among Malaysian ESL learners with high levels of writing anxiety?

In order to answer the second research question of this study, a focus group interview was conducted. The interview was conducted among the 36 Malaysian ESL students who experience high levels of writing anxiety based on the results of the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) (Cheng, 2004). The responses of the students gathered through the focus group interview were audio-tapped and transcribed to facilitate the study (Refer Appendix 6). Their responses, as mentioned in Chapter 3, were analysed according to themes. Figure 4.1, a bar chart, presents the summary of the causes of writing anxiety faced by the students according to themes.

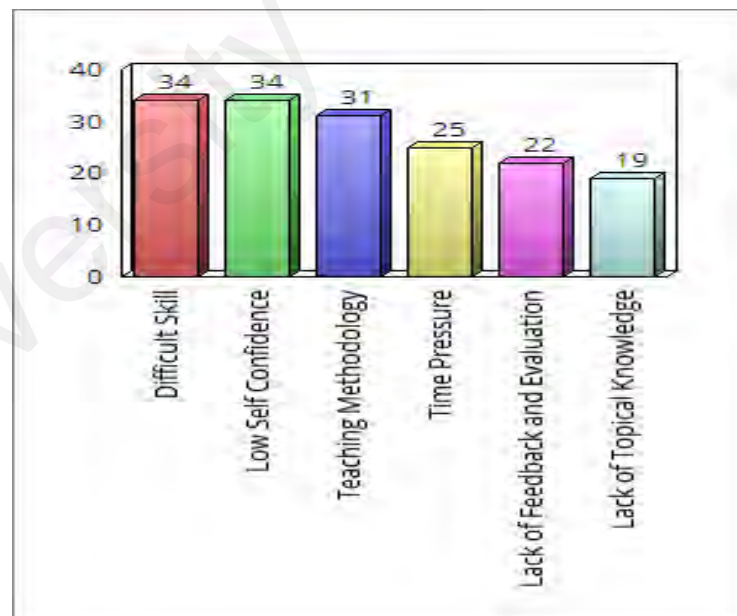


Figure 4.1: Causes of Writing Anxiety Among Malaysian ESL Learners with High Levels of Writing Anxiety

Based on the focus group interview conducted among the 36 ESL learners in Malaysia who experience high levels of writing anxiety, the causes of writing anxiety among them include finding writing to be a difficult skill, having low confidence towards writing in English, inappropriate teaching methodology, time pressure, lack of feedback, evaluation and topical knowledge. Below are the analysis of each causes of writing anxiety followed by a discussion in reference to the findings of previous studies.

4.2.1 Difficult Skill

Based on the findings of the focus group interview administered (Refer to Figure 4.1) , majority of the students who experience high levels of writing anxiety found writing to be a difficult skill. The negative perception students have towards writing had caused them to suffer from high levels of writing anxiety. Below are some of the responses of the students obtained through the interview.

“Writing is difficult for me.” (Student 29)

“I am not good at writing, it is very difficult.” (Student 15)

“I am very scared to write during exam because it is difficult for me to get high marks.”
(Student 10)

“I don't like to write, just very difficult.” (Student 32)

“I always get low marks for writing during exams. For me, writing is very difficult.”
(Student 17)

The perception that writing is a difficult skill among the students who experience high levels of writing anxiety in this study explains one of the major causes of writing apprehension among these students. The following section will reveal the second cause of high writing anxiety levels among the students in this study.

4.2.2 Low Self Confidence

The findings of the focus group interview conducted also revealed that the majority of the students admit not having confidence writing in English. The students' perception that writing is a difficult skill has contributed towards them having low self confidence in writing. On that account, these two causes of writing anxiety identified in this study are inter-related. Below are some of the responses of the students.

"I am not very good in writing. I always feel scared to write." (Student 3)

"When I have to write, I get scared because I know I will get low marks. I don't feel confident to write in English." (Student 10)

"I am not confident writing in English." (Student 15)

"I always make a lot of mistakes, this makes me worried when I have to write."

(Student 27)

From the responses of the Malaysian ESL learners above, it is evident that their lack of confidence towards writing in English has contributed to the high levels of writing anxiety faced.

4.2.3 Teaching Methodology

Besides having low confidence towards writing in English, the Malaysian ESL learners in the present study also commented on the methods of teaching writing which had contributed to their writing anxiety. Writing strategies employed by their teachers that are not student-centered and rather boring were possible causes for the anxiety faced. Some of the responses of the students are highlighted below.

“Writing class is always boring.” (Student 12)

“We don’t do any fun activities for writing lessons like language arts lessons.”

(Student 31)

“All we do is write and classroom is always quiet and boring.” (Student 5)

“We spend the whole lesson writing, it is boring and that is why I try to avoid writing.”

(Student 25)

From the responses gathered, it is found that the teaching methodologies employed in the teaching of writing had contributed to the writing anxiety faced by the Malaysian ESL learners in this study.

4.2.4 Time Pressure

In addition, 25 Malaysian ESL learners in this study seem to agree that writing under time pressure, is a contributing factor to their writing anxiety. The students commented that when a time frame is given to them to complete their writing, they often

panic. The feeling of panic that takes control during the writing process makes the whole process of writing unpleasant for them. Hence, they do not enjoy writing. Below are some of the responses of the students gathered through the interview.

“We need to hand in our essays before the lesson ends, this makes me nervous.”

(Student 10)

“Sometimes we have to pass up our essay before the lesson ends, I always panic.”

(Student 34)

“I don’t like to rush and write because I will go blank and will end up not writing anything.” (Student 18)

“When teacher gives me 45 minutes to write, I get all worried because I can’t think for an interesting story to write. So I will just write something and submit.” (Student 23)

Writing within a given time frame is another contributing factor that had caused the Malaysian ESL learners in this study to experience high levels of writing anxiety.

4.2.5 Lack of Feedback

Besides having the pressure to write within a given time frame, lack of feedback or constructive comments from a teacher is another factor that leads to high levels of writing anxiety among the students in this study. During the interview, the students shared their views on the role of feedback and comments which would increase their self-confidence when the next writing task is given. 22 students in the present study admit that lack of

feedback after a writing activity is completed is a contributing factor to their writing anxiety. They admit looking forward to feedback which will help improve their writing skill but above all increase their self confidence and interest in writing. The feedback and comments received will allow the weaker students to improve their writing skills too. Below are some of the responses of the students.

“I do not get comments on my writings.” (Student 17)

“I get nervous when my teacher writes ‘SEE ME!’” (Student 25)

“I do not receive any feedback from my teacher, sometimes my teacher will write ‘See Me!’”. I will never go see her because I know I will be in trouble.” (Student 7)

“When I write well, better than the previous essay, I do not get any praises.” (Student 10)

As a consequence, insufficient or lack of constructive feedback with reference to learners' writing has caused most learners in this study to lose interest in writing.

4.2.6 Lack of Topical Knowledge

Last but not least, a few students also believe that lack of knowledge on a topic given to write causes anxiety in them. The students claim that lack of topical knowledge coupled with time pressure adds up to the anxiety faced. Most of them admit not having the interest to write as the feeling of panic takes over. Below are some of the responses of the Malaysian ESL learners who commented that lack of knowledge on a topic given to write causes writing anxiety in them.

“I feel very worried when I need to write on a topic I don’t know because I will have not much things to write.” (Student 11)

“I get low marks for essays on topics I don’t know and I feel very sad.” (Student 9)

“I don’t like to write when I don’t know the topic.” (Student 23)

The findings of this study reveal learners’ lack of schemata or prior knowledge on a specific topic as a possible cause for writing anxiety among the Malaysian ESL learners in this study. Hence, based on the focus group interview conducted, the causes of writing anxiety among the ESL Malaysian students in this study include factors such as finding writing to be a very difficult skill, having low self-confidence in writing, inappropriate teaching methods, time pressure, lack of feedback, evaluation and topical knowledge.

The causes of writing anxiety among the Malaysian ESL learners were very much in line with the findings of other researchers. Findings of other researchers, for instance, Raimes (1991), indicate that writing skill is one of the toughest skills perceived by many ESL learners. Latiff (2007) revealed that English writing is indeed an anxiety driven skill which resulted in writing apprehension among ESL learners. Therefore, the perception that writing is a difficult skill among the students who experience high levels of writing anxiety in this study explains one the major causes of writing apprehension among ESL students.

Cheng (2002) has also pointed out that low self-confidence and lack of confidence in the second language writing were possible accounts for writing apprehension among learners. A study conducted by Zhang (2011) entitled ‘A study on ESL writing anxiety among Chinese English majors-Causes, effects and coping strategies for ESL writing anxiety’ also found students’ low self-confidence as a factor that had caused writing anxiety

among the English majors. The findings of this study support those presented by Cheng (2002) and Zhang (2011).

In addition, it is also discovered through the focus group interview conducted that the teaching methodologies employed in the teaching of writing contribute to the high levels of writing anxiety faced by the Malaysian ESL learners in this study. In response to this, Baxter (1987) holds an opinion that in order to promote success in teaching the writing skill, teachers should consider incorporating a student-centered approach, use concrete materials and instructional tools in order to increase learners' interest.

Moreover, a study conducted by Kara (2013) entitled 'Writing Anxiety: A Case Study on Students' Reasons for Anxiety In Writing Classes' revealed that learners in her study admit that teacher's teaching style contributes to their writing anxiety. Teachers not teaching in an interesting manner adds up to their anxiety. Findings from other studies by Suleiman (1983), Zughoul (1987) and Zhang (2011) were also in line with the findings of this study. Teachers should therefore evaluate their teaching practices to promote learning and effectively reduce writing anxiety among students.

Furthermore, writing within a given time frame has caused the Malaysian ESL learners in this study to experience writing anxiety. The findings of this study are consistent with the findings of other studies. For example, 70% of students in the study conducted by Zhang (2011) confessed that writing English compositions under time constraint leads to writing anxiety. Studies conducted by Leki and Carson (1997) as well as Hyland (2003) were also in support of the findings of this study. The findings of these studies indicate that time pressure contributes to learners' writing anxiety, leaving an undesirable effect on learners.

