The Use of Technology to Enhance English as a Second Language (ESL) Learners’ Descriptive Writing

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Abstract: This research investigates on the use of technology to enhance ESL learners’ descriptive writing. The purpose of this study being carried out is to find out the underlying reasons behind ESL learners’ inability to write good descriptive writing. Apart from that, this research was also carried out to find out why technology was the approach chosen to solve the raised issues in descriptive writing as well as finding out students’ perception on the use of technology to act as an aid to their descriptive writing skill. This is an action research study in which thirty-four students of Form 4 participated. The instruments used to obtain data from students were open ended questions, semi structured interview and teacher’s reflective entry. Only three students were chosen for the semi structured interview session using purposive sampling method, the justification for this is that they vary in terms of their proficiency and the researcher had a time restriction to interview all thirty-four students. Data was analysed using thematic analysis method. The result of this study shows that the incorporation of technology has enhanced students’ performance in descriptive writing.

Keywords: Technology; L2 Writing; ESL learners

1. Introduction

In Malaysian classroom, ESL learners vary from one level of proficiency to another. Due to this factor, the condition of learners facing anxiety in learning English is unavoidable. Language anxiety can be characterised as the anxiousness and pessimist emotional reaction aroused in second language acquisition (Young, 1999). Before that, MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) specified that language anxiety is the feeling of being alarmed and uneasyparticularly in second-language contexts, including speaking, listening, reading, and writing. In fact, anxiety has been regarded as one of the most fundamental affective factors that influence the learning of a second language (Schmidt, Boraie & Kassabgy, 1996). Apart from that, Horwitz et al. (1986) define foreign language anxiety as a noticeable complex of self-perceptions, stance, emotions, and attitudes related to classroom language learning appearing from the novelty of the language learning process (p.128). Crookall and Oxford (1991) defend that prominent language anxiety may inauspiciously affect students’ morale, self-confidence, and ultimately hamper proficiency in language acquisition. Therefore, in order to prevent these terrible consequences branching from second language anxiety, teachers have to implement an approach that could help learners to resolve their anxiety issue in learning English.

Writing skill is one of the most predominant components when it comes to teaching English as a second language. One of the main issuessuffered by students learning English as a second language (ESL) is their incompetence to paraphrase a text accurately; this has effectively hindered their writing skills and ability to express themselves (Ismail & Maasum, 2009). Mohamed A. Okasha (2014) stated that writing skill presentsstudents’ ability in mastering writing techniques; students need to be conscious about the fact that writing is both process and product. Over the last two decades, learning how to write has been deemed important and given prime attention for mainly two factors: its capability to function as an effective communication of ideas, and the substantial amount of research carried out in writing skill to examine various issues suffered by L2 writers (Dar & Khan, 2015). Despite the fact that they are significant amount of studies that focus on teachers teaching writing skill to students, more attentiveness was laboured in the needs of students learning to write rather than to teachers learning to teach writing skill (Cheung, 2011; Lee, 2010). To add on that, earlier studies did not engage on writing intervention to aid teachers in learning to teach (Sufatmi & Aizan, 2016).

According to Mustafa (2015), technology does not constitute methodology, but teachers utilize technology to complement it. Cameron (2003), students’ motivation to learn increases when the material is varied as in using interactive learning tools such as simulations and static graphics in an online environment. In this particular study, the technologies used to help enhance learners’ descriptive writing skill are PowerPoint slides, Youtube
videos and pictures from Google. In addition, 21st century learning skill such as collaborative learning, group work and presentation were made compulsory.

Many ESL learners in different stages of learning face the same difficulties of writing in English. On the other end of this issue, teachers also find it strenuous to provide aid for students to produce academic writing with a commendable quality (Abdel-Hack, 2002). This has further resulted in the impoverishment of learners’ writing skills. The underlying reason can be drawn from a number of components such as the complexity of the skill, inadequate amount of knowledge possess by students about the topic, insufficient practice and limited feedback (Anwar, 2000). To further worsen this condition, studies of teaching the language tend to put emphasis solely on the accuracy and correctness of grammar and writing mechanics (Calhoun, & Hale, 2003). Sufatmi&Aizan (2016) added that teachers who put their full attention on getting students to produce error-free writing, they will gradually spend a hefty amount of time to teach grammatical structures or edit the errors made by the students instead of focusing on the process itself. Therefore, the process of learning writing skill becomes very complicated as it focuses mainly on the correctness of the sentences and the accuracy of the writing mechanics. This has further caused students to deviate further from being interested in learning the skill of descriptive writing.

