

The Use of Graphic Organiser on Second Language Students' Writing Performance

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Abstract

English as a Second Language (ESL) learners, especially in rural educational settings, continue to encounter challenges in acquiring fundamental writing skills. One possible factor is the lack of creative and innovative pedagogical approaches tailored to support the learners. In light of this, the present study examined the use of graphic organiser (GO) as a pedagogical tool on writing performance of Malaysian ESL learners. Twenty-seven intermediate students from a secondary school in Malaysia participated in a series of 11 writing sessions using GO in writing descriptive essays. The application of this GO in composing the descriptive writing was carried out throughout the writing lessons consisted of modelling, scaffolding, individual prewriting, drafting with peers and group writing. Using a qualitative study, the data analysis involved content analysis sourced from participants' essay scripts. Guided by the CEFR framework, 54 descriptive essays were evaluated and analysed to observe changes in writing in terms of content, communicative achievement, language, and organisation. Participants' essays in Writing Task 1 (WT1) and Writing Task 2 (WT2) were compared to observe changes in their writing performances after the implementation of GO in the writing instructions. Results showed that the use of GO in developing descriptive essays has improved learners' writing in all components. The study has revealed that successful writing requires differentiated and creative graphic organisers, accompanied by systematic writing activities for ESL learners to thrive in a challenging writing classroom.

Keywords: *ESL writing, ESL learners, graphic organiser, writing pedagogy, descriptive essay*

INTRODUCTION

Writing has become a significant communicative skill as it is widely used in social (Baharuddin & Mohammad, 2020), academic (Safa, 2018), and workforce (Selvaraj & Aziz, 2019) settings. Graham et al. (2016) emphasised the value of writing as a lifelong skill as it is needed for anyone to convey ideas and thoughts, analyse information, and describe events. By having the necessary skills in writing, learners can succeed beyond the classroom context (Graham et al., 2016). However, poor writing skill is observed to be appalling among school leavers across Asian countries, including Malaysia (Lee, 2017; Viswanathan, 2019), Indonesia (Herman et al., 2020), and Bangladesh (Suvin, 2020). In the case of Malaysian English as a Second Language (ESL) or L2 learners, writing proficiency issue is pervasive across all educational tiers, affecting learners in primary (Harun & Abdullah, 2020) and secondary schools (Sianturi et al., 2020), as well as those in tertiary education (Lingaiah & Dhanapal, 2020). The unresolved issue of writing poses potential risks to learners' future career prospects, as poor command of English is singled out as the primary factor for the decline in employability (National Graduate Employability Blueprint 2012-2017, 2012). Given this scenario, it is expected that ESL learners, particularly in rural settings are at higher risk of struggling with overall language proficiency including writing skills and as such, writing a basic composition like descriptive writing will be difficult.

Descriptive writing requires learners to display good vocabulary, sound grammar, the ability to structure sentences, and organisation of ideas (Selvaraj & Aziz, 2019; Herman et al., 2020). However, a large majority of Malaysian ESL learners admitted that descriptive writing is difficult, elaborating that they did not know how to start writing, particularly when it comes to word selection and usage of suitable vocabulary in a sentence (Sianturi et al., 2020). Further, issues with grammar, spelling as well as overall editing are also evident (Sianturi et al., 2020). Lembaga Peperiksaan Malaysia (LPM) (2020) reported that secondary school learners have difficulty conveying ideas as their essays lack depth, creativity, and maturity despite average proficiency in the language. In fact, writing tasks become even more daunting for those with limited proficiency or learning difficulties (LD) because they are expected to go through the same rigorous learning process as their typical peers (Baxendell, 2003). In addition to the task difficulties, the complexity of cognitive and linguistic skills needed to accomplish them often causes ESL learners to feel lost and hopeless (Selvaraj & Aziz, 2019). Findings from these studies provide valuable insight into issues about writing ability which is essential to developing the present study.

The ability to approach writing tasks strategically could assist L2 learners in achieving their writing goals (Graham, 2016). Nevertheless, insufficient exposure to effective writing strategies further contributes to writing difficulties (Ahmad Ghulamuddin et al., 2021). Learners with limited access to learning resources frequently depend on classroom-based formal instruction provided by their teachers. Unfortunately, a significant number of ESL teachers continue to rely on a traditional product approach to teach writing (Singh et al., 2020). Teachers are also reportedly unfamiliar with using pedagogical tools in teaching writing (Rahimi & Zhang, 2018). Teachers' insufficient pedagogical knowledge and failure to select effective writing strategies tailored to the needs of learners are reasons for producing incompetent writers (Md Yunus & Chan, 2016). This scenario implies challenges of language learning faced by language learners in classrooms. Accordingly, when students are not adequately exposed to differentiated writing instruction, it may hamper their learning process,

which in turn could lead to a disappointing writing performance. To intervene in this issue, utilising graphic organisers (GO) like mind maps in writing classrooms may benefit struggling ESL learners by enhancing their ability to process concepts and understand writing tasks (Lembaga Peperiksaan Malaysia, 2021). Many previous studies on the use of graphic organisers in ESL writing instruction have produced diverse findings (Ewoldt & Morgan, 2018; Puspitawati, 2017; Abdul Aziz et al., 2018; Lingaiah & Dhanapal, 2020; Singh et al., 2020; Anggraeni & Pentury, 2018; Rahmat, 2020). Even though the studies provide insightful perspectives and understanding of ESL writing, their findings do not yield an adequate understanding of the ESL writing phenomenon beyond the context in which they worked. Some findings are limited to learning disabilities (Ewoldt & Morgan, 2018) and quantitative approaches (Puspitawati, 2017; Anggraeni & Pentury, 2018). While Malaysia-based research is abundant (Rahmat, 2020; Lingaiah & Dhanapal, 2020; Singh et al., 2020; Abdul Aziz et al., 2018), it is limited to university settings and does not comprehensively cover the context of ESL secondary school learners, particularly in rural settings. Consequently, a knowledge gap emerges, creating an opportunity to explore the use of graphic organisers in ESL writing instruction within classrooms in a Malaysian secondary school.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The complexity of the writing process

