



ESL Pre-University Students' Perceptions of the Generic Rubric Used to Assess Problem-Solution Essay – A Preliminary Study

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Received: 7 August 2024

Accepted: 27 September 2024

Published: 27 October 2024

CITE THIS ARTICLE:

Ramli, N. H. L., Damio, S. M., & Majid, S. (2024). ESL pre-university students' perceptions of the generic rubric used to assess problem-solution essay – A preliminary study. *Journal of Creative Practices in Language Learning and Teaching*, 12(3), 68-81.
10.24191/cplt.v12i3.2639

ABSTRACT

In writing, assessment is conducted to enable language educators to provide feedback regarding students' development in their learning. Hence, a scoring rubric is one of the teaching and learning tools that can assist language educators in helping students to develop their writing skills. This preliminary study sought the ESL pre-university students' perceptions towards generic scoring rubric used to assess their problem solution essays. A total of 23 ESL pre-university students at one of the centers of foundation studies in Selangor, Malaysia were involved in this preliminary study through a given adapted questionnaire used by Gutiérrez (2017) to determine the effectiveness of the generic scoring rubric. Data gathered were analyzed using SPSS software version 29 to determine the mean, frequency, and percentage through descriptive statistics analysis. The findings depicted that the majority of the respondents believed



that the generic scoring rubric is useful in terms of guiding them to write essays in general. However, the findings also revealed that the rubric is somehow unable to improve their skills in writing problem-solution essays since the descriptions of the rubric's elements are too general. Thus, the findings suggested that improvement towards the generic scoring rubric is vital to help the ESL pre-university learners' development in writing problem solution essays as well as for students to understand how their writing is being assessed.

Keywords: higher learning, ESL pre-university students, writing rubric, problem-solution essay, language assessment.

INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the language skills that language learners need to acquire since it is a skill that can facilitate their communication as well as intellectual growth (Arindra & Ardi, 2020). Therefore, learners need to develop strong writing skills to facilitate their learning, especially tertiary level learners where most of the assignments are in the written form. However, to acquire writing skills is not considered as easy for some learners, especially for English as a second language learners (ESL). Most of the ESL students in Malaysia are still unable to obtain good results in their writing exams and many are still unable to write well after they have completed their secondary schools (Ling Jen & Salam, 2024). Ramli et al. (2024) stated that ESL students often perceive writing as a system that is not easily acquired and they are encouraged to learn writing through constant conscious effort which at times can make them frustrated and unmotivated. Similar insight provided by Prasetyaningrum et al. (2021) that ESL students become easily discouraged in writing since it is the most complicated skill to understand due to obstacles faced by them that are not only in finding ideas and organizing them into coherent paragraphs but also in delivering thoughts in a text. Hence, due to the obstacles, they will be less motivated in writing class and this will then jeopardize their performance in their written assignments.

In addition, obstacles in writing can also lead to writing anxiety and uneasiness among ESL students (Prasetyaningrum et al., 2021; Arindra & Ardi, 2020; Karakaya & Ulper, 2011). One of the reasons that causes ESL students to feel anxious when it comes to writing is when they are not aware of the requirements of the task assigned to them and they are not clear of their educators' expectations. They will begin to feel pressure due to the limited guidelines on what is expected in their writing and how to craft the best essay to achieve a good grade for their writing assignment or test. This will then cause ESL learners to become less interested in writing. Hence, it is important for ESL students to have information about the quality of their writing while they work on their assessment tasks. They also need to be aware of how they are expected to write and language educators should ensure that ESL students can comprehend what constitutes good writing performance.

