

The Effectiveness of Contemporary Children's Literature Module in Enhancing the Upper Primary School Pupils' Vocabulary Mastery (Keberkesanan Modul Kesusasteraan Kontemporari Kanak-Kanak dalam Meningkatkan Penguasaan Perbendaharaan Kata Murid Sekolah Rendah Tahap Atas)

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ABSTRACT

Contemporary Children's Literature (CCL) is being used worldwide as an extended reading material especially in the teaching and learning of English. Back in 2004, the Curriculum Development Centre of Malaysia introduced the CCL module for upper Primary School pupils that covers all the basic skills in English such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary. Vocabulary plays an important role in the process of learning a language. The lack of vocabulary hinders the pupils from using the target language. Thus, this study aimed to investigate how the use of CCL modules can effectively enhance the upper primary school pupils' vocabulary. Quantitative approach using mixed-methodology design employing the pre and post test as well as questionnaires were used in this study. A total number of 90 upper primary pupils in a primary school in Penampang district, Sabah, Malaysia were selected using purposive sampling. Then, the data were analysed using the descriptive analysis model and Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The main findings indicated the results from the pre-test and post test showed a significant difference where the pupils' marks in the post-test were higher than the pre-test. Hence, the findings depicted that the use of CCL modules can enhance the pupils' vocabulary effectively. Finally, based on the research findings, it is recommended to conduct further studies that focus on other language skills. Policy makers are encourage to establish a designated time for teaching Contemporary Children's Literature based on these implications.

Keywords: Contemporary Children's Literature (CCL); English skills, vocabulary; upper Primary School pupils; target language; CCL modules

ABSTRAK

Sastera Kanak-Kanak Kontemporari (CCL) digunakan di seluruh dunia sebagai bahan bacaan lanjutan, terutamanya dalam pengajaran dan pembelajaran Bahasa Inggeris. Pada tahun 2004, Pusat Perkembangan Kurikulum Malaysia telah memperkenalkan modul CCL untuk murid Sekolah Rendah Tahap Dua yang merangkumi semua kemahiran asas dalam Bahasa Inggeris seperti mendengar, bertutur, membaca, menulis, tatabahasa, dan perbendaharaan kata. Pemerolehan kosa kata sangat penting dalam proses pembelajaran bahasa. Kekurangan perbendaharaan kata menghalang murid daripada menggunakan bahasa sasaran. Justeru, kajian ini bertujuan untuk menyiasat bagaimana penggunaan modul CCL dapat meningkatkan perbendaharaan kata murid Sekolah Rendah Tahap Dua secara berkesan serta persepsi mereka terhadap penggunaan modul CCL. Pendekatan metodologi campuran menggunakan reka bentuk kajian kes menggunakan ujian pra dan pasca, soal selidik, serta temu bual telah digunakan dalam kajian ini. Sejumlah 90 orang murid Sekolah Rendah Tahap Dua di sebuah sekolah rendah di daerah Penampang, Sabah, Malaysia telah dipilih menggunakan kaedah persampelan bertujuan. Kemudian, data telah dianalisis menggunakan model analisis deskriptif dan Pakej Statistik untuk Sains Sosial (SPSS). Dapatan utama menunjukkan keputusan daripada ujian pra dan ujian pasca menunjukkan perbezaan yang signifikan di mana markah murid dalam ujian pasca adalah lebih tinggi daripada ujian pra. Justeru, dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa penggunaan modul CCL dapat meningkatkan perbendaharaan kata murid dengan berkesan. Implikasi kajian telah dibincangkan dari sudut guru, murid, penggubal dasar dan institusi pendidikan. Akhir sekali, berdasarkan dapatan kajian, sebagai cadangan, penyelidikan masa hadapan yang memberi tumpuan kepada kemahiran bahasa lain harus dilakukan. Penggubal dasar digalakkan untuk membuat penguatkuasaan bagi menetapkan masa khusus untuk mengajar Kesusasteraan Kanak-Kanak Kontemporari.

Kata Kunci: Sastera Kanak-Kanak Kontemporari (CCL); kemahiran Bahasa Inggeris, perbendaharaan kata; murid Sekolah Rendah Tahap Dua; bahasa sasaran; modul CCL

INTRODUCTION

Literature is one of the components of the English language that cover all the basic skills in English such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary, as stated by Turker (1991), reading literary texts doesn't just enhance reading abilities; it also boosts listening, speaking, and writing skills. Contemporary Children's Literature (CCL) is widely used as reading materials all over the world especially among the English as a Second Language (ESL) learners. As stated by Mustakim et.al (2018) in their article, the main objective of integrating literature into the English Language curriculum is to enhance students' language proficiency. Thus, considering the advantages of implementing literature into English lessons in Malaysia, the Curriculum Development Centre of Malaysia has taken immediate action by introducing CCL for upper Primary School pupils (Year 4 to 6) back in 2004. The rationale behind introducing the CCL in English classrooms was to enhance the pupils' proficiency in the English language through various materials as mentioned by Al-Najjar (2023), children can demonstrate their preferences and attitudes towards English classes through the exploration of children's literature. This is in line with the second shift in the Malaysia Education Blueprint (2013 to 2025), which is to produce a Malaysian citizen who is proficient in both Bahasa Malaysia and the English language. According to the Curriculum Development Centre of Malaysia (2015), pupils can acquire vocabulary and new knowledge by reading literary text as well could help them to encounter more complex materials which are related to the same subject in the future.