Writing is a multifaceted skill that facilitates learning, expression of feelings, entertainment, exploring the meaning of events in the world, and persuasion through written texts (Graham, 2018). Writing skills are viewed by scholars from many different perspectives. Flower and Hayes (1981) conceptualised writing as a cognitive, hierarchical process that begins with planning, then translating, and ends with reviewing. Harmer (2004) argued that the writing process is not linear, but rather recursive. Meanwhile, Kirby and Crovitz (2012) viewed writing as an activity of producing and creating, which makes writing instruction unique from other disciplines. Specifically, the process of writing is viewed as a phase that a writer experiences in order to create the final product of a written text involving four elements which are planning, drafting, editing (reflecting and revising), and producing the final version (p.4-6). According to Flower and Hayes (1981)'s writing model, the writing process begins with planning which involves three sub-processes: generating, organising and goal setting. The organising process is not merely an arrangement of content. Rather, it involves the strategic sequencing of information to establish a pattern of presentation. Notably, this process extends beyond linguistic expressions, incorporating symbols or visual elements. Once the information is structured in an orderly manner, writers will establish goals for writing.

The writing goal established at the organisation stage is a defining factor in differentiating between excellent and poor writers. Subsequently, the writing process advances to the translating phase, where the gathered information is translated and formulated into written English sentences. This process shows the transformation of inner mental activity (ideas) to physical textual composition (writing). In the final stage of writing, the reviewing process encompasses evaluating and editing. Evaluation of texts takes place when the writer assesses the writing to ensure it is aligned with the writing goals. Simultaneously, correcting the text includes correcting grammatical errors, revising content, and enhancing text clarity. Throughout this intricate composition activity, the writer monitors the current process and

progress. The multifaceted and dynamic approach of correction and refinement ensures a refined, coherent, and well-structured written outcome. The sequence of stages demands various mental processes, such as visualisation and critical thinking, to effectively structure ideas in writing (Alkodimi & Al-Ahdal, 2021). Understanding the nature and complexity of the writing process from different scholars makes it evident that writing is a challenging skill to master regardless the writer is a native or non-native speaker of the language (Mohammadi & Mustafa, 2020).

Graphic organisers and writing

Graphic organisers (GO), also referred to as concept maps, visual organisers, cognitive maps, or content webs serve as mediums of visual tools representation (Uba et.al, 2017). David and Eaves (1986) viewed GO as visual and spatial representations that enhance learning and teaching of text-based materials by employing “lines, arrows, and spatial arrangements to describe text content, structure, and key conceptual relationships” (p.310). Meanwhile, Anggraeni and Pentury (2018) opined that GO are concepts of text, graphics, and visuals that facilitate users' easy comprehension of the concepts and creative expression of ideas and information. GO were first introduced by Ausubel in 1960 as advanced graphic organisers which were utilised as a pre-reading tool because of its potential to link prereading information and learners' existing schema. The importance of Ausubel's work in influencing language learning has led other prominent researchers like Earle (1969), Barron (1969), and Baker (1977) to broaden the concept as it was developed into an outline format called a *structured overview* (Merkley and Jefferies, 2001). Their studies have further expanded the use of structured overviews into prereading, during-reading and post-reading tasks which were then changed to be known as graphic organisers (Dunston, 1992).

GO are identified through four unique categories according to the link between information and concepts presented: conceptual, cyclical, sequential, and hierarchical (Ermiş, 2010; Struble, 2008). Novak and Gowin (1984) stressed the importance of labelling the concepts introduced in GO to specifically link the relationships, and the usage of labels in GO reflected learners' improved understanding of concepts compared to traditional learning (Novak, 1991). Another proponent of GO, Baxendell (2003), highlighted three keys to the effective implementation of graphic organisers, often referred to as the “3Cs”- consistency, cohesiveness, and creativity. The author explained the GO must follow a standardised approach and maintain consistency in their implementation in the writing instruction, as it establishes a routine of using them. This includes minimising distractions, focusing on a limited number of ideas, and providing clear labels to link conceptual relationships in graphics. Furthermore, GO should be creatively integrated into all lesson stages, including practice, tests, and cooperative group/pair activities. An extensive body of literature confirmed the effectiveness of graphic organisers as a pedagogical tool in facilitating teaching and learning across various disciplines globally. This type of visual representation of information is, in fact, widely used in various fields such as history (Dawkshas, 2020), reading (Rahmat, 2020; Brevik, 2019; Abdul Rahim & Chun, 2017), sciences (Ramos et al., 2022) and health education (Ward et al., 2017). GO are also extensively used to improve competency for students with learning disabilities (Ewoldt & Morgan, 2018; Kim et al., 2004) and fundamental language skills like reading (Abdul Rahim & Chun, 2017; Brevik, 2019; Rahmat, 2020) and writing (Abdul Aziz et al., 2018; Lingaiah & Dhanapal, 2020; Singh et al., 2020). GO are proven to be facilitative in writing for their creative medium to improve understanding of difficult concepts (Puspitawati, 2017). Additionally, GO are effective in organising ideas in composition (Anggraeni & Pentury, 2018), lowering the

cognitive overload of information and making writing lessons much more appealing to learners (Rahmat, 2020).

Ewoldt and Morgan (2018) promoted the use of colour-coded GO to support the teaching of writing to learners with learning disabilities. Research on this phenomenon consistently resulted in positive outcomes in the writing development of this group. The authors highlighted the positive impact of using colour-code GO as colour association with specific types of writing sentences helped the learners recognise the link between the GO and sentences within the paragraph. Consequently, using colour-codes within the GO provided additional support to help learners attain their specific writing goals. On the flip side, Singh et al. (2020) conducted a qualitative study that focused on the implementation of the i-Think thinking map, a form of GO, in secondary students' writing classes. It was observed that this type of GO proved to be advantageous in helping students organise their thoughts and foster critical thinking. This benefit stemmed from their newly acquired habit of connecting ideas or concepts for enhanced comprehension.