On the other hand, Ragupathi and Lee (2020) reported that students are less anxious and more confident in working on their writing assignments when expectations are clearly listed in a rubric and they are made aware of it. The use of rubric when teaching is crucial as it provides students with a better understanding of what is being assessed, on what criteria grades are based, and what



standards are expected. In a study conducted by Baharudin et al. (2023), among ESL pre-university students, they easily get frustrated when they are unable to meet the requirements listed in the writing rubric because it is not clear to them. Hence, the use of rubric in the writing classroom is important and ESL students should have a clearer understanding about the writing requirements listed in the rubric. Many educators are not aware of the advantage that rubrics can offer when it comes to teaching and learning. Rubric itself has a variety of meanings but according to Dawson (2017), rubric is best known as an assessment tool that explicitly lists the criteria for a student's work and 'speaks' the levels of quality for each criterion. Hence, the use of rubric can help students to identify the learning goals and provide a better understanding of what is being assessed, on what criteria grades are based, and what standards are expected from students when it comes to learning.

Rubric acts as a visual narrative that breaks down the assignment into component parts and provides clear descriptions of the characteristics of the work associated with each component, at varying levels of mastery. Therefore, introducing a writing scoring rubric to students is beneficial for them. Arindra and Ardi (2020) mentioned that in order to make rubric effective for teaching and learning writing, it is important for language educators to give and explain the grading criteria in the rubric as it helps to enhance students' knowledge of writing. Not only that, Mahmoudi and Buğra (2020) stated that it is crucial for educators to share with their ESL students about how to do their writing based on the guidelines listed in a rubric used to assess their writing. Rubric is deemed one of the effective teaching and learning tools in writing classrooms but studies on the effectiveness of using rubric in teaching and learning to enhance writing skills for different types of writing is still limited (Mahmoudi & Buğra, 2020; Chowdhury, 2018).

Hence, considering the limited amount of study conducted on the effectiveness of rubric to enhance writing skills among ESL students, this preliminary study aimed to investigate the perceptions of ESL pre-university learners of the effectiveness of the generic scoring rubric used by their language educators to assess their problem-solution essays. Their perceptions of the generic scoring rubric were based on three criteria which are: (1) Goals and Objectives of the Generic Scoring Rubric, (2) Components and Organisation of the Generic Scoring Rubric and finally the (3) Usefulness of the Generic Scoring Rubric.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The use of rubric in assessing writing is mainly to determine and measure learners' skills in mastery of certain writing skills based on an assigned topic or type of essay. Assessing writing is considered as important and a precise assessment of writing is a critical matter since it involves assessing the learner's ability to write well in English (Shabani & Panahi, 2020). It is not only important in language related fields of studies but the significance of writing assessment covers other educational disciplines and settings as it is one of the ways to measure success in higher educational settings. Arindra and Ardi (2020) stated that when it comes to writing assessment, rubric becomes an important tool for language educators to determine students' writing abilities that can further help language educators to reflect on their teaching approach. Ragupathi and Lee (2020) agreed that rubric has the ability to determine the quality of learners' writing since it presents visual narrative of the assigned task into components parts and provides clear



descriptions of the characteristics of the work associated with each component at varying levels of mastery. As for language educators, the use of rubric in teaching will enable them to determine the effectiveness of their teaching practice. In fact, from the use of rubric in teaching, it can serve as an excellent ‘instructional illuminators’ that can enhance instructional quality of the educators (Farzana & Ilahi, 2023). Writing assessment is one of the ways to measure the effectiveness of the approach used by language educators to teaching writing (Cheng & Chan, 2019). Hence, the design and development stages of rubric are salient because language educators can gain greater clarity on the expectation for content and outcomes. Over time, rubrics can help educators to gain a clearer view of teaching and further address the issues that revolve around teaching writing (Ragupathi & Lee, 2020).

As for ESL students, in learning writing, rubric ‘speaks’ on behalf of the language educators where it makes educators’ expectations clear to students and it can provide more information about areas that learners may need to address in order to improve their writing skills (Mphahlele, 2022). Rubrics help ESL students to follow a clear route of progress and contribute to their own learning. Shabani and Panahi (2020) believed that when rubrics are employed in the realm of assessing writing, it allows ESL students to judge and revise their own work more successfully, it also promotes self-assessment of their learning that can further improve the quality of their writing task. Hence, with effective use of rubric, students will focus on their efforts to produce works of higher quality, get better grades, and most importantly, it helps them to feel more confident about doing their writing tasks. Therefore, it is crucial for language educators to use well-designed rubrics that clearly explain the criteria to assess writing.

