Evaluating the Technical Quality and Pedagogical Affordances of an English Language Learning (ELL) Website using a Methodological Framework

Nur Anisa Ibrahim Gani[1,*], Hadina Habil[2]

1   School of Education, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, 81310 Skudai, Johor, Malaysia
2   Language Academy, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, 81310 Skudai, Johor, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

Websites are commonly regarded as valuable educational resources that extend beyond the confines of the traditional classroom setting. The primary challenge lies in the identification of reputable online sources. The aforementioned concept underscores the imperative necessity of conducting website evaluations. The use of methodological frameworks as an evaluative instrument can effectively examine the potential of a website within a specific context, as frameworks possess descriptive qualities. Despite the extensive body of studies done concerning website evaluation, there are still a significant number of unresolved issues. Therefore, in order to address these significant deficiencies, this qualitative study aims to evaluate the efficacy of an English Language Learning (ELL) website by examining its technical and pedagogical dimensions. The LearnEnglish Kids website was chosen due to its adherence to all of the screening criteria. The evaluation process was conducted in accordance with the methodological framework. Despite the limitations identified, the LearnEnglish Kids proves to be a suitable English Language Learning (ELL) website for integration within the Malaysian educational context. The examination of the six evaluation aspects provides a comprehensive guide for the Ministry of Education in the development of open educational resources (OER) for primary school students in Malaysia.

Keywords:
Computer-Assisted Language Learning
(CALL); ELL websites; website evaluation;
online learning

1. Introduction

In contemporary research on Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL), there has been a notable emphasis on the significance of web usage [1]. The proliferation of online platforms catering to English language acquisition has facilitated educators in locating instructional materials and learners in achieving proficiency in the language. Websites are commonly regarded as valuable learning resources that extend beyond the confines of traditional classroom settings. Nunan and Richards [2] argue that websites play a crucial role in facilitating the development of students' proficiency in second or foreign languages. The primary issue at hand pertains to the challenges

* Corresponding author.
E-mail address: nuranisa@graduate.utm.my

associated with locating websites of high quality [1]. The aforementioned concept underscores the imperative necessity for the evaluation of websites.

According to Robb and Susser [3], checklists are the most often employed instruments for gathering views, particularly in the evaluation field of research. This procedure entails investigating the end user's inclinations for a particular website by requesting them to express their perspectives regarding it. From the preceding discussion, it is important to reiterate that relying completely on checklists bring about limited insight.

Although the use of checklists has persisted over the years, Hubbard [4] claims that there are some limitations and biases in this method. As elucidated by him, this tool may relegate evaluators to a rigid assessment that centres on the mere existence or dearth of a specific attribute, thereby glossing over relevant details. He further proposes methodological frameworks as valuable tools for evaluating websites within specific contexts due to their descriptive nature. A methodological framework offers extensive data by considering the examination of how the existence or omission of a certain aspect relates to the overall conception and goals of the programme [5]. Besides, the frameworks consist of elements that allow the connection with SLA theories through various approaches; the most common is theory borrowing, where a theory is referenced or used without any changes [4]. It is important to note that these elements have a strong correlation with the specific environment in which language teaching and learning occur.

McMurry [6] states that one notable advantage of Hubbard's methodology is its thorough examination of several criteria while evaluating CALL courseware and websites. Owing to the importance of these pivotal elements, a deliberate integration of this framework is sought for to obtain reliable data. Therefore, in order to thoroughly assess ELL websites, it is logical to infer that it is an appropriate paradigm for assessing the calibre of ELL websites.

Despite the extensive body of research conducted on website evaluation, there are still a significant number of unresolved issues. First, the majority of studies employed checklists and checklists in the form of questionnaires. For instance, the studies conducted by Kir and Kayak [7], Chuah *et al.*, [8] and Alhabdan [9] evaluated language learning websites using questionnaires as the research instruments. In spite of its potential for comprehensively evaluating online resources [10], methodological framework appears to be less utilised by researchers. Second, most of the studies conducted within the continuum of English Language Learning (ELL henceforth) website evaluation, such as those by Kartal and Uzun [11], Mavasoglu [12] and Bashori *et al.,* [13] explored more than one website. There are very limited studies that attempt to conduct a thorough investigation of a carefully selected website, evaluate its affordances, accentuate its limitations, and outline appropriate suggestions. Third, there is a scarcity of research that has examined this issue within the unique context of Malaysian primary school learners.