Several studies have proven the benefits of using visually appealing images like GO in improving the writing ability of English language learners (Napitupulu, 2017; Lasaka & Erniwati, 2018; Puspitawati, 2017). A quantitative study on 50 university students in Indonesia by Napitupulu (2017) investigated the impact of using Paragraph Hamburger, a type of GO that uses hamburger as a metaphor for layers of the writing process. The findings revealed an improvement in paragraph writing quality, with the experimental group showing a significant leap in their post-test score, reaching an impressive 80.4, compared to the control group's score of 59.8. The researcher emphasised the value of this visual organiser, as it allowed learners to visually outline the key components of a body paragraph. Similarly, a quasi-experimental study by Lasaka and Erniwati (2018) further reinforced these findings. It examined the effects of using Hamburger Paragraph Strategy on the performance of 30 Indonesian secondary school learners. The experimental group showed a significant improvement in the mean score in the post-test, from 42.0 to 62.6. It proved the use of GO simplified the complex writing process and positively impacted classroom behaviour and management.

In a descriptive study by Puspitawati (2017), a burger-metaphor graphic organiser was employed, adopting the Paragraph Scaffold Hamburger Style (PSHS) Framework by Gunderson and Scotton (2005) to the impacts of this GO on Indonesian high school students' descriptive writing. The author stressed the importance of teachers having a thorough understanding of GO for their effective use. Despite the recognition of its effectiveness, the practice of utilising graphic organisers targeting a specific group like rural learners in secondary school who can benefit from GO, has yet to be recognised. Moreover, a review of existing literature exposes a methodological gap within the research domain.

TAZ Burger

TAZ Burger, a type of GO, was designed to assist learners with limited English language skills in developing their essay writing skills. It is an adaptation of the PSHS framework developed by Gunderson and Scotton in 2005. The initial development of the TAZ Burger began in 2016 as an in-class writing activity for Form 4 students in the rural East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia. The burger-shaped writing organiser was introduced to engage students who were struggling with writing tasks. Encouraged by the possibility of this GO as an effective writing strategy for struggling Malaysian ESL learners, the process of developing, evaluating, and refining the GO as an innovative pedagogical tool was carried out in 2019 under the guidance

and consultation of a senior lecturer, specialising in digital innovation and pedagogy at Institut Pendidikan Guru (IPG), Terengganu. To make this GO more culturally appealing to ESL learners in the local community, the teacher decided to localise the visual representation from a hamburger to a local Malaysian burger. Finally, this GO was registered as "TAZ Burger: A Delish Way to Write" and trademarked under the Malaysia Intellectual Property Office (MyIPO) in 2022 (Aznan, 2022). The acronym "TAZ" lacks a specific meaning, as it simply represents three influential individuals who inspired the creation of "TAZ Burger". TAZ Burger, which is a type of sequential GO, has three key features: a colourful graphic organiser, three main components consisting of the Top Bun, The Fillings, and the Bottom Bun, and traffic lights colour-coded for different layers. The visual graphic of this burger differs from the Western hamburger, where the burger comprises two small buns filled with three components (the fillings): salad leaves, anchovies sambal and cucumber slices. These layers of the burger serve as the metaphor for the structural layers of an essay. While TAZ Burger and Paragraph Scaffold Hamburger Style (PSHS) share some similarities, TAZ Burger differs in several aspects, as illustrated in Table 1.

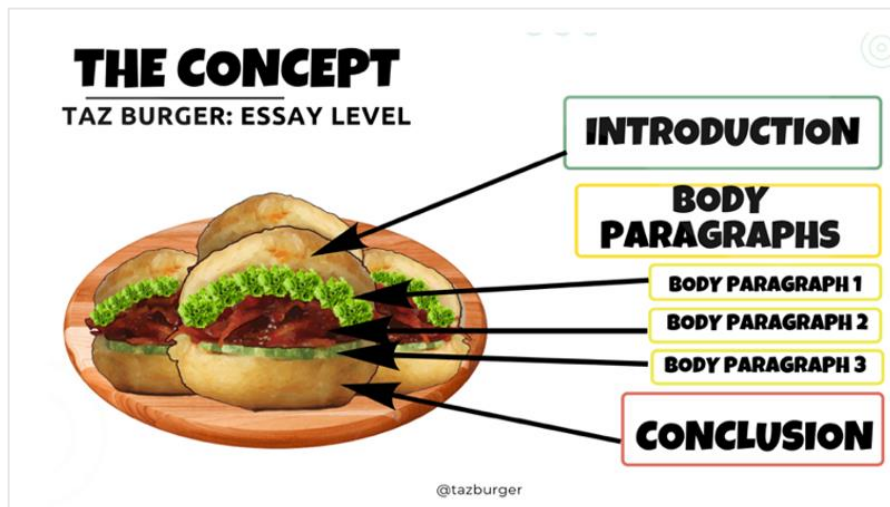
Table 1

Similarities and Differences between PSHS and TAZ Burger

No.	Features	PSHS	TAZ Burger
1.	Level of writing	• Paragraph level	• Essay level
2.	Top Bun	• Topic sentence	• Thesis statement
3.	The fillings	• Lettuce and beef • 2 supporting sentences	• Salad, anchovies sambal and cucumber • 3 topic sentences
4.	Bottom Bun	• Concluding sentence	• Concluding paragraph
5.	Level of writing	• Paragraph level	• Essay level
6.	Important keywords	• Topic sentence • Supporting details • Concluding sentences	• Thesis statement • Topic sentence • Supporting details • Concluding sentences