A well-designed rubric can be determined based on certain features. Popham (1997) revealed that a rubric should have these three essential features which are: 1) evaluative criteria where it identifies the factors that determine the quality of a learners’ work; 2) quality definitions, a detailed description of the skills and knowledge for each level that learners must achieve to reach the suggestive levels of performance; and, 3) a scoring strategy or a rating scale used to interpret learners’ levels. Chowdhury (2018) shared similar thoughts as Popham (1997) on the three essential features with an addition of one feature which is dimension; the skills that students must display when solving a particular task. Chowdhury (2018) also believed that dimension can ultimately result in enhanced student’s learning and ensure higher quality work. Similar insight is shared by Chan and Ho (2019) that a well-designed rubric should have clear guidelines on dimension because it helps to promote academic standards especially among most Asian students at higher institution.

Apart from that, in writing assessment, analytic scoring rubric is considered as more suitable as it provides the maximum opportunity for reliability since it is more detailed. Chowdhury (2018) stated that most educators recommend analytic rubrics for effective assessments. This is because of the nature of analytic rubrics that emphasize on one criterion at a time and provide detailed feedback to learners about their strengths and weaknesses on each task component, which can be helpful for future improvements. In fact, Li (2022) believed that analytic scoring rubric with detailed and broadened scoring bands would be able to effectively determine students’ writing levels. Therefore, based on the findings by Li (2022) and Chowdhury (2018), it is believed that a well-designed and detailed rubric can be an effective tool to assess and enhance second language learners’ writing skills if it is properly integrated into teaching and learning of writing in



language classrooms.

As for the generic scoring rubric used by the language educators at this center of foundation studies, it portrays clearly the 3 evaluative criteria namely: 1) organisation, 2) language, and 3) contents. However, for the quality definitions, the descriptions for each criterion are too general that it might affect the ESL pre-university students' abilities to perform well in their writing tasks especially if they are not clear of the description of the criteria. Hence, based on the features suggested by Popham (1997) and Chowdhury (2018), the generic scoring rubric needs to be revised or to develop a well-scoring rubric to be used in assessing problem-solution essays.

METHODOLOGY

This preliminary study was conducted in order to determine the perceptions of the ESL pre-university students of the generic scoring rubric used by their educators to assess their problem-solution essays. A quantitative study was employed since using questionnaires is believed to be more focused and efficient in collecting data. Since this is a preliminary study, the result from the questionnaire will be a guide and focus for the researchers to further conduct an actual study on a large population. By using questionnaires also, the researchers are able to gather data faster than other research activities (Rudestam & Newton, 2014).

The respondents of the study

The respondents for this preliminary study were 23 ESL pre-university students at one of the centers of foundation studies in Selangor, non-randomly selected for the purpose of this study. The researchers determined the participants' selection criteria, which are:

- 1) they were second-semester students and enrolled in an English course offered by the center,
- 2) they have learned how to write problem-solution essay during their first semester, and
- 3) they are aware of the criteria of a good problem-solution essay.

Instrumentation

The instrument used in this study was a questionnaire. Not only that it is relatively low cost and at the same time respondents are granted ample time to provide thoughtful responses. The questionnaire was adapted from Gutierrez (2014), an instrument used to evaluate the students' view of a learning tool since this adapted questionnaire was also used in a study conducted by Singh et al. (2021) to evaluate the effectiveness of a card game as a teaching tool in Mathematic lessons in Malaysia. However, several modifications were made to suit the purpose of the study. Firstly, the demographic profile section was added to the questionnaire in order to get general information of the respondents. Secondly, there are five criteria from the original questionnaire namely: 1) Goals and objectives; 2) Design; 3) Components and organization; 4) Playability and playfulness; and 5) Usefulness.

