The Effect of Analytic Text-Based Writing Strategies on ESL Argumentative Writing among Malaysian Form-Six Students in Sabah, Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

Producing effective and high-quality academic writing, such as argumentative writing, requires more than regular writing ability; it demands analytical writing that can increase argumentation skills and promote higher cognitive skills. This study was conducted to address a problem that exists within the Malaysian education setting where English-as-a-second language (ESL) learners face difficulties in presenting and expanding their ideas and viewpoints convincingly, lack of knowledge of the subject matter and inadequate language competence. Therefore, this paper aims to investigate the effect of analytic text-based writing strategies on the students' argumentative performance, proposing a conceptual framework that integrates the approach of text-based instruction and the writing model by Hyland (2003) that emphasises the genre approach of teaching writing. Utilising a mixed-method sequential explanatory research design, the current research employed a quasi-experiment with a convenient sampling to collect the quantitative data from two groups of Form-Six students at a public school in Sabah, Malaysia. The experimental group received a 12-week intervention programme, while the control group continued with their regular classroom practices. A pre-test and a post-test were conducted for both groups before and after the intervention, followed by a semi-structured interview that was carried out with a focus group to elicit students' responses about their learning experiences. The paired-sample t-test indicated that the student's writing performance significantly improved from the pre-test (30.27) to the post-test (40.27) with a large effect size (.77). On the other hand, four themes were derived from the students' responses as the following: an efficient way of distinguishing important information, an effective way of organising ideas, useful guide for argumentative essay and enriching students' knowledge. This research recommends more comprehensive explorations of text-based analytic writing to expose its' dynamic effect on students' writing advancement.

Keywords: Analytic text-based writing; argumentative writing; Malaysian ESL learners; Form-Six students; Sabah

INTRODUCTION

Writing is a core skill that should be mastered by all language learners at all levels in any education system (Graham, 2019). For students, having strong writing skills can improve their chances of succeeding in their educational and employable requirements. The writing process itself brings substantial knowledge to students as it not only improves communication skills but sharpens creativity and imagination levels, widens the knowledge base, and increases the level of confidence (Rae, 2020, as cited in Joseph et al., 2022). Writing is a productive learning process ranging from generating ideas and gathering required data to the publication of a finalised text (Ansarimoghaddam & Tan, 2013). Higher level and complex writing, such as academic writing, brings more skills and provides wider opportunities to students. Writing academically will help

them analyse, convey understanding, think critically, and focus on technique and style (Ahmad Azizi, 2018). When students write, they need to read previous writings, form their own understanding, and analyse the ideas or viewpoints presented by the writers. These help students to think critically and objectively and to look at any issue from different perspectives, and this promotes intellectual maturity.

However, the complex features of argumentative essay writing make it one of the most challenging tasks for students to accomplish. Substantial research has documented second learners' difficulty in learning this form of writing (Peloghitis, 2017) as it requires sophisticated cognitive and linguistic abilities (Taylor et al., 2018). The complexity of this type of writing causes ESL learners to struggle to produce high-quality writing (Dang et al., 2020; Ozfidan & Mitchell, 2020; Pei et al., 2017). Students encounter problems in terms of organisation/structures, thesis statement, content development, providing concrete evidence, writing counterclaims and refutation paragraphs, as well as vocabulary and grammar-related problems.

ESL students in Malaysia struggle with the same problems, specifically when it comes to elaborating and organising ideas in the proper order (Abbas & Herdi, 2018). A similar issue revolves around Form-Six students (the sample in the current study) who sit for Malaysian University English Test (MUET) as a compulsory test and encounter the same problems when dealing with writing tasks. Based on the latest report of the third session of the examination released by the Malaysian Examination Council (MEC) in 2019, only 10.44% of the candidates were in Bands Four and Five (highly proficient and proficient users), 53.21% were in Band Three (modest users), and 36.35% were in Bands Two and One (limited and very limited users). This indicates that 89.56% of the candidates did not manage to achieve a satisfactory level or to be considered proficient users of the English language. Based on the report, the students had difficulties in presenting and expanding ideas or viewpoints and lacked proper language proficiency as well as knowledge about the given topics.

As far as the context of the current study is concerned, the Form-Six students at a public school in Sabah, Malaysia, who previously had undergone formal English Language classes in the primary and secondary levels of education, did not show a good performance in the language. 75.9% of them were not able to achieve the credit level (C) in the Malaysia Certificate of Education (MCE/SPM), which is required for university admission to certain programmes. In general, Malaysian students perform unsatisfactorily in English language examinations, especially in the writing section (Azman, 2016). Many stakeholders in the country have raised their concerns about the circumstances (Li Li & Razali, 2019).