Using TAZ Burger in a Writing Classroom

Effective implementation of a GO in classroom learning instruction is essential for the successful acquisition of language skills, as emphasised by Baxendell (2003). Therefore, the use of TAZ Burger for writing instruction follows a seven-step protocol: (a) scaffolding, where the concept of TAZ Burger is introduced through multiple exposures; (b) Modelling, where each layer of TAZ Burger is demonstrated; (c) Drafting, which entails breaking down the drafting process into five sub-tasks for composing a five-paragraph essay; (d) Writing, allowing students to create their paragraphs; (e) Producing, which involves combining previous isolated paragraphs and engaging in collaborative writing using the TAZ Burger template; (f) Editing, an ongoing process where students make adjustment and improvement to their writing; and (g) Reviewing, where students evaluate the entire essays as their final writing production. To enhance the efficacy of this protocol, it is imperative to highlight the use of colour for TAZ Burger instead of presenting it in black and white. Incorporating colour makes this GO visually appealing, which allows the use of this GO to its fullest potential. A representation of TAZ Burger as a graphic organiser for writing is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1*TAZ Burger as a Graphic Organiser for Writing*

As shown in Figure 1, the use of colourful graphics for the GO is purposeful. The specific colour-code (green, yellow, and red) for each layer of writing distinguishes three levels of essay development. Green represents the introduction, yellow signifies the body paragraphs, and red designates the conclusion. Therefore, maximising the impact of the GO, TAZ Burger, is essential, and this is best achieved by representing it in a visually appealing graphic.

METHODOLOGY

The study

This study aimed to investigate the use of TAZ Burger and in what way it changes the writing quality of ESL learners in a rural secondary school. Specifically, this study attempted to answer one research question as follows:

1. What changes have been observed in the descriptive essays of the upper secondary school students after exposure to TAZ Burger in an ESL writing classroom?

This study emphasises the qualitative data of document analysis sourced from participants' descriptive essays (WT1 and WT2 essay scripts) and participants' drafting using TAZ Burger template. A total of 54 documents were collected and analysed, adhering to Bazerman and Prior's (2004) six-step content analysis protocol. Meanwhile, the second document analysis played a secondary role, contributing additional evidence to reinforce the study's findings.

This investigation is centralised on using the TAZ Burger as a graphic organiser to provide a holistic understanding of this phenomenon. The employment of qualitative study serves as an excellent way to describe how TAZ Burger promotes participants' development of writing competency in an ESL classroom. The data collection method was conducted via document analysis of multiple writing activities in the 7-week period of pre-TAZ Burger, during TAZ Burger, and post-TAZ Burger to record changes to the participants' writing before and after its use.

Participants

Data for this study was collected in a national secondary school located in the East Coast of Malaysia. The procedure was assisted by the school principal and the English teachers. 27 research participants, encompassing 7 boys and 20 girls, were selected through purposive sampling and voluntarily participated in this 7-week writing programme. All participants were screened following four important criteria, which were used as a baseline to ensure the data's reliability. They were Form 4 students who had completed a nine-year of formal education, possessed intermediate English competency, and had basic writing skills. It is also noteworthy to mention that they did not have any significant encounters with the usage of this writing tool before their participation in the present study.

Instrument and Data Collection Procedure

TAZ Burger was employed in a writing program for a group of 27 intermediate learners for seven weeks to observe changes in the writing quality and performance of these learners. This writing programme is designed according to the nature of writing tasks in the SPM (Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia), utilising the usage of TAZ Burger to improve students' descriptive writing ability in the Part 2 writing task. The writing programme was carried out during the formal teaching and learning classroom session with the school principal's approval. The learning period is discussed in three stages, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Stages of Classroom Learning with TAZ Burger

Stage	Activities	Timeline
Stage 1	Writing Task 1	Week 1
Stage 2	Writing lesson using TAZ Burger Strategy	Week 1 – Week 6
Stage 3	Writing Task 2	Week 7

a) STAGE 1

During Stage 1, the goal was to observe students' initial writing proficiency through their engagement in a writing task. Participants were instructed to compose a descriptive essay (WT1) ranging from 120-150 words in response to the provided question. This essay prompt required participants to describe a place they would like to visit for a class trip. Students must fulfil three sub-tasks for the essay requirements: (i) details of the trip, (ii) reasons for the choice, and (iii) one benefit the class will gain from the trip. The time allocated was 30 minutes, and the writing session was closely supervised with assistance from the English teacher.

b) STAGE 2

Stage 2 focused on the introduction and consistent implementation of TAZ Burger to scaffold students' process of acquiring descriptive writing skills in the 7-week writing programme. This stage involved 11 writing sessions, consisting of 90 minutes of writing class per week, amounting to a total of 8.5 hours of writing guidance. The English teacher, well-versed in the application of TAZ Burger, provided the writing instruction using TAZ Burger. Notably, the school administration specifically integrated these sessions into the official school timetable, thereby creating a real classroom environment of formal teaching and learning. The lesson plans for the writing programme were curated, drawing upon valuable insight gained from the Writing Task 1 (WT1) essays. The writing instructions were carried out using a structured seven-step protocol that included scaffolding, modelling, drafting, writing, producing, editing, and reviewing. The primary objective of the writing instructions was to assist students in achieving the smaller goals associated with their descriptive writing tasks in a more structured and efficient manner through the use of TAZ Burger. Over the 7-week programme, participants used the TAZ Burger template to scaffold their descriptive essay.

The main writing task, descriptive essays, was divided into three smaller writing tasks for successful smaller writing goals. First, the participants focused on successfully writing an introduction, followed by body paragraphs and a conclusion. Engaged in individual, pair, and group activities such as drawing and drafting using the TAZ Burger templates, the students were introduced to essential essay writing phrases such as "thesis statement", "topic sentence", and supporting details" to assist each of the writing tasks using TAZ Burger. Since they were intermediate writers, the participants were only required to understand how they were used in drafting their essays. Scaffolding also involved ample support for sentence construction and vocabulary improvement tailored to the individual needs. A comprehensive schedule of the Stage 2 writing programme is tabulated in Table 3.