Moreover, ESL learners always view themselves as poor writers and that they have terminal condition in writing skills and this is complicated by the fact that ESL learners like any other language learners, face anxiety in learning L2 or in this context; English. Forsyth (2003) stated that the reason for weak writing skills includes the terrible attitudes that students manifest upon writing skill. Apart from that, Gomaa (2010) indicated that students’ first language affects learning the target language. In the context of Malaysian ESL learners residing in the East side of Malaysia, their first language is Malay, Mandarin or Tamil; therefore, teaching writing skill in English becomes even more difficult for teachers since they have to tackle the influences carried by these first languages spoken by students. However, according to Al-Khawwneh (2010) students have recognised that the methodology of teaching and the environment that they are learning in are the main causes of their weaknesses in English. This includes teachers’ conventional teaching method without consistent incorporation of technology and teachers’ inability to make writing lessons interesting with appropriate teaching aids being utilized. Besides, teachers are commonly too insisting in achieving correct grammar structures and their focus primarily given to the language structure (Leki, 1990) and sentence level grammar (Nunan, 1999). The writing tasks that adopt product-oriented approach were mostly imitating, copying and transforming models given by the teachers or text books. (Sufatmi&Aizan, 2016). In light of these stated problems, researcher proposed this study to help ESL learners to overcome their problem in writing skill by incorporating technology into lessons, particularly in descriptive writing lessons.

**Writing Skill in Malaysian Context**

Writing skill is one of the most crucial components in English syllabus. Upon completing secondary school, students are expected to have the ability to write and understand written English in both school and real life situations (Ministry of Education, 1991). ESL learners in Malaysia, specifically in secondary school, range from 13 to 17 years old in terms of age. They possess different level of proficiency hence different level of writing skill. In school, their writing lessons vary from a 350-word narrative essay or expository essay, a formal letter of complaint, and a guided essay based on a given outline (Tan et al., 2009). However, according to Marina (2014), Malaysia has been afflicted by a steep decline in English language proficiency over the past several decades mainly due to the failure of maintaining the consistency in the country’s education policies. There is an invariable trend of dissatisfaction among students, educators, policy makers and the public in a large scale that revolve around the teaching and learning of the language (Abdul Rahman, 2005, Ismail, 2008). Following the problems coming from the education context is the lexical and grammatical problems that students have. An error analysis study conducted on 10th grade Malaysian students studying in semi-urban school with 72 English used essays as instrument shows that students typically suffer from the problem of applying correct grammatical rules in their writings (Darus&Kaladevi, 2009). Inappropriate prepositions and conjunctions, imprecise subject verb agreement, wrong usage of tenses and chaotic sentence structures show that ESL learners in Malaysia are still struggling to even write simple sentences in a grammatically correct manner. Furthermore, since the ability to write is closely related to reading, many ESL learners are suffering from deficiency of motivation to read hence affecting their writing skill. According to Mustafa (2007), Malaysian students in general do not read for contentment that comes with it, but rather, to pass examinations. Larry (2003: 121) states that writing is the process of conveying notions from one’s mind onto paper to share with readers but he admits that producing texts to communicate their ideas is tough sledding. Furthermore, Guthrie (2005) stated that many Malaysian students depend on their teachers to instruct them to read, if not they will not read by themselves. Therefore, students are actually forestalling their language-rich learning process by not reading. This has caused them to not being
exposed to correct sentence structure, bombastic words, accurate choice of words in expressing ideas and the wide range of lexical variety to further express themselves in writing.