But, for the purpose of this study which is to investigate the ESL pre-university learners' perceptions of a generic scoring rubric, the design and playability and playfulness elements are not relevant since this criterion is to evaluate game as a learning tool. Hence, only three criteria were used which are: 1) Goals and Objectives; b) Components and Organisation; and c)



Usefulness. For Goals and Objectives, this section consists of five items whereby for Components and Organisation and Usefulness, they consist of four items respectively. Altogether, there are 13 items for the ESL pre-university learners to respond to. The Cronbach Alpha test was conducted once the data was gathered to measure the internal consistency for each item of the adapted questionnaire. The overall value of the Cronbach's alpha is 0.96, which suggests that the items in each questionnaire construct have a high degree of reliability.

Data collection and analysis

Research ethics were applied and obtained before the questionnaires were distributed to the respondents. The researchers ran a pilot study to determine its reliability before conducting the actual study. Online Google forms were used to distribute the questionnaire and the majority of the respondents completed the survey in 30 minutes. Before the respondents began to answer the questionnaire, the researchers verbally explained about the confidentiality of the responses and information of the respondents were not disclosed to any third parties or during the data analysis process.

The data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 29. The descriptive analysis was utilized to obtain each research question's frequency, mean score, and standard deviation respectively. A 5-point Likert scale was used to indicate the ESL foundation learners' perceptions of the use of generic scoring rubric into high, moderate and low categories. The data rated as "1=Strongly disagree and 2=Disagree" with mean scores of 1.00 to 2.99, were considered a low rate of the ESL foundation students' perceptions of the generic scoring rubric to assess problem-solution essays. The data rated "3=neutral, and 4= agree," with the mean scores of 3.00 to 4.99 were considered moderate. Finally, for data rated as "5=strongly agree" with mean scores of 5.00 and above were categorized as a high rate.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to investigate the perception of ESL pre-university students on the use of generic scoring rubric to assess their problem-solution essays. Findings from the questionnaire are reported and discussed in the following sections.

The demographic profile of the respondents

This preliminary study has a sample size of 23 participants. The sample of the study consists of males with 34.8% (n=8), while females make up 65.2% (n=15). Concerning the distribution of their English course grade during their first semester, most fell into the A-, comprising 34.8% (n=8) of the total sample. This was followed by the grade A and B+, which shared the same percentage which is 26.1% (n=12) respectively. From the total of 23, 13% (n=3) of the respondents scored B for their English course. When it comes to the respondents' exposure towards the generic scoring rubric used by their language educators to assess their problem-solution essays, 39.1% (n=9) stated that their language educators often share with them the generic scoring rubric before introducing them to the essay that they need to write. Subsequently 30.4%, precisely 7 participants agreed that their ESL educators always shared the generic scoring rubric with them and followed by 26.1% (n=6) of the respondents stated that their ESL educators sometimes shared the generic scoring rubric with them before introducing them to the essay that



they need to write. Finally, only 4.3% or 1 of the respondents stated that he/she has never been exposed to the generic scoring rubric used to assess their problem solution essays.

ESL Pre-University Students’ Perceptions of the Goals and Objectives of the Generic Scoring Rubric

Section B of the questionnaire was used to explore the ESL pre-university students’ perspectives of the goals and objectives of the generic rubric used by their language educators to assess their problem-solution essays.

Table 1. Goals and Objectives of the Generic Scoring Rubric

Descriptive Statistics			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The purpose and rationale for the generic scoring rubric are clear to help in writing problem-solution type of essay.	23	3.91	.85
Goals and objectives of the generic scoring rubric are clear as a guide to write problem-solution type of essay.	23	4.22	.59
The generic scoring rubric enhanced my skills in writing problem-solution essay.	23	3.78	.85
The generic scoring rubric discussed in details of the criteria to write problem-solution essay	23	3.57	.95
The generic scoring rubric helps me to recall and apply my skills to write a problem-solution essay	23	3.91	.85
Total	23	3.88	.47