What's more, insufficient or lack of constructive feedback with reference to learners' writing too has caused most learners in this study to lose interest in writing. Zhang (2011) in her study among ESL Chinese majors revealed that 40% of them claimed that the feedback received was not adequate and effective enough for them to improve their writing skills and abilities. The findings of this study are similar with the findings of Zhang (2011), where the students believe that constructive comments and feedback would help improve and enhance their writing skills. The students believe this element, if present, would increase their self-confidence. The findings of another study conducted by Kara (2013) also acknowledged the role of teacher's feedback. Students in her study agreed that not receiving any comments contributed to their failure and anxiety in writing courses.

Last but not least, the learners in this study reveal the lack of knowledge on given topics to write has caused anxiety in them. Bachman & Palmer (1996) claim that learners in their study who are given a topic or a subject that is unfamiliar to them experience considerable amount of tension and apprehension. Learners lacking in schemata and prior knowledge about a specific topic may possibly cause writing apprehension among learners. Gagne, Yekovich & Yekovich (1993) define learner's schemata as abstract knowledge structures consisting of large amounts of information. Therefore, lack of schemata on a given topic promotes writing anxiety among learners.

With an understanding of the factors that causes high levels of writing anxiety among the 36 Malaysian ESL learners in this study, the following section of this chapter will reveal the results of the third research question followed by a discussion of the findings obtained.

4.3 Influence of Digital Comics on Writing Performance

Research Question 3

Does the use of a digital comic tool affect the scores of learners with high levels of writing anxiety in terms of context, sentence fluency and word choice?

Pre-test

An independent t-test using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was performed to determine if there are any significant differences in the writing performance of the Malaysian ESL learners in this study in terms of context, sentence fluency and word choice before and after the treatment phase. The results of the pre-test was obtained prior to the treatment phase. As mentioned earlier in Chapter 3, the students were divided into two groups which are the Control Group (CG) and the Experimental Group (EG). Each group consists of 18 Malaysian ESL students aged 11 who experience high levels of writing anxiety.

The results of the pre-test conducted consist of the students' writing scores before any treatment was performed. Tables 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4 below provide a statistical analysis of the pre-test results focusing on context, sentence fluency and word choice of the students narratives entitled 'My Best Vacation'. Their narratives, as indicated in Chapter 3, were assessed by two inter-raters appointed for this study to ensure reliability.

4.3.1 Pre-test Statistical Analysis for the Category of Context

Table 4.2: Pre-test Statistical Analysis for the Category of Context

Group Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
PRE-TEST SCORES Control Group	18	1.3611	.33456	.07886
CONTEXT Experimental Group	18	1.3889	.32338	.07622

Independent Samples Test

	t-test for Equality of Means		
	df	Sig.	Mean Difference
PRE-TEST SCORES CONTEXT	34	.802	-.02778

An independent samples t-test was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to compare the scores for the category of context between students from the Experimental and Control Group. With reference to 3.1.1, both the experimental and control group are deemed homogeneous as they are students who experience high levels of writing anxiety. There was only a slight difference in the pre-test scores for the Experimental Group (M=1.38, SD=0.32) and Control Group (M=1.36, SD=0.33); $p=.802$. These results suggest that the students in the Experimental Group (EG) and the students in the Control Group (CG) have similar writing competencies. Thus, it can be concluded that both groups of students possess more or less similar English writing skills.

4.3.2 Pre-test Statistical Analysis for the Category of Sentence Fluency

Table 4.3: Pre-test Statistical Analysis for the Category of Sentence Fluency

Group Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
PRE-TEST SCORES Control Group	18	1.1389	.23044	.05432
SENTENCE FLUENCY Experimental Group	18	1.1389	.23044	.05432

Independent Samples Test

	t-test for Equality of Means		
	df	Sig.	Mean Difference
PRE-TEST SCORES	34	1.000	.00000
SENTENCE FLUENCY			

For the category of Sentence Fluency, the independent samples t-test conducted reported that the scores of students from the Experimental Group (M=1.14, SD=0.23) and Control Group (M=1.14 SD=0.23); $p=1.000$ are similar. With these readings, we can conclude that the students in the Control (CG) and Experimental Groups (EG) share the same level of writing competency for the category of sentence fluency. The scores indicate that there is no significant difference in writing between these two groups.

4.3.3 Pre-test Statistical Analysis for the Category of Word Choice

Table 4.4: Pre-test Statistical Analysis for the Category of Word Choice

Group Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
PRE-TEST SCORES Control Group	18	1.2778	.30785	.07256
WORD CHOICE Experimental Group	18	1.3333	.34300	.08085

Independent Samples Test

	t-test for Equality of Means		
	df	Sig.	Mean Difference
PRE-TEST SCORES	34	.612	-.05556
WORD CHOICE			

Lastly, for the category of Word Choice the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) reported that there is only a slight difference in terms of scores between students from the Experimental Group (M=1.33, SD=0.34) and Control Group (M=1.28, SD=0.31); $p=0.612$. Therefore, it can be concluded that the students in both groups have similar writing competencies for the category of word choice. The following section of this chapter will reveal the post-test statistical analysis for the category of context, sentence fluency and word choice after the implementation of treatment among 36 Malaysian ESL learners with high levels of writing anxiety.

Post-test

After conducting the pre-test, the 36 Malaysian ESL students in their respective groups were treated to two different writing approaches. As pre-mentioned in Chapter 3, students from the Control Group (CG) were taught writing skills using the traditional method. The students wrote their narratives using the typical or rather traditional method of writing which involves the use of pencil and paper during the treatment phase. On the other hand, students in the Experimental Group, wrote their narratives using an online digital comic tool known as ‘Stripgenerator’.

There were altogether 5 lessons during the treatment phase for both the writing approaches. After the treatment phase was over, all the 36 students sat for a post-test whereby they were required to write a narrative entitled “My Best Vacation”. This was to determine how much they had gained from the two writing approaches taught. The narratives written during the post-test were also scored using the same scoring rubric used during the scoring of the pre-test. The same teachers who were assigned to score the narratives of the pre-test were also assigned to score the narratives of the post-test to ensure consistency throughout the scoring process.

The mean scores and the significant (Sig.) value computed through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) would help answer the third research question of this study. Tables 4.5, 4.6, and 4.7 below provide a detailed analysis of the outcome based on the two writing approaches.

4.3.4 Post-test Statistical Analysis for the Category of Context

Table 4.5: Post-test Statistical Analysis for the Category of Context

Group Statistics

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
POST-TEST SCORES	Control Group	18	1.6944	.30384	.07162
	Experimental Group	18	2.1111	.40423	.09528

Independent Samples Test

	t-test for Equality of Means		
	df	Sig.	Mean Difference
POST-TEST SCORES	34	.001	-.41667
CONTEXT			

An independent sample t-test which was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) reported that there was a significant difference in scores between students from the Experimental Group (M=2.11, SD=0.40) and Control Group (M=1.69, SD=0.30); $p=.001$. With the significant value (Sig.) reported to be smaller than 0.05, there is a significant change of scores from the pre-test to post-test. Hence, we can conclude that the students in the Experimental Group (EG) performed better compared to students in the Control Group (CG). There was a positive influence of the digital comic tool for the category of context after the implementation of the treatment phase. Therefore, the first null hypothesis for this study '*there is no significant difference in scores before and after the treatment in the experimental group in terms of context*' can be rejected.

4.3.5 Post-test Statistical Analysis for the Category of Sentence Fluency

Table 4.6: Post-test Statistical Analysis for the Category of Sentence Fluency

Group Statistics

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
POST-TEST SCORES SENTENCE FLUENCY	Control Group	18	1.7778	.30785	.07256
	Experimental Group	18	2.1944	.34890	.08224

Independent Samples Test

	t-test for Equality of Means		
	df	Sig.	Mean Difference
POST-TEST SCORES SENTENCE FLUENCY	34	.001	-.41667

For the category of Sentence Fluency, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) reported that there was also a significant difference in scores between students from the Experimental Group (M=2.19, SD=0.35) and Control Group (M=1.77, SD=0.30); $p=.001$. With the significant value (Sig.) reported smaller than 0.05, there is a significant change in scores from the pre-test to post-test. Students in the Experimental Group (EG) scored higher compared to students in the Control Group (CG). There was indeed a positive influence of the digital comic tool for the category of sentence fluency. Hence, the second null hypothesis of this study *‘there is no significant difference in scores before and after the treatment in the experimental group in terms of sentence fluency’* can be rejected.

4.3.6 Post-test Statistical Analysis for the Category of Word Choice

Table 4.7: Post-test Statistical Analysis for the Category of Word Choice

Group Statistics

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
POST-TEST SCORES	Control Group	18	1.6944	.38877	.09163
WORD CHOICE	Experimental Group	18	2.2778	.35240	.08306

Independent Samples Test

	t-test for Equality of Means		
	df	Sig.	Mean Difference
POST-TEST SCORES	34	.000	-.58333
WORD CHOICE			

Lastly, for the category of word choice, it is reported through the independent t-tests conducted that there was a significant difference in scores among students from the Experimental Group (M=2.28, SD=0.35) and Control Group (M=1.69, SD=0.38); $p=.000$. With the significant value (Sig.) reported smaller than 0.05, there is a significant change in scores from the pre-test to post-test. Students in the Experimental Group (EG) performed better compared to students in the Control Group (CG). There was a positive influence of the digital comic tool for the category of word choice. Hence, the third null hypothesis for this study *'there is no significant difference in scores before and after the treatment in the experimental group in terms of word choice'* can also be rejected.

From the results obtained, it can be inferred that the use of a computer assisted language learning tool, 'Stripgenerator' had aided the learners from the Experimental Group (EG). The students performed better in comparison with students from the Control

Group (CG) in terms of context, sentence fluency and word choice. Findings of previous research have also proven that digital comic tools, which is regarded as a computer-assisted language learning (CALL) writing tool, does provide for a positive learning platform for second language (L2) learners.

For instance, Zimmerman (2010) claims that the use of digital comic tools in the classroom encourages learners to use the language. The opportunity provides learners with a platform to develop their language skills. The findings of this study clearly proves that the use of 'Stripgenerator' had allowed students from the Experimental Group (EG) to improve their language skills. The students demonstrated better writing performance in areas such as context, sentence fluency and word choice. Pennington (2004) has also witnessed an improvement in the overall quality of the written work produced by students in her study had improved with the use of computer assisted language learning tools.