Table 3
Writing Programme in Stage 2

Week	Activities	Time
Week 1	Introducing the TAZ Burger and keywords used in the Top Bun; thesis statement.	30 minutes
	Modeling the introductory paragraph using the Top Bun, scaffolding it with multiple samples. Drafting the introductory paragraph through drawings and short sentences using the template	60 minutes
Week 2	Introducing the first layer of fillings and keywords used; topic sentence and supporting details statement.	30 minutes
	Modeling the first body paragraph using The Fillings, scaffolding it with multiple samples. Drafting the first body paragraph through drawings and filling in details in the TAZ Burger template.	60 minutes
Week 3	Introducing the second layer of fillings and keywords used; topic sentence and supporting details statement.	30 minutes
	Modeling the second body paragraph using The Fillings, scaffolding it with multiple samples. Drafting the second body paragraph through drawings and filling in details in the TAZ Burger template.	60 minutes
Week 4	Introducing the third layer of fillings and keywords used; topic sentence and supporting details statement.	30 minutes
	Modeling the third body paragraph using The Fillings, scaffolding it with multiple samples. Drafting the third body paragraph through drawings and filling in details in the TAZ Burger template.	60 minutes
Week 5	Modeling the concluding paragraph using the Bottom Bun, scaffolding it with multiple samples. Drafting the concluding paragraph through drawings and short sentences using the TAZ Burger template.	30 minutes
	Writing and producing all burger layers through collaborative writing tasks. Students fill up each graphic of the TAZ burger layer	60 minutes
Week 6	Continuation from the previous session. Editing the drafting of all burger layers. Reviewing of the completed essay by the teacher and constructive feedback is given for the final essay product.	60 minutes

Table 3 provides insight into a series of structured writing instructions in the writing programme. The students received consistent exposure to the graphic visual and modelled guidance for each layer of TAZ Burger.

c) STAGE 3

Stage 3 marked the final phase of the writing programme. In this stage, participants engaged in the Writing Task 2 (WT2) activity, which entailed addressing the same writing task as in WT1 within a 30-minute time under the guidance of the same teacher. This activity took place following the conclusion of the writing lessons using TAZ Burger.

Data analysis

a) Content analysis of the descriptive Essays

The 54 descriptive essays from WT1 and WT2 were analysed, guided by Bazerman and Prior's (2004) six-step content analysis protocol: (i) posing research question(s), (ii) defining appropriate construct, (iii) selecting appropriate texts, (iv) determining appropriate unit of analysis, (v) gathering data, and (vii) interpreting findings. This analysis aimed to monitor changes in students' writing performance, specifically the quality of descriptive essays. Utilising the SPM Part 2 assessment scale (refer to Appendix 1) as a unit analysis, the essays were evaluated across four main subscales- content, communicative achievement, organisation, and language. The SPM writing assessment serves as a standardised writing evaluation widely used in Malaysian secondary schools. It was adapted from the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) framework, ensuring its high reliability and validity. Each of these criteria carried a maximum allocation of five marks, resulting in a total possible score of twenty marks for each essay. Marks were awarded independently according to the fulfilment of tasks in every criterion, with the total marks for the scripts clearly indicated at the top of the essay scripts.

As much as this study aspired to explore the richer corpus of data recorded during this research, the primary focus remains on analysing the essay scripts using the four established writing criteria. These four writing criteria were thoughtfully integrated into a coding system to help structure and categorise the amassed data into meaningful blocks and patterns. The essay scores were strictly used to observe improvement and decline in the writing quality of the descriptive essays. Subsequently, gathered data from the essays were analysed to answer the research question. The analysis process was conducted for two weeks by analysing fifty-four essay scripts (WT1 and WT2 essays) and 27 participants' drafting using the TAZ Burger. To ensure impartial and unbiased assessments, the essays were meticulously evaluated by an experienced English teacher from the school. Essay scores were awarded following four writing criteria following the SPM Part 2 writing assessment rubric: (i) content, (ii) communicative achievement, (iii) organisation, and (iv) language. Each criterion held a weight of five marks, contributing to a total essay score of twenty marks.

Evaluated scripts of WT1 and WT2 were then given to the researchers to be recorded, further analysed and coded to identify distinctions in writing quality and to track improvements in writing. Key sentences and phrases within the essays that signalled the improvement or decline of each criterion were meticulously coded and compared. Notable disparities in essay quality were documented in short notes. Marks obtained from the examined essay scripts were meticulously recorded and tabulated within an Excel document, allowing observable improvement and declines in essay quality between WT1 and WT2 essays. It is crucial to recognise that the quality of writing goes beyond mark increment. Some scripts did not register mark changes in any specific subscales, but a closer look at their descriptive writing revealed improved overall writing quality. Analysis of changes in writing quality in WT2 from WT1 was observed using the aforementioned four writing criteria. Elaboration of how the analysis of each criterion is discussed below (Malaysian Education Syndicate, 2021).

i) Content

In essay writing, excellent content quality is measured by the writer's ability to fulfil the tasks requirement as a whole by describing, explaining and elaborating required information in a straightforward manner.

ii) Communicative achievement

In achieving excellence in written communicative proficiency, emphasis is placed on the appropriateness of the writing. This includes using appropriate tone, register, and formality of the language. Competent writers demonstrate flexibility, consistently holding the reader's attention and following the conventions of the communicative tasks.

iii) Organisation

The focus of an excellent organisation is how well the ideas are linked and how coherent the text is written. This includes using the appropriate linkers and cohesive devices to leave a good impact on writing.

iv) Language

Proficiency in language is evaluated by the accuracy of lexical and grammatical aspects. Writers are expected to exhibit excellent control of grammar and demonstrate a sophisticated use of vocabulary consistently throughout their writing.

b) Essay drafting using TAZ Burger

When considering the secondary data analysis, our focus centred on students' ability to apply the TAZ Burger in drafting descriptive essays. Observation included the visual representation of TAZ Burger and the content of drafting within each layer, such as organisation and expansion of ideas. Such findings would support the primary data in answering the research question. Likewise, the qualitative assessment of the drafting using TAZ Burger was meticulously documented in short notes, capturing the essence of the observed documents and thereby reinforcing the research findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

a) Descriptive essays of WT1 and WT2

A comparison of the fifty-four essay scripts of WT1 and WT2 yielded positive enhancements in writing quality. Improvements were evident in two aspects: overall marks and essay quality. The overall comparison of marks in WT1 and WT2 essays is shown in Table 4.

