

A Little Life (ALL): Verse and Schedule for Your Soul

¹Indok Nursuhaila Binti Nizamudin, ²Noridah Binti Sain

¹Akademi Pengajian Bahasa UiTM Shah Alam

²Akademi Pengajian Bahasa UiTM Cawangan Johor

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ABSTRACT

This project presents the new and improved version of A Little Life (ALL): Verse and Schedule for Your Soul, which was originally developed as a planner book that combines undated daily and monthly planner with written entries. The upgraded version of “ALL” is developed as a mobile application to support English language learning among English as Second Language (ESL) learners. The mobile application retains the foundational elements of the original planner such as daily and monthly digital planner sheets, interactive writing prompts, and original creative writings, while adding new interactive features designed for digital engagement. Moreover, users are exposed to curated emotional vocabulary lists derived from literary entries which include definitions to support real-life language use. To further engage its users, this one-of-a-kind application incorporates gamification elements such as digital journaling badges, streak milestones, and a personal dashboard which the application can track mood tags, vocabulary growth, and writing consistency. This approach aims to transform language learning into a personal journey to encourage users to regularly express themselves and track their emotional improvement. By integrating language learning strategies, writing therapy techniques, and mobile technology, “ALL” provides its users with both practical tools for journaling and emotional connection through relatable literary materials. It is intended that by focusing on shared experiences through expressive writing, the application seeks to provide the users with a sense of companionship in terms of comprehending their feelings and planning their day ahead. Ultimately, “ALL” serves as a digital companion that grows with its users to make language learning a personal, expressive, and healing journey.

Keywords: Creative Writing, ESL Learners, Language Learning

INTRODUCTION

The extensive usage of planners, both in print and digital media, indicates a growing need as individuals increasingly seek devices to organise their daily lives while simultaneously fostering personal growth. The increased number of digital platforms for self-care, journaling, and planning indicates a growing demand for tools that support both productivity and mental well-being. However, few of these platforms effectively integrate language learning with emotional expression in an engaging, accessible, and sustainable way. Wu et al., (2022) asserts that most existing applications focus on a single domain, such as language learning or another specific focus, and rarely incorporate tools of emotional engagement or play within language learning platforms.

This innovation introduces A Little Life (ALL) as a mobile application designed to support emotional expression and English vocabulary development through reflective journaling. This improved digital version of the planner, which began as a physical prototype, combines creative writings and interactive writing prompts to help users process their feelings and improve their English communication skills. Simultaneously, ALL aims to be more than simply an organisational tool because it seeks to also serve as a support for individuals to express their emotions through writing therapy and find solace in shared experiences of life struggles. Ruini and Mortara (2021) describe writing therapy as a process that involves exploring one's personal thoughts and feelings through writing, using it as a tool to promote self-healing and personal growth. This is significant as expressive language is important for emotional clarity as well as for building fluency, confidence, and voice. This innovation places users at the centre of their learning journey by encouraging them to write and read, in contrast to conventional language learning applications that focus directly on learning English through exercises of memorization or

practice of vocabulary and grammar skills. Thus, as emotional resilience and clear communication become important, “ALL” sets the stage for a new type of learning, one where language is not only learned, but lived, felt, and healed through.

Problem Statement

The problem this innovation seeks to solve is to address an important but often overlooked issue in language learning which is the need for learning that starts from within, based on personal experience, emotional expression, and reflective writing. Many current educational approaches overlook the power of writing therapy which shows that when individuals begin to write and read from within their own emotions, their language skills develop more naturally. This is supported by Alkhalaf (2022) who states that expressive writing leads to higher levels of syntax complexity, showing that being able to express their feelings helps English language learners produce more advanced linguistics structures in second language (L2) writing. When this area is overlooked, many L2 learners struggle to express their true feelings. According to Abdolrezapour et al., (2025), 40% of second language learners experience a change in their self-perception, often feeling less confident, and more emotionally distant when using their L2. This can affect their fluency, emotional processing, and ability to connect with others. Over time, this may also lead to emotional frustration and missed chances to improve language skills through self-expression, as emotional distance in L2 use has been demonstrated to decrease communicative confidence, fluency, and learners engagement (Wang, et al., 2025). Therefore, it is anticipated that ALL will help mitigate the aforementioned problem, with its valuable attributes, paving the way for a more effective and efficient solution.

Objectives

1. To improve users’ vocabulary through the mobile application’s integrated features, which encourage consistent engagement with reading and writing.
2. To promote individual autonomy in daily planning and self-expression through writing while simultaneously acquiring a better understanding of their feelings by reading about shared life struggles.