The reasons for Malaysian ESL students' difficulties in writing tasks lie in their cognitive difficulties as well as their insufficient linguistic competence in English, which causes them to face problems in comprehending, conceiving, and composing ideas (Ghulamuddin et al., 2021). Additionally, as revealed by previous studies, the problem persists because the students still receive faulty writing instruction (Hashim et al., 2018). Effective teaching, in general, would expectedly lead to positive learning (Taat et al., 2020), and effective writing instruction is vital to guide students to develop their writing skills, especially in argumentative writing where students need to write proficiently and convincingly.

Analytic text-based writing has been claimed to be effective in enhancing students' writing (Campbell & Filimon, 2018; Matsumura et al., 2015). It is a cognitively demanding task that requires the integration of reading and writing skills. The task provides opportunities for students to process up to three stimulus texts and then use the information to construct an argument and provide supporting evidence from the source text using their own words. The process of

completing the task would help students to write good quality argumentative essays with convincing arguments, concrete evidence and elaboration, and the use of standard English conventions.

THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The Standard-Based English Language Curriculum (SBELC) in Malaysia has emphasised the engagement of students in responding, analysing, and evaluating a variety of literary text types as well as understanding a variety of texts by using a range of appropriate strategies to construct meaning. However, the SBELC does not provide any directives on teaching strategies related to how using reading text from different sources can help improve students' writing performance. Furthermore, very few studies have been carried out to investigate how analytic text-based writing improves argumentative writing, which could hardly be found within the Malaysian context. Most of the studies revolved around descriptive, narrative, or other genres of writing. Therefore, this study attempted to reduce these gaps identified in the relevant literature by conducting research to implement analytic text-based essay writing strategies to improve the linguistic competence and the quality of argumentative writing among ESL students to enable them to produce high-quality writing that reaches the expected level. Therefore, this study addressed two research questions (RQ) as follows:

1. What is the effect of analytic text-based writing strategies instruction on ESL argumentative writing among Form-Six students at a public school in Sabah, Malaysia?
2. How does the analytic text-based strategies instruction function with the ESL argumentative writing among Form 6 students at a public school in Sabah, Malaysia?

Accordingly, two research hypotheses were formulated as follows:

H_1: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of the argumentative writing pre-test and post-test of the control group among Form-Six students at a public school in Sabah, Malaysia.
H_2: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of the argumentative writing pre-test and post-test of the experimental group among Form-Six students at a public school in Sabah, Malaysia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING AND ANALYTIC TEXT-BASED WRITING

To demonstrate proficiency in argumentative reading and writing, ESL learners need to master all the argumentative writing skills, making a case to sustain a claim, identifying evidence from various sources that connect the claim logically, using warrants that support the link between the claim and the supporting evidence and backing the warrants with support (Hillock, 2011, as cited in Campbell & Filimon, 2018). To achieve that purpose, there is a need for explicit writing instructions that guide students to master analytic text-based writing.

Researchers apply text-based analytic writing when they write reviews of articles; professionals do it to synthesise information for their reports, whereas students engage with it when they write research reports, book reviews, write summaries, and argumentative essays. Analytic text-based writing provides opportunities for students to process a lot of information, develop responses about that information and present it clearly in the form of writing. The cognitive demand of text-based writing tasks predicts various features of students' writing performance, including students' ability to reason analytically about texts, provide evidence to support their claims and organise their writing (Matsumura et al., 2015). These features of analytic text-based writing, especially with high-quality (more cognitively demanding) tasks, are very much relevant for guiding and improving students' writing, particularly argumentative essay writing, which requires complex cognitive and linguistic skills (Nippold & Ward-Lonergan, 2010).

TEACHING APPROACHES

Nunan (2003) defines writing as an intellectual activity of finding ideas and thinking about how to express them in good writing and arranging the ideas into statements and paragraphs clearly (cited in Bossonggo et al., 2016). It means that writing is the activity of composing a text to communicate thoughts and ideas in a readable form. Brown (2001) further elaborates that writing is the result of thinking, drafting, and revising procedures that require specialised skills. Such procedures and skills in producing good quality writing need effective and explicit ways of realising it.

Hyland (2008) in Imsa-ard (2020) suggested three main writing approaches for effective writing. The first approach is called the product approach, which focuses on language structures and the products of writing, while the second one is the process approach which concentrates on the process of preparing and creating texts rather than the products. The third approach, however, focuses more on the communicative purposes of the genre and the opinions of the reader called the genre approach. These three approaches provide different benefits depending on the lesson objectives, the needs of the students, and their level of proficiency in the second language (L2). Hyland (2008) in Imsa-ard (2020) states that approaches cannot replace one another but rather complement each other to make a complete whole.