Vocabulary plays an important role in the process of learning a language. It is important to gain as much vocabulary as we can in order to at least comprehend the "real" meaning behind what someone is trying to say and to "reply" using that language. According to Aminatun and Oktaviani (2019), the comprehension of vocabulary will make it easier for people to say something in other languages, especially the second language. Besides that, Sari and Aminatun (2021) stated that in the process of learning a second language, vocabulary is crucial as pupils will be facing difficulties to voice out their comprehension and production when they do not have enough vocabulary of that language. However, most Malaysian pupils have difficulties in using the second language which is English since they have very limited vocabulary of that language. As mentioned in a study by De La Cruz & Paula (2023), limited vocabulary restricts pupils from freely expressing themselves in English, thereby reducing their confidence in using the language. Namaziandost et.al (2020) supported this notion in their article by stating that proficiency in vocabulary is frequently regarded as a crucial asset for

second-language learners, as a limited vocabulary in the second language hinders effective communication. Learning vocabulary through drilling and set exercises can be boring and demotivating for the pupils, so that the use of Contemporary Children's Literature can be a lot more fun and motivating especially in acquiring vocabulary. The results of a study conducted by Asnita & Marlina (2022), has proven that the utilisation of English children's literature appears to have led to an improvement in the grades of the students, specifically in enhancing their vocabulary. Thus, the implementation of the CCL module in Malaysian English classrooms can be one of the ways to improve the English vocabulary among the upper primary school pupils.

Krashen (1987) in his theory stated that the most effective methods in learning the second language involve providing 'comprehensible input' in relaxed settings, delivering messages that genuinely interest learners. In accordance with this study, the use of CCL modules in learning the second language, especially the vocabulary can adhere to the theory. Thus, this study was conducted in order to cater to this issue as the lack of English vocabulary among upper primary school pupils is quite common especially in rural and suburban areas. Bayraktar (2021) in his article mentioned that children's literature can increase the learners' vocabulary which can aid them to express their feelings and thoughts easily. Additionally, Pulimeno et.al (2019) stated in their article that children's literature provides new knowledge to the children through the enrichment in their vocabulary as well as communication skills, also corroborate emotional support to the pupils especially during the difficult phase in life. Furthermore, in a study done by Gabrielsen et.al (2019), their findings reported that a teacher used literature text as an opportunity to teach vocabulary to his Norwegian learners by relating it to theme, as symbols or words specifically to allow the learners to find out the definition of the words and the text as a whole. However, there is not much recent research on the use of CCL in enhancing primary pupils' English skills, especially vocabulary in the context of Malaysian classrooms. Therefore, there is a need to emphasise the use of the CCL module again as it can bring a lot of benefits especially in enhancing the pupils' vocabulary skills indirectly. Thus, this issue is something that should not be overlooked, and a study needs to be done.

Accordingly, this study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of the Contemporary Children's Literature (CCL) module in enhancing vocabulary mastery among the upper primary school pupils. The primary objective of this research was to assess whether the implementation of CCL module into the curriculum can lead to the significant improvements in vocabulary mastery among the upper primary school pupils. Specifically, this research seeks to explore the impact of using CCL module as a supplementary

educational tool aimed at enriching the pupils' vocabulary acquisition.

Besides, the research question guiding this research was; how can the Contemporary Children's Literature (CCL) module effectively enhance the upper primary school pupils' vocabulary mastery? This question will be addressed through a comprehensive investigation into the specific learning outcomes observed when the CCL module was being implemented in the upper primary school classrooms. Thus, by focusing on these aspects, this research aimed to provide insights into the potential benefits and effectiveness of the CCL module in supporting the language development among upper primary school learners specifically in vocabulary mastery.

LITERATURE REVIEW

CONTEMPORARY CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

The employment of Contemporary Children's Literature (CCL) in teaching and learning is actually quite common all over the world. As a matter of fact, the implementation of CCL brings a lot of benefits to both educators and learners, not just in teaching and learning, also in their self development as stated by Pulimeno (2020), children's literature offers more than just educational value; they also contribute to global development and the overall well being of young individuals. However, this paper would be focusing more on the benefits of CCL in teaching and learning especially the vocabulary acquisition.

