

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CO-STAR MODULE TO ENHANCE WRITING PROFICIENCY AMONG THE LOW ACHIEVER LEARNER

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UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN SULTAN IDRIS

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THE EFFECTIVENESS CO-STAR MODULE
TO ENHANCE WRITING PROFICIENCY
AMONG THE LOW ACHIEVER
LEARNER

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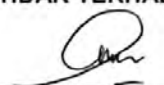
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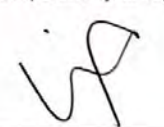
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ABSTRACT

This study aims to alleviate the low performance of writing proficiency by examining the effectiveness of implementing self and peer assessment (SPA) approach in the Collaborative-Student Takes Assessment Responsibility (Co-STAR) writing module of the Year 5 low achiever learners (LALs). This study focuses on self and peer reviewing as part of the writing process and as a pedagogical strategy that can help students develop their writing and self-regulation learning skills. It was conducted through mixed-methods based on Sidek's Model which consists of two phases. In the first phase, need analysis results showed 83.3% of 46 teachers in Gombak District agreed that the SPA approach help to develop LALs' writing skills and build up their confidence in assessing their own writing. The second phase involved the item verification process based on the agreement of seven experts using the Content Validity Index (CVI). A total of five constructs consisting of 20 items received experts ($n=7$) consensus reliability value (α) = 0.92. In total, 18 students participated in the study, which was evaluated using a pre-test/post-test without control group evaluation design. There was significant improvement in the participants' achievement after post-test ($M=4.33$, $SD=3.32$) compared to pre-test ($M= 2.12$, $SD=2.64$). It shows that the implementation of SPA has an effect in improving the LALs' writing. The overall results of observation showed were deficient in putting extra work into task due to their cognitive level and background. However, they are successful in helping peer, sharing idea and showed positive attitude by being able to be self -driven in learning and cooperate with peer. Document analysis of the participants' essays showed improvement in structural of writing. The interview received positive response on the four themes namely collaboration of the students, writing skills development and progress as well as motivation. The implication of this research has been proven that the assessment process changes the LAL's role from passive receiver into active participants in classroom activities, teach the students on how to socialise better as well as enhancing their motivation. Therefore, teachers need not hesitate to practice SPA approach to ensure LALs are no longer left behind.



KEBERKESANAN MODUL CO-STAR DALAM MEMPERTINGKATKAN PENGUASAAN KEMAHIRAN MENULIS DALAM KALANGAN PELAJAR BERPRESTASI RENDAH

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengurangkan masalah prestasi penguasaan menulis dalam Bahasa Inggeris yang rendah pelajar tahun 5 dengan mengkaji keberkesanan pelaksanaan pendekatan penilaian sendiri dan rakan sebaya (*SPA*) dalam modul penulisan *Collaborative-Student Takes Assessment Responsibility (Co-STAR)*. Ianya memberi tumpuan kepada penilaian sendiri dan rakan sebaya sebagai sebahagian daripada proses penulisan dan sebagai strategi pedagogi yang boleh membantu pelajar mengembangkan kemahiran menulis dan pembelajaran sendiri. Kajian ini dijalankan melalui kaedah campuran berdasarkan Model Sidek yang terdiri daripada dua fasa. Pada fasa pertama, keputusan analisis keperluan menunjukkan 83.3% daripada 46 guru di Daerah Gombak bersetuju bahawa pendekatan *SPA* membantu membangunkan kemahiran menulis pelajar lemah dan membina keyakinan mereka dalam menilai penulisan mereka sendiri. Fasa kedua melibatkan proses pengesahan item berdasarkan persetujuan tujuh pakar menggunakan Indeks Kesahan Kandungan (*CVI*). Sebanyak lima konstruk yang terdiri daripada 20 item diterima pakar ($n=7$) nilai kebolehpercayaan konsensus (α) = 0.92. Secara keseluruhan, 18 orang pelajar telah mengambil bahagian dalam kajian ini, yang dinilai menggunakan reka bentuk penilaian pra/ujian pasca tanpa kumpulan kawalan. Terdapat peningkatan yang ketara dalam pencapaian peserta selepas ujian pasca ($M=4.33$, $SD=3.32$) berbanding ujian pra ($M=2.12$, $SD=2.64$). Ia menunjukkan bahawa pelaksanaan *SPA* mempunyai kesan dalam menambah baik penulisan pelajar. Hasil keseluruhan pemerhatian menunjukkan kekurangan dalam melaksanakan kerja tambahan kerana tahap kognitif dan latar belakang mereka. Walau bagaimanapun, mereka berjaya membantu rakan sebaya, berkongsi idea dan menunjukkan sikap positif dengan dapat memacu sendiri dalam pembelajaran dan bekerjasama dengan rakan sebaya. Analisis dokumen esei peserta menunjukkan peningkatan dalam struktur penulisan. Temubual mendapat respon positif terhadap empat tema iaitu kolaborasi pelajar, perkembangan dan kemajuan kemahiran menulis serta motivasi. Implikasi kajian ini telah dibuktikan bahawa proses penilaian mengubah peranan pelajar daripada penerima pasif kepada aktif dalam aktiviti bilik darjah, mengajar pelajar bagaimana untuk bersosial dengan lebih baik serta meningkatkan motivasi mereka. Oleh itu, guru tidak perlu teragak-agak untuk mengamalkan pendekatan *SPA* bagi memastikan LAL tidak lagi ketinggalan.