**Descriptive Writing**

Descriptive writing is a form of writing which contains a heavy amount of details in regards to the written topic. It has the tendency to be affluent in detail based on personal observations and sensory input (Schaeffer, 2010). Usually, this type of writing can be perfected by writer asking him or herself Wh-questions about the selected topic. Schaeffer (2010) also stated that teachers may target this form of writing by assigning descriptive sentence, paragraph or poetry assignments. The teachers are encouraged to ask students more questions that revolve around the details of the specific topic being written. Teachers are then encouraged to ask for more specific use of language with precise words to specifically describe the events that students are trying to express. Finally, the teacher needs to instruct students to create and construct sentences by joining clauses until desired variability in sentences structure is achieved. However, according to Schaeffer (2010), this instructional based way of exposing descriptive writing to students may lead to a shorter written passage.

**Technology in Teaching Descriptive Writing**

In this particular study, the researcher has incorporated technology in every writing lesson taught. The types of technology that the researcher used for every cycle are PowerPoint slides, Youtube videos as well as pictures from Google. The researcher has also integrated the use of PowerPoint slides for the purpose of fulfilling their practice stage and completing their extended work that needs to be done at home. The usage of computers can amplify how children learn by assisting four fundamental characteristics of learning: (a) active engagement, (b) participation in groups, (c) frequent interaction and feedback, and (d) connections to real-world contexts (Roshelle, Pea, Hoadley, Gordin, & Means, 2000). Youtube videos were massively used throughout the three cycles of writing lessons to enrich students’ input on the selected topic. There were also times when the researcher used Youtube as a simulation for students to emulate from. This method of technology incorporation was a great help in helping the researcher to deliver lessons of writing in a more effective manner. Simulations promote student motivation because when students are active learners, students are motivated to learn the material and therefore succeed in class (Montgomery, Notar, & Wilson, 2005). Students were also taught using PowerPoint slides to ensure they get the most out of the teaching and to keep them focus on the lesson.

2. Previous Research

Writing skills have a crucial role across the lifespan (Ingebrand, 2016). Lerner (1976) specified that writing difficulties were the most common communication disability. Writing is one of the most taxing skills that second or foreign language learners are demanded to acquire as it necessitate the mastery of a variety of “linguistic, cognitive, and sociocultural competencies” (Barkaoui, 2007). According to Graham (2006), beginning in the elementary grades, students might be expected to write to evidence their knowledge on a specific topic. That shows how important writing skill is in education world and mastering L2 for ESL learners. The assurance that children will be literate once they leave school is crucial and vital, but the ability to write with competence is nonetheless important as it ensures children can respond to what is read and they can demonstrate knowledge on the given subject (Hooper, 2002). Poor language proficiency is a critical issue to revise on (Al Fadda, 2012) therefore, it can be concluded that problems in writing are due to deficiency in linguistics knowledge in addition to students’ perspective on writing since they approach it with “negativities and misconceptions” (Pine, 2014). ESL learners therefore have to start mastering the art of writing skill from school in which it can become difficult if proper method of teaching is not applied by teachers. Composition is influenced by both knowledge about the writing topic and knowledge on how to write, however obtaining these types of knowledge is intricate (McCutchen, 1986; Olinghouse, Graham, & Gillespie, 2015). Further, with multiple consequences for poor writing performance, educational leaders must be able to identify individual students or groups of students (White, 1996) who require specific method or way of teaching in for them to be able to learn writing skill effectively.

Technology and English language education are highly related to each other (Singhal, 1997). Many schools in Malaysia are equipped with enough facilities and up to date technological supports. Some schools even have LCD projectors, personal computers, iPads and document cameras. Many schools now have access to technology, yet the question one must ask is whether the technology is integrated into the curriculum (Alvidrez, 2014). Alvidrez also stated that many teachers are still not fully utilizing technology in their classroom. “Students use word processors mainly to type up and present good copies of writing, but underutilized other functions, such as the alterability of text on screen to edit, to experiment and to keep other versions” (Harris, 2011, p. 41). Now that 21st century way of learning is being implemented in mass, teachers have to find means for technology to be
incorporated into the lesson. In response to T-PACK, the incorporation of technology and pedagogy has to be in parallel without neglecting either one of the elements. In the past, students would be required to memorize facts about a certain topic and be able to restate them at a later time. “Content mastery is not sufficient” when it comes to the common core standards, “students need proficiency in a range of academic learning skills and behaviours (Conley, 2011, p. 20). Alvidrez (2014) also added that technology is no longer a separate section of standards; it is woven throughout all of the standards.

