



Prosiding

Seminar Nasional Inovasi pendidikan dan Pembelajaran
Fakultas Pendidikan Bahasa dan Seni
IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro

Tema "Inovasi pendidikan dan Pembelajaran di era digital untuk Pengalaman Belajar
Imersif"



Combining the Use of Freewriting and Mind-Mapping to Enhance Writing Creativity of Narrative Text

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Abstrak – Menulis merupakan kemampuan dasar yang perlu diajarkan dalam proses belajar Bahasa Inggris, selain menyimak, berbicara, dan membaca. Kemampuan ini berperan penting dalam mendorong siswa untuk menyampaikan ide secara jelas dan kreatif. Salah satu bentuk menulis yang menekankan kreativitas adalah *creative writing*, yang sangat berperan dalam penyusunan teks naratif. Teks naratif sendiri merupakan tulisan yang mengisahkan suatu kejadian dengan tujuan menghibur kepada pembaca. Dalam penulisannya diperlukan kemampuan *creative writing*, agar cerita yang dihasilkan lebih menarik dan imajinatif. Namun, berdasarkan hasil observasi di kelas XI MA Al-Munawwar, siswa mengalami kendala dalam menulis teks naratif. Beberapa hambatan yang mereka dihadapi antara lain, rendahnya minat menulis, keterbatasan kosakata, kesulitan dalam mengembangkan dan mengekspresikan ide, serta kurangnya strategi yang tepat dalam proses pembelajaran. Untuk mengatasi permasalahan tersebut, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kemampuan menulis kreatif dalam teks naratif dengan menggabungkan strategi *freewriting* dan *mind mapping*. Penelitian ini menerapkan pendekatan Penelitian Tindakan Kelas (PTK), dengan metode wawancara, observasi, questionnaire, dan test. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penerapan kombinasi kedua strategi tersebut efektif dan mampu meningkatkan kreativitas menulis teks naratif pada siswa kelas XI MA Al-Munawwar. Hal ini ditunjukkan melalui peningkatan nilai yang signifikan, yaitu dari nilai pre-test 54.32%, meningkat menjadi 70.33 pada Post-test 1, dan mencapai nilai rata-rata 82.25 pada Post-test 2.

Kata kunci – *Freewriting*, *Mind-Mapping*, Kreativitas Menulis, Teks Naratif

Abstract – Writing is a fundamental component of English language education, alongside listening, speaking, and reading. Writing plays a crucial role in helping students develop their ideas clearly and creatively. One form of writing that emphasizes creativity is *creative writing*, which plays a significant role in the composition of narrative texts. Narrative text is a form of writing designed to convey stories intended to amuse or engage the reader. Writing narrative texts requires creative writing skill so that the stories produced are more engaging and imaginative. However, based on observations in the 11th grade at MA Al-Munawwar, most students experience difficulties in writing narrative texts. Some of the problems include low interest in writing, limited vocabulary, difficulty in developing and expressing ideas, and the lack of effective strategies in the learning process. To address these issues, this research aims to improve students' creativity in writing narrative texts through a combination of *freewriting* and *mind-mapping* strategies. This research employs a Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach, using interviews, observations, questionnaires, and tests as data collection methods.

The results show that the implementation of the combined strategies is effective in improving students' creativity in writing narrative texts. It has significant increase in scores, from a pre-test average of 54.32 to 70.33 in Post- test 1, and reaching an average of 82.25 in Post-test 2.

Keywords—Freewriting, Mind-Mapping, Writing Creativity, Narrative Text

INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the important skills in language learning that often becomes part of broader activities, such as speaking, listening, and reading (Nurdianingsih et al., 2023). Writing not only serves as a medium of communication but also as a means of expressing ideas and emotions. Writing plays a significant role in shaping and optimizing other essential skills in individuals, making it a foundational component of language development (Fitrianingsih et al., 2022). Writing has a function beyond just conveying messages, but also as a means of expressing thoughts and feelings. Additionally, writing can enhance creativity by generating new ideas and concepts, resulting in more engaging and meaningful work. Hedge 1998, as cited in Dian (2023) divides writing types into six categories, one of which is creative writing.

Creative writing is a type of writing that focuses on the expression of the writer's imagination, ideas, and emotions in a free and original manner. Fitria, (2024), creative writing includes the ability to generate new ideas and organize them interestingly and effectively, which makes it an important aspect of creating creative writing. To produce creative writing, the process of teaching English writing skills requires a high level of creativity and continuously developed innovative approaches (Tirtanawati and Rahmawati, 2020). Creative writing is usually also used in writing narrative text because important elements in narrative texts such as plot, character, conflict, and setting require creative skill to build a well-structured, interconnected, and interesting story. As explained by Temizkan (2014), as cited by Ahıskalı & Maltepe, (2023), these elements interact with one another to create a narrative text, so creative writing is the main key to success in composing narrative text.