Sullivan and Pratt (1996) were also in support of Pennington's (2004) hypothesis, where the comparison of data obtained in their study between a traditional classroom and a computer-assisted classroom, revealed students' quality of writing in the computer-assisted classroom to have improved over a period of time. Similarly, Goldberg, Russel and Cook (2003) concluded that learners who use computers to write are believed to produce writings that are of greater quality.

Besides, it has been widely acknowledged that comics offer a wide range of interesting elements that spur the interest of a comic-culture among students. Chilcoat (1993) believes that comic is a form of art that students enjoy. He adds that with the given opportunity for students to create their own comics, they would explore the use of dialogue, acquire various vocabulary and develop non-verbal communication skills. Chilcoat's (1993) notion on the benefits of incorporating comics in the classroom is well demonstrated through the findings of the present study.

Since the students in the Experimental Group (EG) had the opportunity to experiment with words and images with the use of ‘Stripgenerator’, the written performance of the students in terms of word choice and sentence fluency were better in comparison with students from the Control Group (CG). Therefore, the findings of this study, confirm that the use of a computer assisted language learning tool in the classroom aids in the development of writing skills.

A similar study conducted by Megawati and Anugerahwati (2012) also reported a positive outcome in using comic strips to teach narratives. These two researchers found with the use of comic strips, the writing skills of students in areas such as context, organisation, grammar, vocabulary and mechanics were found to have improved. Besides, the attitudes of the students towards writing too had improved over the course of study. Findings of studies conducted by Hamidah et.al (2015) and Lutfifati (2011) were also very similar to the findings of Megawati and Anugerahwati (2012). Hamidah et.al (2015) studied the effects of comic strips on two elements of writing which are mechanics and grammar while Lutfifati (2011) focused on organisation, language use and spelling. The findings of both the studies indicated improved writing performance in the areas tested.

Hence, with evidence highlighting the positive influence of a digital comic tool on the writing performance of Malaysian ESL learners in this study, the last section of this chapter will present the findings on the perceptions of the learners on the use of a digital comic tool during the writing process. The findings obtained from the focus group interview conducted will add depth to the findings of the present study.

4.4 Perceptions of Learners on The Use of A Digital Comic Tool during the Writing Process

Research Question 4

What are the perceptions of the learners with high levels of writing anxiety on the use of a digital comic tool during the writing process?

A second focus group interview was conducted only among 18 students from the Experimental Group (EG) to find out their perceptions on the use of a digital comic tool during the writing process. The second interview was conducted after the post-test was completed. The students' perceptions on the use of an online digital comic tool 'Stripgenerator' are examined as part of this study with an aim to answer the fourth research question. The students' responses were audio-tapped and transcribed in order to provide concrete evidences on the use of a digital comic tool as an aid in the writing classroom (Refer Appendix 7). The bar chart below presents a summary of the responses gathered according to themes.

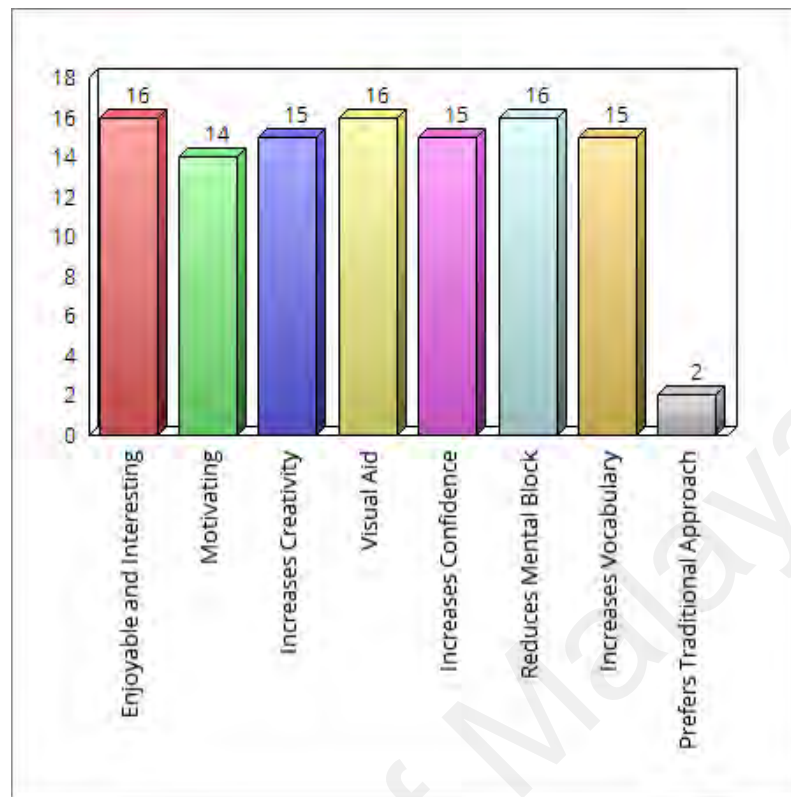


Figure 4.2: Perception of Learners on the use of ‘Stripgenerator’

Based on the second focus group interview conducted among 18 ESL learners from the Experimental Group (EG) who experience high levels of writing anxiety, their perception towards the use of ‘Stripgenerator’ throughout the treatment phase was enjoyable, interesting, motivating, increases their creativity, a good visual aid, increases their confidence, reduces their mental block and increases their vocabulary. However, two students prefer the traditional approach to writing. The following section of this dissertation will provide an analysis on the use of ‘Stripgenerator’ followed by a discussion in reference to the findings of previous studies.

4.4.1 Enjoyable and Interesting

With reference to Figure 4.2 above, majority of the students in the Experimental Group (EG) found using ‘Stripgenerator’ to have aided their writing process. They found it to be enjoyable and interesting. The students enjoyed the writing lessons throughout the treatment phase as it had been a new experience for them to write using an online digital comic tool. The students admit to have not been exposed to writing using any digital comic tools during their previous writing lessons. They found this approach to be very engaging and not intimidating especially for those who experience high levels of writing anxiety. The interview scripts below are some of the responses of the students from the interview conducted with them.

“I felt very excited when we were told that we were going to write and create our own comics.” (Student 21)

“This is the first time I am using “Stripgenerator” and creating comics for a writing lesson. It is interesting.”(Student 32)

“I enjoyed the lesson because I love creating comics. It helps me to use images to write an interesting story.” (Student 20)

“This is the first time I am writing using ‘Stripgenerator’ and it is very interesting and fun!” (Student 19)

Based on the responses, students from the Experimental Group (EG) found using ‘Stripgenerator’ makes writing lessons enjoyable and interesting.

4.4.2 Motivating

Besides finding the online digital comic tool, ‘Stripgenerator’, to be very enjoyable and interesting, the students in the Experimental Group (EG) also found this approach of teaching writing to be motivating. As mentioned earlier, the majority of the students found working with this tool enjoyable and interesting so much so it spurs their interest in writing. This approach of teaching the writing skills to ESL learners is proven to be motivating as students were not anxious when it comes to completing the writing task given. Below are some of the responses of the students from the Experimental Group.

“I was so excited to create my own comics” (Student 33)

“I felt very motivated to write using “Stripgenerator” because it is a fun way for me to write my story.” (Student 23)

Based on the responses of the students, ‘Stripgenerator’ had been a motivating tool for writing.

4.4.3 Good Visual Aid

Besides that, the present study proves that the online digital comic tool used did act as a stimulus during the writing process. 16 students from the Experimental Group (EG) admit that the visuals in ‘Stripgenerator’ had helped them to complete their writing whenever they were in need of words. The visuals available in the tool tend to aid their thoughts. The students found it very helpful as they were able to play with words and images to write their story.

The responses of a few students in this study during the interview with regards to their perceptions on the use of a digital comic tool are as below.

“I used the help of the images to write my story and create my comic whenever I am lost with words.” (Student 21)

“I felt less worried when I used “Stripgenerator” because I used the images to make my story very interesting.” (Student 29).

“I like the pictures, it is very cool and help me write a nice and interesting story.” (Student 32)

“I looked at the pictures, find suitable pictures and wrote my story.” (Student 25)

It is evident through the findings of this study how visuals facilitated the writing process. The students enjoyed how they were able to choose visuals to represent their thoughts. This aspect of the tool leads us to the discussion of the next theme.

4.4.4 Increases Vocabulary Knowledge

As mentioned earlier, the students in the Experimental Group (EG) had the opportunity to use ‘Stripgenerator’ which offers a wide range of visuals to aid the writing process. With students having access to the visuals during the writing process, it has certainly helped them increase their vocabulary. The students produced interesting stories with the use of visuals which the students found helpful. The responses of some of the students are highlighted below to provide justification on the use of a digital comic tool in

increasing students' vocabulary in the present study.

"The pictures in the tool help me to add interesting words to my story." (Student 19)

"I like the pictures in the tool. It help me describe my story." (Student 30)

"I learn new words, if I am not sure of the picture, I ask my friend." (Student 23)

With reference to the students' responses gathered, the students in the Experimental Group (EG) found using 'Stripgenerator' enables them to expand their vocabulary.

4.4.5 Reduces Mental Block

Moreover, the use of digital comic tools had proven to be very beneficial especially for students who often experience mental block when they write. A total of 16 students from the Experimental Group admit that the use of 'Stripgenerator' had helped them overcome mental block during the writing process. The students admit that the use of 'Stripgenerator' had helped them during the post-test. Below are some of the responses of the students from the Experimental Group (EG) in support of the claims made above.

"When I get stuck, I used pictures to help me." (Student 19)

"The pictures in 'Stripgenerator' help me when I don't know what to write." (Student 33)

"I find pictures to help me write the story." (Student 27)

Due to the nature of the digital comic tool that provides visual aid, the students in the Experimental Group (EG) found it to be very useful.

4.4.6 Increases Creativity

Furthermore, a total of 15 students from the Experimental Group (EG) commented that with the array of visuals available in ‘Stripgenerator’, they were able to be creative as they produce their comics during the treatment phase. The students found this aspect of the tool increases their creativity. Below are some of the responses of the students.

“Stripgenerator helps me be creative.”(Student 30)

“I can use different objects and be creative with my story.” (Student 19)

“This time I wrote a creative and interesting story about my vacation to Langkawi.”
(Student 27)

Thus, it can be concluded that the use of ‘Stripgenerator’ had encouraged creativity among the students in the Experimental Group (EG). Last but not least, the tool had also helped students in the Experimental Group (EG) increase their confidence.

