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## Open Response Essay Writing (Public Domain) Based on SPM Scoring Rubric among Non-Native Students in Negeri Sembilan

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### Abstract

The highest level of language skill is essay writing, and to achieve it, a student must comprehend numerous language sub-skills in the first place. Writing skills represent a high value of marks in the secondary school Malay language subject, especially at the *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia* (SPM) examination level. As a result, non-native speaker students always experience challenges since they are unable to acquire the aspects of Malay language essay writing effectively. Therefore, to analyse the relevance of the ideas raised by the students toward the title of open-response essay writing provided by the teacher, this qualitative research has been carried out by using the document analysis method. Besides, the researchers also aimed to analyse students' language difficulties when they presented ideas for essay titles based on the SPM scoring rubrics set by the Malaysia Examinations Council 2022. Purposive sampling was used to select 10 essay scripts among non-native speaker students that in a medium level of achievement in several secondary schools in Negeri Sembilan. The results found that most participants (80%) did not achieve an excellent level in terms of the relevance of ideas because they did not meet the task requirements (30%), had irrelevant and unclear descriptions, and did not match the title of the task (30%), non-grammatical sentences (80%), general, limited, and inaccurate vocabulary (80%), and uninteresting and ineffective essays (30%). The findings also indicate that the most noticeable and dominant language errors were incorrect use of terms and vocabulary (80%), followed by spelling errors (75%) and incorrect use of affixes (75%). Due to the poor performance of non-native speaker students in essay writing, the researchers suggested conducting a study on how to write essays in Malay language subjects by creating a step-by-step composing module that is simple but systematic, fun, informative, meaningful, and effective also the approach can ensure a long-lasting understanding for the students.

**Keywords:** Essay Writing, Malay Language, Secondary School, Non-Native Speaker, Language Mistake, Generating Idea

## Introduction

Malaysian Education Blueprint (PPPM) 2013-2025 stipulates that every student must have an effective cognitive performance. Students in primary and secondary schools must possess high skills in various disciplines to ensure successful development. Speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills are the abilities that students should accomplish in complying with the Standards-Based Curriculum and Assessment Document (2018) for the Malay language. The emphasis on these four main aspects is crucial to develop students who are competitive and have the potential to become outstanding individuals in the future. In particular, essay writing is one of the skills that require attention. According to Rozana (2020), the most challenging skill for students to accomplish is essay writing. Essay writing is complex and requires high reasoning to produce quality writing. According to the Malaysia Examinations Council (2021), a good essay should demonstrate an accurate task, relevant ideas, grammatical language, and engaging description. Therefore, it is essential to consider writing skills seriously, especially Malay language teachers with the goal to create excellent and forward-thinking people.

## Problem Statement

Multicultural society in Malaysia involves three main races: the Malays, Chinese, and Indians. All races in Malaysia should be proficient in the Malay language because it is the national language, according to the National Language Act of 1967. From the viewpoint of Hardeah (2019), the Malay language serves as a Malaysian identity for the people. Therefore, to develop a society that cherishes the country, Malaysians must communicate the Malay language in their daily interactions. In the education sector, the Malay language has become the language of knowledge that serves as the teaching medium in schools, as established in the Education (Amendments) Act of 1961 (1996). Therefore, the Department of Information Services Malaysia (2017) stated that the Malay language should be prioritized along with other languages. However, non-native speaker students may face difficulties during learning the Malay language, which can affect their academic performance. Alhaadi et.al (2018) stated that Chinese students frequently make errors when learning a second language, particularly in grammar. Students frequently make mistakes in their writing, especially in the morphological aspects of writing. According to Kiong et.al (2017), students who are non-native speakers have difficulty understanding the requirements of the question, which results in them receiving poor grades for their essay writing. The student must be able to understand the requirement of the question because it will assist the student in acquiring the skill of essay writing. Data from the *Kupasan Mutu Jawapan SPM* in 2015 showed that the majority of the non-native speaker students struggled with essay writing, as they have difficulty developing the content, had limited vocabulary, and frequently made language errors. According to Azian (2020), in her research on reading and writing skills, non-native speaker students frequently experience writing trouble, which can affect their exam results. Poor reading skills among students can also negatively affect their essay writing scores. Based on the view of Nurul et.al (2020), learning a second language can be challenging because non-native speakers are already accustomed to their mother tongue. Their attitude toward their mother tongue makes it difficult for them to understand the Malay language since they tend to speak in their native language for daily interaction. Thus, this issue has a negative indirect impact on them, particularly when it comes to essay writing as they will struggle to articulate the idea precisely and effectively. Due to these reasons, a study on Open Response Essay Writing (Public Domain) based on the SPM Scoring Rubrics Among Non-Native Speaker Students in Gemas