Narrative text is a type of text that tells a story with the purpose of entertaining or informing the readers or listeners. However, many students experience difficulties in writing narrative texts, especially in putting their ideas into an interesting and coherent form of writing. This difficulty often arises because students do not understand how to organize story elements such as plot, character, and conflict well. In addition, they also have difficulty expressing their imagination and emotions freely, which is an important part of creative writing (Wibowo, 2013). To overcome these difficulties, it is necessary to use appropriate strategies, such as freewriting and mind mapping, which can help students organize ideas and expand their creativity.

Freewriting is an initial strategy in the writing process that allows individuals to freely express their ideas, thoughts, and feelings without worrying about grammar rules, sentence structure, or the outcome of the writing (Sawsen & Sebti, 2022).

Meanwhile, mind mapping is a highly effective strategy that promotes creative thinking (Susanti et al., 2023). Creative thinking is the ability and capacity to find various solutions to problems, in the learning aims to develop creative thinking skills to enhance knowledge and improve the quality of thinking (Fitrianingsih et al., 2020). When freewriting and mind mapping are used together, they create a complementary synergy in the writing process. Freewriting serves to generate ideas spontaneously and freely, while mind mapping helps to organize and structure those ideas into a logical, coherent, and easily understandable to produce the good narrative text.

Based on the observations conducted with the English teacher at MA Al Munawwar in the 11th grade, it was discovered that students faced significant challenges in writing narrative texts. One of the main problems observed was students' lack of enthusiasm toward participating in writing activities, which directly impacted the quality of the texts they produced. Several factors cause this problem; First, the limited vocabulary of many students makes it difficult to convey their ideas clearly and effectively. Second, frequent grammatical errors reduce their confidence in writing. Third, students often struggle to determine the main topic or ideas to develop, resulting in poorly structured texts. These challenges are further exacerbated by the use of teaching strategies that are less engaging and insufficient to help students understand the writing process effectively. In this case, teachers play an important role and contribute to teaching and learning activities, this aims to create active classroom interactions between teachers and students during the learning process (Rohmah, 2017). As a result, students face not only technical barriers, such as grammatical errors and limited vocabulary but also a lack of interest in developing their writing skills. This situation highlights the need for innovations in teaching methods that are more relevant and supportive, enabling students to learn to write with greater confidence and focus, especially in the context of narrative texts.

Based on the background described above, it is important to use the right strategies to help students in the 11th grade at MA Al Munawwar to improve their ability to write better narrative texts. Although many studies have addressed the challenges students face in writing narrative texts, few have explored the combination of Freewriting and Mind Mapping strategies as an approach to improve students' creativity and interest in writing. Therefore, this research aims to fill this gap by developing more innovative and comprehensive teaching strategies.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research adopts a Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach, based on the model proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart., (2014), it was carried out in two cycles, with each cycle involving four steps: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The population of this research consisted of eleventh-grade students at MA Al-Munawwar in the academic year 2024/2025. A random sampling method

was applied to choose the participants, where all students in one class consisting of 31 learners were involved as research subjects. This class was chosen because it represented a manageable group for implementing classroom actions aimed at improving narrative writing creativity. The primary objective of this research is to improve students' writing creativity in narrative texts through the implementation of combined freewriting and mind-mapping strategies.

Data collection methods employed in this research included observation, questionnaires, interviews, and writing tests. The instruments used were observation checklists and a creativity assessment rubric designed to evaluate the students' narrative writing test. Both qualitative and quantitative method were utilized to analyze the gathered data approaches. Qualitative data were obtained from classroom observations and interviews with the English teacher, while quantitative data were derived from the students' narrative writing test results and the questionnaires completed during the research process.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

FINDINGS

From the findings of this research, the objective of this research is to enhance creativity of narrative text in eleventh-grade students at MA Al-Munawwar through the implementation of a combining freewriting and mind mapping strategies. This research utilized the Classroom Action Research (CAR) method, which was carried out over two cycles. The instruments used included interviews, questionnaires, written tests, and observation checklists. The data were analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Qualitative data were obtained through observations and interviews with the English teacher, while quantitative data were derived from students' writing test results and completed questionnaires.

1. Qualitative Result

The Qualitative data were collected through an observation checklist and interviews conducted with the English teacher. Three key aspects were observed during the learning process: material explanation, students' participation, and students' application. The analysis of observation and interview data indicates that there was a notable, it can be concluded that the implementation of the combining freewriting and mind mapping strategies was highly effective in improving students' writing creativity, particularly in composing narrative texts. Additionally, the English teacher noted that most students became more active, confident, and enthusiastic during the writing process when combining these strategies.