4.4.7 Increases Confidence

As previously mentioned, the availability of the visuals had helped students in the Experimental Group (EG) to write. Hence, in return, a total of 15 students admit that ‘Stripgenerator’ helped them gain confidence in writing. They found that the visual tools had allowed them to supplement their thoughts with the array of images suitable to be incorporated when creating their comics. This aspect of the tool had helped them in their

writing during the post-test. Clearly, this tool had provided an opportunity for students to overcome their writing anxiety. Below are the responses of some of the students transcribed during the interview.

“I don't feel scared to write now I can use some pictures to help me write a story.”

(Student 26)

“I feel confident to write with Stripgenerator.” (Student 22)

Last but not least, the use of Stripgenerator had increased the confidence level of 18 Malaysian ESL learners who suffer from high levels of writing anxiety.

4.4.7 Caveat

However, two students from the Experimental Group (EG) confessed that they dislike the idea of using ‘Stripgenerator’, as they dislike comics and prefer the traditional methods of writing. Based on the responses of the students, the reason these two students dislike using the online digital comic tool was due to the fact that they have very limited ICT skills. With the lack of ICT skills, the students found the writing process to be very intimidating. This adds on to the anxiety faced. Below are their responses.

“I am not good with computers, so I prefer using pencil and paper to write.” (Student 22)

“I get more nervous writing using the comic tool because I am not good with computers.”

(Student 26)

Based on the responses gathered from the focus group interview conducted, majority of the students in this study found the use of ‘Stripgenerator’ to be useful and helpful. The findings of the focus group interview revealed that the students found using ‘Stripgenerator’ interesting, motivating, increases their creativity, acts as a good visual tool, increases their confidence, vocabulary and reduces their mental block. Through the evidence presented and discussed above, the perception of the learners on the use of digital comic tools in the present study were in line with the findings of previous researchers.

For instance, several studies on the use of computer assisted language learning writing tools have acknowledged the capabilities of these tools in creating a less stressful and threatening classroom environment (Blake, 2008). Greenfield (2003) affirms that students have positive attitudes towards computer-aided writing and therefore enjoy a computer assisted language learning classroom. He also points out that students make significant progress in their writing with a computer mediated approach. Unequivocally, the use of ‘Stripgenerator’, an online digital comic tool, has created a positive learning environment for the second language learners in the present study.

Moreover, the element of fun embedded in ‘Stripgenerator’ has also prompted the students to complete their writing task without feeling anxious and pressured. Faulkner (2009) in his study also strongly supported the notion that the use of digital comic tools in the classroom increases the interest and motivation of the learners in writing. On similar grounds, Zimmerman (2010) too asserts that working with digital comic tools can turn a frustrating learning process into an enjoyable one.

Computer assisted language learning tools can act as a stimulus for second language writing (Blake, 2008). In essence, the findings of a study conducted by Bledsoe (2010) entitled “Comic Life in Education” revealed that many students who did not know what to write when a writing task was given to them, managed to complete the writing task

with the use of digital comics. He believes that students was able to complement their thoughts with images and digital comics offer them with the comfort needed when learning to write in a second or even a third language. Hence, this aspect of the digital comic tool used in this study creates a very meaningful and enjoyable writing experience for the students in the Experimental Group (EG). With the interactions gained through the use of visuals in the tool, learners in the Experimental Group (EG) are provided with opportunities to increases their vocabulary.

Similarly, a study conducted by Tozcu and Coady (2004) on the use of computer assisted language learning (CALL) also reported that students from the experimental group outperformed the students from the control group in areas which include vocabulary knowledge. Tozcu and Coady (2004) stated that incorporating technology in the language classroom helps vocabulary development.

To add on, students in Warschauer's (1996) study also shared the same opinion and agreed that the use of computer assisted language learning (CALL) tools have helped them write better essays and become aware of linguistic forms. Several studies have agreed that computer assisted language learning writing tools act as a stimulus for writing (Blake, 2008). Besides helping the students in the Experimental Group (EG) in this study to overcome the mental block experienced, the students also claimed that 'Stripgenerator' had helped them increase their creativity. The students in Warschauer's (1996) study also commented that the use of computers provided opportunities for them to be creative.

Last but not least, a study that was conducted among teacher trainees in University Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), by the researcher, Melor Md Yunus et. al (2009) and her fellow colleagues in her study entitled "Using Digital Comics in Teaching ESL Writing" reveals that using digital comics in the ESL classroom did provide a meaningful learning

environment. Also, 93.3% of the teacher trainees felt that the application of the tool motivated learners to write in English. 80% of the trainee teachers believe that the use of digital comics in the classroom encourages learners to explore and use their multiple skills. In addition, 96.6% of the trainee teachers believes that the use of digital comics as a tool in the teaching of writing, does provide a positive way to attract learners to write especially less proficient learners.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the findings of the present study were in line with those from the previous studies. The use of computer assisted language learning (CALL) tools, in this case, a digital comic tool, is beneficial to ESL learners.

4.5 Summary

Based on the results obtained through this study, the causes of the students' writing anxiety and the perception of the learners on the use of a digital comic tool during the writing process as opposed to the traditional pencil and paper method further added depth to the findings of this study. The students from the Experimental Group (EG) scored higher in the post-test administered in the aspects of context, sentence fluency and word choice. It can therefore be concluded that the use of a digital comic tool does have a positive influence on the writing anxiety and writing performance of the Malaysian ESL learners.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATION AND IMPLICATION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter consists of a summary of the findings of the study. Apart from that, the theoretical, research, and pedagogical implications will be presented along with the recommendations for further research.

5.1 Summary of the research

A visual map on the next page, Figure 5.1, summarises the findings of the present study.

University of Malaya

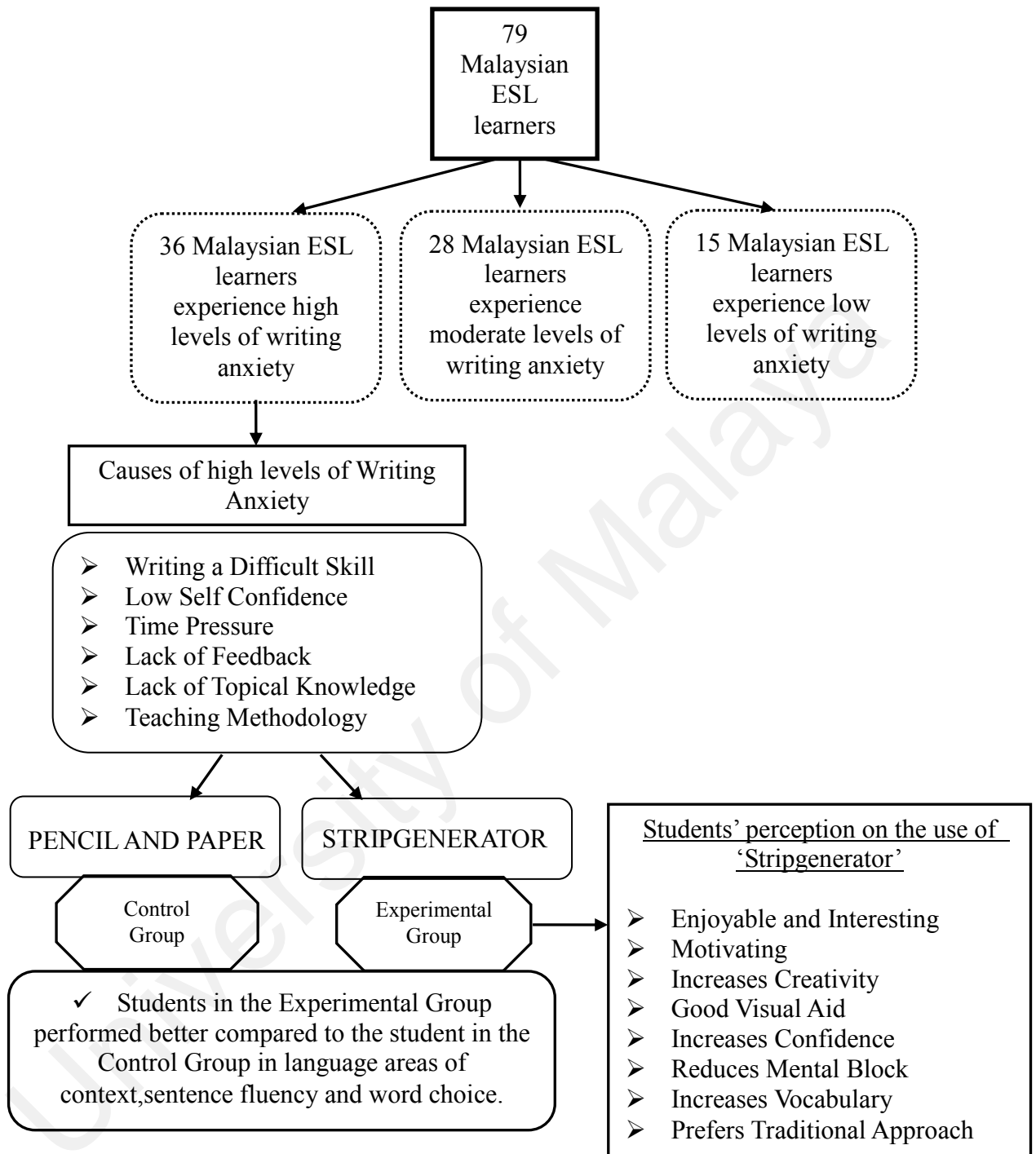


Figure 5.1: Summary of Findings

With reference to Figure 5.1, the findings of this study reveal that Malaysian ESL learners do experience writing anxiety based on the results of the Second Language Writing

Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) (Cheng, 2004) administered to 79 Malaysian ESL learners. The results indicate that 36 students experience high levels of writing anxiety, 28 students experience moderate levels of writing anxiety and 15 students experience low levels of writing anxiety.

In order to answer the second research question of the present study, a focus group interview was conducted. The interview was conducted among 36 Malaysian ESL students who experience high levels of writing anxiety. The interview revealed the causes of writing anxiety.