should be conducted. This is because non-native students must master the art of essay writing, and research on writing public domain essays based on the SPM rubric is still limited. Most studies only touch on grammar aspects, and therefore, more research is needed, particularly on non-native speaker students in Form 4 who will soon sit for SPM. Thus, this issue has a negative impact on them, particularly when it comes to essay writing since they will struggle to articulate the idea precisely and effectively. Significantly, non-native students must display good writing skills, especially in essays. Besides, the research on writing public domain essays based on the SPM rubric is still limited. Most studies only focus on grammar aspects, thus more research is required, particularly on non-native speaker students in Form 4 who will sit for SPM soon.

### **Research Objectives**

1. To identify the relevance of ideas for open response essay writings (public domain) done by form 4 non-native speaker students.
2. To explore the weak points of language used in open response essay writings (public domain) done by form 4 non-native speaker students.

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the form of idea relevance in open response essay writings (public domain) done by form 4 non-native speaker students?
2. What are the weak points of language used in open response essay writings (public domain) done by the form 4 non-native speaker students?

### **Literature Highlights**

#### **Essay Writing Concept**

Essay writing is the process of delivering information in a planned and organized manner. According to Rozita (2018), writing is the process of expressing ideas, information, opinions, and compatible knowledge thoroughly and effectively. This is aligned with the view of Norafidah (2017), who stated that writing is gathering data based on the different types of sentences used by the author. Marzni (2018) stated that writing an essay is a combination of various sentence structures that creates information that other people can understand. Students' writing must be supported by relevant ideas, as well as the appropriate knowledge of the topic. Furthermore, essay writing skills must emphasize the use of appropriate language. According to the DSKP for the Malay Language in form 4 and 5, the writing component becomes one of the primary focuses in developing students to success. Writing abilities depend on a person's comprehension of the language they are learning. As stated by Rozita (2018); Shah et al (2020), essay writing is the result of cognitive mechanisms that assist people to write clearly and effectively. The Ministry of Education Malaysia (2018) indicated that a good essay should be well-written, clear, and provide the reader with a deep understanding. Effective essay writing demonstrates how language proficiency is improved both directly and indirectly. According to Hardeah (2019), the Malay language is the spoken language of the nation, so students in Malaysia should be able to write effective essays. Thus, people should be able to speak the Malay language well and use it in their daily conversations. Rozita (2018) explained that writing an essay has a few phases that students should follow to have a significant impact on the reader. Marzni (2018) also stated that essay writing involves the integration of ideas from various sources. Students should be aware of their surroundings and able to interpret the information they have gained so they can write maturely and

grammatically. Quality essay writing must follow criteria in essay writing and this is important to produce more systematic writing.

According to Azma (2020), students need to be proficient in writing because almost all exam papers in this country require students to answer in long-form writing. Significantly, students must possess good writing skills directly and indirectly. When students can effectively and meaningfully explain data in their writing, it indicates that they have good writing skills. Additionally, the students must be coherent in grammar aspects, vocabulary, and proverbs. However, during teaching and learning sessions, educators experienced difficult tasks because writing skills require complex cognitive abilities (Roffian et.al., 2020). In SPM, essay writing is more focused on Part B, which is between 350 to 500 words and is worth 70 marks.

### **Essay Writing Among Non-Native Speakers in Secondary School**

Essay writing among non-native speakers is crucial in this study. Previous research conducted by several experts will assist researchers in this study. Zamri et al (2021) conducted a study on the Comprehension Level of Reading and Writing Malay Language in a secondary school. The study focuses on the writing and reading skills of non-native speakers, and the findings indicated that non-native speakers do not have good ability in writing essays. Ruzana et al. (2018) conducted a study on the Use of Affixes in the Essay Writing of Bidayuh Students. The analysis revealed that the students are not proficient in using the second language well, so they are unable to use appropriate affixes in their essays. Meanwhile, Norsimah et. al (2012) conducted a study on the Learning of Malay Language as a Second Language: Idea Expression in Writing among Secondary School Students in Malaysia. The study was conducted in five schools and the findings showed that non-native speakers are having problems with essay writing. They do not understand the task given in the question. Hence, they are unable to elaborate on the idea and content effectively. Norsimah et al (2010), who studied the proficiency of the Malay language among secondary school students that focused on the idea development aspect, found that non-native speakers struggled to write well. The situation gets worse when they struggle to combine a variety of linguistic elements into their writing. The weakness of students in this aspect ultimately has a negative impact on them, as they obtain low marks in writing essays tested by the researchers.