Table 4
Comparison of Marks in WT1 and WT2

Comparison of Marks					
Script ID	Marks (20 marks)		Scrip ID	Marks (20 marks)	
	WT1	WT2		WT1	WT2
A001	9	15	A015	2	10
A002	1	6	A016	17	17
A003	2	14	A017	12	14
A004	2	11	A018	7	12
A005	8	13	A019	5	10
A006	6	13	A020	6	15
A007	10	15	A021	2	12
A008	9	14	A022	12	13
A009	14	14	A023	13	14
A010	12	15	A024	12	15
A011	11	15	A025	12	14
A012	13	11	A026	6	12
A013	9	9	A027	7	15
A01	2	11			

The data presented in Table 4 provides an insightful comparison of total marks, shedding light on the changes in participants' improved writing quality. Twenty-three participants exhibited a clear improvement in their writing performance after using the TAZ Burger in their writing process. Seven participants (A003, A006, A021, A020, A004, A014, and A015) showcased remarkable advancements, with score increments ranging from five to ten marks. Meanwhile, two participants consistently maintained the scores, as exemplified by A011 and A012, scoring nine and fourteen marks in both WT1 and WT2. In contrast, only two participants demonstrated a decline in performance in WT2 compared to WT1. The observed score improvements underscore the positive influence of using TAZ Burger as a supportive tool for writing instruction, leading to enhanced overall writing performance in descriptive essays.

On the other hand, the comprehensive examination of writing scripts of WT1 and WT2 revealed insightful findings about the participants' writing abilities. It was observed that nearly all participants who had initially struggled to compose complete essays in WT1 showed noticeable improvements in their writing quality after using TAZ Burger. This was evidenced by the increased length of their essays, which encompassed both partially completed and fully finished essays. Furthermore, the enhancement of writing quality was consistently achieved across all four aspects: content, communicative achievement, organisation and language.

i) Content

Out of twenty-seven participants, nineteen exhibited improved content scores in WT2, with only one student experiencing a decline in performance. The overall enhancement in content quality signals the improved writing performance in this subscale. Notably, seven participants achieved a remarkable three to four-mark increment in this subscale, showcasing commendable task fulfilment. Script A021 serves as an illustrative example. In WT1, script A021 was not awarded any marks for content because the composition was irrelevant to the writing task given, which was to plan a class trip. The writer gave the impression of misunderstanding or failing to comprehend the given task. An excerpt of the content from the script is provided below:

“This trip about gotong-royong. My school start gotong royong at 9.00 a.m to 11 am.” (Script A021, WT1)

However, in WT2, script A021 showed significant improvement in content, receiving the highest content score of five marks. Despite persisting issues related to the subject-verb agreement (e.g., “me and my friend”), sentence structure (e.g., “because it’s relax”), punctuation, (e.g., “enjoy at there”) and conjunction (e.g., “relax and on therapy for me”), the writer successfully addressed the task by providing a descriptive account of the trip’s location, activities, and reasons for the choice. The writer exhibited a clear understanding of the writing task. The content was wholly fulfilled, providing a concise description of the trip’s location, detailing activities during the trip and elaborating on the mentioned activities in a straightforward manner. Despite occasional grammatical errors throughout, it did not hamper the reading, ensuring the target readers were fully informed. Notably, the content showed substantial improvement in WT2. An excerpt of the content from the script is presented below:

“Penarik Beach is located at Setiu district, Terengganu. It is famous in the world. Me and my friend can enjoy at there. ... My favourite activity is picnic. The reason why I choose picnic is because it’s relax and on therapy for me...” (Script A021, WT2)

ii) Communicative achievement

Twenty-one participants had mark increments in WT2 for this subscale, even though the increment was not as substantial as in the content. The overall enhancement in communicative achievements showed enhanced writing performance in this subscale. A sample script for this subscale is A020. The script was awarded only one mark for communicative achievement in the WT1 because the writer did not appropriately use the right tones or register to describe a plan for a class trip. The essay came across as monotonous and lacked enthusiasm when planning a class trip, and frequent grammatical errors in the text failed to engage the readers. An excerpt from the script is shown below:

“At Zoo Negara we will learn many things about animal. We will know khow animal eat, sleep, communicate and more things. Ticket for one person to get in is not expensive just RM 5. All student can save their badjet.” (Script A020, WT1)

However, in WT2, script A020 showed a slight writing improvement in this subscale, receiving a score of three marks in this subscale. The writer employed an appropriate tone and register to describe the class's trip plan, showing excitement. For instance, there was a noticeable tone of excitement, with phrases like "Among the fun activities we can do". Additionally, the use of conditional statements like "if I go to Batu Burok Beach" makes the writing more engaging to readers, which is appropriate for planning a trip. Despite occasional grammatical errors throughout, it did not hamper the reading. An excerpt of the content from the script is presented below:

"Among the fun activities we can do is riding banana boats.... Additionally, if I go to Batu Burok Beach, I can relax, healing.... All in all, this is why I want to go at Batu Burok Beach..." (Script A020, WT2)

iii) Organisation

Nineteen participants had scores increment in WT2 for the organisation subscale, indicating better writing performance in this aspect. Only one participant received four marks in this subscale, indicating that many participants struggled with the organisation of ideas in writing. A sample script for this subscale is A007. Due to poor organisation, the writer inaccurately used some linkers despite having a variety, and ideas were not tied coherently. The flow of ideas also appeared distorted when describing locations and activities during the trip, leading to a low score of two marks for organisation. An excerpt of the organisation from the script is provided below:

"In a first places, at Taman Damansara... In addition, The Melaka has Muzium a famous with history. A Muzieum is very test for pupil...I choose A Melaka because I like the place and view. In conclusion, The Melaka has a interesting places ." (Script A007, WT1)

However, in WT2, script A020 showed significant improvement in organisation quality, earning a score of four marks. The writer demonstrated a fair organisational skill in the essay and accurately applied linkers like "first and foremost" and "in addition" in writing to leave a generally good impact on the overall writing. An excerpt of the content from the script is presented below:

"First and foremost, Kenyir Lake is located Hulu Terengganu district, Terengganu. The place is truthly popular in the world... In addition, there are many benefits like beautiful nature." (Script A007, WT2)

iv) Language

For this subscale, twenty-one students displayed slight improvement in marks and quality in the language used in writing, contributing to improved performance in writing. A sample script A027 is an example of this subscale. In WT1, Script A027 contained spelling errors such as "activiti", errors in tenses such as "they are to get", subject-verb agreement such as "everyone do", and blurring, leading to a low score of two marks for language. An excerpt of the language from the script is provided below:

"After that, they are to get activiti with all friend... Secondly, one benefit the class will gain....to everyone do to place." (Script A027, WT1)

However, in WT2, script A027 showed a slight improvement in language quality, scoring four marks. The writer showcased a moderate control of language in writing, using grammatically accurate simple sentences and maintaining subject-verb agreement in some sentences. For instance, there was a noticeable improvement in language in simple sentences, such as “The place I would like to go for a class trip is Redang Island...” and subject-verb agreement phrases like “It is one of the largest islands..”. Minimal errors in writing did not impede the meaning of the description of the trip’s location. An excerpt of the content from the script is presented below:

“The place I would like to go to for the class trip is Redang Island in the state of Terengganu. ... It is one of the largest islands.... And as will as one of the most beautiful islands in the worlds.” (Script A027, WT2)

A summary of the comparison of writing performance in WT1 and WT2 essays that highlights the improvement in writing quality is provided in Table 5.

Table 5

Comparison of Writing Performance in WT1 and WT2 Essays

Writing assessment subscale	COMPARISON OF WRITING PERFORMANCE	
	WT1	WT2
Content	<i>This trip about gotong-royong. My school start gotong royong at 9.00 a.m to 11 am. (A021)</i>	<i>Penarik Beach is located at Setiu district, Terengganu. It is famous in the world. Me and my friend can enjoy at there. .. My favourite activity is picnic. The reason why I choose picnic is because it’s relax and on therapy for me.. (A021)</i>
Communicative achievement	<i>At Zoo Negara we will learn many things about animal. We will know khow animal eat, sleep, communicate and more things. Ticket for one person to get in is not expensive just RM 5. All student can save their badjet (A020)</i>	<i>Among the fun activities we can do is riding banana boats.... Additionally, if I go to Batu Burok Beach, I can relax, healing....All in all, this is why I want to go at Batu Burok Beach. (A020)</i>
Organisation	<i>In a first places, at Taman Damansara... In addition, The Melaka has Muzium a famous with history. A Muzieum is very test for pupil...I choose A Melaka because I like the place and view. In conclusion, The Melaka has <u>a</u> interesting places (A007)</i>	<i>First and foremost, Kenyir Lake is located Hulu Terengganu district, Terengganu. The place is truthly popular in the world... In addition, There are many benefits like beautiful nature. (A007)</i>
Language	<i>After that, they are to get activiti with all friend... Secondly, one benefit the class will gain....to everyone do to place. (A027)</i>	<i>The place I would like to go to for the class trip is Redang Island in the state of Terengganu. ... It is one of the largest islands.... And as will as one of the most beautiful islands in the worlds. (A027)</i>

As shown in Table 5, certain lower-level aspects of writing, like spelling, conjunctions, and punctuation, remained challenging for the participants. However, after the use of TAZ Burger, there was a noticeable improvement in the quality of writing, as exemplified by excerpt scripts

A021, A020, A007, and A027, which illustrates significant enhancement between WT1 and WT2.

b) Drafting using TAZ Burger

The observation of a sample of drafting using TAZ Burger shows a collaborative writing task. The structured drafting was centred on crafting a descriptive essay about activities during a trip to Redang Island while adhering to the TAZ Burger template. The participants engaged in collaborative work with their peers in one of the writing lessons to pre-plan the essay using the TAZ Burger template. Students' comprehension of TAZ Burger, from its conceptualisation to its practical application, was systematically assessed through the conducted activity. During this process, participants had the freedom to engage with the drafting process using TAZ Burger in a manner reflective of their individual perspectives, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Drafting using TAZ Burger