Among the causes of high writing anxiety identified among the Malaysian ESL students are; *perception of writing as a difficult skill, having low self-confidence in writing, inappropriate teaching methods, time pressure, lack of feedback, and lack of topical knowledge*. The causes of writing anxiety were in line with the findings reported by various other researchers. The findings presented by Cheng (2002) Hyland (2003), Zhang (2011) and Bachman & Palmer (1996) were very similar to the findings of this study.

The primary aim of this study is to investigate the influence of a digital comic tool on the writing performance of Malaysian ESL learners in this study. Therefore, the influence of the digital comic tool ‘Stripgenerator’ on the writing performance of the learners was evaluated in areas including context, sentence fluency and word choice. The comparison of the pre-test and post-test scores on the three language areas indicated improved performance among students in the Experimental Group (EG) that used ‘Stripgenerator’ throughout the treatment phase. The students in the experimental group performed better in areas such as context, sentence fluency and word choice.

Similarly, the findings of other researchers were also in favour of the use of digital comics when it comes to writing. For example, Goldberg, Russel and Cook (2003) conclude that learners are believed to produce writings that are of great quality and it

provides the opportunity for students to explore the use of dialogue, acquire various vocabulary and develop non verbal communication skills through the use of digital comics. Zimmerman (2010) also claims that using digital comic tools for writing encourages learners to use the language therefore indirectly allowing learners to develop their language skills.

Besides, findings of the discussion conducted with students from the Experimental Group (EG) on the use of ‘Stripgenerator’ were also reported positive. The findings of this study were in favour of the use of the digital comic tool in the writing classroom. The students from the Experimental Group found using the digital comic tool during writing *interesting, motivating, increases their creativity, a good visual aid tool, increases their confidence, vocabulary and reduces their mental block.*

In essence, the findings support the findings of other researchers. Faulkner (2009), for example, strongly supports the use of digital comic tools in the classroom. He believes that it had increased the interest and motivation of the learners to write. Zimmerman (2010) similarly asserts that working with digital comic tools can turn a frustrating learning process into an enjoyable one. Bledsoe (2010) in his study entitled “Comic Life in Education” also affirms that with the use of digital comic tools, learners can present their thoughts using images and this aspect clearly offers learners the comfort needed when learning to write in a second or even a third language. In this study, students from the Experimental Group (EG) agreed that the use of digital comic tool, ‘Stripgenerator’ had helped them throughout the writing process.

In a local context, a study that was conducted by Melor Md Yunus et. al (2009) and her fellow colleagues also revealed that using digital comic tools in the ESL classroom did provide a meaningful learning environment and acted as a motivating tool for learners

to write in English. The use of the tools too encourages learners to explore and use their multiple skills. It may encourage learners to write especially the less proficient learners.

The findings of this study were in line with various studies that were conducted in the past with regards to writing anxiety and the use of digital comics in the classroom . The conclusion that can be drawn through this study is that, the influence of a digital comic tool on writing anxiety and writing performance of Malaysian ESL learners is positive. The use of ‘Stripgenerator’ had improved the writing performance of Malaysian ESL learners in this study specifically in areas such as context, sentence fluency and word choice. Therefore, it is concluded that the use of digital comic as a computer assisted language learning (CALL) writing tool in the ESL classroom proved to be able to enhance the writing skills of students.

5.2 Theoretical Implication

Findings of this study acknowledge the role of medium of instruction in lowering writing anxiety among learners. Previous studies that have investigated the use of digital comics have confirmed the positive impact of using this medium of instruction in the classroom (Glen Bledsoe: 2010, Faulkner: 2009, Melor Md Yunus et. Al: 2009, Goldberg, Russel and Cook: 2003 and Zimmerman: 2010). Many of the previous studies involved adult ESL learners or teacher trainees. In relation to that, this study was therefore designed to investigate the influence of a digital comic tool on the writing anxiety and writing performance of young ESL learners.

The results of this study have confirmed that the use of a digital comic tool has produced a positive impact on the writing anxiety and writing performance of Malaysian ESL learners. The students also had a change of attitude towards writing. Inevitably, the use of ‘Stripgenerator’ had improve the writing performance of Malaysian ESL learners in this

study in areas such as context, sentence fluency and word choice. Thus, it can be concluded that the use of digital comic as a writing tool in the ESL classroom was positive.

5.3 Research Implication

As previously mentioned in Chapter 3, a pilot study was conducted prior to the present study. Porta (2008) defines pilot study as “A small-scale test of the methods and procedures to be used on a larger scale”. The fundamental purpose of conducting a pilot study is to examine the feasibility of the approaches that is intended to be used in a larger scale study.

In retrospect, a few changes were made to the present study to ensure the methodologies employed would provide sufficient evidence for the present study. Among the changes made was in terms of the data collection technique employed. In the pilot study, one-to-one interviews were conducted with 20 Malaysian ESL learners selected to understand the causes of writing anxiety among them. Besides being time consuming, the interview session was not fruitful in collecting the needed data from the students. The students were shy and did not contribute much data as needed to facilitate the study.

Hence, in the present study, focus group interviews were conducted with the students to gather the needed data. Creswell (2012) holds the opinion that focus group interviews create a non-threatening environment that enable researchers to obtain information from individuals who are hesitant to provide information. Since this study deals with young ESL learners, it seemed this method of collecting data from the learners was more appropriate.

5.4 Pedagogical Implications

One of the biggest challenges of teachers in Malaysia is to cultivate good writing skills and habits among the students. Despite having to learn the English language for many years, Malaysian students still struggle when it comes to writing skills (Rashidah, 2005).

The findings of this study have confirm that ‘high writing anxiety’ to be the reason behind poor writing skills among the Malaysian ESL learners. The writing anxiety faced by the students are triggered by a few factors previously discussed in Chapter 4. Inevitably, by incorporating the appropriate teaching methodologies, students will be able to overcome the writing anxiety faced. Therefore, this study has shown that the use of computer assisted language learning (CALL) writing tools help students cope with writing anxiety and improve the writing performance of learners who have high levels of writing anxiety.

With concrete evidence pointing towards the benefits of using a digital comic tool, such as ‘Stripgenerator’, blended learning should be part of the classroom learning method to enhance language skills among students. Blended learning methods have proven to be able to increase students’ achievement compared to face-to-face learning (Saritepeci, et al. 2015). Additionally, not only will students enjoy the teaching and learning process, but it also ensures an effective delivery of content and information. Thus, the curriculum in Malaysia should incorporate blended learning to achieve mastery in the English language.

The lack of emphasis on blended learning as a part of formal education programme in Malaysia has resulted in low English language proficiency among Malaysians. Thus, with the findings obtained in this study, the benefits of blended learning should be highlighted.

Having discussed the pedagogical implication of this study, the following section will put forward recommendations for future research.

5.5 Recommendations for Future Research

This study does face some limitations. As such, a few suggestions are presented as below:

5.5.1 Participants

The number of participants in this study consists of 36 Malaysian ESL learners. The students were divided into two groups, each with 18 students. Hence, the findings of this study cannot be generalised to other educational settings. Therefore, it is suggested that future study should consist of a larger number of participants. In essence, a larger sample size is more representative of the population, limiting the influence of outliers or extreme observations. Hence, future studies should look at a larger sample size.

5.5.2 Gender

The present study did not look at gender as a manipulative variable. The students are boys and girls randomly assigned into the Experimental and Control Groups. There are a mixture of both genders in the two groups assigned in this study. Future research may consider further testing the hypothesis of this study, focusing on gender to identify if gender has an influence on the levels of anxiety faced and the performance level of students in relation to the use of CALL tools.

5.5.3 Language Areas Tested

The language areas tested in this study are context, sentence fluency and word choice. The findings reveal improved writing performance of the language areas tested. Thus, the influence of a digital comic tool on other language areas such as punctuation, spelling and creativity should also be studied to provide more concrete evidence on the

impact the tool has on learners. More research on the use of the tool on the teaching and learning of other aspects of language would be useful to aid teachers catering to the various needs of the learners.

5.5.4 Topic

Last but not least, the use of similar writing topics for the pre-test, treatment phase and post-test would have had an effect on the students' memory. The students might have memorised phrases and sentences throughout the course of the study. This could have influenced the performance of the students. Future research may choose to manipulate the topics to be tested to eliminate memorization of content.

5.6 Conclusion

The findings of this study has shown that writing anxiety can be reduced and mediated with the right medium. In this technologically advanced era, teaching and learning methods should suit the needs and interest of the students. Prensky (2001) in his article posited that "*the arrival and rapid dissemination of digital technology in the last decade of the 20th century*" had changed the learning culture of students. The change will influence how students perform academically using the available learning tools.

On that account, the interest of digital native students should be taken into account to ensure an effective teaching and learning culture. With an understanding of the impact of technology on today's digital native students, classroom teaching and learning that capitalise on digital learning tool will definitely be a success.

Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) (Cheng, 2004)

Instruction: Read the following statements and tick in the appropriate column.

Note:

SA- Strongly Agree

A-Agree

U-Uncertain

D-Disagree

SD-Strongly Disagree

Statements	SA	A	U	D	SD
1. When writing in English, I'm not nervous at all. 2. I feel my heart pounding when I write English compositions under time constraint. 3. When writing English compositions, I feel worried and uneasy if I know they will be evaluated. 4. I often choose to write down my thoughts in English. 5. I usually do my best to avoid writing English composition. 6. My mind often goes blank when I start to work on an English composition. 7. I don't worry that my English compositions are a lot worse than others'. 8. I tremble or perspire when I write English compositions under time pressure. 9. If my English composition is to be evaluated, I would worry about getting a very					

<p>poor grade.</p> <p>10. I do my best to avoid situations in which I have to write in English.</p> <p>11. My thoughts become jumbled when I write English compositions under time constraint.</p> <p>12. Unless I have no choice, I would not use English to write composition.</p> <p>13. I often feel panic when I write English compositions under time constraint.</p> <p>14. I'm afraid that other students would deride my English composition if they read it.</p> <p>15. I freeze up when unexpectedly asked to write English compositions.</p> <p>16. I would do my best to excuse myself if asked to write English compositions.</p> <p>17. I don't worry at all about what other people would think of my English compositions.</p> <p>18. I usually seek possible chance to write English compositions outside of class.</p> <p>19. I usually feel my whole body rigid and tense when I write English compositions.</p> <p>20. I'm afraid of my English composition being chosen as a sample to be discussed in class.</p> <p>21. I'm not afraid at all that my English compositions would be rated as very poor.</p> <p>22. Whenever possible, I would use English to write compositions.</p>					
---	--	--	--	--	--

Consent Letter for Parents or Guardian
Permission for Research with children

16 April 2015

Dear Parent (s) or Guardian (s),

I am writing to seek approval for your child to take part in a research conducted by me, Miss. Faustina Roberts, entitled “ The Influence of A Digital Comic Tool on Writing Anxiety and Performance of Malaysian ESL Learners. This research will be conducted in school during school hours with the permission of the school over the next several weeks.