PRODUCT DESCRIPTION AND METHODOLOGY

“ALL” incorporates writing entries which are six poetry and six prose writing that explore life’s struggles, providing users with relatable narratives to help them comprehend and connect with their own emotions. This is beneficial in the case of poetry because poetry is a specially created language inspired with insights into a wide range of topics, primarily focused on life (Carey, 2020). In the mobile application version, these reading materials will be regularly updated to ensure users have access to new reflective content over time for ongoing engagement and learning. Moreover, the writing entries in “ALL,” which include poetry and prose, incorporate creative writing approaches. Creative writing employs the imagination and literary devices to convey meaning, such as challenging experiences, offering a way to communicate and connect with people about things that might be too difficult to say directly. Thatcher (2021) asserts that creative writing helps individuals choose words, metaphors, and images that accurately communicate their thoughts, which can develop self-awareness, boost self-esteem, and improve mental health. Additionally, these writing entries are complemented by writing prompts produced from these entries that might encourage users to reflect on their feelings, as well as a vocabulary list that enable users as tools for self-expression by broadening their linguistic capabilities. Vine et al. (2020) indicate that a person's emotional vocabulary reflects their mental health in which the more emotional words they know, the better they can express themselves effectively. Therefore, the provided vocabulary list is a tool for self-expression, allowing users to expand their linguistic knowledge and express themselves better.

In this mobile application, users have designated sections to write down their personal thoughts. This feature is particularly useful, as Siegel-Acevedo (2021) notes that writing serves a dual purpose as it helps in processing past experiences and envisioning future paths, while also positively improving our physical health and emotional well-being. This is because bottling up emotions can lead to psychological pain, hence, expressing one's thoughts and feelings about life experiences helps in emotionally processing difficult events. Furthermore, “ALL” mobile application incorporates gamification elements to make language learning and emotional journaling more engaging and rewarding. For example, users earn badges for completing milestones such as writing their first

journal entry and maintaining a daily writing streak. These badges serve as visual achievements that celebrate personal growth. A built-in progress tracker will track writing and reading consistency, learned vocabulary, and emotional patterns to help users see their growth over time.

The development of the mobile application “ALL” was built upon the foundation of the original physical planner book with a revised focus on language learning through mobile application. The methodological framework and analysis used in this project were grounded in the original research efforts which included an online survey and public engagement through Instagram (@lifeinscribes). The market survey was conducted through Google Form to identify public interest, needs, and awareness regarding planner and journal books. The questions were designed to gather demographic data, determine preferences for the book type, propose desirable features, and analyse the importance of expressing thoughts and emotions in such tools. The responses provided valuable insights into the market demands and user preferences, thereby directing the project towards efficiently meeting the demands of the audiences. Therefore, all components of the original project which are the concept, content writing, data analysis, visual design, and social media engagement strategy were fully managed and created by the author herself. These elements provided the empirical and creative basis for transitioning the prototype into a more interactive, accessible, and educational digital format.



POTENTIAL FINDINGS AND COMMERCIALISATION

The original version of A Little Life (ALL): Verse and Schedule for Your Soul began as a small physical prototype that was sold for RM20 each. Despite limited production, 17 copies were sold which showed a meaningful achievement for a self-made project, written, designed, and promoted by a student. For a first-time independent writer, this response reflects strong user interest and supports the project's emotional and educational relevance. The original physical book project has been registered with an ISBN [978-629-99649-0-2] by National Library of Malaysia, ensuring recognition and easier cataloguing. This increases the project's accessibility for readers and researchers.

The transition to a mobile application represents an advancement in accessibility and user interactivity. The digital version keeps the elements of the original project while adding gamification features. These updates are expected to increase user engagement and broaden its appeal to digital learners, especially those dealing with emotional struggles and looking for a safe space to grow and learn. The application meets real-world needs in both language learning and mental health support. By combining expressive writing with emotional vocabulary lists, this helps users improve their English while learning to express and understand their feelings.

From a commercialisation perspective, the mobile application version of "ALL" holds strong potential. It may attract partnerships with technology companies, language learning start ups, or mental health platforms. The application can also be extended by inviting other writers to contribute their original content and create a community-driven platform which opens opportunities for in-application purchases, exclusive writing collections, and subscriptions, making "ALL" a scalable and marketable tool for both personal growth and creative collaboration.

NOVELTY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

"ALL" is an innovative mobile application that combines emotional self-expression, language learning, and daily planning. Unlike typical planner applications that only manage tasks or track moods, or educational applications that are limited to standard syllabus formats, "ALL" blends creative writing with learning. It encourages reflective journaling for mental well-being as well as a method of vocabulary acquisition, especially for English language learners. This version also expands accessibility by shifting from a physical planner prototype to a mobile application in order to meet the preferences of modern users who value digital tools for mental wellness and language practice. This transition will also increase usability and interactivity as well as open up opportunities for wider adoption and personalization.

Additionally, this innovation can be further expanded by adding a community space in the application, where users can anonymously share journal entries or poems. This would offer a safe space for users to connect through shared experiences and emotions.

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