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AfL	Assessment for Learning
CBA	Curriculum-based assessment
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference
CL	Collaborative Learning
Co-STAR	Cooperative-Student Takes Assessment Responsibility
CPL	Cooperative learning
CREATE	Centre for Research, Advisory and Technology
CVI	Content Validity Index
DSKP	<i>Dokumen Standard Kurikulum dan Pentaksiran</i>
EALAS	East Asia Learning Achievement Report
EI	Emotional Intelligence
EL	English Language
ESL	Malaysian English Second Language
GALUS	<i>Gagal Lulus</i>
GARUK	<i>Gagal Teruk</i>
GoV	Government of Malaysia
JPN	<i>Jabatan Pendidikan Negeri</i>
KBSR	<i>Kurikulum Baru Sekolah Rendah</i>
KSSR	<i>Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah</i>
L2	Second language
LAL	Low achiever learner
LINUS	Literacy and Numeracy Screening program

MEBP	Malaysian Education Blueprint Plan
MOE	Ministry of Education
NEAS	National Education Assessment System
NUTP	National Teaching Service Association of Malaysia
PPD	<i>Pejabat Pendidikan Daerah</i>
PLC	Professional Learning Community
PMR	<i>Penilaian Menengah Rendah</i>
SBA	School Based Assessment
SBJK	Sekolah Bimbingan Jalinan Kasih
SDT	Self-Determination Theory
SMDM	Sidek's Module Development Model
SOLO	Structure of the Observed Learning Outcome
SPA	Self-Peer Assessment
SPM	<i>Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia</i>
SPSS	Special Package for Social Statistics
SRL	Self-regulated learning
TS25	School Transformation 2025 Program
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPSR	<i>Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah</i>
ZPD	Zone of proximal development

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Language is important because it is one of the important ways of communicating and socializing with others around us. As the official language of 53 countries and spoken by around 400 million people, English has become the world's second-largest language. The data from Internet World Stats (2020) showed 872.9 million internet users speak English and makeup 25.9% of the global online population. Fluency in speaking and writing in the language will not only give one's access to the world of entertainment but to be more knowledgeable and create many opportunities to achieve the highest potential of the individual; In contrast, lack of language comprehension places non-English speaking people at a disadvantage position, underemployed, less future prospect than those who understand and proficient in the language (Rios, 2014; Shirmohammadi, 2019).

Being aware of the importance of English proficiency to Malaysian learners, the Ministry of Education (MOE) has launched various intervention programs to raise the level of English language proficiency among students in Malaysia. The Malaysian Education Blueprint Plan or MEBP 2013-2025 has highlighted priority in language to ensure that every child is fluent in Bahasa Malaysia and English (Government of Malaysia (GoM), 2012). Everyone is encouraged to learn an additional language. The MOE has released its "English Language Education Reform in Malaysia: The 2015-2025 Roadmap" blueprint in support of this objective, The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) is set out in this blueprint.

The questions are – how well is English being taught in Malaysia? Are students offered equally to fulfil their needs in acquiring the language skills and access to useful materials to enhance their English skills? The low achievers do not just struggle in their daily life but also in school. English is considered as one of the alien subjects which they did not have much opportunity to practice and some never apply the language outside the classroom (Rajkamal & Prema, 2018; Misbah et al., 2017). Thus, is crucial for educators to find a way of how and what they can do to help the low achievers to master the language, especially the writing skill. What kind of input do they need to support their writing development? In conjunction with the primary objective of this study, therefore, is to develop a module focusing on enhancing writing proficiency among the low achievers in primary level in Malaysia using cooperative self-assessment and peer feedback approach.

1.2 Background of Study

The low performance of English Language results in Standard Examination is imperative towards the performance of students' language proficiency. Malaysian students must first be adequately proficient in the English language through meaningful English lessons in schools in order of becoming competitive in the global workforce, academia, and economy (Lim, 2014). However, the proportion of passes for the English Language was below expectation in primary and secondary schools. The English Language result for 2011 in Standard Examination for Primary schools *Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah* (UPSR), *Penilaian Menengah Rendah* (PMR) and *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia* (SPM) showed a low level of performance in comparison to other subjects of Malay Language, Mathematics and Science (*Majlis Peperiksaan Malaysia*, 2011). The results indicated that Malaysian students still not achieving the standards of learning.

Figure 1.1 and 1.2 show that the performance for English writing in UPSR, 2017 and 2018 were the lowest among the other five subjects.