This study aims to study the causes of writing anxiety among Malaysian ESL learners as well as the influence of a digital comic tool called ‘Stripgenerator’ on the writing anxiety and performance of the learners. I would however like to assure you that your child’s performances are confidential and results are not counted for any school based examination. Information based on the results of the group of participants will be discussed as part of the findings of the study.

I would really appreciate if you could allow your child to take part in this study. If you have any doubts about this study or you would like to have additional information, kindly contact me through my email at faustina@sksbu.com. Thank you in advance for your cooperation and interest.

Sincerely,

.....
(FAUSTINA ROBERTS)

TGB 120003

FACULTY OF LINGUISTICS AND LANGUAGES

UNIVERSITY MALAYA.

REPLY

Permission for Research with children

Attention: Miss Faustina Roberts

With regards to the letter received, I acknowledge and understand the purpose of this study. I hereby

would like my child to participate in this study

would not like my child to participate in this study.

Child's Name : _____

Class: _____

Parent (s) Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Circle the appropriate scores based on the descriptions given for each area.

Areas	Needs Improvement	Fair	Good
1) Context Student stays on the topic. Student has interesting ideas and details.	1	2	3
2) Organization Student sequences their narratives which makes sense. Has a beginning and an ending.	1	2	3
3) Word Choice Student has an array of vocabulary. Uses action words and adjectives to describe and makes narratives interesting.	1	2	3
4) Sentence Fluency Student has a variety of difference type of sentences from simple to complex.	1	2	3
5) Punctuation Students punctuate each sentence appropriately and accordingly.	1	2	3

Total = /15 marks

Appendix 4

Below are the questions asked to the students during the focus group interview:

1. Do you face difficulties in writing?
2. How do you feel when a writing task is given to you?
3. What causes writing difficulties for you?

University of Malaya

Below are the questions asked to the students during the second focus group interview:

1. What do you think about using digital comics to aid the writing process?
2. How would you compare this tool with the traditional method of writing?
3. Does using this tool help you during the writing process? How?
4. Do you recommend using this tool in the classroom to aid the writing process?

RQ 2: What are the causes of writing anxiety among Malaysian ESL learners with high levels of writing anxiety?

Researcher : Dear students, as you know, I am Miss Tina, and I would like to thank you for taking part in this discussion today. Based on the questionnaire that you sat to determine the levels of your writing anxiety, all 36 of you are found to experience high levels of writing anxiety. So, today I would like to find out the reasons behind it. Your opinions and views are really important. There is no right or wrong answer. This discussion will be recorded for the purpose of the research I am working on.

(pause)

Researcher : As you can see, a number card is placed in front of you. If you would like to say anything, please show me your number card and identify yourself as ‘ Student No. 5’ , for example. This will help me to identify who the speaker is. Now we are going to do a test-run. Listen to my question carefully.

(pause)

Researcher : (Points at a student) Let us try with you. What makes you happy?
Urrrrrrr..books.

Researcher : Okay, but you should identify yourself as ‘Student No 3’ , first, only then answer my question. Okay?

Student 3 : Okay.

Researcher : Lets try again. (points at a student). What is your favourite food?

Student 11 : My favourite food is Nasi Lemak.

Researcher : Good. So, students, remember to identify yourself first before you speak. Understand?

Students : Understood.

Researcher : Good. Our discussion today is on the topic ‘ What causes your writing anxiety? Remember, when you took the writing anxiety questionnaire, I did explain to you what exactly writing anxiety means. Can you recall what is ‘writing anxiety’?
(pause)

Students : Yes...

Researcher : Writing Anxiety is... (pauses)
A student yells that ‘Writing Anxiety’ is being scared to write.

Researcher : Yes, but you forgot to identify yourself. Remember to identify yourself before you speak. Yes, writing anxiety is the fear of writing. One will avoid writing or feel very tensed or nervous when there is a need to write. My question for you today is “Do you face difficulties in writing?”

Student 29 : Writing is difficult for me. I find it very difficult to write long essays.

Student 20 : Yes, for me too.

Researcher : Why do you find it difficult?

Student 15 : I am not good at writing, it is very difficult.

Student 10 : I am very scared to write during exam because it is difficult for me to get high marks.

Researcher : Anyone here feels the same?

Student 12 : Yes me, Miss Tina. I always get low marks for essays. Very difficult for me to score.

Student 32 : I don’t like to write, just very difficult.

- Student 17 : I always get low marks for writing during exams. For me, writing is very difficult.
- Researcher : Okay, how many of you find writing a difficult skill?
(pause) A total of 34 students raised their hands.
- Researcher : How do you feel when a writing task is given to you?
- Student 3 : I am not good in writing. I always feel scared to write.
- Student 18 : Same with me, especially during exams.
- Student 10 : When I have to write, I get all nervous because I know I will get low marks. I don't feel confident to write in English.
- Student 15 : I am not confident writing in English.
- Student 11 : Like me.
- Student 27 : I always make a lot of mistakes, this makes me worried when I have to write.
- Researcher : So, you feel less confident because of the mistakes you make when writing?
- Student 27 : Yes, Miss Tina.
- Researcher : Alright, how many of you have very low confidence when it comes to writing in English?
Pause. A total of 34 students raised their hands.
- Researcher : Okay, majority of you admit having low confidence when it comes to writing in English. Besides that, what causes writing difficulties for you?
How do you find your writing lessons?
- Student 12 : Writing class is always boring.
- Researcher : What do mean by boring?

Student 31 : We don't do any fun activities for writing lessons like language arts lessons.

Researcher : Why do you like language arts lessons?

Student 30 : Because it is fun. We sing songs, play games and do a lot of fun activities.

Researcher : Really? What do you do in a writing classroom then?

Student 5 : All we do is write and classroom is quiet and boring.

Student 25 : We spend the whole lesson writing, it is boring and that is why I try to avoid writing.

Student 13 : Yes, I enjoy that kind of activities. It is fun.

Researcher : Okay, so you feel the way writing is taught is boring?

Students : (in chorus) Yes.

Researcher : How many of you feel like that?
(Pause) 31 students raised their hands.

Researcher : How would you like the teaching of writing to be done?

Student 6 : Fun activities, Miss Tina.

Student 17 : Yes, Miss Tina.

Researcher : Fine. Any other reasons why you experience high levels of writing anxiety? Why do you feel pressured to write?

Student 10 : Oh yes, another one more. We need to hand in our essays before the lesson ends, this makes me nervous.

Student 34 : Sometimes we have to pass up our essays before the lesson ends, I always panic.

Researcher : Why but the teacher discusses the points, what to write with you right?

Student 18 : I don't like to rush and write because I will go blank and will end up

not writing anything.

Student 23 : When teacher gives me 45 minutes to write, I get all worried because I can't think for an interesting story to write. So, I will just write something and submit.

Student 29 : Yes, me too.

Researcher : How many of you feel the same? You get very nervous or pressured to write when a time frame is given?

Pause. 25 students raised their hands.

Researcher : What are the reasons that make you feel nervous or scared when it comes to writing?

Student 25 : I get nervous when my teacher writes 'SEE ME!!'.

Researcher : Anyone else?

Student 17 : I do not get comments on my writings.

Student 4 : Me too.

Student 7 : I do not receive any feedback from my teacher, sometimes my teacher will write 'See Me'. I will never go see her because I know I will be in trouble.

Researcher : So, do you expect for feedback from your teacher?

Student 12 : Yes, but not 'See Me'. Makes me scared. Maybe I did something really really bad. It will help me be confident in writing and make me more interested in writing.

Researcher : How many of you feel that feedback is important? Constructive ones?

Pause. 22 students raised their hands.

Researcher : Good. What else makes you nervous?

Student 11 : Well...for me... I feel very worried when I need to write on a topic I

don't know because I will not have much things to write.

Student 1 : Ya ya... me to la.

Student 9 : I get low marks for essays on topics I don't know and I feel very sad.

Student 23 : I don't like to write when I don't know the topic.

Researcher : So you feel that you are more comfortable writing a story that you have experience or knowledge about?

Student 3 : Yes...so we can write more.

Researcher : Does anyone else feel the same?

Pause. 19 students raised their hands.

Researcher : Okay. So having knowledge or experience about the topic you write is important am I right?

Chorus : Yes.

Researcher : Any more?

(Pause)

Researcher : Shall we recall all the causes, in case you would like to add on? So, you have identified 'writing as a difficult skill, low confidence in writing in English, inappropriate teaching styles, time pressure, lack of feedback and evaluation and lack of knowledge on topics given to write'. Hmmm.. does anyone has anything else to add on?

(Pause)

Researcher : Okay, I assume there is none. Thank you for sharing your views and thoughts with me. Before you go off for recess, I have prepared some refreshments for you, as a token of appreciation. Thank you, children.

Students : Yeay...thank you Miss Tina. (students leave the classroom)

University of Malaya

Focus Group Interview Transcript

RQ 4: What are the perceptions of the learners with high levels of writing anxiety on the use of a digital comic tool during the writing process?

Researcher : Dear students, I would like to thank you for taking part in our second discussion today. All 18 of you are selected to be part of the Experimental Group (EG). During the course of the study, you worked with an online digital comic tool called the ‘Stripgenerator’. So, today I would like to find out your perceptions on the tool used. Your opinions and views are really important. There is no right or wrong answer. This discussion will be recorded for the purpose of the research I am working on.

(pause)

Researcher : Just like our previous discussion, please show me your number card and identify yourself. This will help me to identify who the speaker is.

(pause)

My question for all of you today is ‘What do you think about using digital comic to aid the writing process? How could you compare this tool to the traditional method of writing? Who would like to start the discussion first?’

(pause)

Student 19 : Me, Miss Tina. I really like the ‘Stripgenerator’.

Researcher : Why?