3. Methodology

In this study, the researcher has employed qualitative research approach. Action research was the research design used for this particular study. According to Sagor (2000), action research is a strict process of inquiry conducted by and for those taking the action. The primary reason for engaging in action research is to assist the “actor” in improving and/or refining his or her actions (Retrieved from http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/100047/chapters/What-Is-Action-Research%C). Three cycles of action research was carried out throughout the entire study, in between each cycle was a gap of 2 weeks for the researcher to collect and analyze the data obtained. For each cycle, there were 4 stages that the researcher needs to complete before advancing to the next cycle.

First Stage of Action Research

The first stage is problem statement. During this stage, the researcher has to identify a major problem suffered by participants; the students and further find out whether or not the problem identified can be solved through interventions that will be introduced later on in the cycle. For this particular stage, the researcher has distributed needs analysis for students to answer. The researcher also had to come up with three research questions that revolved around the field of focus chosen earlier. The research questions must be answerable by the data collected later in stage 3 through the use of three instruments.

Second Stage of Action Research

The next stage is introducing the intervention to the cycle; which is trying to introduce a recognized solution to the problem identified earlier in stage one. According to Sagor (2010) action researchers should avoid relying on any single source of data, this is to ensure validity and reliability of their findings is reasonable. Triangulation is a process that is commonly used by teacher researchers in the endeavour of keeping their findings valid and reliable. Triangulation means using more than one source of data that is independent to answer one’s enquiry. Triangulation can be reckoned to looking at an object placed inside a box from different angles. A researcher can compare and contrast better when observing a phenomenon through multiple perspectives by looking from a variety of lenses.

Third Stage of Action Research

The third stage is observation, this is when the researcher observed whether or not the intervention, she introduced in the earlier stage has made any changes and helped her students to progress in writing skill. The observation was made by collecting data through the selected instruments. Instruments are the tools used to provide aid to collect data obtained from the changes that occur after intervention was introduced to the cycle. The three instruments that the researcher used were open ended questions where students were required to answer a few questions divided into several sections, semi structured interview in which students were interviewed right after the session of intervention ended and lastly, teacher reflection where the researcher has written the changes and variables that she have managed to notice and detect throughout this entire stage.

Fourth Stage of Action Research

The fourth stage would be the reflection stage. In this particular stage, the researcher would evaluate whether or not the interventions introduced was a success. This was done by analyzing the data obtained earlier in stage 3. These stages were repeated two more times in the next two cycles.

Purposive sampling is the method used by the researcher when choosing her respondents to participate in the interview and questionnaires answering sessions. The researcher has selected the respondents based on their different level of proficiency from high to low. The reason why the researcher has selected students of different proficiency is because the researcher wants to see the impact of the intervention introduced to different students with different level of proficiency.
4. Data Collection Technique

Open Ended Questions

According to Foddy (1993: 127) open ended questions permit the respondent to voice out their own opinion without being influenced by the researcher. One of the many advantages of collecting data using open ended questions is the possibility of discovering spontaneous responses given by individuals, and thus eliminating the possibility of obtaining bias responses that may result from suggesting responses to individuals, a bias which may occur in the case of close-ended questions (Reja et al, 2003). The open-ended questions were distributed to all 34 students for them to answer. There were a total of 10 questions in the form. First four questions focus on students’ background and language knowledge. The remaining questions focus more on students’ behavioral changes before and after the intervention took place, students’ perception on the technology incorporation and students’ real problems in mastering descriptive writing. This instrument was used to help answering research question one and three because students were instructed to answer the questions by themselves since there were no scale provided for them to easily rate their perceptions and thoughts about the lesson.

Semi Structured Interview

A semi structured interview is a process that involves interchange of verbal data where the interviewer, attempts to obtain information from another person by asking questions (Longhurst, nd.). Semi structured interview was conducted after each and every lesson selected for this research. Three students were interviewed for each interview session to know their feedbacks about the technology used in the classroom. The reason why only three students were chosen instead of interviewing the entire 34 students was due to time limitation. For each interview, the same three students were called to ensure the feedbacks are consistent and easily monitored by the researcher. These three students possess different level of proficiency from low to intermediate to high. The interview questions were prepared before the actual session took place and students’ were not given any preparation time for them to answer the questions as the researcher wanted the answer to be spontaneous and honest. This instrument was used to help answering all research questions as the researcher discovered students’ perception and problems regarding descriptive writing and the technology incorporated into the lesson.