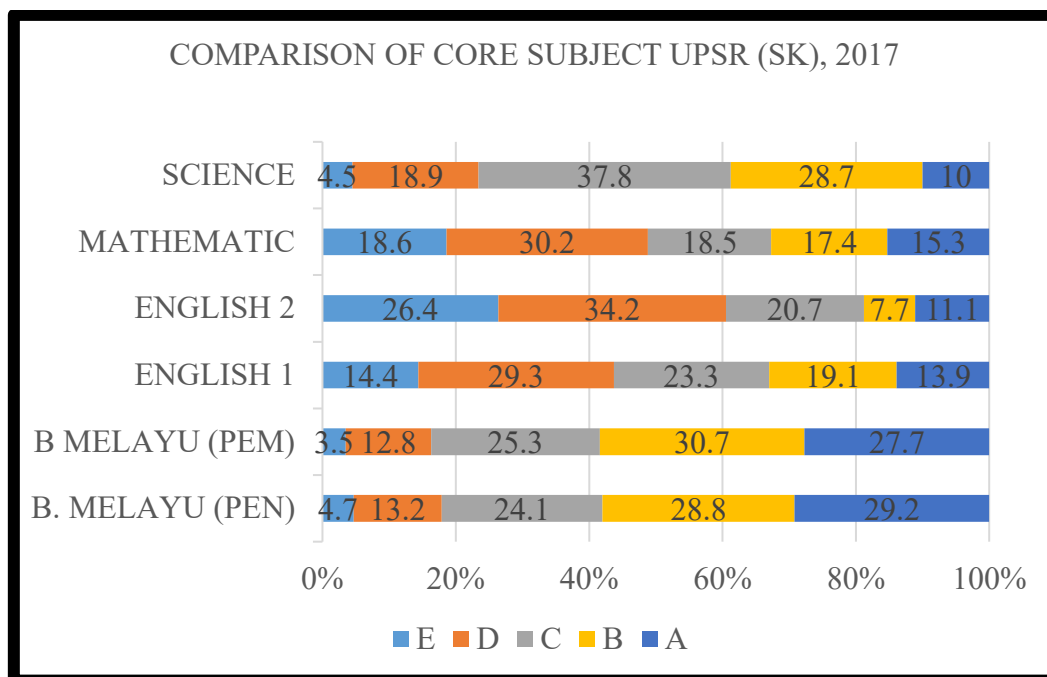


Figure 1.1. Comparison of Core Subject, UPSR 2017

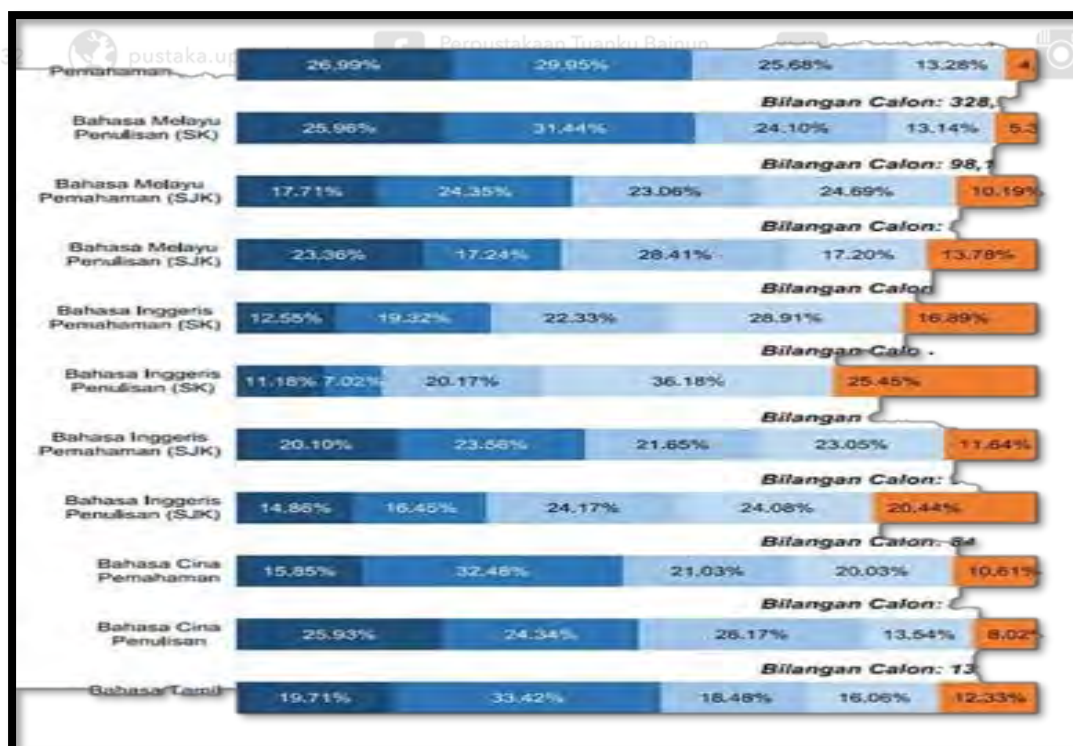


Figure 1.2. Comparison of Core Subject, UPSR 2018



The data of the 014 paper results representing the students writing proficiency were the least in performance and quite alarming with 26.4 % or 87, 205 candidates failed in 2017 and 25.6% or 83,735 candidates in 2018. It showed that due to a lack of vocabulary and grammatical skills to write a story, the low-achiever candidates could not create simple phrases successfully. In their sentences, they made multiple errors, and their sentences were nonsensical. The use of direct lifting in their sentences contributed to poorly constructed sentences due to intrusion from their mother tongue (GB, 2019).

According to Misbah et al. (2017), the lack of English vocabulary, the mother tongue's influence, and the family's social and economic condition are three significant factors contribute to the English Language (EL) learning disabilities among learners.

Getie (2020) and Erarslan (2021) also included in their studies that the combination of economic inequality, lack of educational facilities, the social environment, motivation, and attitudes contributed to the incapability of students to learn English. All the factors mentioned above are closely related to the low achiever learner's background, which mostly contributes to the failure percentage. Most of them received lack support and guidance in their learning progress and did not have the chance to go to private tutors or tuition due to their poor background. The achievement of learners would be much more meaningful if their family members (read: parents) demonstrated their concern and took part in the learning process (Kalayci, & Öz, 2018).

Due to this shortcoming, teachers and peers seem to be the closest sources that they could refer to. Peer support is well-known as a strategy for collaborative and cooperative learning that facilitates peer engagement and leads to language growth at





the same time. Villardón-Gallego, García-Carrión, Yáñez-Marquina and Estévez, (2018) indicated that peer support is essential not only as of the solidarity of friendship but also in facilitating learning for language learners. Besides, many pieces of research of peer-assisted have been carried out, and the outcomes tend to buttress the successful effects of peer tutoring (Ajai, 2018). Besides, one of the MEBP aspirations is to provide adequate support to those who have been at a vulnerable position, ensuring that the socio-economic background of a student would no longer be the most significant factor of whether or not he or she succeeds in life by providing options and opportunities to develop their skills and talent. Thus, the collaboration and scaffolding with a peer are seen as an approach that can be explored for teaching English among the low achiever learner, especially in writing.



demonstrated collaborative and cooperative learning frameworks have been seen to enhance self-esteem and greater motivation for learning. Self-esteem was found to be more prevalent for all students when taking part in collaborative learning classrooms. The leadership skills of the future will improve the social and interpersonal relationship skills through collaborative and cooperative techniques. To be successful, students must learn to interact with others in various social contexts, particularly situations involving complex social systems, human diversity and interconnectivity. A comprehensive literature review indicates that cooperative and collaborative groups positively impact students' academic and social performance (Slavin, 2013). Thus, according to Black and Wiliam (2018) there is a need to acknowledge group work as part of a general teaching approach to classroom organization and learning to support the need to revise instructional learning theories and pedagogical practices.





Teaching methods in the education system in these last few decades, including teaching practices and the role of teachers and students in the classroom, have undergone many positive changes towards student's improvement. In fact, the school's conventional teaching approaches have shifted from the traditional chalk-and-talk technique to the more innovative implementation of the technologies. Primary schools in Malaysia are also undergoing fundamental reforms in the curriculum and the classroom instruction processes as well due to the government's effort in reviewing and upgrading the education system in our country. One of the changes in the implementation of the MEBP stresses the student-centred approaches and holistic development of the individuals. In line with the MOE's objective to fulfil the vision of MEBP, teachers were encouraged to apply the 21st-century teaching and learning strategy during their lesson. Students' emotional process such as psychology, co-curricular, values and morals, and student intelligence is also the ministry's core elements. Thus, the teaching practice and approach need to be evolved to align with the changes.