The results in the Table 1 above showed that the total mean score of the five items is 3.88 (SD = .47) indicating that the ESL pre-university students moderately believed that the goals and objectives of the generic scoring rubric are suitable to assess problem-solution essays. The highest mean score was obtained from the item “Goals and objectives of the generic scoring rubric are clear as a guide to write problem-solution type of essay” with a mean score 4.22 (SD = .59). This was followed by items “The purpose and rationale for the generic scoring rubric are clear to help in writing problem-solution type of essay” and “The generic scoring rubric helps me to recall and apply my skills to write a problem-solution essay” that has similar mean score of 3.91 (SD=.85). Meanwhile, the lowest mean score was obtained from item “The generic scoring rubric discussed in details of the criteria to write problem-solution essay” with a mean score of 3.57 (SD = .95).

ESL Pre-University Students’ Perceptions of the Components and Organisation of the Generic Scoring Rubric



Table 2. Components and Organisation of the Generic Scoring Rubric

Descriptive Statistics			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The requirements of the generic scoring rubric is clear, concise and easily understood.	23	3.70	.82
The generic scoring rubric emphasised important criteria in writing problem-solution essay.	23	3.83	.94
The terms and language used in the generic scoring rubric are appropriate and easily understood.	23	4.00	.67
The number of criteria that will be assessed in the problem-solution essay is reasonable.	23	3.65	.78
Total	23	3.79	.58

The next element of the questionnaire, which is Section C, explored the effectiveness of the components and organisation of the generic scoring rubric in assessing problem-solution essays. The findings revealed that the overall mean score of the four items was 3.79 with $SD=.58$. Therefore, it can be interpreted that the components and organisation of the generic scoring rubric was moderate in assessing problem-solution essays according to the ESL pre-university students. Furthermore, the highest mean score of 4.00 ($SD=.67$) was from the item “The terms and language used in the generic scoring rubric are appropriate and easily understood”. This followed by the item “The generic scoring rubric emphasised important criteria in writing problem-solution essay” with a mean score of 3.83 ($SD = .94$). On the other hand, the lowest mean score of 3.65 ($SD=.78$) was shown by the item “The number of criteria that will be assessed in the problem-solution essay is reasonable”.

ESL Pre-University Students’ Perceptions of the Usefulness of the Generic Scoring Rubric

Table 3. Usefulness of the Generic Scoring Rubric

Descriptive Statistics			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The scoring rubric is effective to guide me to write problem-solution essay.	23	3.78	1.04
The scoring rubric encouraged me to think critically when writing a problem-solution essay.	23	3.83	.94
Using the scoring rubric helps me to improve my writing for problem-solution essay.	23	3.78	1.04
I would recommend this scoring rubric to be use in writing classrooms as guideline to write a problem-solution essay	23	4.04	.82
Total	23	3.86	.81

The last four items in Section D determined the usefulness of the generic scoring rubric in assessing problem-solution essays. Table 3 above indicates that the total mean score from these



items was 3.86 (SD=.81). It shows that the ESL pre-university students have a moderate level on the usefulness of the generic scoring rubric to assess problem-solution essays. Based on the analysis, the item “I would recommend this scoring rubric to be used in writing classrooms as guideline to write a problem-solution essay” obtained the highest mean score of 4.04 (SD = .82). It was followed by the item “The scoring rubric encouraged me to think critically when writing a problem-solution essay” with the mean score of 3.83 (SD=.94). However, items “The scoring rubric is effective to guide me to write problem-solution essay” and “Using the scoring rubric helps me to improve my writing for problem-solution essay” recorded the lowest mean score of 3.78 with SD=1.04.