Teacher’s reflective entry

Throughout the two months of the researcher being there at the school, reflective entry was written after each and every writing lesson chosen for the research. The reflective entry written was to observe and monitor changes that take place in each and every cycle done by the researcher. The reflective entry was written with concerns given to three aspects which are students’ responses in class to writing lessons, students’ descriptive writing skill’s progress and students’ work which shows their language learning from that particular lesson. Reflective entry written by the teacher was used to answer research question one and research question two.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis method was used to analyze the data obtained through the instruments mentioned earlier. There are 6 steps in conducting thematic analysis which are familiarization, coding themes, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and writing up (retrieved from: https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/thematic-analysis/). The researcher adapted thematic analysis method to analyze obtained data because semi structured interview was used as one of the instruments to obtain data from participants. Participants’ responses were recorded and transcribed before the researcher coded sentences that show similarities in terms of its theme. The themes were then reviewed and categorized under smaller class for later purpose of writing up the findings.

5. Findings

Limited vocabulary

In the context of this study, limited vocabulary is confined to the use of wide range of words in an essay. As the participants for this research are Form 4 students and they are the last batch utilizing the old curriculum specification of Kurikulum Bersepadu Sukatan Malaysia (KSBM), therefore the list of vocabulary that should have mastered are embedded in the curriculum specifications. Therefore, the theme of limited vocabularies mean these students were not familiarised or have no grasp on those words listed in KBSM hence making it difficult for them to write descriptive essay.
Inconsistent Tenses

Inconsistent tenses mean students have problems in determining the appropriate tense that should be used in a particular event of their writing. Apart from that, inconsistent tenses also mean students have problems deciding when to switch from one tense to another according to the arrangement of their writing. In accordance to KBSM which is the curriculum specification used for the current Form 4 students, there are several tenses that must be taught to students before they leave for Form 5. The list of tenses for form 4 students are presented in Table 4.1.2 below.

Table 1. List of tenses for Form 4 students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenses</th>
<th>present, past, continuous, * perfect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| a. Simple Present Tense | • For habitual actions  
| |  
| |  
| |  
| | e.g. Every day we play football.  
| |  
| |  
| |  
| | For instructions and directions  
| |  
| |  
| |  
| | e.g. First, mix the solutions.  
| |  
| |  
| |  
| | • Describing feelings and senses  
| |  
| |  
| |  
| | e.g. “I feel upset over what has happened.”  
| b. Simple Past Tense | was were  
| |  
| |  
| |  
| | • Regular verbs, Irregular verbs  
| |  
| |  
| |  
| | e.g. walk-walked; sit-sat; go-went  
| |  
| |  
| |  
| | • Using words that signal the past tense  
| |  
| |  
| |  
| | e.g. Yesterday, Last week  
| c. Present Continuous Tense | The action is happening at the time of speaking  
| |  
| |  
| |  
| | e.g. I am …… verb + -ing;  
| *d. Present Perfect Tense | has / have + past participle  
| |  
| |  
| |  
| | e.g. She has walked 5 miles.  
| *e. Past Perfect Tense | Had + past participle  
| |  
| |  
| |  
| | e.g. They had changed the wheel in 10 minutes.  

Ideas arrangement

In this theme, the researcher has identified the same pattern of answers in which the students have written “I don’t know what to write”, “I don’t know how to write” and “It is hard for me to write what I have in mind”. The researcher believes that the reasons for this answer is that they were not exposed to any enriching source of input before writing session took place. Apart from that, not having enough knowledge on how to arrange their ideas into a well put essay was also one of the contributing factors. This could have branched from the poor technique of teaching writing skill prior to the incorporation of technology. The frequency of these words surfacng was not often, only 3 students were recorded using this answer.