### **Essay Writing among Non-Native Speaker Students in Primary School**

Shah et al (2021) conducted a study on the issue of essay writing in the Malay language among non-native speaker students in primary schools. The research findings show that non-native students are influenced by their mother tongue, which causes them to be unable to adapt the skills of essay writing in a good manner. Non-native students used their mother tongue for words they do not understand. The research findings further indicated that students have difficulty developing the content of their essays. Adzwa et al (2020) conducted a study on prefix and affix errors in student essay writing and their relation to grammar. The study involved primary school students who were both native and non-native Malay speakers in Negeri Sembilan. The research findings showed that non-native students made many errors in using prefixes and suffixes. They often made mistakes in using affixes, thus could change the original meaning of the words they intended to write.

Azian (2020); Hasmidar et al (2020) conducted a study on the ability of reading and writing skills in the Malay language among non-native speaker students at a Chinese national type primary school (SJKC). The researchers found the students' academic performance declined. The students were identified to have reading skills issues, which ultimately affected the



quality of their essay writing. Thus, they are unable to understand the requirements of the questions and develop the content of their essays. Additionally, it was discovered that the students were struggling with grammar and content structure in writing.

### **The Issue of Essay Writing Among Non-Native Speaking Students**

Non-native students always encounter issues with essay writing. According to Adzwa et.al (2020), non-native students struggle with limited vocabulary as well as frequent grammatical and spelling issues. According to Haslindar (2019), this circumstance results from the vocabulary deficiencies of non-native students. This situation happened because they use their native language in daily conversations. Consequently, when writing essays, they tend to repeat similar words, which makes it difficult for them to organize their thoughts. Kiong et.al (2017) believed that non-native students have difficulty comprehending the questions that have been asked. Students only understand the question without fulfilling its requirements. Thus, this situation makes it difficult for them to write essays. Instead of focusing on the requirements of the question, they will answer the question based on what they already know. It will be challenging for students to articulate their ideas if they did not fulfill the question's requirements. Hence, they will come up with irrelevant ideas or content.

### **Methodology**

#### **Research Design**

This research was conducted based on a case study method. Noorzan (2018) stated that the aspect of document analysis should be focused on to obtain more accurate and in-depth results. In this regard, conducting a case study is the most suitable to ensure that the findings are relevant to the research questions posed by the researchers. This research was carried out due to unsatisfactory exam results, especially among non-native students who live around Gemas. Determining the sample size is crucial to ensure the research obtain the best and most effective results. The researchers involved ten non-native Form 4 students of different genders as participants in this study. The following is a summary of the background information for the ten participants in this study:

Table 1

*Research Participants*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Essay Achievement Score Section B Test 1 (70/70)</b>
PK1		55
PK2		58
PK3		47
PK4	16 years old	62
PK5	(Form 4)	54
PK6		55
PK7		46
PK8		61
PK9		55
PK10		60

### Research Instrument

According to Chua (2006), a research instrument is a tool for data collection conducted by researchers in a study. The research instrument used is the Part B essay question in SPM Trial Exam, which is based on the public domain. The trial questionnaire was selected because it was constructed by skilled and knowledgeable teachers who have expertise and experience in developing and designing questions. The selection of the question is also suitable because it used the actual format in the SPM questions. Therefore, the selection of the instrument is considered appropriate and will assist the researchers in the study conducted.

### Validity and Reliability

Several approaches have been applied to ensure the reliability of this investigation, including focusing on the first matter, which is getting permission from the relevant authorities to conduct the study, ethical issues, and the research instrument that has been selected. It is crucial to ensure that the study conducted is significant and effective.