One of the benefits CCL brings to the teaching and learning is it helps in developing English language literacy. Spencer (2022) stated that CCL plays a vital role in young learners' classroom literacy development. This statement can be supported based on the results of a study done in China. It is proven that reading Children's Literature is effective in developing the learners' English language skills as well as it is imperative to use the children's literature in learning English (Ye, 2021). Meanwhile, Hamid & Aziz (2022) mentioned in their article that studying literature provides many opportunities for ESL teachers to improve the contents in their language classes which can lead in enhancing the children's interests in literature, and at the same time, it can enhance their vocabulary.

Singh et.al (2020) in their article stated that CCL is introduced to inculcate reading habits among learners, improve pupils' vocabulary and language skills as well as their thinking skills. Besides, the CCL is being introduced to the primary school pupils in order to enable them to maximise their prior knowledge to interpret meanings which leads in developing high order thinking skills (Singh et.al,

2020). This statement is also supported by another study by Stan (2014), in which stated that literature is not only important for the learners to gain information, but also to interpret them to become meaningful as well as a medium of effective language teaching. Literature offers a language model to learners who hear and read it as they can learn new vocabulary, syntax, discourse function, sentence patterns, and also standard story structures which will help them in writing skills (Stan, 2014).

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CONTEMPORARY CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN MALAYSIA

The Malaysian Ministry of Education (MOE) inaugurated the Contemporary Children's Literature Module back in 2003 as a non-tested component in English paper where Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah (UPSR) was still being carried out. Then, in 2004, the Malaysian Curriculum Development Centre started to implement the CCL in English lessons whereby the Year 4 batch at that time was the pioneer. The implementation of the CCL module continued in the following years, which was in 2005, the Year 5 pupils and in 2006, the Year 6 pupils respectively. The Year 4 to Year 6 English teachers need to integrate the literature components as a non-textbook lesson during the English lessons. Basically, the upper primary school pupils are expected to read poems, short story books and graphic novels throughout their school years. By the end of their primary school year, which is in Year 6, they are supposed to have read at least 28 poems, three short story books and three graphic novels whereas in Year 4 and Year 5, the teachers will cover eight poems, one short story and one graphic novel respectively. Meanwhile in Year 6, they are going to cover 10 poems, one short story and one graphic novel.

VOCABULARY IN ESL CLASSROOMS

Vocabulary is the main core in language learning, because without sufficient vocabulary, it is difficult for language learners to master any other language skills. This statement can be supported by Maghfirah & Fajhri (2023) in their article that, it's essential for learners to master learning strategies aimed at acquiring vocabulary, as this proficiency is foundational for conquering other language skills and improving overall linguistic competence. Therefore, using contemporary children's literature in teaching the target language can be one of the strategies to help learners to acquire vocabulary.

Vocabulary teaching is an essential part in an ESL classroom as learners are required to have sufficient English

vocabulary at least by the end of their school years (Tahir et.al, 2020). One of the crucial areas in language learning and teaching is, the compilation of spoken and written text such as Children’s Literature, has had a particular effect on vocabulary studies, through the production of word frequency lists (Macalister, 2019). Alharthi (2020) stated in an article that, vocabulary is an important element of language in order to achieve successful communication. In addition, vocabulary is the most vital tool for second language learners as limited vocabulary in a second language might hinder a successful communication (Alqahtani, 2015). Susanto (2017) in his article stated that vocabulary is considered as the core of the language and not considered as a valuable item when it is taught formally in school. Besides that, vocabulary skills have a direct link to reading comprehension especially for English language learners (Cho et.al, 2019). On the other hand, the vocabulary skill is also crucial for ESL learners in order to master other subjects such as Maths and Science (Trakulphadetkrai et. al, 2020). Thus, vocabulary plays an impressive role in the teaching and learning of a second language especially in an ESL classroom.

THEORY OF SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Krashen (1987) in his theory of second language acquisition stated that learners learn vocabulary in a subconscious way through reading which is more effective than learning words through exercises focusing on vocabulary because the learners’ conscious focus will be more on the story, not the items to learn. For instance, Alharbi (2024) in her article

supported this notion that learning a second language happens through subconscious processes, akin to how children learn their first or native language.

Vygotsky (1978), in the theory of constructivist learning believed that language learners can construct new knowledge, concepts and skills through the interaction with other people of their culture. Through the interaction, the learners would also learn the vocabulary subconsciously. Constructivist theory on language learning is focused on the zone of proximal development (ZPD) as it enhances the individual behavioural transformations and the progress they make in language learning and what the learners can do with and without help (Vygotsky, 1978).

In conclusion, an individual’s spontaneous learning and scientific concepts are developed within the zone of proximal development with the help of some or more proficient others (Vygotsky, 1978). Moreover, the process of learning involves social interaction, internalising concepts, and using the concept as a guide to the development of vocabulary in ESL classrooms (Doolittle, 1997).

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

This research applied the quantitative approach with mixed-method experimental research design to investigate the effectiveness of Contemporary Children’s Literature (CCL) modules in enhancing the vocabulary mastery among the upper primary school pupils.