Discussion

The findings in this preliminary study depicted that the ESL pre-university students’ overall level of perception of the generic scoring rubric used was moderate at aiding them when writing their problem-solution essay. As for the first element investigated in this study regarding the goals and objectives of the generic scoring rubric (Section B), highest response recorded for the “Goals and objectives of the generic scoring rubric are clear as a guide to write problem-solution type of essay” item (M=4.22, SD=.59) demonstrated that majority of the ESL pre-university students found that the goals and objectives of the generic scoring are understood by them. This finding is supported with a study conducted by Arindra and Ardi (2020) that rubric for writing should be clear as students will continue to consult the rubric given to them when completing their writing in order to fulfill the requirement of the essay. However, even though the ESL pre-university students agreed that the goals and objectives of the generic scoring rubric are clear but the item “The generic scoring rubric discussed in details of the criteria to write problem-solution essay” recorded the lowest mean (M=3.57, SD=.95) amongst all the five items in Section B. Hence, this could be one of the reasons for ESL pre-university students unable to fulfill the criteria in writing problem-solution essays.

Without detailed criteria stated in the generic scoring rubric, it can cause ESL pre-university students to feel less motivated to write. As stated in a finding of a study by Arindra and Ardi (2020), without clear and detailed goals stated in the writing rubric, undergraduate learners in Sanata Dharma University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia were less motivated to complete their writing compared to learners who are aware with the goals and criteria that are discussed in details in a rubric. Hence, it is crucial for rubric developers to be precise and detailed when designing a rubric as it will be used as a guide to facilitate students to emphasize on the quality of their works rather than on their grade. In fact, detailed descriptions of criteria in a rubric are vital as it indicates the various skills and knowledge that students must showcase to achieve a particular learning outcome (Chowdhury, 2018).

As for the components and organisation of the generic scoring rubric, which is explored in Section C of the questionnaire revealed that the item “The terms and language used in the generic scoring rubric are appropriate and easily understood” recorded the highest mean (4.00, SD=.67). This shows that ESL pre-university learners moderately believed that they can easily comprehend the language and terms used in the generic scoring rubric. This might be related to the approach used by most of the language educators at this center of foundation studies that they often shared the generic scoring rubric before they assigned learners with a writing task (39.1%). Hence, this allows the ESL pre-university students to discuss their language educators’



expectations as well as to clarify difficult terms in the rubric before they begin to write. In a finding from a study by Arindra and Ardi (2020), undergraduate learners were struggling with their writing task as they do not read and understand the rubrics thoroughly. Therefore, it is recommended that language educators clarify with the students the terms used in a rubric before assigning them with a writing task.

However, the ESL pre-university students moderately believed that they can easily understand the terms and language used in the generic scoring rubric, item “The number of criteria that will be assessed in the problem-solution essay is reasonable” recorded the lowest mean for the components and organisation aspect ($M=3.65$, $SD=.78$). This confirmed the finding of the item “The generic scoring rubric discussed in details of the criteria to write problem-solution essay” which scored the lowest mean as mentioned at the finding section of the ESL pre-university students’ perceptions of the goals and objectives of the generic scoring rubric. Since the ESL pre-university students had learned on how to write problem-solution essay during their first semester which make them aware of the good criteria of problem-solution essay, it is undeniable that the generic scoring rubric used is not able to assess certain important criteria of problem solution essay as it is not included in the generic scoring rubric. This is because the generic scoring only has three criteria namely: 1) content, 2) language, and 3) organization. Although these three criteria are enough to assess essays in general, the descriptions for these criteria are too brief and too general to be used when assessing problem-solution essays.

When writing a problem-solution type of essay, ESL pre-university students are aware that they need to pay close attention to the elements of the essay such as thesis statement, topic sentence, supporting details as well as the soundness of the solution proposed to overcome the problem assigned to them. However, those elements are not listed in the generic scoring rubric that is used by their language educators when assessing their essays. Hence, this could be one of the contributing factors that make the generic scoring rubric less effective in assessing problem-solution essays and to further enhance students’ skills in writing problem-solution essays. Bearman and Ajjawi (2019) stated that detailed explanation of the assessment criteria is important as it is one of the ways that educators can communicate their expectation to the students. This in return will help the students to realise their weaknesses and strengths in learning (Jonsson, 2014) and to work hard in achieving the expectations and requirements stated in a rubric.