Table 2

*Strategies to Determine Validity and Reliability*

Type of Test	Strategy	Research Level
<b>Construct Validity</b>	Member Checking and Peer Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research design</li> <li>• Data collection</li> </ul>
<b>Internal Validity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review information with research participants</li> <li>• Evaluate the information obtained</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data collection</li> </ul>
<b>Reliability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain theory</li> <li>• Prioritize the ethical issues</li> <li>• Developing complete data for every research participant</li> <li>• Prepare an audit trail</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research design</li> <li>• Data collection</li> <li>• Report writing</li> </ul>

### Research Findings

#### Objective 1

#### **To identify the relevance of ideas for open response essay writings (public domain) done by form 4 non-native speaker students**

The research findings are based on the analysis of documents using the SPM scoring rubric, which covers task, ideas, language, and content. In this study, 10 participants were from Form 4 non-native students. The researchers will explain the participants' understanding of the given questions based on the theme of health.

Table 3

*Table of The Relevance of Research Participant's Ideas*

LEVEL	RESEARCH PARTICIPANT	NUMBER OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT	ASSESSMENT RESULTS
<b>EXCELLENT</b>		0	-Not Available-
<b>VERY GOOD</b>	PK1	1	<p><b>T</b>– Answer the task</p> <p><b>I</b> – Relevant, Description – clear Example – appropriate</p> <p><b>B</b> – Grammatical in terms of words and sentence structure. Vocabulary varied and accurate with minimal errors</p> <p><b>P</b> – Interesting and effective</p>
<b>GOOD</b>	PK3	1	<p><b>T</b> – The essay still fulfills the task</p> <p><b>I</b> – Still relevant, Description still clear Example – still appropriate</p> <p><b>B</b> – Grammatically correct in terms of words and sentence structure. Vocabulary –general, with minimal errors</p> <p><b>P</b> – Still interesting</p>
<b>SATISFACTORY</b>	PK2 PK5 PK6 PK9 PK10	5	<p><b>T</b>– The essay still / partially fulfills the task</p> <p><b>I</b> – Still relevant, Description – Unclear Example – not quite appropriate</p> <p><b>B</b> – Lack of grammatical correctness in terms of words and sentence structure. Vocabulary general and limited</p> <p><b>P</b> – Less interesting</p>
<b>MINIMUM PROFICIENCY</b>	PK4 PK7 PK8	3	<p><b>T</b>– Essay did not fulfill the task/mixed up</p> <p><b>I</b> – Still relevant, Description unclear/ Undeveloped. Example not suitable</p> <p><b>B</b> –Not grammatically correct in terms of words and sentences Vocabulary general and limited</p> <p><b>P</b> – Uninteresting</p>
<b>DID NOT ACHIEVE MINIMUM PROFICIENCY</b>		0	-Not Available -



Based on the schedule in Table 3 above, it is clear that no one scored at an excellent level in terms of relevance, representing 0 percent. Only one person scored at a very good level in terms of relevant ideas, which represents 10 percent. Research participants wrote based on the SPM scoring rubric, which includes the following criteria: **T** – Answer the task. **I** – Relevant, Description – clear, Example – appropriate. **B** – Grammatically correct in terms of words and sentence structure, Vocabulary - general and accurate with minimal errors. **P** – Interesting and effective. On the other hand, the research participant who scored at a good level in terms of relevant ideas one person, which is equivalent to 10 percent. Research participants who achieved the good level wrote according to the SPM scoring rubric as follows: **T** – The essay still fulfills the task, **I** – Still Relevant, Description – still clear, Example – still appropriate. **B** – Grammatically correct in terms of words and sentence structure, Vocabulary – general, with minimal errors. **P** – Still interesting. Meanwhile, five participants, equivalent to 50 percent, achieved a satisfactory level. Their writing result based on the SPM scoring rubric is as follows: **T** – The essay still / partially fulfills the task. **I** – Still relevant, Description – Unclear, Example – Not quite appropriate. **B** – Lack of grammatical correctness in terms of words and sentence structure, Vocabulary – general and limited. **P** – Less interesting. Three people, equivalent to 30 percent, were at the minimum proficiency level. They wrote based on the SPM scoring rubric as follows: **T** - Essay did not meet the task / mixed up. **I** - Still relevant, Description - Unclear/undeveloped, Example - Not suitable. **B** - Not grammatically correct in terms of words and sentences, Vocabulary - General and limited. **P**- Uninteresting. None of the research participants were at the 'did not achieve minimum proficiency level. The researchers also analyzed the research findings based on the selection of public domains in student essay writing. The results for the first research question are shown in Table 3 above.