English learning in Malaysia is test-oriented learning before the implementation of MEBP. The traditional writing classrooms in Malaysia had given so much emphasis on the end product: form, structures and grammar. The methods for assessing the students in English of our school is merely focusing on test and exam. There is only a limited formative evaluation in our teaching. Since they are passive learners, some learners do not get their desired grades and do not have the motivation and confidence to learn English. The traditional assessment is generally good at evaluating, especially giving students the learning outcomes, but some feedback and encouragement that





students need most are often missed. It is unfair for a student to be justified by the achievement of the UPSR as the centre's assessment while the process of the learning input is not taken in heed.

Recent changes in Malaysia education have witnessed a new scenario in the methodology of teaching and learning. As an integral aspect of the learning process, a shift from teacher-centred to learner-centred tacit evaluation must be incorporated into the class's activity or tasks. Active learning, cooperative learning and inductive learning are used in the student-centred approach. Teachers' responsibility is to provide an inspiring learning structure for learners by providing information and tools and facilitating constructivist learning experiences (Rob & Rob, 2018). However, in the study conducted by Sardareh (2018) entitled 'Assessment for Learning in a Malaysian English Second Language (ESL) Primary School Context', results found that it is erratic for the teachers to use formative feedback systematically to improve learning because they are not known to apply the approaches effectively to improve the academic performance of students in their daily teaching.

The *Kurikulum Baru Sekolah Rendah* (KBSR) English syllabus focused on configured process approaches' that emphasize the policy goals, educational values and cultural context which encourage the four language skills to be integrated, student-centred learning and immersive incorporation. At the end of Year Six in Primary School, the performance is accumulated and tested in UPSR. A systematic review of the national education system undertaken in 2011 subsequently contributed to forming the new MEBP, which was launched in 2012. In 2013, with the introduction of the Primary School Standards-Based Curriculum or *Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah*



(KSSR), the MEBP adoption culminated in the third education reform for elementary education. Also, the MEBP application has a most considerable influence on English language education in primary school level, e.g., incorporating English literacy in the Literacy and Numeracy Screening program (LINUS).

The LINUS program emphasized the need to ensure that 100% of primary school children became literate in Bahasa Melayu and not less than 90% in English by the end of the year (Government of Malaysia (GoM), 2012). The introduction of the English Language Education Roadmap 2015-2025 for Malaysia is the fourth and most recently implemented reform, which is basically extended from the MEBP. The increasingly aligned roadmap with the MEBP acts as a guide for developers and teachers of the English language curriculum to ensure that students reach competency levels that are aligned with international norms, benchmarked against the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The transformation outlines the development of students as knowledgeable users of the language in a comprehensive way so that they can fully engage in professional and academic environments, from school to tertiary level, and in teacher preparation.

The transition from traditional teaching and learning to new approaches, as mentioned above, requires focus and success not only defined by the end results but also the process of learning. With the incorporation of the National Education Assessment System (NEAS), the role of evaluation has shifted. One of the goals of the NEAS is to improve the School Based Assessment (SBA). Three domains: cognitive, affective and psychomotor are calculated by the SBA, which the MOE officially adopted along with the KSSR in 2011.

During the teaching and learning process, the subject teachers conduct the evaluation following the procedures stipulated by the Malaysian Examination Board (*Lembaga Peperiksaan Malaysia*, 2011). In this model, the teacher must be more involved in decision-making and instructional methods for instruction and review in response to individual needs. This will allow teachers to continually observe their students while providing input to maximize the students' academic ability (Sieberer-Nagler, 2016). Another beneficial impact of SBA is that students learn flexible curriculum according to their individual capabilities; to strengthen not only the thinking ability but also their mental, emotional and physical abilities of students (Othman, 2019). It is believed and expected that SBA could remedy the traditional assessment issues which has been going on for a long time in Malaysia education system.

Therefore, self-assessment and peer feedback approach are seen as essential metacognitive skills that foster the student's capability to think critically and attain their academic achievement.

Apart from the step taken, to achieve the education goals stated in the MEBP 2013-2025, School Transformation 2025 Program (TS25) has been launched in 2015 as one of the educational transformation initiatives to improve students' outcomes and the quality of the schools (Zubaidah Harun & Kamarul Arifin, 2018). Simultaneously, the current abolishment of the streaming system in schools is aligned with the norm practised in the TS25 schools. Muhammad Sidek and Arfah (2017) mentioned that TS25 program is developed to ameliorate school management and teaching practices, which included the use of 21st-century learning styles, techniques, and tools in enhancing students thinking skills. In conjunction, the differentiation approach is one

of the focused techniques in the TS25 modules along with the implementation of the i-Think program, active learning and cooperative learning (Safii, 2017).

TS25 emphasizes 21st century learning (PAK21 hereafter) which refers to developing learning, literacy and life skills as part of the classroom experience. Learning skills encompass critical thinking, creativity, collaboration and communication, which have been identified as essential for successfully adapting to modern work environments. Literacy skills, including information, media and technology literacy, focus on understanding figures, evaluating a source's credibility and understanding the machines and computer networks that we rely upon today. Life skills include flexibility, leadership, initiative, productivity and social skills. These skills help students strategize projects, maintain efficiency and network with others.

Thus, teachers need to reflect, transform their teaching practices and shifts classroom assessment strategies to suits with the TS25 pedagogy; which highlight on six assessment strategies: 1) Rubrics, 2) Performance-based assessments (PBAs), 3) Portfolios, 4) Student self-assessment, 5) Peer-assessment, 6) Student response systems (SRS).

The implementation of peer and self-assessments approaches to English teaching can become very challenging, but useful in improving the relationship between feedback from teachers and peers, motivating students to improve the way students learn and stimulating lifelong learning. Therefore, the present study aimed at exploring and recognizing how self-assessment and peer feedback could help the low achiever students resolve their weaknesses in second language writing skills. Therefore, the result of this study recommends that there be a depth instructional strategy to teach



English by creating more meaningful English lessons rather than a surface-level teaching approach through memorization and repetition.