This study adopts the genre-approach model by Hyland (2003) to implement text-based analytical writing to enhance student's writing performance, especially their argumentative writing. Based on Firkin, Foray, and Sengupta (2007, as cited in Dirgeyasa, 2016), there are three important stages in the process of teaching and learning through the genre approach. The stages include building context, modelling and deconstructing text, joint construction text, independent construction, and linking related texts. The first stage reveals the genre's purposes and the setting. A teacher asks questions to activate students' background knowledge. The second stage is analysing samples of the genre to identify its features in terms of the key features and the variations. A teacher introduces the model of the genre to students to familiarise them with the genre and to give them a better understanding of the text type chosen. The third stage guides students to focus on specific functions of the text. A teacher encourages students to construct texts related to a social function. The next stage is individual independent writing by students. Lastly, a teacher relates the new knowledge to other genres and contexts to understand how genres are designed to achieve particular social purposes. The procedure is illustrated in the following figure, which shows the three stages of the teaching-learning cycle.
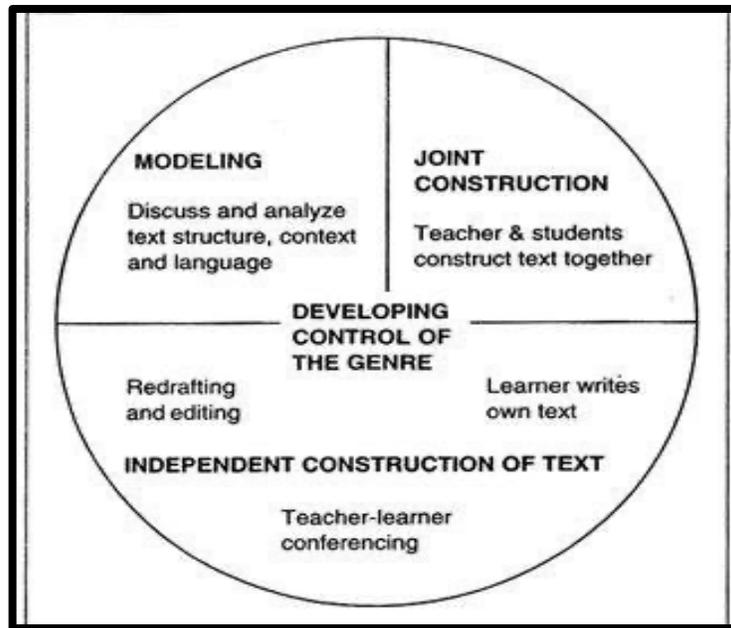
FIGURE 1. Hyland's model of genre teaching and learning cycle (2003)

REVIEW OF THE RELATED STUDIES

Much research on text-based writing has been conducted in response to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) that present the Generation K-12 designed to prepare them for success in the future. The CCSS emphasises the need for students to read different reading sources, especially complex tests that provide facts and background knowledge. Students are challenged to respond to stimulus text that can develop their critical thinking, problem-solving and analytical skills which are important for success in school, career, and life. The Malaysian Standard-Based English Language Curriculum (SBELC) correlates with the objective of the CCSS to emphasise the engagement of students in responding, analysing, and evaluating a variety of literary text types as well as the need for educators to have various teaching strategies such as evidence-based learning activities.

Campbell (2018) explored the use of paragraph frames to scaffold the text-based argumentative writing of low-proficiency students. The results revealed the students showed significant improvement in two domains: (1) purpose, focus, and organisation, and (2) evidence and elaboration. The study indicates that explicit paragraph frame instruction with teacher scaffolding can improve the writing performance of low-achieving students. The degree of effectiveness of the writing strategy can be increased with the use of suitable reading texts for students to analyse and as a prompt to engage deeper in the content of the text.

Matsumura et al. (2015) conducted a study to explore the role of the quality of writing tasks in students' mastery of text-based analytic writing. Based on the results, the researchers claimed that the cognitive demand of text-based writing assignments helped produce various features of students' writing performance, including students' ability to reason analytically about texts and use evidence to support their ideas and organise their writing. Therefore, to help students to develop their level of thinking, cognitively demanding tasks should be considered an essential part of writing instruction to meet the standard level of writing.

Wang et al. (2018) carried out a study to explore the aspect of what high-quality students' responses should look like in a particular genre. The results showed that the students' writing which teachers considered as high-quality analytic text-based writing, rarely projected the kinds of thinking and evidence demanded in the new standard that is to foster students' ability to analyse and interpret texts, marshal effective text evidence, and explain their reasoning. The researchers suggest teachers look at broader criteria of how students' responses in writing should be evaluated rather than using a limited scope they have set for such an assessment. Having a real understanding of what is regarded as quality writing could help teachers implement the kinds of evidence-based practices for writing instruction necessary to prepare students to meet the writing demands of the expected writing standards.

Campbell and Filimon (2018) examined the effects of strategy-focused writing instruction on the argumentative essay writing skills of students in a linguistically diverse classroom. The results revealed that the students had difficulties in (1) presenting opposing claims, (2) implementing different transitional strategies to show relationships, (3) using a logical progression of ideas from the beginning to the end with a satisfying introduction and conclusion, and (4) maintaining and establishing appropriate style and tone. However, students made significant gains in two aspects: the evidence and elaboration and conventions of standard English. In conclusion, the overall results suggest that students' overall writing performance can improve when receiving strategy-focused writing instruction.