Table 4

*The Writing Content of Research Participants Based on Public Domain*

<b>Participant</b>	<b>The content presented by study participants</b>	<b>Public Domain</b>
PK1	<p><b>Content 1:</b> <i>Salah satu langkah ialah penjarakan sosial.</i></p> <p><b>Content 2:</b> <i>Selain itu, kita perlulah menggunakan sanitasi sebelum makan selepas menggunakan kemudahan awam dan lain-lain lagi.</i></p> <p><b>Content 3:</b> <i>Selain itu,kita hendaklah memakai pelitup muka.</i></p>	<p><b>Content 1</b> -Not specifically stated</p> <p><b>Content 2</b> - Not specifically stated</p> <p><b>Content 3</b> - Not specifically stated</p>

PK2	<p><b>Content 1:</b> <i>Antara, langkah-langkah yang berkesan untuk memastikan virus tersebut tidak terus merebak dalam kalangan masyarakat ialah masyarakat perlu mengamalkan tiga sop paling asas.</i></p> <p><b>Content 2:</b> <i>Selain itu, kita perlulah menggunakan sanitasi sebelum makan selepas menggunakan kemudahan awam dan lain-lain lagi.</i></p> <p><b>Content 3:</b> <i>Selain itu, masyarakat perlu elakkan tiga S iaitu kawasan sesak, kawasan yang sempit dan bersosial dengan individu yang tidak tergolong sebagai isi rumah.</i></p>	<p><b>Content 1</b> - Society</p> <p><b>Content 2</b> - Not specifically stated</p> <p><b>Content 3</b> - Society</p>
PK3	<p><b>Content 1:</b> <i>Salah satu langkah ialah pihak kerajaan perlulah mengadakan isolasi kepada orang yang menjangkiti Covid-19.</i></p> <p><b>Content 2:</b> <i>Selain itu, perintah kawalan pergerakan juga perlu diadakan</i></p> <p><b>Content 3:</b> <i>Di samping itu, ibu bapa memainkan peranan penting.</i></p>	<p><b>Content 1</b> - Government</p> <p><b>Content 2</b> - Not specifically stated</p> <p><b>Content 3</b> - Parents</p>
PK4	<p><b>Content 1:</b> <i>Langkah yang pertama ialah pihak kerajaan perlu mengewar-warkan tentang virus ini dan bahayanya.</i></p> <p><b>Content 2:</b> <i>Seterusnya, kerajaan perlu mengambil tindakan drastik untuk membuat sekatan yang melibatkan pergerakan, perhimpunan beramai-ramai dan perjumpaan secara bersemuka.</i></p> <p><b>Content 3:</b> <i>Akhir sekali, masyarakat perlu peka dan mengambil tindakan untuk membendung virus ini.</i></p>	<p><b>Content 1</b> - Government</p> <p><b>Content 2</b> - Government</p> <p><b>Content 3</b> - Society</p>
PK5	<p><b>Content 1:</b> <i>Sebagai rakyat yang bertanggungjawab cara paling rakyat lakukan untuk mengelakkan penyebaran Covid-19 ialah “duduk di dalam rumah”.</i></p>	<p><b>Content 1</b> - Society</p> <p><b>Content 2</b></p>

	<p><b>Content 2:</b> <i>Rakyat tidak dibenarkan keluar kecuali adanya perkara penting dan mesti keluar.</i></p> <p><b>Content 3:</b> <i>Perdana Menteri juga berpesan kepada rakyat untuk mengambil vaksin.</i></p>	<p>- Society</p> <p><b>Content 3</b> - Government</p>
PK6	<p><b>Content 1:</b> <i>Masyarakat yang bertanggungjawab perlulah mematuhi undang-undang yang disediakan oleh kerajaan pada masa pandemik terkini.</i></p> <p><b>Content 2:</b> <i>Selain itu, negara kita terpaksa tidak boleh menutupkan seberapa firma yang mengeluarkan barang keperluan dan pekerjaan kerajaan seperti polis, tentera dan doktor.</i></p> <p><b>Content 3:</b> <i>Akhir sekali, masyarakat haruslah membuat kerja dari rumah.</i></p>	<p><b>Content 1</b> - Society</p> <p><b>Content 2</b> - Government</p> <p><b>Content 3</b> - Society</p>
PK7	<p><b>Content 1:</b> <i>Antara langkah yang diambil untuk mengawal jangkitan virus ini ialah kerajaan mengisytiharkan Perintah Kawalan Pergerakan (PKP) untuk mencegah virus Covid-19.</i></p> <p><b>Content 2:</b> <i>Selain itu, penjarakkan sekurang-kurangnya 1.5 meter juga diaplikasikan di kawasan luar rumah.</i></p> <p><b>Content 3:</b> <i>Idea: Seterusnya, orang yang berisiko tinggi seperti kanak-kanak bayi, warga emas dan orang kurang upaya (oku) perlu dilindungi daripada individu yang tidak sihat dan bergejala.</i></p>	<p><b>Content 1</b> - Government</p> <p><b>Content 2</b> -Not stated</p> <p><b>Content 3</b> - Society</p>
PK8	<p><b>Content 1:</b> <i>Langkah-langkah yang pertama ialah kita hendaklah memakai pelitup muka semasa berada dalam kawasan yang dilindungi oleh orang ramai.</i></p> <p><b>Content 2:</b> <i>Selain itu, kita perlulah mengamalkan langkah kuarantin apabila kita dapat</i></p>	<p><b>Content 1</b> -Not stated</p> <p><b>Content 2</b> -Not stated</p> <p><b>Content 3</b> -Not stated</p>