In order to address these significant deficiencies, this study aims to evaluate the potential of a specific free ELL website with regards to the six aspects derived from Hubbard's [4] methodological framework. This study is guided by two objectives, which are: i) to explore the strengths and limitations of the LearnEnglish Kids; and ii) to evaluate the appropriateness of the LearnEnglish Kids for integration within the Malaysian context. This evaluation accentuates the affordances of this powerful free ELL site for consideration as supplementary resources within the Malaysian context. The limitations highlighted, coupled with the recommendations, will assist the website administrator in improving the website. Above all, these recommendations serve as adaptation ideas for educators who wish to utilise free ELL websites as supplementary resources to support Malaysian primary school learners.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Global Perspectives on Website Evaluation

Evaluation using checklists; evaluation in compliance with methodological frameworks for language teaching; and evaluation in tandem with SLA theory and research-based criteria are the three primary evaluation approaches suggested by Levy and Stockwell [14]. Additional explanations are provided below for each of the aforementioned approaches.

The first approach, characterised by the utilisation of checklists or forms, has been the predominant one among the three mentioned. Checklists can be created using interrogative statements that elicit a binary (yes-or-no) answer or adapted to a questionnaire with a series of Likert scales. Additionally, there are checklists that need responses in the form of open-ended answers. Nevertheless, this method of evaluation is generally characterised as presumptive [5].

The second approach involves the application of methodological frameworks. Given that checklists are objective in nature, methodological frameworks are mostly contingent and subjective (context-dependent). Furthermore, the pedagogical links are distinctly established as they relate to language teaching and learning elements. The third approach is driven by SLA theories and research-based criteria. It is based on the idea that using software to teach language may be seen as a form of language instruction. It is often reflected as a list of characteristics or items embedded within checklists as evaluation aspects.

There has been a sizable body of research [8,9,15,16] that used checklists to evaluate language learning websites. For instance, Aly [15] employed a checklist comprising 63 evaluation criteria to examine a selection of six websites in total. Most notably, the studies conducted by Aly [15], Aguayo and Ramírez [16], and Alhabdan [9] gave rise to limited data concerning the strengths and deficiencies of the selected websites. The limitation of using checklists in providing comprehensive evaluation data is further acknowledged by Chuah *et al.*, [8] in his study with the use of interviews to complement the data obtained from the checklists.

Based on the discussion above, it is vital to highlight that the findings generated by checklists are often restricted within the continuum of strengths and weaknesses of the evaluated websites. Comprehensive views regarding the websites' appropriateness within language teaching contexts and theories are often disregarded. Thus, the use of a methodological framework is deemed beneficial to accentuate enhanced research insights specifically within the selected context.

2.2 Quality of ELL Websites

ELL websites provide access to free, authentic resources that facilitate unique learning experiences by providing several levels of achievement. For instance, the study conducted by Abramova and Boulahnane [17] involved the evaluation of a non-commercial website, www.breakingnewsenglish.com, that provides over 2000 lessons focused on contemporary news topics. Users can choose courses based on their competency score, which is displayed on a scale ranging from 0 (easy) to 6 (challenging). The provision of resources at different levels will undoubtedly facilitate teachers' objectives of addressing the diverse requirements of individuals.

Conversely, it is crucial to emphasise the issue raised by Oqilat [18] regarding the quality disparity between free ELL websites and commercial websites. Commercial websites have been recognised as more extensive, granting a wide array of resources essential for students to achieve proficiency in a second or foreign language. According to Aguayo and Ramírez [16], the rising tide of free websites listed on search engines does not ensure the quality of these learning resources. These resources

appear to be deficient in terms of physical attributes, contextual relevance, and pedagogical effectiveness [11].

The primary flaw is the content itself. Oqilat [18] highlighted in his study that the free websites analysed during the assessment period were deficient in crucial learning and teaching tools and did not offer comprehensive coverage of all language learning components. Aguayo and Ramírez [16] go more into the constraints of the content in their research findings. According to their statement, these websites lacked comprehensive or minimal step-by-step instructions for first-time users and also lacked sufficient interactive capabilities to assist learners. The scarcity of materials will undoubtedly hinder the progress of pupils' language proficiency.

Although there are many non-commercial ELL websites, some of them have been haphazardly planned and built. This can lead to the propagation of erroneous knowledge, which can hinder the language learning progress of learners. Thus, there is an urgent necessity for a comprehensive website evaluation using an appropriate approach.