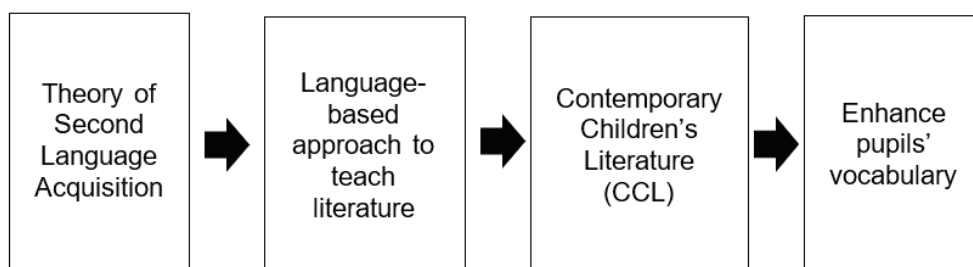


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework of the Study

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of this research. Based on the above conceptual framework, this research adopted the theory of second language acquisition by Krashen (1987) and Vygotsky’s constructivist theory (1978), the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) which focuses on learners’ acquisition of second language naturally and subconsciously. Krashen's theory (1987) is

predicated on the idea that language acquisition occurs most effectively in a natural, low-anxiety environment where learners were exposed to comprehensible input slightly above their current proficiency level. Krashen (1987) also asserted that there were five main hypotheses in his theory: the Acquisition-Learning hypothesis, the Monitor hypothesis, the Input hypothesis, the Natural Order

hypothesis, and the Affective Filter hypothesis. Each of these components underscores the importance of intuitive, meaningful communication and stresses the distinction between acquisition (a subconscious process) and learning (a conscious process). In relation to this research, CCL modules contained the richness in literary texts, as highlighted by Khatib et.al (2011), literary texts in CCL are richer in writing style, vocabulary, and grammatical structures as compared to standard ESL textbooks. Thus, this richness helps pupils to encounter and internalise a wide range of linguistic elements in a natural and engaging manner.

Apart from that, Vygotsky's constructivist theory (1978) emphasizes the social context of learning and the critical role of interaction in cognitive development. The ZPD represents the difference between what a learner can do independently and what they can achieve with guidance and encouragement from a skilled partner. This scaffolding process enables learners to progress beyond their current abilities through social interaction and collaborative learning. Ferey (2004) supported the theory as well as relating it with the use of CCL, in which CCL allows for the integration of EFL/ESL skills in a classroom setting where learners are exposed to new vocabulary in context. The repetitive and illustrative nature of children's literature aids in reinforcing vocabulary and grammar in a meaningful way.

Besides, this research also adapted a language-based approach to teach literature as a basis. This research employed a language-based approach to teach literature, which aligned with the theoretical foundations of Krashen (1987) and Vygotsky (1978). According to Van (2009), the language-based approach is highly suitable for second language learners because it emphasises the intrinsic value of literature in enhancing linguistic awareness. From the language-based approach to teaching literature, it leads to the main subject of this research which is the Contemporary Children's Literature (CCL). As mentioned previously, CCL offers a lot of great benefits to ESL learners especially in terms of enhancing their vocabulary in English language. According to Ye (2022), a learner's English language acquisition can significantly improve through listening to and reading English children's literature. By integrating these theoretical foundations and methodological approaches, this research aimed to investigate how the use of Contemporary Children's Literature (CCL) can significantly enhance the process of second language acquisition especially in vocabulary mastery, providing learners with a rich, contextual, and engaging learning environment.

RESEARCH SAMPLE

Purposive sampling technique was used in this research as stated by Obilor (2023), the researcher can eliminate unrelated responses that don't make sense in the context of the study with the aid of purposive sampling. Besides, it also reduces the margin of error in data collecting (Obilor, 2023). Thus, 90 upper primary school pupils from a primary school in Penampang district were chosen. The 90 participants consisted of pupils from three different classes. Besides, the participants are mixed-ability pupils who have different levels of performance; advanced, intermediate and low achievers. Before implementing the research, each of the participants were given a consent form to ask for permission from their parents to allow them participate in the research in order to avoid any unwanted issues later.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

In this study, the primary research tool used was the pre and post test. One advantage of employing this method is its ability to establish the research's directionality (Stratton, 2017), guiding the study towards its intended goals. The pre-test aimed to gather initial data on participants' performance before implementing the CCL module, while the post-test sought to assess any significant differences in pupils' results compared to their pre-test performance.

Additionally, the study utilised questionnaires as another research instrument. To accommodate varying ages among the pupils, different sets of pre and post tests were designed. For 10-year-old participants, both pre and post tests consisted of six questions, while for 11-year-olds, eight questions were included in each test. Similarly, 12-year-old pupils were presented with six questions for both pre and post tests. Different sets of questions were provided to pupils in different age groups for both the pre-test and post-test assessments, following the English Subject's Document of Standard Curriculum and Evaluation (2017). This approach ensured that questions were aligned with each group's current syllabus and level of proficiency. For 10-year-old participants, both the pre-test and post-test comprised six questions, reflecting their younger age and expected vocabulary level. These questions were intentionally simpler compared to the 12-year-olds, who had a more complex set of questions. Meanwhile, 11-year-olds were given eight questions, aiming to strike a balance between complexity levels suitable for their intermediate age group. This variation was designed to cater effectively to each age group's educational needs as well as the provided syllabus (Refer to Appendices A, B, and C for details).