	<p><b>Content 3:</b> <i>Idea: Justeru, kita hendaklah menjaga jarak 1 meter.</i></p>	
PK9	<p><b>Content 1:</b> <i>Langkah yang perlu dilakukan oleh rakyat untuk memastikan virus tersebut tidak terus merebak adalah seperti mengamalkan penjarakkan sosial.</i></p> <p><b>Content 2:</b> <i>Seterusnya, langkah yang perlu dilakukan oleh rakyat ialah mengamalkan pelitup muka.</i></p> <p><b>Content 3:</b> <i>Walau bagaimanapun rakyat juga mestilah rajin mencuci tangan.</i></p>	<p><b>Content 1</b> - Society</p> <p><b>Content 2</b> - Society</p> <p><b>Content 3</b> - Society</p>
PK10	<p><b>Content 1:</b> <i>Sebagai pembuka tirai perbincangan saya, kita seyogianya peka dan mematuhi langkah pencegahan terkini yang dikeluarkan oleh Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM).</i></p> <p><b>Content 2:</b> <i>Menelusuri idea yang seterusnya, kita hendaklah menjaga kebersihan diri dalam pergaulan seharian.</i></p> <p><b>Content 3:</b> <i>Kita sebagai rakyat seyogianya berada dalam jarak sosial yang selamat yakni sekurang-kurangnya dua meter daripada orang lain.</i></p>	<p><b>Content 1</b> -Ministry of Health</p> <p><b>Content 2</b> - Society</p> <p><b>Content 3</b> -Society</p>

The findings based on Table 4 explain that all study participants included the public domain aspect directly except for the first PK1 study participant, and the eighth PK8 study participant. They did not state clearly the public domain that should be included in the essay content. However, all research participants only wrote two public domains in their essay writing. Ideally, all students should write three public domains according to the suitability of the content conveyed. The findings show that PK2 research participant only touched on the public domain in the essay content. The third PK3 study participant focused on the public domain from the perspective of the government and parents. PK4, PK5, PK6, and PK7 research participants touched on the public domain aspect of the government and society. PK9 study participant only discussed the public domain aspect of society, while the PK10 study participant clarified the aspect of the Ministry of Health Malaysia and society.

**Objective 2**

**To explore the weak points of language used in open response essay writings (public domain) done by form 4 non-native speaker students**

The research findings are based on an analysis of essay writing documents produced by 10 research participants. The researcher will explain the language mistakes made by the research participants. These findings are based on the essay questions given to them.

Table 5

*The Language Error done by the Research Participants*

Participant	Error in Spelling Error	Error of Affixation	
PK1		<u>membasmikan</u>	
PK2	sudah tigas keseriasan mandatkan	<u>Pemvaksinan</u> <u>keluarganya</u>	
PK3	<u>online</u> <u>sentuhan rapat</u>	pergerakkan ibu-bapa	
PK4		KORONA Menyebibkan Mengewar-warkan penelitan	
PK5	<u>Topeng muka</u>	Menghidupi Kemuautan Pendemik penyakin	<u>Pensanitasi</u> <u>mendapati</u>
PK6	<u>Lasaknya</u>	Firma Penyerakan Menentan Stress Diri-sendirinya	<u>memuncul</u> <u>menularan</u>
PK7		Masyar akat	<u>Elakkan</u> <u>penjarakkan</u>
PK8	<u>la</u> <u>Pemangsa positif</u>	Contonya norang	
PK9			<u>penjarakkan</u>
PK10	<u>Mahatma</u> <u>Ghandi</u> <u>bersabda</u> <u>Adalah</u> <u>gerompok</u>		<u>Pensanitasi</u> <u>keimunan</u>