Applying analytic-text-based writing to enhance students' writing quality has proven its effectiveness in some aspects of students' wiring performance (Campbell, 2018; Campbell & Filimon, 2018). The studies demonstrated that students with low proficiency in English gained improvement in producing evidence, elaboration, and the convention of standard English. The students also improved in other aspects, such as purpose, focus, and organisation, as well as in maintaining appropriate style and tone. The effectiveness of text-based writing, which has a close relationship with the genre approach to writing, is expected to have a similar outcome for the current study.

Based on the previous studies, some considerations need to be paid attention to. Educators should choose suitable and high-quality reading texts (Dombek et al., 2016) that engage students in a deeper analysis of the text (Campbell & Filimon, 2018) and provide cognitively demanding tasks to develop students' level of thinking (Matsumura et al., 2015). Moreover, educators need to develop grammar instructional approaches that recognise language variations and students' existing knowledge about language to reinforce the reading and writing skills of students who speak a dialect other than English. This idea is very much applicable as the current study was conducted among students from different social backgrounds who speak different languages based on their ethnicity. Additionally, Dombek et al. (2016) also emphasised engaging students with multiple text-based writing activities for the same purpose. Siak Bie Soh (2022) also suggested implementing dyadic discussions during a pre-writing stage to enable L2 learners to perform individual argumentative writing tasks more easily, relaxingly, interestingly, motivationally, and confidently.

Based on the reviewed literature and for the purpose of achieving the high expectations of improving students' writing quality, it is necessary to reinforce the use of analytic text-based writing strategies for the intended purpose. Achieving the purpose of the current research is shown by the conceptual framework illustrated in Figure 2 below, where the study aims to investigate the effect of the analytic text-based writing strategies as the independent variable on argumentative writing performance that serves as the dependent variable.

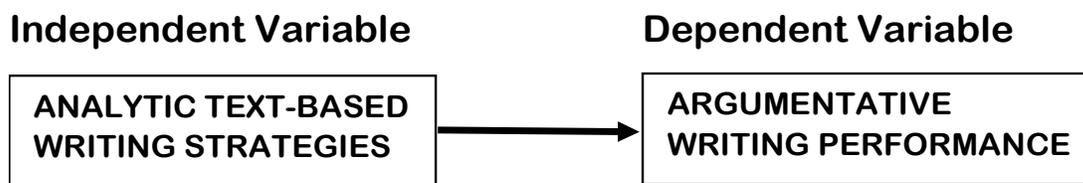| **Independent Variable**		**Dependent Variable**
ANALYTIC TEXT-BASED WRITING STRATEGIES	→	ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING PERFORMANCE

FIGURE 2. Conceptual Framework

As shown in Figure 2 above, the independent variable in this study refers to the instructional tasks or the writing strategies, which are arranged carefully in the form of a writing module ranging from simple activities (such as identifying the pros and cons of an issue, stating relevant and irrelevant information, or determining positions) to advanced activities such as developing general claims and providing evidence to back claims. On the other hand, the dependent variable is the student's argumentative writing performance which is expected to change depending on the interaction between variables after the intervention programme is implemented. To sum up, this study manipulates the analytic text-based writing strategies (independent variable) to assess how they will affect students' argumentative writing performance (dependent variable).

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH APPROACH AND DESIGN

This study employed a mixed-method sequential explanatory research design. It was carried out at SMK Takis, a suburban school located in Papar, Sabah, Malaysia. The sampling technique for this study was convenient sampling, as the researchers had direct access to two groups of students who were from different classes. The participants were 60 Form-Six students aged 19 with similar characteristics and qualities in terms of average socioeconomic background, knowledge, and learning experience. In addition, students' performance in class assignments showed that most of them were classified as limited and modest users of English. These qualities are important to get the intended outcome and information needed for the research. Thirty students were involved in the experimental group, while the other 30 formed the control group.

INSTRUMENT

A set of writing tests was used to collect data to examine the impact of the analytic text-based writing strategies intervention on argumentative writing. The writing tests (pre-test and post-test) were taken from the standardised MUET (Malaysian University English) questions that were developed by the MEC (Malaysian Education Council). The writing question requires students to write a 250-word essay about a topic that was taken from the MUET syllabus within 50 minutes. The writing was then graded using band descriptors provided by the MEC, and the grading was based on the CEFR aggregate score.

To elicit students' responses on their learning experiences using text-based writing strategies, a semi-structured interview was conducted one week after the intervention. The questions were checked and approved by a panel of experts in the field. This interview was carried

out with a focus group consisting of three students with different levels of proficiency: good, average, and poor. The interview session took about 20 minutes for each student. The transcripts from the interview were transcribed using thematic analysis.