PowerPoint Slides

All 3 respondents answered that PowerPoint slides is the most effective intervention out of the three types of technology intervention introduced. Their answers vary from one respondent to another, however, the gist of their responses were similar. When asked which intervention is the most effective and works the best for them, all three answered PowerPoint slides. Below are the excerpts of the transcribed interview.
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Interview session 3: A1

Researcher: Can you please tell me which technology that I have incorporated in your lesson, is the most effective and works best for you?

A1: Errmmm… I like PowerPoint slides the most because it ermmm… (pause) shows me how… the guideline of writing in the most effective way. I mean (pause) it is the most effective because I can see the example of the essay. After that, I can see the format because ermmm… (long pause) there were arrows that show the format of the writing.

Interview session 3: B1

Researcher: Can you please tell me which technology that I have incorporated in your lesson, is the most effective and works best for you?

A1: Okay, I like Youtube video very much (pause) but in class, when learning, I like PowerPoint slides. (Pause) Because it feels like I am taught with a private teacher where ermmm… (pause) like you(teacher) were there, so I learn from the PowerPoint slides, then I ask you if I have questions. It is effective because I see it on the screen, then I practice writing in my book. It is also effective because I see how to write essay and how the correct format of writing essay. (Pause) It is also effective because I only have to copy important notes about the ermmm… (pause) about the essay, like you (teacher) put arrows and direction anywhere important, then I copy.

From the frequency of the word “effective” that appears when asked about the use of PowerPoint slides, it can be concluded that the learners find PowerPoint slides as the most effective intervention among all three interventions introduced. Moreover, while using PowerPoint slides, features like animation and smart arts were fully utilized to get the optimum result.

Youtube Videos

Videos retrieved from Youtube application was always used as teaching aids during set induction. The justification for this action is the researcher wanted to enrich students’ knowledge and tap on their schemata before proceeding with the writing skill content of that particular lesson. Shown below is an excerpt from one of the lesson plans used for the purpose of this study and the screen grab from the Youtube video used.

Table 2. Excerpt from Lesson Plan Cycle 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Teaching and Learning Activities</th>
<th>Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Set Induction (5 minutes) | 1. Teacher instructs students to think about these questions;  
a) Who have been causing environmental damages all this while?  
b) How does human contribute to environmental damages?  
c) What can be done to lessen the environmental damages done to the Earth?  
2. Teacher shows a video about environmental damages done by human.  
3. Teacher discusses students’ responses and gives feedbacks where possible. | 1) Video taken from Youtube and edited by the teacher to achieve suitable duration.  
Youtube link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JaSe85Mcpw0 |
As shown above, the Youtube video was used during the set induction to provide ideas to students on the topic given on that day. Respondent C1 also said that she gets excited every time Youtube video is played in front because that helps to motivate her to write. The ideas that she gets from watching Youtube video has provided sufficient aid to help with her perception that writing is difficult.

**Interview session 1: C1**

Researcher: How do you feel every time Youtube video is played in your classroom to help with your lesson?

C1: I like it so much... because ermmm... (pause) it gives me motivation to write. I also like it because I can see videos (pause) ermmm... Videos of people doing things that ermmm... I have to write... write today.

Researcher: Do you think Youtube video is effective to help you write better descriptive essay? Why?

C1: Yes, it is effective. I think it is effective because I get ideas from it. I also think it helps me to think about the topic... ermmm (pause) like, I need to write about My Experience in the Orphanage, I see video people in the orphanage...

Researcher: Orphanage.

C1: Ermr... orphanage. I see they live and write. So it is effective because it gives me help.

From the excerpt above, it can be seen that the use of Youtube video has helped C1 who also possesses low level of language proficiency to write better than before the introduction of the intervention. C1 also mentioned that if she had to choose only one type of technology to be incorporated into her lesson, it will be Youtube videos.

Through the analysis of teacher reflective entry, the researcher has also found that it was recorded C1 has progressed from being able to only write 3 paragraph essay with 4 sentences in each paragraph at most, after the intervention of Youtube videos, she could write 3 paragraph essay with at least 5 sentences in each paragraph. However, it was also recorded that the grammatical accuracy and the writing mechanics can be further improved.