Self-assessment is the method of continuous assessment, self-judgment, and self-monitoring, to classify one's abilities and identify growth areas (Quddus, Khalid, & Khan, 2019). This means understanding one's own experience; assessing one's way of living, professional and academic achievements; observation of personality characteristics on the context of actuality, external assumptions, and precise, explicit requirements for maximizing individual potential quality—data shown that self-assessment can enhance the communication skills of the learners. Ratminingsih, Marhaeni, and Vigayanti (2018) indicated students need self-assessment to know what they have been learning, how often they need to spend towards improvement when they are able to succeed when they're incorrect, and what learning strategies are appropriate for them. By improving self-efficacy and willingness to change, strengthening one's awareness, abilities, beliefs, and attitudes can boost one's motivation and self-esteem.

Self-assessment plays a significant role in developing self-perceptions that lead to greater motivation. It is well established that student engagement depends upon students' self-efficacy beliefs—perceptions of their ability to do well on a specific task, and the value of doing well (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). Self-efficacy involves students estimating what they can do and the likelihood of successful performance. Such self-perception develops gradually as students connect their successes and failures to factors, they believe have caused the result. It is important to emphasize the influence of situation and context upon self-efficacy. Self-perceptions of competence are part of self-efficacy and refer to beliefs about general ability or knowledge and skills to do well



(e.g., “I’m good in English” or “I do well in Science classes”). Students with high expectations are more likely to persist; those with low expectations often avoid tasks or give up. Positive self-evaluations encourage students to commit more resources to continued study and set higher goals in the future (EDUCATION, 2019)

According to Boud (2013), two significant elements of all assessment, including self-assessment, are:

“...making decisions about the standards of performance expected and then making judgments about the quality of the performance in relation to these standards.”

It should preferably include students in all of these ways as self-assessment is implemented and relies on the formative learning that one will promote: self-assessment is a constructive evaluation process whereby the students reflect and analyse the quality of their work and their progress, examine the degree to which they clearly defined aims or standards, recognize accomplishments and deficiencies of their performance and audit them accordingly (Andrade, 2018). By gaining awareness about their values and possible misconceptions, Self-assessment can help learners discover their learning capacity. It may promote continuous evaluation of someone's performance requirements and optimize one's intellectual skills and abilities. One can find others' preferences and despises, gaps in knowledge, and chances for self-improvement by self-assessment. Self-assessment should also be used to boost morale, increase competency contribution, and optimize motivation to undertake the responsibility of one's professional accomplishment. By using and incorporating feedback from peers, educators and mentors, self-assessment is empowered when a learner sets goals and develops plans of action.



Peer review requires feedback or ratings on a product or output related to its quality or occurrence. Learners may have been participating—evaluating the outcome or quality of the production (Mansur & Alves, 2018). Students could help each other make logical sense of the inconsistencies between their experience and comprehension and achieve the more comprehensive perception of the learning process. Research evidence shows that peer feedback could be used successfully to develop students' writing skills. Mowl and Pain (1995, as cited in Dyevre & Wijtvliet, 2019) stated in their article “Using Self and Peer Assessment to Improve Students Essay Writing” that though peer measurements are considered less accurate than the teacher's marks, student learning benefits are deemed to exceed them. The finding showed 64 per cent of the respondents believed that the assessment methods would help them produce more nuanced essays in the future. This is one of the crucial factors that drive and motivate the researcher to develop a module based on self and peer feedback approach for the low achiever students to enhance their writing.

Talib et al. (2014) suggested that educators could see assessment as an essential practice to classroom instruction and extremely efficient in helping students comprehend their achievements. It should be part of the daily planning of teaching and learning processes. Their preparation should include strategies to ensure that students recognize the tasks they will accomplish and the standards adopted to assess their work. The policymakers (read: MOE should prepare specific guidelines, consistency and uniformity of instruction to strengthen the proficiency of teachers' execution through in-service training and professional learning via several continuous workshops. Efforts



must be made to equip teachers with the awareness, expertise and optimistic mindset they will need to endure all the obstacles.

In this study, the researcher will tailor and develop a module that contributes to pedagogical development in English writing proficiency for future Malaysia ESL learners. The Cooperative-Student Takes Assessment Responsibility (Co-STAR) module was designed as an indication of how cooperative self-assessment and peer feedback could be implemented into academic learning to support low English language achievement. The *Gagal Lulus* (GALUS) and *Gagal Teruk* (GARUK) students will work collaboratively with their peers through a few sets of exercises developed based on Structure of the Observed Learning Outcome (SOLO) taxonomy and writing skills of MOE syllabus.

1.3 Problem Statement

The curriculum restructuring from summative to formative assessment in SBA implementation changed the teaching practice to be more reflective and student-centred. However, there is a lack of understanding, references, and material towards the implementing of SBA. A study of English language (EL) teachers' concern towards SBA by Majid (2011) has found that although the teacher has an awareness of the SBA implementation despite the ministry's guidelines and goals, the teachers' competencies in implementing SBA are still minimal. More hands-on activities, such as seminars and open forums on the problems, instructional materials and issues involved in the evaluation's execution, need to be held. Hence, she proposed training focused on time



management, the introduction of students to assess and approaches or methods may be accomplished and beneficial. Mercer and Dörnyei (2020) elucidated that motivation alone cannot ensure students to engage with the given tasks. Educators need to rethink by recognising teacher as designer of learning experience as well as putting learners and their learning at the centre of the design process. This further emphasizes the need for teachers to design and build a pedagogy and learning materials that can shape student to be an active learner.

However, for the peer reviewing process to be helpful, it is important to consider including clear guidelines and training sessions prior to engaging students in peer review (Al-Kefagy & Nagy, 2021). Therefore, the researcher felt an urge to fill the gap in preparing teaching and learning material based on the assessment pedagogy approach. Since there is no specific module in the current market, focusing on self-assessment and peer feedback to enhance writing proficiency in the Malaysian context for teachers' guidance, this study hopefully could be contributed and bridging the gap to the development of the proposed module for the implementation of self-assessment and peer feedback approaches in primary school, to enhance low achiever student's writing abilities and promote language proficiency via several methods to be employed by teachers in the classroom instruction and leads to pedagogical development in English writing in future.