Furthermore, each participant received a questionnaire, which encompassed three sections; (Section A: Demographic

Background, Section B: The Use of CCL Modules and Section C, Pupils’ Perceptions towards the Use of CCL Modules).

RESEARCH PROCEDURE

Before conducting the research, the researcher applied for permission through the Educational Research Application System (ERAS) online. The application was approved, and a letter of approval was issued (Refer to Appendix F). Following this approval, the researcher distributed a consent form to each participant (Refer to Appendix E). Once consent was obtained, the researcher proceeded the research by collecting data from the participants.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

First of all, the pre-test was conducted to get the initial data of the participants’ performance before implementing the CCL module. The pre-test took two weeks to make sure that every participant had ample time. After that, the researcher implemented the CCL module in the classroom. The implementation of the CCL module took eight weeks. Then, the post-test was conducted to get the final results after the implementation of the CCL module in enhancing the pupils’ vocabulary mastery.

Besides that, the questionnaires were distributed to the participants after the post-test. Before implementation, the questionnaire undergoes refinement based on research objectives and expert insights such as the head of English panels and the senior English teachers. A pilot study also has been conducted in order to check the reliability of the questionnaires. Participants expressed their views using a scale of strongly agree, agree, not sure, disagree, and strongly disagree for sections B and C in the questionnaires. The scales were represented in a form of “emoji” each since the participants were children of 10 to 12 years old. The questionnaires were distributed using “pen and paper” since not all of the participants have access to the internet as well as electronic devices. The researcher photocopied the questionnaires and distributed them to the participants during the English lessons and replacement classes. The participants handed over their completed questionnaires immediately after finishing them. Last but not least, the final step in this research was the data analysis.

DATA ANALYSIS

The collected data underwent a statistical analysis using a descriptive analysis model. According to Bhandari (2020), descriptive statistics are used to summarize and organize the features of a data set, which consists of a collection of

responses or observations from either a sample or an entire population. In relation to this study, the data were collected and then analysed based on the participants’ responses from their pre, post, questionnaires and interviews. Bhandari (2020) also added that, there were three types of descriptive analysis, which were the the frequency of each value occurs, central tendency and variability and the dispersion of data. Turney (2022) stated that the frequency of a value indicates how often it appears in a dataset, while frequency distribution shows the pattern of these frequencies for a variable, revealing how frequently each possible value occurs within the dataset.

As this study utilised pre and post tests, the data were sorted into frequencies and categories for analysis. Similarly, the data from the questionnaires were categorised and assessed for trends to facilitate analysis. Additionally, SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), a widely recognized software for data analysis, was employed. This software aided in processing percentages, frequencies, and categories for a more comprehensive analysis. All of the data gathered in this study were analysed and categorised using SPSS.

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

To ensure the validity and reliability of the instruments used in the study, the researcher consulted experts such as the head of English panels and a senior English teacher with fifteen years of teaching experience to check on the reliability and validity of the instruments. The pre and post tests had gone through validation process in which the researcher asked for the opinion from an experienced teacher, which was the head of English panel. The head of the English panel had commented and gave a few suggestions for a better outcomes of the pre and post tests. After some amendments made, only then the pre and post tests were distributed to the participants. Besides, a pilot study also has been done in order to check the reliability of the questionnaires since it was not adapted from any other sources and originally from the researcher. Table 1 shows the Cronbach’s Alpha value for the questionnaires.

Table 1 Cronbach’s Alpha Value for Questionnaire

N of Items	Cronbach’s Alpha Value
16	0.796

There were 16 numbers of items in the questionnaires being tested using the SPSS. Hence, the result of the pilot study (Table 1) shows the Cronbach Alpha value of 0.796 which is acceptable and reliable to be used for the research as according to Taber (2017), an internal consistency considered acceptable is indicated by Cronbach alpha values

of 0.7 or above. In addition, all of the research instruments have gone through validation and reliability tests before proceeding with the implementation.

FINDINGS

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CCL MODULE IN ENHANCING THE UPPER PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS' VOCABULARY MASTERY

The research question put out in this study attempts to identify how the use of CCL modules can effectively enhance the upper primary school pupils' vocabulary

mastery. The researcher would like to explore more on the influence of the CCL module in enhancing the upper primary school pupils' vocabulary through the pre and post test results. Based on the data collected by the researcher, the researcher was able to identify a significant difference between the pre and post test in which the results indicated that the pupils' marks in the post-test were higher than in the pre-test. In order to check whether the results from the pre-test and post-test have a significant difference, the researcher has done a paired sample t-test using SPSS. Table 2 shows the results of the paired sample t-test.