INTERVENTION

English lessons were 40 minutes long for eight periods a week. During the eight periods per week, the control group (n=30) received regular English instruction with practices using the MUET reference book consisting of listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities and other additional activities for 12 weeks. The experimental group (n=30), however, received two periods a week with 40 minutes for each period for 12 weeks as well. The overall duration for the experimental group to undergo the intervention was 16 hours.

A pre-test and a post-test were administered to both groups. The purpose of the pre-test was to ensure the comparability of the two groups prior to the treatment, whereas the post-test allowed the researchers to determine the effects of the treatment on the outcome variable (Rogers & Révész, 2020). The following weeks after the pre-test, the control group did regular class activities, and the experimental group underwent analytic text-based writing strategies for 12 weeks. In the 12th week, the post-test was carried out, and data were analysed for the results and further discussions of the implications.

TABLE 1. Research intervention procedures

Week	Control Group	Experimental Group
Week 1	Pre-test	Pre-test
Week 2 – Week 11 Two periods a week (40 min each period) 80 X 12 = 960 min 16 hours	Regular Class Activities	Intervention (Analytic Text-Based Writing Strategies)
Week 12	Post-test	Post-test, Interview

DATA ANALYSIS

Data were analysed using a paired sample T-test to find out whether there were any significant differences between the mean scores in the pre-test and the post-test of both groups after the intervention. On the other hand, a standardised semi-structured interview was carried out with a focus group consisting of good, average, and poor students to reveal the reflections and views of the participants regarding their own learning experience using text-based writing strategies.

RESULTS

RQ1 dealt with the effect of analytic text-based writing strategies instruction on ESL argumentative writing among Form-Six students at a public school in Sabah, Malaysia. Descriptive statistics of the writing test scores for both groups resulting from the paired sample t-test are displayed in Table 2.

TABLE 2. Means and standard deviations of writing test scores of the experimental group and control group

	Experimental		Control	
	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test
M	30.37	44.27	31.77	32.67
SD	10.75	10.78	8.31	7.66

Results showed that the performance of both groups in the pre-test was highly convergent (*M = 30.37, SD = 10.75; M = 31.77, SD = 8.31*). However, the experimental group outperformed in the post-test compared with the control group (*M = 44.27, SD = 10.78; M = 32.67, SD = 7.66*).

For a clearer view, the bar graph in Figure 3 below shows the overall writing performance of both groups. While the two groups had approximately similar mean scores before implementing the programme, the experimental group showed a significant difference in the post-test as their mean score improved from 30.27 in the pre-test to 44.27 in the post-test. The control group, however, did not produce much of a change in the writing scores, with mean scores of 31.77 and 32.67 in the pre-test and post-test, respectively.
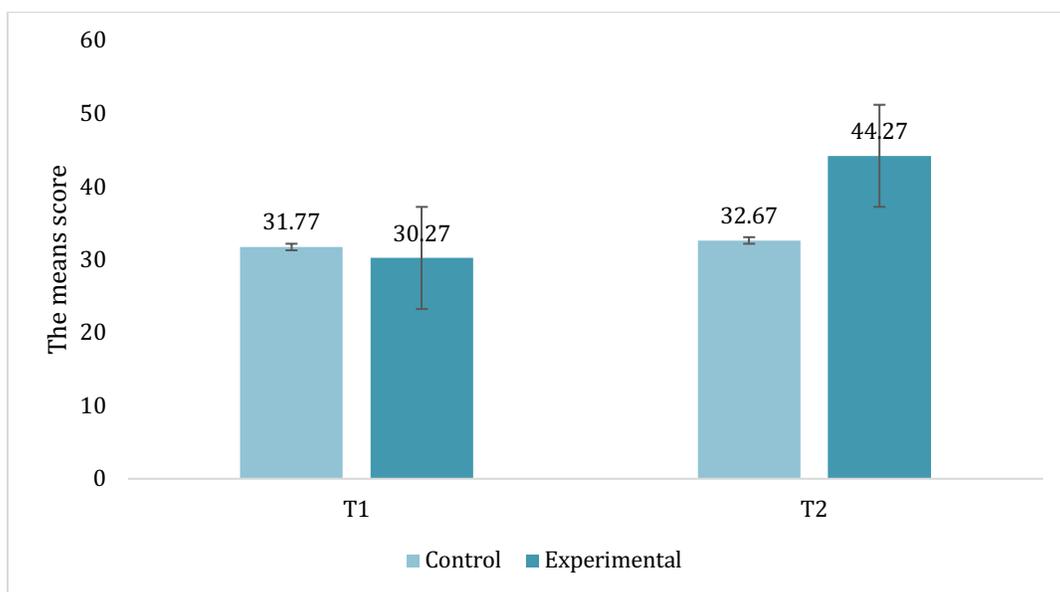

FIGURE 3. Comparison in means of writing performance between the groups (experimental and control)