3. Methodology

The primary objective of this qualitative study is to assess the efficacy of an ELL website by examining its technical and pedagogical components. This study is guided by two research questions which are: i) what are the strengths and limitations of the LearnEnglish Kids? and ii) how appropriate is the LearnEnglish Kids for integration within the Malaysian context?

The investigation was conducted in June 2023. It was initiated in accordance with the suggestion put forth by Fotos and Browne [19], known as the screening step. The aim of this technique is to reduce the assessment pool, namely the number of ELL websites, to a more manageable quantity. To compile a comprehensive inventory of potential websites, an extensive search was conducted on the search engine. Based on the review of previous studies, two keywords were identified, which are "ELL websites for kids" and "ESL/EFL websites for kids". The first 20 search results of each search attempt were visited, which resulted in a list of websites. Only websites that appeared more than twice in the search results were selected.

Next, the Google PageRank algorithm was employed to assess and rank the websites under consideration, with the objective of determining the websites with the best PageRank (PR) value (PR8–PR10). The adoption of the method aligns with the study conducted by Kettle et al. [16], who evaluated the user value and relevance of 25 Chinese ELL websites. The use of the Google PageRank algorithm will guarantee the selection of relevant ELL websites for evaluation.

This resulted in 7 ELL websites (6 of which scored PR8 and 1 of which scored PR9). Out of these 7 websites, only 2 are specifically crafted for primary learners, which suits the aim of this study: exploring an ELL website designed for primary learners. An automated evaluation tool, SEOptimer, was then utilised to choose one ELL website with the best technical quality. Kwangsawad et al. [21] suggest using the SEOptimer tool because of its thorough audit report, which is crucial for investigating the technical quality of websites. Thus, the use of this evaluation tool will ensure the selection of an ELL website with good technical quality, which indirectly contributes towards strengthening the findings of this study.

The selected website is the LearnEnglish Kids, accessible at https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/. This website is attributed to the British Council. The assessment procedure was conducted in accordance with Hubbard's [4] methodological framework, as depicted in Figure 1 below.

Fig. 1. Hubbard's [4] methodological framework
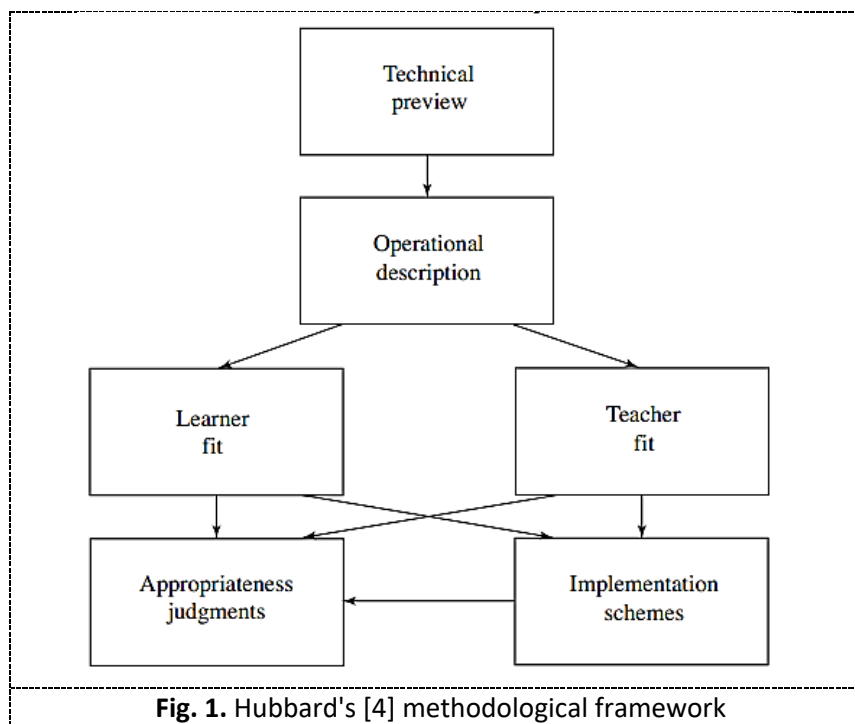
The rationale for choosing this framework lies in its comprehensive nature, encompassing both the development and implementation aspects of CALL material evaluation [4]. The initial phase of the evaluation centred on assessing the strengths and limitations of the LearnEnglish Kids website. This analysis was conducted by considering four key aspects: technical preview, operational preview, teacher fit, and learner fit.