Weak students rarely understand why they should learn and do not focus on what and how to know; therefore, even though various teaching methods have been carried out, the results are still unsatisfactory. The MOE has launched the Literacy and Numeracy Screening LBI 2.0 (LINUS) on 2013 program to fix the problem. After four





years of the implementation, although it has reduced the number of students who fail, the number of failures is still in a state of concern. Writing is a prominent position among the four language skills and essential to assess student knowledge in all subjects. Thus, the pedagogy that prioritizes self-regulation and peer assessment in this Co-STAR Module can be applied and expected to help low achiever students who struggle to construct grammatical sentences and increase their interest and achievement in their writing UPSR writing paper.

Hattie in his publication “Visible learning for teachers: Maximizing impact on learning” has highlighted the power of ‘assessment as feedback’ derive towards success criteria so that teachers can make an adjustment and modify their teaching. Students who have developed their assessment capabilities can learn how to self-regulate and be motivated to further learn (2012. p.126). Li, Xiong, Hunter, Guo and Tywoniw (2020) conducted extensive in-class observations and noted that 80 per cent of verbal feedback comes from peers. The researchers proposed an initiative aimed at encouraging relevant peer input is essential, and it seems that many teachers were hesitant to include peers as feedback agents because it takes a lot of time and teachers are more recessive to keep up with the syllabus for our local school circumstances to drill students for the national examination. Moreover, teachers are already stressed out with the heavy workload. Hopefully, applying self-assessment and peer feedback approach could lessen the burden, according to the President of the National Teaching Service Association of Malaysia (NUTP), Kamarozaman Abd. Razak, teachers, especially in big cities, has more depression due to many students in the class. According to him, the case of teacher depression in big cities is reported to increase every year when there is no action to handle it than the class of rural schools with only half the number of pupils—when the





quantity of students per class is too high, then teaching more challenging even the study of clerical, which is also part of the teacher's responsibilities. "It has not been added to other factors such as financial problems, personal problems and pressure from parents. If this challenge is not addressed, it will increase the case of depression, and I can say this is quite serious" (Kamarozaman Abd. Razak, 2018).

Therefore, this research addresses two literature gaps. First, the targets are at how the Collaborative Learning (CL) and SPA can help the low achiever learner confront difficulties to achieve the minimum levels in writing skills. Second, it aims to design and produce a teaching and learning material based on assessment to suit the reformation of the latest curriculum and hopefully lessen the teachers' burden in school.



1.4 Research Objectives

The research aims to assess the effectiveness of the module's implementation. The objectives were as outlined:

1. To identify the needs of the development of the Co-STAR module to improve the writing proficiency of the low achievers at the primary level, based on the teacher's perspective.
2. To design Co-STAR module to enhance writing proficiency for low achiever students based on the opinions and decisions of experts.
3. To evaluate the Co-STAR module in enhancing writing proficiency and encourage self-regulated learning among the low achiever learners.
4. To explore the perceptions of teacher and students towards the use of the



self-assessment and peer feedback pedagogical module in their learning process.

1.5 Research Question

1. What are the teachers' views and acceptance of the need to develop the Co-STAR module to enhance writing proficiency for the low achiever at primary level?
2. What are the experts' concessions on the suitability of the Co- STAR module in enhancing writing proficiency for the low achiever at primary level?
3. To what extent the Co-STAR module has improved the writing proficiency and encourage self -regulated learning among the low achiever learners?
4. What are the perceptions of teacher and students towards the use of the self-assessment and peer feedback pedagogical approach in their teaching and learning process?

1.6 Research Hypothesis

H₀₁ There is no significant difference in the mean score of pre and post- test on students' performance after using the Co-STAR Module.



1.7 Significance of the Study

1.7.1 Policy Makers

In tandem with the national education aspirations to achieve a high standard of international standards, the Malaysian education system needs improvement in teaching and learning approach in schools to produce not only knowledgeable, but skilled people in the future, able to master literacy at least bilingual, ethical, and spiritual high and intelligent in thinking skills. Hence the monitoring from MOE and State Education Department on the diversity of teaching pedagogies such as the practice of learning this cooperative approach should be extended to achieve the aspiration.



Besides, the study's contribution would also benefit the institution for unfortunate children such as Sekolah Bimbingan Jalinan Kasih (SBJK) who experienced the same impoverished background. SBJK is the Ministry's initiative to help street children gain access to quality education, thus paving the way for them to continue their education to a higher level for a better future. Enrolment at SBJK in 2016 has increased by 57% compared to 2014. SBJK helps less fortunate street children gain access to quality education and provides opportunities to improve their quality of life.



1.7.2 School Administrator and Teacher.

English education in Malaysia aims to empower students with English language skills and ability to communicate both inside and outside of the school orally and in writing



(Zaki, & Darmi, 2021). Therefore, to achieve this educational goal, English teaching and teaching in schools should be enhanced. According to Noraini et al. (2001) the selection of effective instructional strategies is needed to ensure the teaching process's success. The results of this research are intended to provide teachers with knowledge and awareness of the benefits of self-assessment and peer feedback to increase students' performance. With this Co-STAR learning module, teachers will have guidance and useful teaching tools to more organized teaching instructional and sources to ensure the low achievers achieved the syllabus's objective. The module will hopefully contribute to the body of knowledge in ESL teaching and learning in Malaysia and other countries with a similar background.

1.7.3 Students.

The findings are also expected not only to help students improve their writing skills but social interactions as well in arousing their interest in learning English. Students must have soft skills, particularly in communication, as progress is crucial with the fourth industrial revolution challenges (Petrillo, De Felice & Zomparelli, 2018). A self-analysis can help identify their strengths and weaknesses in more repetitive and challenging work (Han & Fan, 2020). Furthermore, good English proficiency and high interaction skills enable them to compete in their future career. Therefore, it is essential to help the low performing students in improving their achievement.

1.8 Limitation of the Study

The Co-STAR module development is anticipated to suggest how the collaboration of self-assessment and peer feedback approaches can be integrated into formal learning to benefit low-level English language learners. Limitation of the study limits the scale of the researcher's analysis (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). This research was delimited by participant recruiting as only 18 low-level from Year 5 students studying at three primary schools in Gombak, Selangor were involved. They are not facing the UPSR examination while Year 4 is in the transition level from CEFR format to UPSR format. The results of this research cannot however be applied to other ESL students in Malaysia and abroad. In addition, the research was conducted among the low level of English proficiency students only.