The last section of the questionnaire which is Section D is to investigate the usefulness of the generic scoring rubric. Majority of the ESL pre-university students would recommend this generic scoring rubric to be used in writing classrooms as a basic guideline to write problem-solution essay ($M=4.04$, $SD=.82$) despite the students feel that the generic scoring rubric moderately discussed in details of criteria that are used to assess for problem-solution essay. The students would still consider using the generic scoring rubric in writing classrooms although the level is moderate for item “The scoring rubric is effective to guide me to write problem-solution essay” and item “Using the scoring rubric helps me to improve my writing for problem-solution essay” which is $M=3.78$, $SD=1.04$. Based on these findings on the usefulness of the generic scoring rubric, it can be suggested that the generic scoring rubric used by the language educators is useful as a general guideline to write problem-solution essay, but the generic scoring rubric is considered as less effective in enhancing and improving ESL pre-university students’ skills in



writing problem-solution essay. Thus, it is important to revise the generic scoring rubric to ensure that it is reliable in aiding ESL pre-university students to achieve the desired skills to write problem-solution essays.

It is no doubt that one of the weaknesses of the generic scoring rubric is lack of detailed explanations for the criteria listed to assess problem-solution essays, thus it does not completely support the ESL pre-university students' development in writing problem-solutions essays. This is supported by the moderate level for the item "Using the scoring rubric helps me to improve my writing for problem-solution essay" indicated by the ESL pre-university students. A good rubric should be able to support students' learning by helping them to focus their efforts on specific criteria to be achieved in order to produce high-quality work (Ragupathi & Lee, 2020).

Rubrics should be able to show and clarify teachers' expectations and requirements that can further improve learners' performance and skills (Ragupathi & Lee, 2020). Therefore, the development of a rubric is a process that is never over but always evolving. Regular monitoring and modification of rubrics are crucial to ensure reliability, validity, and usability (Banerjee et al., 2015). Ergo, it is highly recommended that ESL educators at this center of foundation studies to monitor and improve the generic scoring rubric used to assess the pre-university learners' problem-solution essays to ensure its' effectiveness to enhance learners' problem-solutions writing skills by having detailed descriptions of the elements that are going to be assess.

CONCLUSION

This preliminary study employed a quantitative research approach to determine the ESL pre-university students' perceptions of the generic scoring rubric used by their language educators to assess their problem-solution essays. The aim of this study is to investigate whether the generic scoring rubric is an effective tool for ESL pre-university students to enhance their skills in writing problem-solutions essays. Overall, the responses by the ESL pre-university students indicated that in general, the generic scoring rubric is useful as a basic guideline for them in writing problem-solution essays. However, the ESL pre-university students moderately agreed that the said rubric is able to enhance their skills in writing problem-solutions essays. This study has proven that the design and development of a scoring rubric for writing is important especially to ensure its' effectiveness to improve students' skills in writing. The findings could assist ESL educators, educational policy makers, and curriculum designers in designing effective rubrics that can better assess specific types of essays.

In a nutshell, it is recommended that for future research in the field of writing assessment and rubric development to have more respondents in order to have different perspectives of the effectiveness of a rubric in enhancing students' writing skills. In addition, future research could also focus on rubrics used to assess different types of essays in order to strengthen students' skills in different writing genres. A comparative study could also be conducted across different languages, and across institutions in Malaysia to identify factors that can contribute to the literature of writing assessment and effectiveness of writing rubrics used in the teaching of English language classrooms.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare there is no conflict of interest.

Acknowledgement




The authors would like to declare that no financial support was received in conducting this research. Furthermore, the authors would like to thank the ESL foundation students at one of the centers of foundation studies in Malaysia for their assistance and cooperation in participating in this research.



Authors' Contributions

Introduction, literature review, methodology, discussion and conclusion N.H.L.; Reviewing of data analysis and conclusion, S.A.M, Reviewing, editing and supervision, S.M.D All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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