The first aspect, a technical preview, assesses the level of accessibility of the website, while the second aspect, an operational description, elucidates the functioning and mechanisms of the website. The third aspect, known as teacher fit, examines the credibility of the chosen website in relation to its alignment with the language teaching approach advocated by the site as well as its compatibility with the approach adopted by the teachers intending to utilise the site [4]. The concept of learner fit pertains to the extent to which the content, skills, and language level align with the specific requirements and preferences of the target learners.

The subsequent phase of the study discusses the appropriateness of the LearnEnglish Kids for integration in the Malaysian context. The discussion revolves around the remaining two aspects: implementation scheme and appropriateness judgments. The implementation schemes pertain to the various potential approaches (in the form of recommendations) for mitigating the limitations that have been highlighted with regards to the four aspects analysed in the first phase. Meanwhile, the appropriateness judgements provides a summary of the appropriateness for integration of the LearnEnglish Kids in the Malaysian context.

4. Results
4.1 The Strengths and Limitations of the LearnEnglish Kids

This section discusses the results obtained from the evaluation conducted with reference to the four key aspects suggested in Hubbard's [4] methodological framework. The aspects are as follows: technical preview, operational preview, teacher fit, and learner fit. The first aspect, referred to as the technical preview, showcases a notable strength: the rapid loading of the main page. The only concern is that the videos require high bandwidth, which indicates the need for a stable internet

connection. Indeed, the internet connection and network stability have always been the vital issues discussed in relation to the use of online resources [22].

With reference to the second aspect, which is the "operational description", the website functions in an exemplary manner as it organises its lessons, activities, and resources in a systematic manner. Furthermore, the navigation buttons of the LearnEnglish Kids exhibit a straightforward and uncomplicated design that effectively caters to the intended audience, namely young learners. These significant strengths of easy navigation and usability corroborate the findings of the study conducted by Alhabdan [9] and Chuah [8]. The participants in both studies expressed their positive views towards the language learning websites evaluated. On the contrary, the language learning website evaluated in the study conducted by Kan [23] was reported as problematic in terms of its content organisation. The problem is further extended to issues related to the operability and usability of the selected ELL websites in the research conducted by Aguayo and Ramirez [16]. Indeed, it is vital to ensure limited technical and operational errors, as these determine the relevance of a language learning website [24]. These two aspects can only be addressed by the website host.

In relation to the third aspect, teacher fit, this educational platform adheres to the five principles outlined in Krashen's [25] natural approach theory. The LearnEnglish Kids platform provides learners with a diverse range of comprehensible input in the target language. However, it is worth noting that there is a scarcity of comprehensive writing tutorials that provide a systematic approach and a lack of accessible and impactful speaking tutorials. In addition, it should be noted that there are fewer resources available to facilitate the instruction of reading skills for novice learners. The available assessment formats are restricted to the use of matching exercises and the completion of sentences with missing words.

This section examines the significance of the LearnEnglish Kids in terms of its instructional value, namely by doing a thorough analysis of its language teaching methodology. The primary objective of this evaluation is to assess the credibility of the chosen website in relation to its language teaching strategy as well as its compatibility with the approach adopted by the teachers who plan to utilise the site [4]. The LearnEnglish Kids is a platform that aligns with the principles of language acquisition advocated by Stephen Krashen in his 1982 work. The website reflects the Natural Approach, which can be analysed based on the five principles delineated in the theory.

First, the learners are presented with a diverse range of authentic input originating from different areas or sections within the target language. This is in line with the findings of the study conducted by McClure [26], who evaluated two ELL websites, Dave's ESL Cafe and Activities for ESL/EFL Students. Both websites offer a wide range of educational resources, such as lessons, reading materials, and tasks. Table 1 shows the variety of resources available within the website, with an analysis in terms of their distribution and quantity. Indeed, the website aligns with the overarching principles of the Natural Approach, which emphasise the provision of input in the target language to facilitate language acquisition. Krashen [25] posits in his acquisition/learning hypothesis (first principle) that the acquisition of language, characterised as an unconscious process facilitated by meaningful language use, is the sole means by which proficiency in a second language is attained. In a similar vein, Krashen [25] emphasises the parallels between the acquisition of the initial language and the subsequent language. The process of learning occurs when pupils are provided with language that is either inherently comprehensible or modified to become comprehensible to them. Thus, the vast amount of input is crucial in assisting the learning process.