As far as research hypotheses are concerned, the results obtained from the paired sample t-test supported the first hypothesis, i.e., H$_1$: there is no significant difference in the mean scores of the argumentative writing pre-test and post-test of the control group among Form-Six students at a public school in Sabah, Malaysia, as shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3. The comparison of the mean score between the pre-test and the post-test of the control group

	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean Difference	t	df	Sig. Two-Sided P	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Score Control Pre-test Score Control Post-test	30	31.77 32.67	8.31 7.66	-.90	-.67	29	.509	-3.65	1.85

Table 3 shows a comparison of the mean scores between the pre-test and post-test of the control group after the period of 12 weeks. The result of the paired sample t-test was not significant, t (29) = -.67, *p* = .509 (two-tailed), indicating that there was no significant increase in writing scores of the control group from the pre-test (M = 31.77), SD = 8.31, N = 30 to post-test (M = 32.67), SD = 7.66. Additionally, the eta squared effect size was (0.2), indicating a small effect size based on Cohen's (1998) convention.

In terms of the level of significance in the means scores of the writing tests of the experimental group, Table 4 below summarises the results as produced by the paired-sample t-test.

TABLE 4. Comparison of the mean score between the pre-test and the post-test of the experimental group

	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean Difference	t	df	Sig. Two-Sided P	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Score Exp. Pre-test Score Exp. Post-test	30	30.77 44.27	10.75 10.78	-13.90	-9.74	29	<.001	-16.82	-10.98

Table 4 shows there is a significant difference in the experimental group's writing test scores at Time 1(pre-test) and Time 2 (post-test), t (29) = 9.74, P < .001(two-tailed), indicating a significant increase in writing performance scores from the pre-test (M=30.37), SD=10.75, N = 30 to post-test (M = 44.27), SD=10.78. The mean difference was 13.90, with a 95% confidence interval for the difference between the means of -16.82 to -10.98 with a large effect size (.77). The result shows that the use of analytic text-based writing strategies was effective in improving students' argumentative writing performance. Thus, this result rejects the second research hypothesis, i.e., H$_2$: there is no significant difference in the mean scores of the argumentative writing pre-test and post-test of the experimental group among Form-Six students at a public school in Sabah, Malaysia.

To answer Research Question Two, a one-to-one semi-structured interview was conducted with three participants with different proficiency levels (good, average, poor) to elucidate the quantitative findings. Table 5 shows the summary of the thematic analysis from the interview transcript.

TABLE 5. Summary of the analysis of the findings from the interview transcript

No	Question	Findings	
		Code	Theme
1	What do you like about the writing strategies?	▪ Efficient strategies ▪ Identify points ▪ Identify relevant and irrelevant ideas ▪ Read faster ▪ Write easier	An efficient way of distinguishing relevant from irrelevant information
2	Do you find the strategies help you to complete the tasks easily? Why?	▪ Arrange ideas ▪ Useful T-chart (graphic organiser) ▪ For comparison ▪ List content	An effective way of organising ideas
3	Do the strategies guide you to get the important ideas from the text?	▪ Identify main points ▪ Sow contrast points ▪ Helps to get important content	
4	In what ways have the techniques helped you in writing an argumentative essay?	▪ Refutation ▪ Reading more focus ▪ Better elaboration	
5	Would you explain your writing experience using the techniques?	▪ Elements of Argumentative Essay ▪ Better essays ▪ Summarise ideas ▪ Happy and excited ▪ New technique	A useful guide for argumentative essay writing
6	Do you want to use the techniques for your writing strategies in the future?	▪ Gain more knowledge ▪ Informative articles ▪ Better technique ▪ Helpful ▪ Useful for future learning purposes	Enrich students' knowledge.

Based on the data analysis, there are four themes deduced from the codes of the interview transcripts. The participants found that there were four main reasons why the strategy had helped them in writing an argumentative essay. First, it is an efficient way of distinguishing relevant from irrelevant information as it is a better, clearer, and faster way of reading and getting relevant content from reading texts. Second, it is effective in organising ideas or content for essays. The strategy of locating and collecting relevant information using a T-chart helped students to put the pros and cons of any issues, which is useful for writing essays with organised points.

The next reason is that it is a useful guide for argumentative essay writing. The strategies benefited students as they could choose the information listed in the T-chart to form their claim and the points to support their argument. They were also aware of the important elements of argumentative writing, such as the claim, thesis statement, evidence, refutation, and good elaboration. The fourth reason is that the strategies enrich students' knowledge. Providing students with suitable articles for reading prior to writing tasks contributed many advantages to students. One of the participants said that one of the challenges in writing, especially argumentative writing, is students may not have any ideas related to certain topics. Therefore, by having articles or reading materials, students would be able to get the information that they need, such as the contrasting points, details, and evidence, as well as the special vocabulary used in the reading texts. The respondent said that he did not have to depend on his own knowledge, which was limited to a certain level of information. Additional content from reading texts was added to improve students' writing to a higher level.