Table 2. Paired Sample t-test Results

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pre-Test - Post Test	-2.75556	1.80082	.18982	-3.13273	-2.37838	-14.516	89	<.001

Based on Table 2, the mean difference between pre-test and post-test scores was -2.76 (SD=1.80), indicating a substantial difference. The t-value obtained was -14.516, demonstrating a significant contrast between the paired observations ($t(89) = -14.516, p < .001$). Additionally, the 95% confidence interval (-3.133 to -2.378) supports the likelihood that the true mean difference between pre-test and post-test scores falls within this range. With a p-value of $< .001$, a highly significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores was confirmed.

These results signify a statistically significant increase in scores from pre-test to post-test, with a mean difference

of -2.76. This improvement highlighted the effectiveness of CCL modules in enhancing the upper Primary School pupils' vocabulary.

On the other hand, the researcher investigated further on the effectiveness of CCL in order to enhance the upper primary school pupils' vocabulary mastery through a questionnaire. Table 2 below shows the results of the second part of the questionnaire (Section B) which is related to the use of the CCL module in Malaysian upper primary school classrooms.

Table 3 Section B (The Use of CCL Module)

Item	Statements	N	Frequency (%)				
			SDA (%)	DA (%)	NS (%)	A (%)	SA (%)
1	I know the existence of the CCL module.	90	4 (4.4)	-	16 (17.8%)	24 (26.7%)	46 (51.1%)
2	My teacher uses the CCL module in the classroom.	90	11 (12.2%)	13 (14.4%)	31 (34.4%)	16 (17.8%)	19 (21.1%)
3	I am interested in reading the materials provided in the CCL module.	90	5 (5.6%)	6 (6.7%)	22 (24.4%)	29 (32.2%)	28 (21.1%)

continue ...

... cont.

4	I have read the reading materials provided in the CCL module.	90	8 (8.9%)	11 (12.2%)	28 (31.1%)	18 (20.0%)	25 (27.8%)
5	I like all the materials provided in the CCL module.	90	1 (1.1%)	6 (6.7%)	22 (24.4%)	29 (32.2%)	32 (35.6%)
6	I like the graphics, illustrations and pictures in the CCL module.	90	1 (1.1%)	9 (10.0%)	13 (14.4%)	27 (30.0%)	40 (44.4%)
7	I like the activities prepared using the CCL module.	90	9 (10.0%)	7 (7.8%)	29 (32.2%)	19 (21.1%)	26 (28.9%)
8	I use the CCL module to learn new words and vocabulary.	90	-	7 (7.8%)	9 (10.0%)	27 (30.0%)	47 (52.2%)

*SDA=Strongly Disagree, DA=Disagree, NS=Not Sure, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree

Based on Table 3, the results depict that higher frequencies for each item can be seen mostly at the Agree and Strongly Agree side. The study found that the participants were aware of the existence of the CCL modules. The result of the questionnaire for Item 1, “I know the existence of the CCL module” proved that only 4.4% of the participants were not aware of the existence of the CCL module. The rest of the participants were aware of the module since the highest percentage for this item is on Strongly Agree which is 51.1%. However, the results for Item 2 shows more variation in which the frequency for each likert scale was almost evenly distributed except for “Not Sure” that shows the highest percentage of 34.4%. In this case, most of the participants were not sure whether the CCL module was implemented during the English lessons. Based on the results in Table 2, the number of the participants who chose “Agree” and “Strongly Agree” for the statement “My teacher uses the CCL module in the classroom” were still higher than the participants who chose Strongly Disagree and Disagree. For Item 3, the highest percentage can be seen where 32.2% of the participants agree with the statement that they were “interested in reading the materials provided in the CCL module”. Besides that, the study found that 31.1% of the participants were not sure whether they have read the materials provided in the CCL module or not since the highest percentage for Item 4 is Not Sure. Even though the highest percentage is on Not Sure, the percentage for Agree and Strongly Agree were still higher than Strongly Disagree and Disagree. Meanwhile, in reference to Item 5, “I like all the materials

provided in the CCL module”, the percentage of the participants who chose Strongly Agree was positive. The result for Item 5 shows that 35.6% of the participants were showing interests in all the materials provided in the CCL module. The result for Item 6 indicates that almost half of the participants, 44.4%, strongly agree that they like the graphics, illustrations and pictures provided in the CCL module. In spite of that, the results for Item 7 shows a little difference in the results. 32.2% of the participants, which is the highest percentage in Item 7, were not sure whether they liked the activities prepared using the materials in the CCL module or not, yet the results for the participants who chose agree (21.1%) and strongly agree (28.9%) were still on the higher level as compared to the ones who strongly disagreed and disagreed. Last but not least, for Item 8, it is interesting that none of the participants chose SDA (Strongly Disagree) for the statement “I use CCL module to learn new words and vocabulary”. The result from this item has an answer to the research question, on how the use of the CCL module can effectively enhance the upper primary school pupils’ vocabulary. The result particularly for Item 8 shows that more than half of the participants agreed that the use of CCL modules in the classroom can help them to learn new words and vocabulary since the highest percentage for this item is Strongly Agree (52.2%).