Table 5 clearly shows that non-native students made errors in terms of usage, spelling, and affixation. The first study participant, PK1, made only one mistake in affixation. The second participant, PK2, made three spelling errors and two errors in affixation. PK3, the following participant, made two mistakes in terms of usage and two spelling mistakes. Participant PK4 made three spelling errors, whereas PK5 made one mistake in term usage, three spelling errors, and two errors in affixation. Participant PK6 made an error in term usage, four spelling errors, and two errors in affixation. On the other hand, PK7 made one spelling error and two errors in affixation, while PK8 made two terms mistake and spelling errors. PK9 made one spelling error, and PK10 made two errors in terms of usage and affixation.

### **Discussion and Recommendation**

Essay writing is an essential element in the Malay language subject. According to Shah et al (2021), writing skills are the foundation of learning the Malay language subject. Writing involves various aspects, whether essay writing, comprehension question writing, grammar question writing, novel question writing, or summary question writing. Students should master writing skills starting in primary school to develop their cognitive abilities when they enter secondary school, university, and later the working industry. Students should have a high skill of writing ability, whether in structure or essay writing. Students who master essay writing should be able to do so in terms of sentence patterns, vocabulary usage, terms, and suitable discourse markers. It is crucial to help students write with systematic and significant ideas. The research findings found that the participants did not have a good ability in the Malay language. In accordance with this finding, Alhaadi et.al (2018) explained that non-native students often make mistakes in learning a second language. The students usually make mistakes in grammatical aspects and writing, they frequently made errors in the morphological component. On the other hand, Nurul et.al (2020) also stated that non-native speakers struggle to learn the Malay language since they are still bounded by their mother tongue. Therefore, it is challenging for them to understand the Malay language because of their attitude toward the first language. As a result, Ruzana et al (2018) discovered that non-native speakers are unable to write suitable affixes in essay writing because they do not fully comprehend the second language. From the perspective of Nurul et al (2020), non-native students made many errors in using affixes. Based on this previous research, it is clear that students always make morphological errors. Supposedly students should not make these basic morphological errors because they have been introduced to this aspect at an early age. To increase their level of proficiency in the second language, they should learn the Malay language more diligently and seriously. For recommendation, further research for the Writing of Open Response Essays (Public Domain) based on the SPM Scoring Rubric among Non-Native Speaking Students should cover various aspects. Future research is expected to focus on the essay writing process undertaken by students. Teachers can use other research methods, such as interviews, which are crucial because they can assist in determining the causes of students' poor performance in essay writing for the public domain. Additionally, researchers can investigate the causes of students' difficulties in writing effective public-domain essays. It can be done through document analysis by using the essays of two or three students. As a result, the research findings will become more precise and effective. Experimental studies can also be conducted on non-native students to improve the quality of their essay writing, especially in the public domain format. The study involves both treatment and control groups. Researchers can use special modules or methods in other studies. This is important as an intervention for writing public domain essays among non-native students.



The quality of students' essay writing can be improved with the help of research findings relating to particular methods used by non-native speakers when writing essays.

### Conclusion

In certain aspects, the changes in the SPM format help students with an opportunity to write essays that are more systematic and meaningful. Non-native students are expected to improve their mastery of the Malay language in various ways. They should have the determination to master the Malay language. Being proficient in the Malay language should not be assumed as disregarding their mother tongue, but it should be considered for knowledge purposes only. Non-native speakers can improve their mastery of the Malay language by speaking and using it frequently in their daily lives. This attitude will lead them to master the Malay language with in-depth knowledge. As a result, they will gradually start to use the correct vocabulary and terms. The practical activities also can help them to a certain extent in improving their Malay language proficiency. Non-native students are also encouraged to interact with the teacher constantly to enhance their language skills. In most situations, the teachers are already aware of the strengths and weaknesses of their students. Therefore, when non-native students meet with teachers, they can recognize the level of their student's proficiency in the Malay language. Hence, the teachers can provide feedback and guidance that will assist them in a more structured and systematic way, ultimately improving the students proficiency of the Malay language.

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