The major concern is the huge gap between the number of resources advocated for each skill, which highlights the limitations of this website in meeting the learners' language learning needs. Based on Table 1, the first area in the directory, 'listen and watch' contains the highest number of resources, followed by 'grammar and vocabulary', with a slight difference in its quantity. The area

with the third-most number of resources is 'print and make'. Contrastingly, 'speak and spell' consists of the least number of resources. The critical imbalance in language skills is further highlighted in the read and write area, where reading skill seems to be more emphasised compared to writing skill. Although there are quite a number of writing contexts, there are limited resources advocated for writing practices, which accentuates a critical limitation. The focus on listening, vocabulary, and reading, as well as the lack of attention given to the speaking and writing sections, corroborate the findings of the study conducted by Chen [22]. It was reported that the majority of educators and learners utilising the Cool English site mostly focused on the sections related to vocabulary, listening, and reading.

Besides, there are sub-areas that consist of resources for only a level: video zone, speak and tricky words. Grammar videos and games consist of very limited resources. Other than that, the majority of resources in these sub-areas: grammar practices and worksheets, are designed for intermediate learners. Nevertheless, a balanced distribution is evident in sub-areas such as reading practices and colouring.

Table 1
The total number of available resources within each area and their level of complexity

No.	Areas	Number of activities or materials			TOTAL	REMARKS
		Level 1	**Level 2**	**Level 3**		
1	**Listen and watch**	**68**	**125**	**100**	**250**	**Area with the most number of resources**
	Songs	43	46	2	79	Very limited resources for level 3
	Short stories	13	47	18	79	Majority of the resources are for level 2
	Poems	0	20	20	20	No resources for level 1
	Video zone	0	0	60	60	No resources for level 1 & 2
	How to … videos	12	12	0	12	No resources for level 3
2	**Read and write**	**16**	**56**	**41**	**113**	**Emphasis is on the reading skill compared to writing skill**
	Your turn	3	43	19	65	All activities are in the form of writing contexts
	Reading practice	11	11	17	39	Balanced distribution
	Writing practice	2	2	5	9	Limited resources & all are in the same format
3	**Speak and spell**	**6**	**9**	**17**	**32**	**Area with the least number of resources**
	Sounds	6	1	0	7	No resources for level 3
	Speak	0	7	0	7	No resources for level 1 & 3
	Spell	0	1	7	8	No resources for level 1
	Tricky words	0	0	10	10	No resources for level 1 & 2
4	**Grammar and vocabulary**	**73**	**86**	**63**	**221**	**Consists of a huge number of resources (almost the quantity in listen & watch)**
	Grammar practice	8	15	7	30	Majority are for intermediate learners
	Grammar videos	1	5	4	10	Very limited
	Grammar chants	16	13	1	29	Only 1 resource for level 3

	Word games	48	49	8	105	Very limited resources for level 3
	Word of the week	0	4	43	47	No resources for level 1
5	**Fun and games**	**3**	**57**	**27**	**85**	**Very limited resources for level 1**
	Games	3	9	2	12	Very limited
	Jokes	0	48	0	48	No resources for level 1 & 3
	Tongue twisters	0	0	25	25	No resources for level 1 & 2
6	**Print and make**	**74**	**123**	**91**	**169**	**Third area with the most number of resources**
	Flashcards	0	30	30	62	No resources for level 1
	Crafts	14	12	3	24	Very limited resources for level 3
	Worksheets	23	46	23	46	The highest number of resources are for intermediate learners
	Colouring	37	35	35	37	Balanced distribution

In relation to the second principle, the presence of videos and other interactive resources that facilitate the development of language structure serves to reinforce the natural order hypothesis, which posits the significance of permitting the acquisition of grammatical structures in a predetermined sequence. Nevertheless, there is a requirement for certain bandwidth when accessing the interactive materials, as the videos can only be accessed with high-speed internet.

The third principle is founded on the assumption that the acquisition of language occurs when the input provided to learners slightly surpasses their existing knowledge, commonly referred to as $i+1$ or the renowned input hypothesis. All of the resources are assigned level tags in order to accommodate the notion of individual variations, as it is not feasible to classify all learners as possessing identical prior knowledge. Educators possess the ability to deliberately choose instructional materials in order to facilitate the occurrence of the $i+1$ phenomenon.

Fourth, the incorporation of the monitor hypothesis is noticeable in the games as learners are motivated to review and correct their output through repeated efforts. The fifth principle pertains to the affective filter hypothesis, which focuses on the notion that the emotional state of the learner might serve as a barrier that hinders or obstructs the reception of input essential for the process of language acquisition [25]. The creator emphasises their efforts to decrease learners' affective filters by asserting that the site offers an enjoyable and secure experience, both in home and school settings.