Student 19 : This is the first time I am writing using ‘Stripgenerator’ and it is very

interesting and fun!

Student 21 : I feel very excited when we are told that we are going to write and create our own comics.

Researcher : Have you all created online comics before?

Student 21 : No...urmmm...just create for fun in our sketch book.

Researcher : Really? Does this tool help you during the writing process?How?

Student 32 : This is the first time I am using 'Stripgenerator' and creating comics for a writing lesson. It is interesting.

Student 30 : I agree. I liked it.

Researcher : Why do you like using ' Stripgenerator' during your writing lesson?

Student 20 : I enjoyed the lesson because I love creating comics. It helps me to use images to write an interesting story.

Researcher : How many of you found using 'Stripgenerator' had made the writing lesson enjoyable and interesting?
(pause) 16 students put up their hands.

Researcher : Okay. Besides that how would you describe the comic tool?

Student 33 : Miss Tina, can I say something?

Researcher : Yes, carry on.

Student 33 : I will say this tool has motivated me to write.

Researcher : Why did you say that?

Student 33 : hmmm...because...I was so excited to create my own comics.

Student 23 : Can I say something Miss. Tina?

Researcher : Yes, you may.

Student 23 : I feel very motivated to write using 'Stripgenerator' because it is a fun way for me to write my story.

- Researcher : So, you feel that this tool had motivated you to write? How many of you feel the same?
(pause) 14 students raised their hands.
- Researcher : How else does the tool helped you in writing?
(pause)
- Student 21 : The characters, objects were useful.
- Researcher : How?
- Student 21 : I used the help of the images to write my story and create my comic whenever I am lost with words.
- Student 29 : Yes. I felt less worried when I used 'Stripgenerator' because I used the images to make my story very interesting.
- Researcher : Were the characters, objects and items useful?
- Student 32 : Hmmmm.. Well... I like the pictures, it is very cool and help me to write a nice and interesting story.
- Student 25 : I have something to say too. I looked at the pictures, find suitable pictures and wrote my story.
- Researcher : How many of you felt that 'Stripgenerator' was a good visual aid?
(pause) 16 students put their hands up.
- Researcher : If it was a good visual aid, how did it help you in writing?
- Student 25 : Miss Tina, I looked at the pictures and wrote my story.
- Researcher : So, you feel that 'Stripgenerator' acted as a visual aid for writing. How else did the visuals help you?
(pause)
- Student 19 : The pictures in the tool help me to add interesting words to my story.
- Student 30 : Yes...I like the pictures in the tool. It help me to describe my story.

Researcher : Good, anyone likes to add anything?
(pauses)

Student 23 : I learn new words.

Researcher : Good. How?

Student 23 : If I am not sure of the picture, I ask my friend.

Researcher : Okay. How many of you feel that the tool has helped you to increase your word knowledge?

Student 35 : Means...ummm...help you learn new words?

Researcher : Yes.
(pause) 15 students put up their hands.

Researcher : Well...good..what else does this tool do for you?

Student 19 : Hmmm...I remember that.. When I get stuck, I used the pictures to help me.

Student 33 : Same with me. The pictures in 'Stripgenerator' help me when I don't know what to write.

Researcher : How many of you found this aspect of the tool helpful?

Student 27 : I find pictures to help me write the story.

Researcher : How many of you found this aspect of the tool helpful? Raise your hands?
(pause) 16 students raised their hands.

Researcher : Good. How else did you find the pictures helpful during your writing?

Student 30 : I think...hmmm... 'Stripgenerator' help me be creative.

Researcher : What makes you say that?

Student 30 : Yaaa...the pictures available makes me write an interesting story.

Student 19 : Yes, yes...me too...I can use different objects and be creative with my

story.

Researcher : Anyone else?

Student 27 : Me. This time I wrote a creative and interesting story about my vacation to Langkawi.

Researcher : How many of you feel that 'Stripgenerator' increases your creativity?
(pause) 15 students agreed.

Researcher : How do you feel using 'Stripgenerator' to write your essays?

Student 25 : I don't feel scared to write now I can use some pictures to help me write a story.

Student 24 : I also agree.

Student 23 : I feel confident to write with Stripgenerator.

Researcher : So, this tool increases your writing confidence. How many of you feel the same?
(pause) 15 students raised their hands.

Researcher : Well anyone feels like this tool is not useful at all? Maybe you feel that this tool increases your writing anxiety?
(pause)

Researcher : You don't have to agree all the time...Like I said feel free to voice out your opinions.
(pause) Two students raised their hands.

Researcher : Yes?

Student 22 : I am not good with computers, so I prefer using pencil and paper to write.

Researcher : Good, and how about you?

Student 26 : I get more nervous writing using the comic tool because I am not good

with computers.

Researcher : Thank you for your honesty. Anyone has anything else to say?

(pause)

Researcher : Anyway, do you recommend using this tool in the classroom to aid the writing process?

Students : Yeeeeeeeeee... (in chorus)

Researcher : If there is nothing, I would like to recall your perceptions towards 'Stripgenerator' which include finding the use of the tool to be enjoyable and interesting, motivating, increases your creativity, a good visual aid, increases your confidence in writing, reduces mental block, and increases vocabulary. However, there is two of you who prefers the traditional approach to writing. Now, we have come to the end of our discussion. Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Students : Thank You Miss Tina. (in chorus)

Researcher : You're welcome.

References

- Akinwamide, T.K. (2012). The Influence of Process Approach on English as Second Language Students' Performances in Essay Writing. *ELT*, 5(3), pp.16-29.
- Al-Ahmad, S. (2003). *The impact of collaborative learning on L1 and L2 college students' apprehension about and attitudes toward writing* (Unpublished doctoral thesis), Indiana University of Pennsylvania.
- Anderson, J. (2005). *Cognitive psychology and its implications* (6th ed.). New York: Worth.
- Arnold, J. (1999). *Affect in language learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bachman, L. F., & Palmer, A. S. (1996). *Language Testing in Practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Baxter, B. (1987). *Basic writing: Breaking through the barriers of apathy and fear*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Southeastern Conference on English in the Two-Year College, Jackson.
- Begum, R. (2005). *A study of the learning strategies of low achievers of English as a Second Language in Selangor, Malaysia* (Unpublished PhD thesis). Universiti Putra Malaysia.
- Betancourt, F., & Phinney, M. (1988). Sources of writing block in bilingual writers. *Written Communication*, 5(4), 461-478.
- Blake, R. J. (2008). *Brave new digital classroom: Technology and foreign language learning*. Washington, D.C. Georgetown University Press.
- Bledsoe, Glen. (2010). Comic Life. (Weblog post). Retrieved from: <http://www.comiclifecom/education>.
- Book, V. (1976). *Some effects of apprehension on writing performance*. Paper presented at Annual meeting of the American Business Communication Association, Diego, USA.
- Chai, C. (2006). Writing plan quality: Relevance to writing scores. *Assessing Writing*, 11, 198–223. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.asw.2007.01.001>
- Chastain, K. (1988). *Writing: Developing second language skills*. United State of America: Harcourt Brace.
- Cheng, Y. S. (2002). Factors associated with foreign language writing anxiety. *Foreign Language Annals*, 35, pp.647-656.
- Cheng, Y, S. (2004). A measure of second language writing anxiety: Scale development and preliminary validation. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 13, pp. 313-15.
- Cheng, Y, S. (2004). A measure of second language writing anxiety: Scale development and preliminary validation. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 13, pp. 313-15.

- Chilcoat, G. (1993). Teaching about the Civil Rights movement using student-generated comic books. *The Social Studies*, (84)3, 113-119.
- Chitravelu, N., Sithamparam, S., & Choon, T. S. (1995). *ELT Methodology. Principles and Practice*. Penerbit Fajar Bakti Sdn. Bhd.
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among the five traditions* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Culham, R., & K. Swing. (2011). *6 + 1 Traits of Writing*. New York: Scholastic.
- Daud, N. M., & Kassim, N. L. A. (2005). Second Language Writing Anxiety: Cause or Effect?. *Malaysian Journal of ELT*, pp.1-19.
- Daly, J. A., & Miller, M. D. (1975). The empirical development of an instrument to measure writing apprehension. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 9, pp.242-249.
- Daly, J. A., & Wilson, D. A. (1983). Writing apprehension, self-esteem, and personality. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 17, pp.327-341.
- Darmi, R., & Albion, P., (2012). Exploring Language Anxiety of Malaysian Learners, 2nd Malaysian Postgraduate Conference, 7-9 July 2012, Queensland, Australia.
- David, N. (2001). *Second English Teaching and Learning*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.
- Dornyei, Z. (2001). *Teaching and researching motivation*. NY: Longman.
- Dornyei, Z. (2005). *The Psychology of the language learner: Individual differences in second language acquisition*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Dovey, T. (2010). Facilitating writing from sources: A focus on both process and product. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, (9), 45-60.
- Faulkner, G. (2009). Digital comics spur students' interest in writing. *National Writing Project*. Retrieved from <http://www.nwp.org/cs/public/print/resource/2811>.
- Faigley, L., Daly, J. A., & Witte, S. P. (1981). *The role of writing apprehension in writing performance and competence*. Retrieved from <http://www.eric.ed.gov>.
- Foroutan, M., & Noordin, N. (2012). Effect of dialogue journal writing through the use of conventional tools and email on writing anxiety in the ESL context. *English Language Teaching*, 5(1), pp.10-19.
- Fowler, B. & Ross. (1982). The Comparative validities of differential placement measures for college composition courses. *Educational and Psychological*

Measurement, 42, pp.1107-1115.