DISCUSSION

The results obtained in this current study are in line with those obtained by Campbell and Filimon (2018), Qin and Liu (2021), and Miller (2014). All the studies have a similar claim about the positive effects of using reading sources to improve students' argumentative writing. In the current study, the main reason why the students' writing performance in the experimental group who underwent the intervention significantly improved was that they were provided with suitable reading sources as an important input for their writing. These reading texts provided content in terms of ideas, facts for evidence as well as lexical and functional words. Apart from that, the selected reading texts contained issues with contrasting views (the pros and cons) and provided students with balanced ideas before they took a stand on whether to agree or to go against the issue. This important feature of reading texts is supported by Qin and Liu (2021), who stated that viewpoints in reading texts have a great influence on the quality of students' argumentative essays. These advantages of reading texts helped to structure students' writing as students were able to form a claim and use the relevant details from the texts to support their argument. The activities (deep reading, interpreting, identifying, and collecting relevant information) of processing the reading texts engaged students deeper into the issue and acquired more understanding which helped them to write quality and more convincing argumentative writing.

This study has also proven that the use of the reading-writing module has impacted students' writing quality. The module consisting of analytic text-based writing strategies was formulated as a scaffolding for students to go through with the intervention process. Students in the experimental group went through all the strategies, which were first locating and collecting information where students identified the relevant and irrelevant details and the pros and cons in the text. Later, students analysed the information to determine a position before drafting and reviewing their claims or arguments. At this stage, students analysed the task, did active reading, and reviewed the concept. In the last stage, students defined their claim, added evidence to back up the claim and wrote a complete essay on the issue. The whole process of the module guided students effectively from processing the content of the reading texts until they produced the final product. This concept of instructional scaffolding to improve students' writing is supported by Campbell and Filimon (2018), who conducted a similar study and revealed that providing students with sufficient scaffolding helped students to accomplish their tasks. They are the step-by-step guidance that students need to work through to complete the writing tasks. Effective writing instructions are indeed vital to guide students to develop their writing skills, especially in argumentative writing, where students need to write proficiently and convincingly (Joannes & AlSaqqaf, 2022).

The second discussion focuses on the second research question of the study, which is 'how does the analytic text-based writing strategies instruction function with the ESL argumentative writing among Form-six students at a public school in Sabah, Malaysia?' Based on the interview, which was conducted with a focus group, there were four themes deduced from the interview transcript explaining how these writing strategies function with students' writing. The themes are 1) an efficient way of distinguishing relevant and irrelevant information, 2) an effective way for organising ideas, 3) a useful guide for argumentative essay writing, and 4) Enriching students' knowledge.

The findings of the study parallel the studies by Qin and Liu (2021); Cooney et al. (2018) and Campbell and Filimon (2018). All these studies reported a great influence of text-based analytic writing or the use of reading texts on students' argumentative writing quality. However, there was a particular aspect of the current study, which was in contrast with the study by Campbell

and Filimon (2018). In the current study, the respondents stated that the analytic strategies helped them organise ideas or important points for their writing, whereas Campbell and Filimon's study revealed that the students did not show improvement in the organisation aspect as they had difficulties in presenting opposing claims, using transitional strategies to show relationships, and using a logical progression of ideas. After a thorough comparison between the two studies, the main reason for the different outcomes is because of the language proficiency of the students. In Campbell and Filimon, the students consisted of low-proficiency students or beginner learners of English, while the students in the current study had an adequately solid foundation of the language, yet their main problem lies in producing high-quality writing. This emphasises that text-based analytic writing is more suitable for average or more advanced students who can do analytical reading and writing and use their critical thinking skills to produce such complex writing.

The current study has also discovered a few ways or reasons regarding how analytic text-based strategies helped improve students' argumentative writing. Firstly, the respondents stated that the strategy of locating and collecting information helped them to identify the main points from a reading text in a more efficient way. During the process, students first read through the text to get a general idea of what the text was all about. Then, they identified the main points of the reading text based on the instruction given to them that the main points could be normally found in the first two lines of a paragraph. Next, they had to determine which supporting ideas were directly related to the topic. They also identified sentences or ideas that seemed to be related to the main point. Finally, they sorted through the details to make sure that they were relevant or irrelevant information. These techniques were helpful, especially for students who struggle with reading a long, stretching text. Having the right techniques for locating and collecting information makes reading and processing reading texts easier. Below are some excerpts from the focus group interview.

> I really like to use it because it saves more time and is more efficient…it's an efficient way to find the main points and can overall make a better essay than whatever technique we used before this. (Informant 3)

> I do like the strategies as it's more efficient…how the students use the points to write…with the strategies…without the strategies, students won't be able to know how to use the information given. So, with the use of the strategies, students have a better, clearer way…how to use the information … yes that's what I think. (Informant 1)

The second reason is that the participants claimed that the strategies of text-based analytic writing guided them to get important information and to identify relevant from relevant information. According to them, the use of a T-chart (graphic organisers) was effective in getting the pros and cons of ideas from an article, and this showed them a clearer picture of what they needed to write in their essays.