2. Quantitative Result

The improvement in students' narrative writing creativity of narrative text, this improvement is reflected in the results of the written assessments, comparing the scores from the pre-test, post-test 1, and post-test 2. The following table presents the average scores of the students at each stage:

Table 1. Result of Writing Test

Types of Tests	Average Scores	Description
Pre-test	54.32	Before the Implement ation
Post-test 1	70.33	After the first implement ation (Cycle 1)
Post-test 2	82.25	After the second implementation (Cycle 2)

Based on the table above, there is a significant improvement in the students' writing test results. From the pre-test to post-test 1, there was an increase of 16.01, followed by a further improvement of 12.50 from post-test 1 to post-test 2. Overall, the total increase from the pre-test to post-test 2 reached 28.51. These results indicate that the implementation of the combined freewriting and mind-mapping strategies is effective in improving students' writing creativity, particularly in narrative text writing.

DISCUSSION

This research aims to enhance the writing creativity of narrative text in eleventh-grade students at MA Al-Munawwar through the implementation of combining freewriting and mind-mapping strategies. Based on the results obtained from the two cycles of action, there was a significant improvement in the students' writing creativity, as indicated by their writing test scores. In the learning process, the freewriting strategy provides students with the freedom to express their ideas spontaneously, without pressure, and without worrying about mistakes in grammar, sentence structure, or vocabulary. This approach encourages the emergence of original ideas from the student's thinking, as they feel more confident and free in expressing ideas through writing. Meanwhile, mind mapping serves as a tool to help students organize and develop the ideas previously generated through freewriting. By using this mind mapping, students can construct a storyline that is more logical, coherent, and easy to understand. Therefore, the implementation of these two strategies in combination complements one another. Freewriting helps generate ideas naturally, while mind mapping directs those ideas into a well-structured and engaging narrative text.

Susanti et al., (2023), stated that mind mapping is one of the most effective strategies for improving students' writing skills. This strategy functions to organize and connect various ideas related to a central concept, thereby helping students understand the topic more easily and thoroughly. In addition, the freewriting strategy

is an effective initial approach to overcome obstacles in the writing process and to encourage the free expression of ideas (Sawsen & Sebti, 2022). When freewriting and mind mapping are used together, they create a complementary synergy in the writing process. Freewriting serves to generate ideas spontaneously and freely, while mind mapping helps to organize and structure those ideas into a logical, coherent, and easily understandable framework. Therefore, the findings of this study strengthen the evidence that creative teaching strategies that combine two approaches can yield more optimal results compared to when applied separately.

The implementation of these combined strategies was carried out through two learning cycles. In the first cycle, the student's average score increased from 54.32 in the pre-test to 70.33 in the post-test 1. Although there was an improvement, the students' writing still showed weaknesses in terms of coherence and the appeal of the narrative content they produced. Therefore, improvements were made in the second cycle, including providing more structured guidance in creating mind mapping and more focused freewriting exercises. As a result, in the second cycle, the student's average score increased to 82.25, indicating that the modifications and refinements made to the learning process successfully enhanced the impact of these strategies' implementation.

Considering the results obtained, it can be inferred that combination of freewriting and mind-mapping strategies has proven effective in improving students' creativity in writing narrative texts. These strategies not only help students overcome common obstacles in the writing process, but also assist them in organizing and developing ideas more systematically, resulting in more coherent, structured, and engaging narrative texts. The combined use of these two strategies can serve as an effective alternative for improving students' writing skills, particularly in the context of narrative writing, and has the potential to be implemented in other schools as well. Furthermore, this research can serve as a reference for future studies that apply the same strategies to different types of texts, in order to evaluate whether similar results can be achieved in a broader context.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of the combined freewriting and mind-mapping strategies in teaching narrative writing to eleventh-grade students at MA Al-Munawwar was implemented in two cycles, consisting of the stages of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. Throughout the learning process, students showed increased participation, confidence, and enthusiasm in writing activities. The English teacher also gave positive feedback, stating that the combined strategies were highly effective in helping students express their ideas and organize them more clearly and creatively when writing narrative texts.

Moreover, the improvement was also supported by the students' writing test scores, which reflected a meaningful progression from the pre-test to the post-tests in

both cycles. The average score was 54.32 in the pre-test. It increased to 70.33 in post-test 1 and 82.25 in post-test 2. The researchers concluded that the implementation of freewriting and mind-mapping strategies can improve writing creativity in narrative text of the eleventh grade of MA Al-Munawwar.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With utmost sincerity, The writer sincerely acknowledges and appreciates the support given to all parties who have provided support, guidance, and contributions throughout the implementation and completion of this research, especially to both advisors.

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