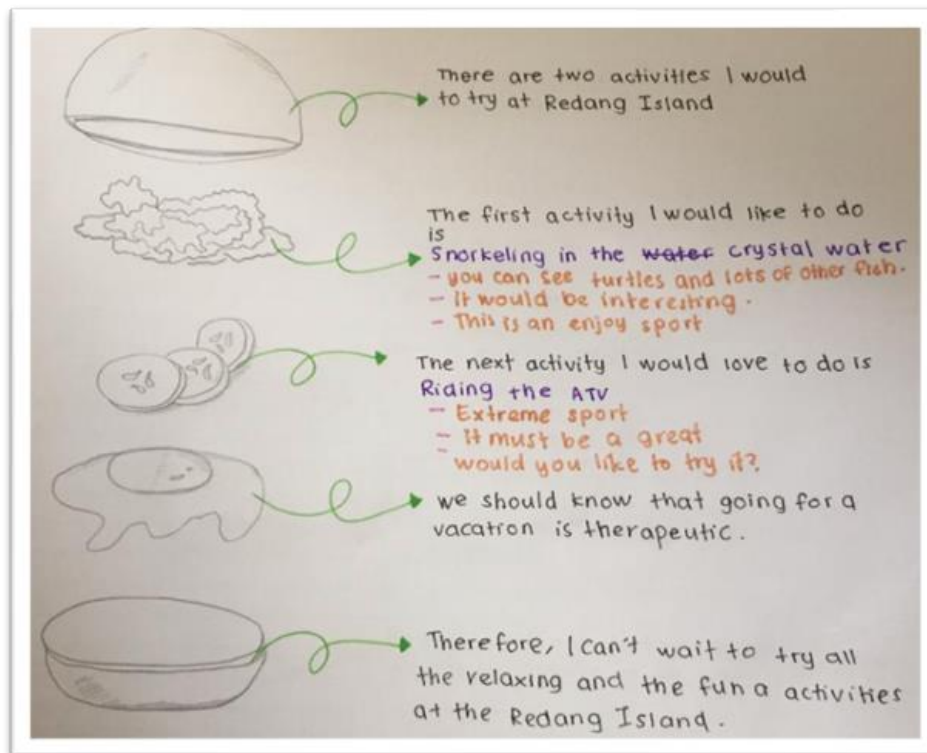


Figure 2 displays the drafting process of composing descriptive writing using TAZ Burger. The meticulous illustration, which distinctly highlights each layer of the burger, showcases not only the writers' artistic flair but also their comprehension of the practical application of TAZ Burger in composing descriptive essays. Although the drawing lacks colour, attributed to limited classroom time, the burger illustration itself is captivating and visually appealing. Each layer of the burger was drawn separately, offering a personal representation of the application of TAZ Burger. This illustration approach provided the participants with a clear insight into the layers that constitute TAZ Burger. In terms of content, the essay accurately follows the TAZ Burger structure and components, including a thesis statement in the introduction. Confidence in using topic sentences and supporting details is evident in the body paragraphs, with distinct colours; purple for topic sentences and orange for supporting details of the two desired activities. Personal opinions on the vacation are shared in the third body paragraph, using simple transition words for cohesion. The conclusion conveys an overall impression of

the planned activities, also linked with transition words. The writers also skilfully employed simple sentence structure, basic vocabulary, and linkers throughout the essays.

The findings of this study affirm that the use of GO, particularly through the implementation of TAZ Burger, into writing instruction has a positive influence on the descriptive writing abilities of rural ESL learners in a Malaysian secondary school. The document analysis of WT1 and WT2 essays clearly demonstrated that the habitual use of TAZ Burger to learn descriptive writing over an extensive period of time significantly enhanced students' writing ability in composing descriptive essays. The improvement in the descriptive writings is evidenced by four key findings: (i) an increment in the essay scores, (ii) the production of longer essays, and (iii) the enhancement in overall essay quality. This underscores the usefulness of TAZ Burger's as GO to assist rural students with lower intermediate skills to shine in writing tasks. These findings corroborated with a quasi-experimental study by Lasaka, Jamiluddin and Erniwati (2018), which concluded that utilising Paragraph Hamburger to teach essays to Indonesian secondary school students has a positive impact on their students' writing achievement.

Furthermore, the use of TAZ Burger as GO also facilitated better essay planning as the learners demonstrated organised drafting using the TAZ Burger template. These findings are in line with a quantitative study by Lingaiah and Dhanapal (2021) that examined the usefulness of graphic organisers to improve argumentative writing. Participants in the study revealed that the use of the GO guided them to plan their essays more effectively. TAZ Burger also proved to be useful in nurturing students' creativity, aligning with prior studies by Devari (2020) and Elshaer (2018), which highlighted the usefulness of the Hamburger strategy in promoting creativity in writing. Additionally, the usefulness of TAZ Burger as a visual aid to facilitate learning is also revealed in this study, as the participants were able to accurately represent complex processes in writing using the TAZ Burger template and overcome some linguistic barriers. This finding is consistent with a study by Gerchow et al. (2021), which validated the use of visual aids in facilitating learning by simplifying complex processes. It also aligned with Aziz (2018), as it confirms the use of GO as both direct and indirect strategies for ESL learners can alleviate writing confidence and engagement in learning.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study highlights the usefulness of TAZ Burger, a type of GO in enhancing the writing ability among ESL learners in Malaysian rural secondary schools. The findings of this study may be specific to Malaysian ESL learners, but the implications are significant to other ESL/EFL learners as well. Students' positive improvement in writing ability was achieved with assistance from the use of TAZ Burger, a type of GO. TAZ Burger is a useful pedagogical tool as it benefits ESL learners in visualising an essay structure, drafting essays, achieving smaller goals in writing, improving writing performance in descriptive essays and promoting creativity in learning writing. This alternative pedagogical approach offers learners the optimism that with a proper strategy in the learning classroom, they can thrive in a challenging ESL/EFL writing environment. Navigating the incorporation of TAZ Burger into a writing classroom poses certain challenges, with a primary concern the pivotal role of the teacher as an expert in using the TAZ Burger in deploying this pedagogical tool successfully and the time commitment for both teachers and students to become proficient in using the TAZ Burger. Although this study examines TAZ Burger's use in the descriptive genre, it is crucial to acknowledge that this focus on a single genre might restrict the breadth of understanding its impact on ESL learners' writing competencies in secondary school. Further research should consider exploring other writing genres like narrative and argumentative for a more comprehensive view. Besides, as the findings reflect specifically on one particular area in Malaysia, which can be considered non-urban, it might not necessarily apply to urban students with more English exposure. Therefore, future studies should attempt to investigate the impact of this writing tool on urban learners. This study's implications benefit novice ESL and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, establishing TAZ Burger as a promising tool for fostering writing readiness. It also enriches the pedagogical repertoire of ESL educators, offering a wider array of effective pedagogical strategies for writing. This research has a significant contribution to the writing pedagogy, resonating across diverse educational settings.

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RESEARCH ETHICS

The research obtained approval from the school administrator, with due consideration given to ethical concerns, including safeguarding participants' confidentiality, and respecting their right to withdraw from the study.

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