> …the T-chart technique…It's separate between the pros, which are the advantages, and the cons, the advantages. So, with the T-chart, I just need to read the text and mark the important ideas that are related to the question and then write them down in the T-chart after the reading. (Informant 2)

> …the strategies guided me to get the important ideas because…we know which is the main point from the text and which is not, and after we list down the points in the T-chart…It helps guides me to the important ideas from the text, and after that…the technique helps me in writing an argumentative essay. So, that's what I think. (Informant 1)

The T-chart laid out expectations of what information or details students needed to focus on while reading. Students could also simply choose the information listed in the T-chart to form their claim and the points to support their argument. Using the graphic organisers, students could organise ideas in a logical order and were aware of where they needed more information. A graphic organiser is a possible effective tool to use with text-based analytical writing. This technique produces a level of reading superior to the conventional method (Collins et al., 2017; Dombek et al., 2016).

The next reason the strategy benefits students is that it makes writing easier, especially an argumentative essay as they could just choose the main points and important details listed in the T-chart to form their claim and the points to support their argument. All the participants had similar opinions on how the strategy made writing argumentative essays easier for them. One of the participants commented as follows:

> One of the struggles of writing an essay is we may not have any ideas…at that time, so with the use of articles, we can get more…we get more information from other sources.

This shows that providing articles or reading texts would enable students to get adequate information, ideas, facts, etc., which they need to form an argument, evidence, and other details for their argumentative essays. Students would not depend on their previous or current knowledge that is limited to a certain level of information. Hence, the content from an article adds to improve students' argumentative writing to a higher level. Additionally, one of the participants mentioned that the strategies were useful for her future learning purposes. This would be clearer if she continued her study in tertiary education, which needs lots of academic writing. This is arguably true as the integration of reading and writing tasks with the genre of argumentative writing is the most common academic writing task in universities (Qin & Liu, 2021).

The positive outcomes that the students experienced after the intervention process shows great implications of the use of analytic text-based writing strategies, which comprise selected instructional tasks (identifying the pros and cons of an issue, identifying relevant and irrelevant information, determining position, developing general claims, and providing evidence to back claims) to improve student' argumentative writing. The instructional tasks were structured based on the writing model, the genre-approach model by Hyland (2003), which consists of 3-stages of the learning cycle; modelling teaching, joint construction between teacher and students, and independent construction of a text by the students themselves. The whole process was the realisation of how the conceptual framework and the writing model were used as the basis or the foundation of the intervention framework. To conclude, English language teachers should be able to identify the reasons behind classroom issues and devise appropriate solutions (Ong et al., 2021).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

With the increasing trend of world economic integration, cultivating language learners with an international vision is an important characteristic and trend of education in today's world (AlSaqqaf et al., 2023). Thus, to achieve this task, further research should be carried out. The current study revealed that text-based analytic writing had helped students improve their writing to a higher standard of quality. Though the study had achieved the expected objectives, further research is needed with some recommendations as follows:

a) A longer period of intervention is recommended as the process of going through the reading-writing process or strategies takes time. A longer intervention period would give opportunities for students to read multiple reading texts with different topics, which would help them produce more writing and enable them to have in-depth experience with each stage of the writing strategies.

b) The current study was conducted in one of the schools in Papar, Sabah, located in a suburban area. A wider range of research is needed for schools in urban as well as rural areas to see a more comprehensive representation of the effect of text-based analytic writing on students' writing performance.

c) For future research, it is suggested to set a certain standard of criteria to measure students' argumentative writing quality. These specific features of writing assessment would help teachers to examine the real quality of argumentative writing produced by students.

CONCLUSION

The study aimed to investigate the effect of text-based analytic writing on students' argumentative writing performance and to explore how the strategies functioned with students' argumentative writing. Matsumura et al. (2015) claim that this cognitive demand of text-based writing tasks predicts various features of students' writing performance, organise their ability to reason analytically about texts, provide evidence to support their claims and organise their writing. The results of the current research revealed students' writing performance has significantly improved in the mean score from the pre-test to the post-test with a large effect size. The findings also show that students perceived analytic text-based writing strategies as efficient, effective, useful, and enriching their knowledge. The findings demonstrate that text-based writing brings substantial benefits as the skills acquired through the reading-writing process help students to be more analytical in reading, more organised in presenting and expanding viewpoints, and accurate in the language in order to produce high-quality writing. This study supports previous research that analytic text-based writing, which largely focuses on reading and writing skills, has positively impacted students' argumentative writing performance. Nevertheless, for a deeper understanding of the effect of text-based analytic writing on students' writing performance, some recommendations for future research had drawn out for a wide-ranging and more comprehensive outlook of the dynamic of this writing strategy for the significant development of students' argumentative writing quality.

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