When considering teacher fit, it is essential to evaluate the manner in which the linguistic input is presented on the site and how the learning experience is structured in terms of the sequence of activities or phases. According to the principles of the natural approach, it is recommended that the process of learning be preceded by an initial stage of preparing the learners. To clarify, the initial phase of the process involves obtaining replies from learners. Educators would anticipate the inclusion of a preparatory phase prior to engaging with the content. Unfortunately, this only pertains to the 'listen and watch' area. In the remaining sections, learners are thereafter led to the second stage, wherein the presentation of language input takes place. The aforementioned phenomenon would undeniably impact the process of acquiring language.

The second stage of the natural approach refers to the exposition or exposure to language input, followed by the opportunity for students to discover and realise the structures being taught. The LearnEnglish Kids provides a wide range of videos that exemplify fundamental communication

expressions using a narrative-based methodology. Teachers can effectively utilise this approach to facilitate learners' exploration of general principles or patterns that underlie functional expression or structure.

Lastly, the third stage is the production stage. The evaluation of the LearnEnglish Kids reveals that the supplied resources lack accompanying tasks to assess the progress of learners, resulting in incomplete courses without proper conclusions. Educators anticipate that the virtual learning platform will offer learners the chance to apply acquired language skills in novel contexts, either for the same reason or for a purpose closely connected to the original learning objective. Unfortunately, some activities do not include assessment tasks. Adding to this is the limited assessment format; most of the tasks are matching and fill-in-the-blank tasks. In parallel, several researchers documented the limited variety of assessment tasks on the language learning websites evaluated [23] [27]. The production stage is indeed crucial since it functions as a metric for evaluating the pupils' performance. In the absence of this tool, instructors will encounter difficulties in assessing their students' accomplishments, thereby hindering the efficacy of instructional practices.

Overall, it can be concluded that the LearnEnglish Kids educational site effectively adheres to the five principles of the natural approach. Nevertheless, a notable issue that arises is the lack of pre-lesson (preparation stage) and post-lesson (production stage) resources. Therefore, it can be inferred that the website exhibits a moderate level of compatibility with teachers.

The fourth component, learner fit, examines the compatibility between the LearnEnglish Kids and the target learners. The evaluation is focused on Malaysian primary learners. According to Arikan [28], the British Council offers a range of beneficial online resources, including puzzles, games, and videos, that are designed to support the language learning of young learners. This is in line with the overall findings of this study. Besides, the LearnEnglish Kids is deemed suitable for learners who possess visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning preferences. While the utilisation of diverse cultures from around the world fosters intercultural awareness, it is important to note that the restricted availability of personalised and contextualised resources hinders the acquisition of language skills. Hubbard [4] posits that the concept of learner fit can be examined by evaluating the alignment of the content, skills, and language level with the specific requirements of the target learners, particularly as outlined in the course syllabus objectives.

The first element to consider pertains to the content featured on the website. The LearnEnglish Kids platform provides a wide range of complementary interactive games, activities, videos, and printables that facilitate the enhancement of abilities across six primary domains. Table 1 provides a concise overview of the distribution of resources. Every resource is assigned a specific level tag. The reading and literacy tools, as well as the games, are pertinent in addressing the educational requirements of Malaysian pupils. The videos appear to be suitable as well. Nevertheless, most of the materials are Western-oriented. This is in line with the findings by McClure [26] that numerous instructional materials available on the selected ELL websites presuppose that their users would predominantly employ the English language within the United States or other countries classified under the Inner Circle category, which highlights their limitation in meeting the needs of Malaysian learners.

The second factor is the compatibility of the website with language skills. In the Malaysian setting, the emphasis on language learning is centred on enhancing students' language proficiency through skill development. Therefore, it is imperative to furnish students with adequate resources that cater to the development of the four essential language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This website provides a wide array of tools designed to enhance skills in areas such as listening, reading, grammar, vocabulary, and language arts. According to Bashori *et al.,* [24], the development of speaking abilities holds significant importance within the language learning

programme. It is imperative for learners to possess adequate proficiency in speaking abilities that are essential for effective communication in the target language. Nevertheless, speaking skills remain overlooked as there are fewer resources available in the LearnEnglish Kids. This is similar to the findings by Arikan [28]. She claimed that the absence of adequate communicative resources, with only a few options available such as listen and tick exercises, is a notable issue on the evaluated ELL website.