To further strengthen the argument, Table 4 shows the results of the third part of the questionnaires that related to the participants’ perceptions towards the use of the CCL module in the classroom.

Table 4 Section C (Perceptions towards the use of CCL Module)

Item	Statements	N	Frequency (%)				
			SDA	DA	NS	A	SA
1	I learn a lot of new words and vocabulary from the CCL module.	90	1 (1.1%)	4 (4.4%)	30 (33.3%)	20 (22.2%)	35 (38.9%)
2	I can memorise new words and vocabulary I learned from the CCL module.	90	8 (8.9%)	11 (12.2%)	22 (24.4%)	18 (20.0%)	31 (34.4%)
3	I can use the new words and vocabulary I learned from the CCL in sentences.	90	2 (2.2%)	8 (8.9%)	30 (33.3%)	28 (31.1%)	22 (24.4%)
4	I can use the new words and vocabulary I learned from the CCL in daily conversations.	90	11 (12.2%)	7 (7.8%)	34 (37.8%)	19 (21.1%)	19 (21.1%)
5	I can understand the contents in the CCL module after learning the vocabulary.	90	5 (5.6%)	6 (6.7%)	22 (24.4%)	28 (31.1%)	29 (32.2%)
6	I found CCL is an interesting module to be used in the classroom to learn new vocabulary.	90	4 (4.4%)	4 (4.4%)	21 (23.3%)	26 (28.9%)	35 (38.9%)
7	I look forward to learning using CCL every week.	90	7 (7.8%)	11 (12.2%)	23 (25.6%)	28 (31.1%)	21 (23.3%)
8	I feel excited every time I learn a new word from the CCL.	90	4 (4.4%)	4 (4.4%)	15 (16.7%)	26 (28.9%)	41 (45.6%)

*SDA=Strongly Disagree, DA=Disagree, NS=Not Sure, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree

According to Table 4, for Item 1, most participants (38.9%) strongly agreed, and a substantial number (33.3%) agreed that they learn a lot of new words and vocabulary from the CCL module. Overall, a majority (72.2%) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Besides that, for Item 2, the highest percentage (34.4%) strongly agreed that they can memorise new words, with a significant total (54.4%) agreeing or strongly agreeing to the statement. In line with the statement in Item 3, "I can use the new words and vocabulary I learned from the CCL in sentences", a higher percentage (31.1%) agreed they could use new words in sentences, while 33.3% were neutral. However, 68.9% agreed or strongly agreed in total. Apart from that, there is a significant difference that can be seen in the results for item 4 in which about 37.8% of the participants were neutral, while 21.1% each agreed or strongly agreed they could use new words in daily conversations. However, a substantial portion (19.0%) disagreed or strongly disagreed. Based on the results for Item 5, the responses from the participants were fairly distributed, with around one-third neutral and roughly equal percentages agreeing and strongly agreeing. However, the result was taking a u-turn in Item 6 in which the majority (67.8%) of the participants either agreed or strongly agreed that the CCL module is interesting for learning new vocabulary. The results of the participants'

responses for Item 7 were distributed fairly evenly across agreement level, yet the highest percentage was still on either agreed (31.1%) and strongly agreed (23.3%) which makes an equal of 54.4% of the participants. Finally, for Item 8, a substantial majority (74.5%) agreed or strongly agreed that they felt excited when learning new words from the CCL module. In conclusion, these findings suggest a generally positive attitude toward the CCL module for learning vocabulary, with most participants acknowledging its usefulness and their interest in using it for vocabulary acquisition.

DISCUSSION

This study investigated the effectiveness of contemporary children's literature (CCL) modules in enhancing vocabulary among upper primary school pupils, particularly within ESL classrooms in Malaysian primary schools. The significance of this study lies in reaffirming the value of integrating CCL modules into educational practices, addressing a notable gap in research regarding their specific impact on vocabulary enrichment in this demographic.

Contemporary children's literature offers a rich source of vocabulary that is often more varied than everyday

language or standard textbooks. By immersing students in engaging narratives and diverse vocabulary contexts, CCL modules provide an ideal platform for vocabulary acquisition. This approach not only exposes students to new words but also embeds them within meaningful contexts, facilitating deeper understanding and retention.

In relation with the theoretical framework displayed in the previous section, the effectiveness of CCL in enhancing the upper primary school pupils' vocabulary mastery can be related through Krashen's Theory (1987). This research applied the Krashen's theory of five hypotheses (1987) which are the acquisition-learning hypothesis, monitor hypothesis, input hypothesis, natural order hypothesis and affective filter hypothesis.