**Pictures from Google**

Pictures are easily retrieved from Google for the purpose of showing example of actions and emotions on the screen. The pictures from Google are usually accurate, high definition, clear for students’ viewing and there is a wide range of choices available on Google.

However, as shown in Figure 4.4, students do not really like the incorporation of pictures from Google as much as the like PowerPoint slides and Youtube videos. They prefer to watch video because the input given is in the form of cartoon, interactive characters or even a news presenter covering on the selected topic. Unfortunately, pictures from Google did not really help in the enhancement of their writing skill. An excerpt of interview with different opinion from C1 and A1 is shown below.

**Interview session 3: A1**

Researcher: What do you think about pictures from Google that I use to help your descriptive writing?

A1: I find it (pause) ermmm.... Okay. Yeah, I find it okay. It doesn’t really help in my writing but I think it is okay. It is not as effective as PowerPoint slides and Youtube videos are, but it is okay. But, it does not really help.
Interview session 3: C1

Researcher: What do you think about pictures from Google that I use to help your descriptive writing?

C1: I think they help me to understand the meaning of words. Like ermmm… (pause) when during last class, you (teacher) show the picture of the Cath…Cath..

Researcher: Cathedral

C1: Cathedral, I did not understand. Then you show, only I understand. I think it is also effective because it helps me to understand. If it helps me to understand, then it is effective.

From the excerpt of the interview above, it can be concluded that picture from Google did provide some help in enhancing students’ descriptive writing, but it is more suitable for the low proficiency students.

Students were at times clueless of the meaning of a particular word, instead of giving the meaning of the word verbally, showing pictures from Google would be a better solution to solve the issue of not understanding the meaning of a word. Apart from that, C1 also commented on how pictures actually help her to remember the meaning of the word better. She claimed that when a word is being spoken and she has seen the meaning of the word in the form of picture, she will automatically be reminded of the image. Even though the issue of not possessing the ability to define a word is not suffered by many, but the problem still occur. Therefore, being able to understand the meaning of a word will help these students to construct sentences using wider vocabulary since they already have the comprehension. Hence, descriptive writing skill will be enhanced.

6. Discussion

Based on the result of the analyzed data presented throughout this chapter, the findings have successfully answered all three research question. The first research question is ‘what are the main problems that the ESL learners face in writing skills?’ has been answered by the existence of the open ended questions. The result was coded into several themes which are limited vocabulary, inconsistent tenses, ideas arrangement and terrifying skill. From the open ended question, it can be concluded that inconsistent tenses and terrifying skill are the main problems faced by ESL learners in writing skill.

This is parallel with the literature review presented earlier in Chapter 2 of this study that says an error analysis study of 72 English essays written by 10th grade Malaysian students in a semi-urban school shows that students generally have problems applying correct grammatical rules in their writings (Darus&Kaladevi, 2009). Moreover, one reason for this inefficiency goes to students’ lack of motivation (Alfaki, 2015; Rabab'ah, 2003).

The second research question is ‘what factors contributed to the use of technology to teach writing skills?’ this research question was answered by the data obtained from the analyzed needs analysis. From the data, it can be seen that 19 students prefer their class to be technology-based rather than having outdoor classroom, collaborative learning or playing board games in class. Since this needs analysis was done before the first cycle, it was easy to establish the type of intervention that the researcher wants to introduce to the students.

The final research question is ‘what are the learners’ perceptions on the use of technology to enhance their writing skill?’ the data collected from the open ended questions shown that 90% of the students would want technology to be permanently implemented into their lesson and they enjoy their lesson with the presence of technology. This is highly due to the incorporation of technology that has made their class more interactive with teacher not confined at the front of the class having to write too much notes on the white board. Apart from that, teacher could also edit and add on the notes through the personal computer so that it will be projected on the screen which is easier for both students and teacher to refer from. However, 10% of the students refused to have technology permanently implemented into their lesson because they prefer chalk and talk better. They see technology as an intervention that could help, but they prefer the teacher to deliver the explanation with notes being written on the board.

This research has indicated that the intervention of technology has helped in enhancing ESL learners’ descriptive writing skill. Even though there are minor percentages of students who dislike the incorporation of
technology, the majority and the positive perceptions about this outweigh the minority who are against this intervention.

References