While the issue of literacy remains a significant concern, there is a lack of systematic writing tasks available to evaluate pupils' writing proficiency. This underscores a prevailing limitation, as the instruction of writing has consistently been recognised as crucial [29-30]. Furthermore, as highlighted by Teng [31], a significant proportion of children in upper elementary grades encounter challenges in generating written compositions and acquiring proficiency in writing. Therefore, it is imperative for an educational platform to have instructional materials that facilitate the development of writing skills. The exclusive emphasis on enhancing literacy skills in the LearnEnglish Kids appears to be achieved mostly through the utilisation of story-based content. This approach, however, may potentially diminish the overall quality of the website and its suitability for learners.

The next factor to consider is the language level. The majority of literacy-based resources pose a level of difficulty for learners in Malaysia. This corroborates the findings by Mavasoglu and Dincer [32] that the reading materials were quite challenging. Based on the findings, it can be inferred that websites, characterised by their extensive word count and complex sentence structures, are more likely to exhibit a challenging level of readability compared to textbooks. Indeed, the English language is widely recognised as a secondary language in Malaysia, and in many rural regions, it is perceived as a foreign language. According to a study conducted by Yaacob *et al.,* [33], despite the considerable time and effort invested in learning English, Malaysian students are found to possess inadequate proficiency in this language. This elucidates the necessity for a more comprehensive evaluation of the resources classified by the LearnEnglish Kids in order to align them with the language proficiency of Malaysian learners.

Table 2 depicts the summary of strengths and limitations for each aspect. The spectrum of credible features and the severity of the problems or issues identified determine the overall quality of each aspect. The LearnEnglish Kids is reported as excellent in relation to the operational preview while being poor with regards to the learner fit. The remaining 2 aspects, technical preview and teacher fit, are reported as average in quality.

Table 2
The strengths, limitations and quality of each aspect

NO.	ASPECTS	STRENGTHS	LIMITATIONS	QUALITY
1	Technical Preview	The main page loads quickly	Videos require stable internet connection to load	Average
2	Operational Preview	Operates in an excellent mode (systematic arrangement of resources)	-	Excellent
3		Navigation buttons are simple and effortless	-	
4		Offers an enjoyable and secure experience, decrease learners' affective filters	-	
5	Teacher Fit	Interactive resources permitting the acquisition of grammatical structures in a predetermined sequence	-	Average
6		Exposes learners to a diverse range of authentic input (different areas) to facilitate language acquisition	Huge gap between the number of resources advocated for each skill	

No.		Strengths	Limitations	
7		All of the resources are assigned level tags in order to accommodate the notion of individual variations	Imbalance distribution of resources across areas and sub-areas	
8		Incorporation of the monitor hypothesis is noticeable in the games as learners are motivated to review and correct their output through repeated efforts	-	
9		Appropriate for visual, auditory and kinesthetic learners	-	
10		Develops intercultural awareness	Limited personalised and contextualised resources- impedes the process of learning the language skills.	
11		Content- wide range of complementary interactive games, activities, videos, and printables that facilitate the enhancement of abilities across six primary domains	Assessment formats-limited to matching and filling in the blanks.	
12	Learner Fit	Language skills- provides a wide array of tools designed to enhance skills in areas such as listening, reading, grammar, vocabulary, and language arts	Unavailability of appropriate and effective speaking lessons Limited number of step-by-step writing lessons Limited resources to support the process of teaching reading for the beginners.	Poor
13		Language level- Most of the level 1 listening materials are simple and straight forward	The majority of literacy-based resources pose a level of difficulty for learners in Malaysia.	

The examination of the website highlights a comprehensive assessment of its strengths and limitations in relation to each aspect, as delineated in Hubbard's [4] evaluation framework (see Figure 1). The overall evaluation based on each aspect determines the appropriateness of the website for integration in the Malaysian context, which is discussed in the next section.

4.2 The Appropriateness of the LearnEnglish Kids for Integration within the Malaysian Context

This section discusses the remaining 2 aspects: implementation schemes (discussed in the form of recommendations) and appropriateness judgements with close reference to the limitations discussed in the previous section. Table 3 summarises the limitations of the LearnEnglish Kids with appropriate recommendations for the website host and teachers.