The first hypothesis is the acquisition-learning hypothesis in which suggested that in this research the use of CCL in naturalistic settings supports the distinction between acquisition and learning. Besides, the engaging nature of CCL facilitates vocabulary acquisition subconsciously rather than through traditional, conscious drilling of vocabulary. The second hypothesis was applied in this study as pupils engage with CCL, they naturally get better at using the language correctly without direct grammar lessons. CCL also provides input that is slightly above the pupils' current language proficiency which is crucial for language development. This was where the third hypothesis which is the input hypothesis comes in. The rich literary text presented in CCL ensure that the language input is not only comprehensible but also challenging in order to promote deeper linguistic processing. Next, the natural order hypothesis could be seen in this study as the pupils read increasingly complex texts, pupils naturally learn language structures in the right order. Also, the affective filter hypothesis suggested that the enjoyable and engaging context of CCL likely lowers the pupils' affective filters, at the same time increase their openness to acquire new vocabulary.

In addition, according to Vygotsky (1978), cognitive development is significantly influenced by social interaction within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). This study's use of CCL created a vibrant social learning environment where pupils could interact with the text and each other, thereby scaffolding their language learning process. This aligns with the constructivist view that learning is best supported through social interaction and collaboration, which CCL inherently promotes.

The practical benefits of employing a language-based approach to teach literature through CCL were evident in the students' ability to better comprehend and use new vocabulary. This method not only helped in scaffolding new knowledge based on what students could already do independently but also what they could achieve with peer

and teacher support, a core principle of Vygotsky's ZPD (1978).

Based on the findings from both pre and post-tests, as well as responses gathered through questionnaires, it became evident that the implementation of CCL modules positively influenced pupils' vocabulary proficiency. Similar studies by Spencer (2022), Singh et al. (2020), and Stan (2014) have underscored how CCL contributes to literacy development, fosters reading habits, and enhances vocabulary and language skills among young learners. This study aligns with the findings, demonstrating that CCL modules effectively support vocabulary enhancement in ESL classrooms.

Vocabulary mastery is crucial in ESL education as it not only aids in effective communication but also enhances comprehension of academic texts across subjects like Mathematics and Science (Alqahtani, 2015; Alharthi, 2020; Cho et al., 2019; Trakulphadetkrai et al., 2020). The noticeable improvement in participants' post-test scores further supports the argument that CCL modules contribute significantly to vocabulary development. Unlike traditional vocabulary drills, CCL modules facilitate indirect, subconscious vocabulary learning through reading, aligning with Krashen's (1987) theory of second language acquisition, which emphasizes the effectiveness of contextual learning over explicit instruction.

However, the study also revealed certain limitations concerning data validity and reliability. While pre and post-tests provided quantitative measures of vocabulary growth, the subjective nature of questionnaire responses raised concerns about interpretation and response accuracy among pupils. The neutral responses regarding application of newly learned vocabulary in sentences suggest a need for further research into how CCL modules can better support practical language use beyond mere recognition.

Last but not least, the integration of contemporary children's literature within the ESL curriculum is strongly supported by the findings of this study, aligning well with established theories of language acquisition and cognitive development. As upper primary ESL students engage with CCL, they did not only enhance their vocabulary but also develop a deeper, more intuitive understanding of English, facilitated by the rich, scaffolded learning environments that these literary texts provide.

In conclusion, while this study confirms the positive impact of CCL modules on vocabulary enhancement in upper primary school pupils, future research should address the validity of data collection methods and explore strategies to enhance application of acquired vocabulary in practical language tasks. These efforts will contribute to refining educational practices that effectively harness the potential of contemporary children's literature in ESL classrooms.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to investigate the use of Contemporary Children's Literature in enhancing the upper primary school pupils' vocabulary. The findings of this study portrayed that there is a significant difference that shows an increase in the participants' marks in the pre-test as compared to the post-test. Moreover, the findings from the questionnaires also contributed to positive expected results in general. Based on the findings from the data gathered using two different instruments, it could be concluded that the use of the CCL module has successfully enhanced the upper primary school pupils' vocabulary mastery.

However, there were some limitations that occurred in this study. The major limitation of this study was that not all pupils were provided with the CCL module, thus it made it quite difficult for the pupils to read the materials provided on their own. Also, for teachers, since the materials provided for the CCL modules to be implemented in the Malaysian ESL classrooms are lacking, not all teachers use the CCL modules in their lessons. This is in line with some of the participants' responses of being "not sure" and "disagree" for Item 2 (Section B) in the questionnaires that "the teacher uses the CCL module in the classroom". Therefore, it should be noted that schools' administration as well as the District Education Office should be more aware of the resources available in order to maximise the usage of the CCL modules in classrooms.

On the other hand, further research is required to identify how far the use of Contemporary Children's Literature can act as an agent in aiding the pupils to acquire the target language. The further research should be focusing on investigating the impact of using CCL on other language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. Finally, as a recommendation, it is important for the policy makers to revise the use of CCL in ESL classrooms as well as highlighting its importance by allocating a fixed time for teachers to highly utilise the CCL in their classrooms.

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