Consequently, the generalizations of the findings derived are bounded to the particular group context. The implementation is also restricted to the national school English syllabus; therefore, some modifications need to be made to suit with the National- type School English syllabus consist of *Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan Cina and Tamil*. The research selected writing skills specifically in answering section C, English writing paper in UPSR, as the objectives of the research, the design of the module was also context-dependent, where it was designed for a particular group of low-achieving students of primary schools for a specific subject of the language course.

Regarding the methods, this research focused on the teachers' opinion in deciding their need to improve the module in reviewing the condition. The research followed the nominal community methodology in the development process to assess

the components for the module, the Sidek's Module Development Model (SMDM) (Mohd Noah & Ahmad, 2005) and the Cronbach alpha test to analyse the module. These methods were primarily focused on the views of experts. The proposed module was, therefore based on the decision of experts and their opinions. Thus, the framework cannot be generalized to be sufficient at the primary level for all language subjects. However, this research might be adjusted to form an equivalent module of self-assessment and peer feedback designed for various sets of students in a specific institution and multiple course subjects.

1.9 Operational Definitions

The following definitions concede the use of terminology, assumptions, concepts and constructs associated with the study:

1.9.1 Self- assessment

In an instructional environment, self-assessment requires students making important decisions on their own task. Students may make assessment judgments of their own writing, reports, projects, presentations, achievements, publications and even outlines for the examination. Students will be benefited by having a compilation of previous work, allowing them to reflect back and then see where they have progressed and what they have gained (Lenski & Verbruggen, 2010).

In this study, students self-assess their writing using the self-editing checklist as provided in the module. By doing so, they can identify mistakes made and make corrections before being judged by their peers.

1.9.2 Peer assessment/ feedback

Peer assessment/feedback reviews each other's work by students regarding accepted and relevant criteria. Using a variety of techniques, this will happen. In a positive and supportive learning setting, the peer review process needs to be taught, and students are encouraged by the opportunity to exercise it continuously (Davies, 2006). Participants in this study employed self and peer assessment in the writing exercises as

1.9.3 Writing Proficiency

Writing is a medium of communication that helps students through well-constructed text, place their thoughts and ideas on paper, arrange their information and opinions into persuasive statements, and express meaning. Reading grows from the first basic sentences to complex stories and essays as children understand the steps of writing and develop new skills on existing ones. To help the learner show more advanced writing skills each year, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and organization merge and evolve together (Horkoff, 2015). In this research, writing proficiency refers to writing



essays in term to fulfil the UPSR standard as highlighted in the language goal for Malaysia's education system.

1.9.4 Low Achiever Students

Low achiever learner (LAL) has typically a lower than average (100) IQ and fail to keep up with general academic standards in the classroom. Low achievement is usually not suitable for special education services because the intellectually impaired IQ standards of 70 or less or the IQ/achievement difference for the designation of learning impaired are not met (Gresham, MacMillan & Bocian, 1996; Jensen, 2009). The definition of a "low-achieving student" for the intent of this research encompasses non-classified students who fail academically or perform below proficiency. Their teachers have described these low accomplishments as requiring academic assistance when they perform poorly on tests or through practice in the classroom. Low-achieving students may have additional characteristics, including under par level grades and achieving with little or no academic achievement.

1.9.5 Co-STAR Module

Co-STAR Module stands for **C**ooperative- **S**tudents **T**ake **A**ssessment **R**esponsibility. It proposes a module on how students can work cooperatively with their peer through a structured self-assessment and peer feedback practice. It should be integrated into structured lessons to support low-level learners of the English language. The excellent



and moderate students will work cooperatively with GALUS (*gagal lulus*) and GARUK (*gagal teruk*) colleagues through a few sets of exercises developed based on SOLO taxonomy and writing skills in MOE English syllabus for Year 5.

1.9.6 Primary School

Primary School refers to a stage in the education system used in Malaysia. The age group of the students in primary school is from 7 to 12 years old. In this study, the participants were chosen from 18 Year 5 students based on purposive sampling method.

Collaborative learning is a situation in which two or more people learn or attempt to learn something together (Dillenbourg, 1999). It is an effective instructional method in which small teams, each of students of various levels of ability, use multiple learning experiences to enhance their comprehension of the subject. Each team member is responsible for understanding what is learned, and helping teammates learn, fostering an opportunity of accomplishment.

1.9.8 Module Usability

Module Usability is an essential element that can guarantee the user's reliability on the quality of a module and its implementation at the primary school level. A module can enrich teaching and learning materials and attract student's attention (Mohd Noah & Ahmad, 2005). In the context of this study, module usability refers to the main features of a module as a practical reference material such as user-friendly and provide information to primary school teachers in terms of assessment and promoting student-centred activities.

1.9.9 Zone of proximal development (ZPD)

The zone of proximal development (ZPD) has been defined as:

"The distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86).

In the context of this research, the ZPD refers to the low achiever learners' ability to perform tasks successfully with the help of more skilled peers, and it is frequently mentioned in relation to supported or scaffolded learning. ZPDs require support with cognitive structuring of learning tasks as well as awareness to the learner's current abilities.