- Gagné, E., Yekovich, C., & Yekovich, F. (1993). *The cognitive psychology of school learning*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Ganschow, L., & Javorsky, J. (2002). 'Deja vu all over again. A response to Saito, Horwitz, and Garza', *The Modern Language Journal*, Vol. 84 (2), pp.251-255.
- Gardner, H. (1999). *Intelligence reframed: Multiple intelligences for the 21st century*. New York: Basic Books.
- Goldberg, A., M. Russell & A.Cook. (2003). The effect of computers on student writing: A meta-analysis of studies from 1992 to 2002. *The Journal of Technology, Learning, and Assessment*, 2(1),pp.1-52.
- Greenfield, R. (2003). Collaborative e-mail exchange for teaching secondary ESL: A case study in Hong Kong. *Language Learning & Technology*, 7 (1), pp.46-70.
- Hamidah, N., Usman.S., Muhsin. (2015). Improving writing skill of the eight graders through comic strip. *E-Journal of English Language Teaching Society (ELTS)*, 3(2), pp.1-11.
- Hamka, Q. (2015, September 28). New Format for UPSR 2016. *The Rakyat Post*. Retrieved from <http://www.therakyatpost.com/news/2015/09/28/new-format-for-upsr-2016/>
- Harvey, R. C. (2001). Comedy at the Juncture of Word and Image. In Varnum, Robin; Gibbons, Christina T. *The Language of Comics: Word and Image*. University Press of Mississippi.
- Hassan, B. A. (2001). The Relationship of Writing Apprehension and Self-Esteem to the Writing Quality and Quantity of EFL University Students. *ERIC Document*, ED45167.
- Hilleson, M. (1996). "I want to talk with them, but I don't want them to hear": An introspective study of second language anxiety in an English-medium school. In K.M.
- Holladay, S. A. (1981). *Writing anxiety: What research tell us*. Paper presented in Boston.
- Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *Modern Language Journal*, 70 (2), pp.125-132.
- Huy, T. N. (2015). Problems Affecting Learning Writing Skill of Grade 11 at Thong Lihn High School. *Asian Journal of Education Research*, 3(2), pp.53-69. Hyland, K. (2003). *Second language writing*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Kara, S. (2013). Writing anxiety: A case study on students' reasons for anxiety in writing classes. *Anadolu Journal of Educational Sciences International*, 3(1), pp.103-111.

- Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia (Ministry of Education). (2000). *Sukatan Pelajaran Bahasa Inggeris (English language Syllabus)*. Kuala Lumpur.
- Krashen, S. D. (1987). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. Prentice-Hall International.
- Latiff, M.A. (2007). The factors accounting for the Egyptian EFL university students' negative writing affect. *Language & Linguistics*, 9, pp. 57-82.
- Leech, G. (1994) 'Students' Grammar – Teachers' Grammar – Learners' Grammar' in Bygate et al (eds.) *Grammar and the Language Teacher*. Prentice Hall International.
- Leki, I. & Carson. J.G. (1997). Completely different worlds': EAP and the writing experiences of ESL students in university courses, *TESOL Quarterly*, 31(1), pp.39-70.
- Leki, I. (1999). *Techniques for reducing second language writing anxiety*. Boston: McGraw-Hill College.
- Lubis, M.A., Embi, M.A., Yunos, M.M., Wekke, I.S., Nordin, N.M., (2009).The application of Multicultural Education and applying ICT in Posantren in South Sulawesi, Indonesia. *World Scientific and Engineering Academy and Society*, 6(8), pp.1401-1411.
- Lutfifati, Norma Indah. 2011. *Using Comic Strips to Improve the Eight Grade Students' Ability in Writing Narrative Texts at SMPN 9 Malang*. Perpustakaan Digital Universitas Negeri Malang.Retrieved from <http://library.um.ac.id/free-contents/download/pub/pub.php/48782.pdf>.
- Lyga, A & Lyga B. (2004). *Graphic novels in your media center: A definitive guide*. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.
- MacIntyre, P. D., & Gardner, R. C. (1991). Language anxiety: Its relationship to other anxieties and to processing in native and second languages. *Language Learning*, 41, 513-534.
- Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2005. Available: <http://www.moe.gov.my/>. Accessed: April 2015.
- Malaysia Ministry of Education. (2012). Preliminary Report Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025. Retrieved from <http://www.moe.gov.my/userfiles/file/PPP/Preliminary-Blueprint-Eng.pdf>
- Matthews, D.H. (2006). Writing apprehension: Acknowledging the issue. *Macon State College Journal*, 4, pp.7-14.
- Mayer, R. E. (2001). *Multimedia learning*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Megawati, F., Anugerahwati, M. (2012). Comic Strips: A Study on the Teaching of Writing Narrative Texts to Indonesian EFL Students. *TEFLIN JOURNAL*, 23(2), pp.183-205.
- Melor Md Yunos. (2007). Malaysian ESL teachers' use of ICT in their classrooms: expectations and realities. *ReCALL*, 19(01), pp.79-95.
- Melor, M.Y., A.L. Maimun and C.P.Lin. (2009). Language Learning via ICT: Uses, challenges and issues, *World Scientific and Engineering Academy and Society*, 6(9): 1453-1467.
- Ministry of Education Malaysia. (2003). *Education Development Plan: 2001-2010*.
- Miles, M. B. & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks, Calif., Sage.
- Nair, S.K.G., Rahim, A.R., Setia, R., Husin, N., Sabapathy, E., Jalil, A.A.N., . . . Yusoff, U.I.N. (2012) Malaysian Graduates English Adequacy in the Job Sector. *Asian Social Science*. 8(4).pp.143-147.
- Negari, G.M. & Rezaabadi, O.T. (2012). Too Nervous to Write? The relationship between anxiety and EFL writing. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 2(12), pp.2578-2586.
- Nesamaral C., Saratha S. & Teh, S. C. (2001). *ELT methodology: Principles and practice*. Selangor: Penerbit Fajar Bakti.
- Norrizan Razali. 1992. ESL in Malaysia: Looking beyond the classroom. *The English Teacher*, 21, pp.84-96.
- Nor Shidrah Mat Daud., Noor Lide Abu Kassim., & Nuraihan Mat Daud. (2006). *Second language writing anxiety: Cause or effect?* Retrieved September 15, 2014 from http://www.melta.org.my/Doc/second_lang_writing_anxiety.pdf
- Nunan, D. (2003). The Impact of English as a Global Language on Educational Policies and Practices in the Asia-Pacific Region. *TESOL Quarterly*, 37(4), pp.589-613.
- Oxford Dictionary, 2000. 7th Ed., Penguin Press, Hinsdale, IL.
- Pennington, M. (2004). Electronic media in second language writing: An overview of tools and research findings. In Sandra Fotos & Charles M. Browne (Eds.) *New Perspectives on CALL for Second Language Classrooms* (pp. 69-92). Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Porta, M. (2008). *A Dictionary of Epidemiology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Powell, B. (1984). A comparison of students' attitudes and success in writing. *Journal of Negro Education*, 53(2), 114-123.
- Prensky, Marc. (2001). "Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants". *On the Horizon*, 9 (5), pp.1-6.

- Rabab'ah, G. (2005). Communication problems facing Arab learners of English: A personal perspective. *TEFL web journal*, 2(1), pp.15-30.
- Raimes, Ann. (1991). Out of the Woods: Emerging Traditions in the teaching of Writing. *TESOL Quarterly*, 25(3), pp.407-430.
- Rezaei, M.M., Jafari, S.M. & Younas, M. (2014). Iranian EFL Students' Writing Anxiety: Levels, Causes and Implications, *English for Specific Purposes World*, 42(15), pp.1-10.
- Salem, M. (2007). *The Effect of Journal Writing on Written Performance, Writing Apprehension, And Attitudes of Egyptian English Majors*. (Doctoral Dissertation). Retrieved from <https://etda.libraries.psu.edu/paper/7894/>.pdf.
- Samuel, R. J., & Bakar, Z. A. (2006). The utilization and integration of ICT tools in promoting English language teaching and learning. *International Journal of Education and Development Using Information and Communication Technology*, 2 (2), pp.4–14.
- Saritepeci, Mustafa; et al. (2015). The effect of blended learning environments on student motivation and student engagement: A study on social studies course. *Education and Science*.
- S. Galea, "Reflecting reflective practice," *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, vol. 44, pp. 245-258, 2012.
- Singh, T. K., & Rajalingam, S. K. (2012). The Relationship of Writing Apprehension Level and Self-efficacy Beliefs on Writing Proficiency Level among Pre-university Students. *English Language Teaching*, 5(7), pp.42-52.
- Siti Hamim Stapa. (1998). The process approach to ESL writing. UKM Bangi: Faculty of Language Studies, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.
- Sparks, R., Ganschow, L., & Javorsky, J. (2000). Déjà vu all over again: a response to Saito, Horwitz, and Garza. *Modern Language Journal*, 84, pp.251-255.
- Spielberger, C. D. (1983). *Manual for the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (Form Y)*. Palo Alto, CA: Mind Garden.
- Suleiman, S (1983), "Teaching English to Arab students at the university level", In Dihayat and Ibrahim (eds.), Papers from the First Conference on the Problems of Teaching English Language and Literature at Arab Universities, University of Jordan, Amman Jordan.
- Sullivan, N., & Pratt, E. (1996). A comparative study of two ESL writing environments: A computer- assisted classroom and a traditional oral classroom. *System*, 29(4), pp.491-501.

- Tabitha D. Lim. (2013). *Analyzing Malaysian English classroom: Reading, writing, speaking and listening teaching strategies* (Unpublished master thesis). University of Washington.
- Tan, E.K., & Miller, J. (2008). *Writing in English in Malaysian High Schools: The Discourse of Examinations*, England: Routledge.
- Tobias, S. (1979). Anxiety research in educational psychology. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, vol. 71, pp. 573-682.
- Tozcu ,A., Coady,J,. (2004). Successful learning of frequent vocabulary through CALL also benefits reading comprehension and speed. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 17(5), pp.473-495.
- Warschauer, M. (1996c). Motivational aspects of using computers for writing and communication. *Telecollaboration in foreign language learning*. pp.29-48.
- Worde, R. (1998). *An investigation of students' perspectives on foreign language anxiety* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia.
- Zhang, H. (2011). *A study on ESL writing anxiety among Chinese English Majors-Causes, effects and coping strategies for ESL* (Doctoral Dissertation). Retrieved from <http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:426646/FULLTEXT02>.
- Ziden, A. A., Ismail, I., Spian, R., & Kumutha, K. (2011). The effects of ICT use in teaching and learning on students' achievement in Science subject in a primary school in Malaysia. *Malaysia Journal of Distance Education*, 13(2), pp.19-32.
- Zimmerman, B. (2010). *Using Digital Comics for Language Learning*. Retrieved from <http://www.elearnmag.org/subpage.cfm?section=articles&article=109-1>
- Zughoul, M. (1987). Restructuring the English department in the Third World universities: Alternative approach for the teaching of English literature. *IRAL*, 25(3), pp.221-236.