Table 3
The recommendations based on the limitations highlighted

NO.	LIMITATIONS	RECOMMENDATIONS	
		FOR WEBSITE HOST	**FOR TEACHERS**
1	Videos require stable internet connection to load	Compress the videos	
2	Huge gap between the number of resources advocated for each skill	Add resources	Search for similar content from other ELL websites
3	Imbalance distribution of resources across areas and sub-areas	Add resources	Adapt the available resources for integration in other areas and sub-areas
4	Limited number of step-by-step writing lessons	Add step-by-step writing lessons	Add step-by-step writing lessons

5	Unavailability of appropriate and effective speaking lessons	Embed advanced automated speech recognition technology and AI chatbots	Record or find appropriate videos
6	Limited resources to support the process of teaching reading for the beginners.	Add phonics videos and modules	Search for phonics videos and modules
7	Assessment formats-limited to matching and filling in the blanks.	Add and differentiate the assessment formats	Adapt the available tasks into different types of tasks
8	Limited personalised and contextualised resources-impedes the process of learning the language skills.	Add resources to cater the needs of various global learners	Adopt & adapt (personalise and contextualise the resources)

It is vital to note that the technical issue identified regarding the video properties can only be fixed by the website host. In order to deal with the issue of slow loading of video files, it is recommended to compress the videos and make the size as small as possible.

Furthermore, it is recommended to add appropriate resources to areas with limited resources to solve the problem of the distribution gap, which may impede overall language learning. It is crucial to note that incorporating step-by-step instructional materials into writing lessons, as suggested in Table 3, is likely to enhance the understanding of primary learners. Moreover, in order to enhance the efficacy of speaking lessons, educators have the option to complement their instructional materials with either self-produced video recordings or other relevant video resources. Additionally, as proposed by Chen [22] the implementation of sophisticated Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR) technology and artificial intelligence chatbots can be employed to aid learners in improving their pronunciation and overall speaking skills. Comparatively,

In addition, it is recommended that reading lessons for novice learners include the provision of phonics videos and supplementary modules. Teachers are recommended to modify, incorporate, and customise the assessment activities or tasks in various formats in order to meet the requirements of their students. It is strongly advised to personalise and contextualise the resources in order to enhance the development of language skills. The essentiality of personalisation and contextualisation of web resources in language teaching and learning is in line with the findings by Bashori *et al.,* [13]. It is evident in their study that the sample benefited from using the culturally-relevant resources that were contextualised and personalised to meet their needs.

The final aspect, the appropriateness judgements, summarises the website's appropriateness within the Malaysian context by taking into consideration the previous aspects that have been discussed. All in all, despite the aforementioned limitations, the LearnEnglish Kids website exhibits exceptional technical and operational quality, along with a wealth of valuable resources. Consequently, it is deemed suitable for primary school students in the Malaysian context, with minor requirements for resource adaptation and addition.

One of the limitations of this study is that it evaluated only one ELL website, which provides limited insights into the potential of the abundance of ELL websites available. Future research might want to explore more ELL websites. Besides, the analysis conducted was on the general attributes of Malaysian primary school students, which is not ideal. Therefore, researchers might investigate the appropriateness of a selected website for a group of students in a certain geographical area. Another limitation of this study, which requires more research, is that it utilised only one approach, which is the evaluation guided by a methodological framework. A combination of two or more approaches

will lead to more reliable findings, which will be beneficial in broadening the research trend in this area.

5. Conclusion

This paper highlights the technical quality and pedagogical affordances of the LearnEnglish Kids website for integration within the Malaysian educational context. The findings of this investigation illuminate the application of a methodological framework in the assessment of language learning websites. The analysis yields several recommendations that are valuable for the website administrators to enhance the calibre of the website, guaranteeing accessibility for students irrespective of their individual attributes, time constraints, geographical location, and choice of devices.

The aforementioned implementation schemes facilitate teachers in effectively and intelligently utilising the LearnEnglish Kids for teaching and learning purposes. This is attributed to the presence of abundant, high-quality resources and materials, along with interactive and captivating features. Given the limited availability of culturally-relevant resources on the website, educators have the opportunity to judiciously incorporate and modify these resources to align with the Malaysian context. This is necessary due to the inherent challenge of finding a universally applicable learning website. This study primarily emphasises the prevailing trend in the field of education, namely online learning, with a specific focus on the significance of ensuring the provision of high-quality learning materials.

Apart from that, this study significantly contributes to the growth of online education in Malaysia by highlighting the untapped potential of free English Language Learning (ELL) websites. These resources can be effectively employed by educators to offer students genuine and immersive English language learning opportunities. The comprehensive examination conducted on the six aforementioned dimensions constitutes a comprehensive manual that can be of great value to the Ministry of Education in crafting open educational resources (OER) tailored to the needs of primary school students in Malaysia.

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