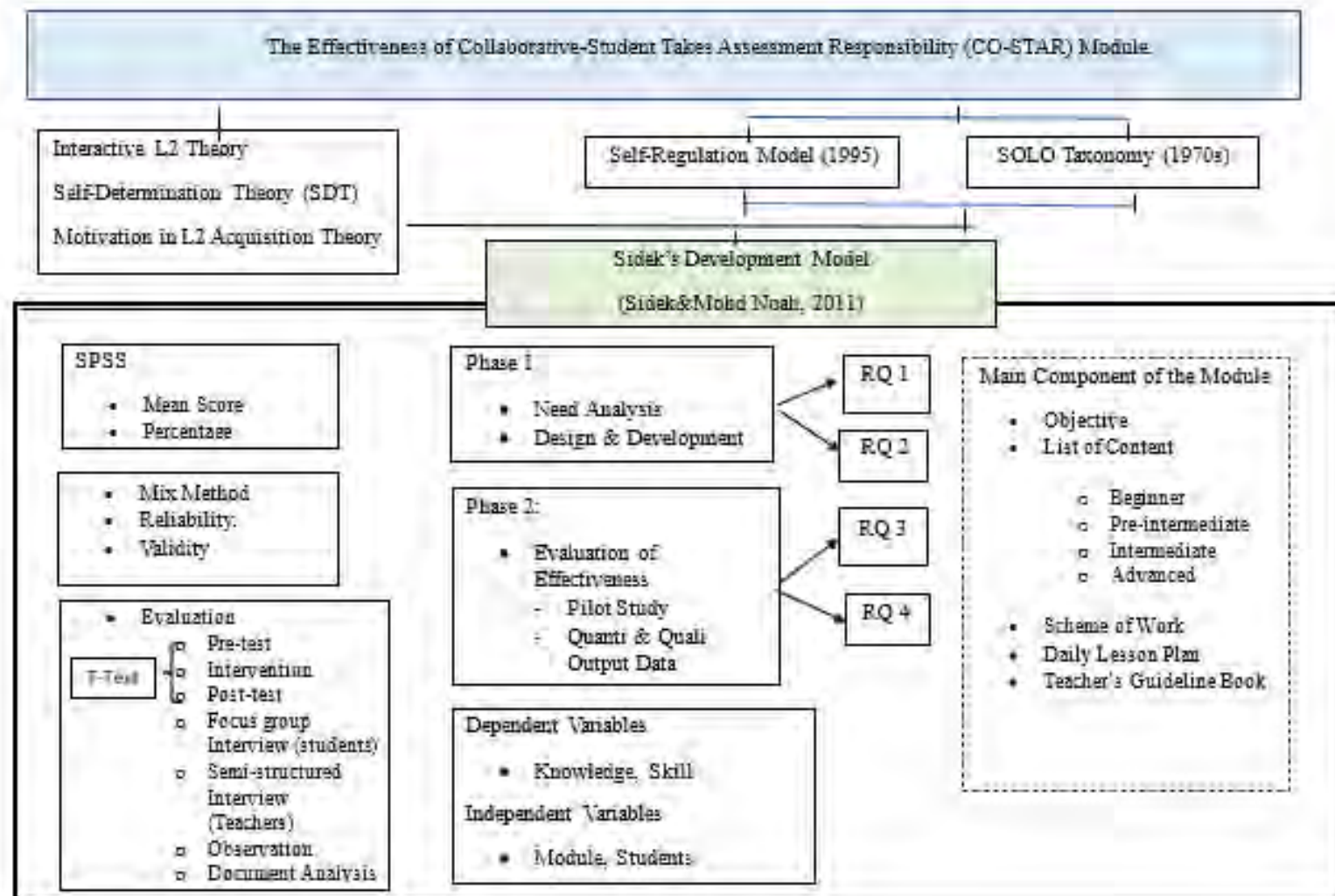


Figure 1.3. The Conceptual of the Research

1.10 Conceptual Framework

This section presents the research framework, as shown in Figure 1.3 above. The conceptual framework is a research framework that demonstrated the entire study and as a guide that helps the researcher conduct the investigation thoroughly to achieve the research's purpose (Ghazali Darusalam & Sufean Hussin, 2017). According to Merriam and Simpson (2000), the literature review, conceptual framework and theoretical framework share five functions: (a) to build a foundation, (b) to demonstrate how a study advances knowledge, (c) to conceptualize the study, (d) to assess research design and instrumentation, and (e) to provide a reference point for the interpretation of findings. All five functions are not necessarily fulfilled by the review of framework in each manuscript, but the function would often be the same. Therefore, the researcher illustrates the study's overview by adapting the Sidek Module Development Model (Mohd Noah & Ahmad, 2005).

The study employed two types of theories: 1) the learning theories to describe and support the language learning process and acquisition of learners in terms of using self and peer assessment approaches, and 2) the theories to develop the Co-STAR module to enhance the writing skills among the LAL which has been divided into into two phases; need analysis, development, and formative evaluation. The first phase needs analysis determines the learning problem and the specific feature of the curriculum to be used. In the field of learning, the research followed the principle of interactive learning (Vygotsky, 1978) explicitly relating to the collective learning paradigm of Vygotsky to see if students could be aided in the learning process by contact with other learners, content, meaning, and assignment using SPA's approaches.

Vygotsky emphasized that engagement is important for a learner at the verge of the school where learners will benefit from interaction to increase their learning achievement. Researchers could provide collective language exercises in this research framework, where professional peers could assist less experienced language learners within the proximal growth zone of the learners.

The research followed the second language motivation (L2) principle, Gardner's motivation theory, to support further how students fulfil their language learning needs (Gardner, 2001). The researcher aims to use these learning ideas to explore students' learning needs and challenges using the SPA to meet learning needs and learning outcomes. This purpose stimulates the design and development of this research's targeted application model, but it was essential to orchestrate the model's development within the theoretical context. The development phase uses the academic structure for the Co-STAR module namely the SMDM (Mohd Noah & Ahmad, 2005) supported by Year 5 *Dokumen Standard Kurikulum dan Pentaksiran* (DSKP), Self-Regulation Model (Butler & Winne, 1995) and Solo Taxonomy (Biggs & Collins, 2014) to guide in the selection of learning objective, content analysis, language activities, the arrangement of the content, teaching methodology, material, and the development of rubric as assessment instruments to be included as elements in the module and in supporting the learning capabilities of learners (Phase 1(ii): Design & Development Phase).

Finally, Phase 2 is formed to evaluate the module's effectiveness using qualitative design. It is hoped that the Co-STAR module would help the LAL enhance their writing skills and align with the study's aim.

1.11 Summary

This chapter identified the background of the analysis, the problem statement, research aim and questions, the critical problems, the theoretical structure consists of concepts along with their meaning and reference to the relevant literature; theory used for the study and to demonstrate the relationship between the independent and dependent variables, the limitation, and the definition of the variables. This study aims to develop a module using self-assessment and feedback from peer approaches to enhance writing proficiency among the low achievers at the primary level in Malaysia. The information gathered from this study may improve the English results and support the use of this module in the teaching process.