

The Effectiveness of Using Short Drama for Students in Writing Narrative Text

 <https://doi.org/10.31004/jele.v11i4.2713>

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ABSTRACT

Writing is an essential skill in English learning; however, many students still face difficulties in developing idea and organizing narrative texts effectively. This study aimed to determine the effectiveness of using short dramas for students in writing narrative text at SMP swasta Santo Yoseph Medan. Short drama was selected as the treatment because it provides contextual and visual representations of narrative elements that can help students generate ideas and organize narrative texts more effectively. A quasi-experimental design was employed involving 60 eighth-grade students divided into an experimental group and a control group. Data were collected through pre-test and post-test writing assessments and analyzed using independent samples t-test. The finding revealed that the experimental group achieved a higher post-test mean score (75.38) than the control group (55.73). Statistical analysis showed a significant difference between the groups ($\text{Sig.}=0.000<0.05$; $t=10.487$). Furthermore, content and organization were the writing aspects that improved the most. It can be concluded that short drama is effective in improving student's narrative writing skills.

Keywords: *Short Drama, Narrative Writing, Writing Skill, Junior High School Students, Quasi-Experimental Study*

Article History:

Received 06th June 2026

Accepted 26th June 2026

Published 02nd July 2026



INTRODUCTION

English is one of the most important international languages used in communication, education, technology, and global interaction. Consequently, English is taught as a compulsory subject in Indonesian schools, including at the junior high school level. In learning English, students are expected to master four language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Among these skills, writing is often considered the most complex and challenging because it requires students to generate ideas, organize information logically, and apply appropriate grammar and vocabulary effectively (H D Brown, 2001). In line with the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, students are encouraged to develop literacy and communicative competence through various forms of written expression (Kementerian Pendidikan Riset, dan Teknologi, 2022). Therefore, writing plays a crucial role in helping students communicate ideas effectively and achieve academic success.

One of the important writing competencies taught at the junior high school level is narrative writing. Narrative text is a type of text that tells a story with the purpose of entertaining readers and typically consists of orientation, complication, and resolution (Knapp & Watkins, 2005). Through narrative writing, students are expected to express ideas creatively while organizing events into a coherent storyline. In addition, narrative writing enables students to develop their imagination, creativity, and ability to communicate experiences in written form.

Narrative writing plays a significant role in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom because it facilitates the development of students' linguistic, cognitive, and creative abilities. Through narrative writing activities, students learn how to express ideas systematically, organize events coherently, and communicate messages effectively to readers (Harmer, 2004; Hyland, 2003). Furthermore, narrative writing encourages students to apply

their vocabulary knowledge, grammatical competence, and critical thinking skills in meaningful contexts (H Douglas Brown, 2004; Richards & Renandya, 2002). As one of the fundamental text types taught in secondary education, narrative writing helps students develop literacy skills that support both academic achievement and effective communication (Derewianka & Jones, 2016). Therefore, improving students' narrative writing ability is an important objective in English language teaching.

However, many students still experience difficulties in writing narrative texts. Based on classroom observations conducted during the researcher's teaching internship at SMP Swasta Santo Yoseph Medan, several problems were identified. Many students had difficulty generating and developing ideas, organizing the generic structure of narrative texts, and maintaining coherence throughout their writing. As a result, students often produced incomplete stories with weak organization and limited content development. Furthermore, students showed low motivation and interest in writing activities because classroom instruction was still dominated by conventional teaching methods. These conditions indicate the need for more engaging and innovative instructional media to support students in improving their narrative writing skills.

One instructional medium that has the potential to address these challenges is short drama. Drama provides meaningful and contextual learning experiences that actively involve learners in the language learning process. In this study, short drama refers to scripted drama presented in video form (Maley & Duff, 2005). Through visual and auditory representations, students can observe characters, settings, conflicts, and resolutions more clearly. These elements help students understand narrative structures and generate ideas more effectively when composing narrative texts. After watching the short drama video, students are expected to transform the story into written form, making the writing process more interactive and meaningful.

The effectiveness of drama-based learning has been supported by previous studies. Tseng & Ming (2021) found that drama-based group projects significantly improved students' language skills and increased their motivation, confidence, and engagement in learning activities. Similarly, Yuniwati et al. (2015) reported that the use of short drama effectively improved students' speaking ability and encouraged active participation in classroom learning. In addition to its contribution to language learning, drama also has theoretical relevance to writing development. Drama techniques are considered capable of providing meaningful learning experiences that actively engage learners in communication and language production (Maley & Duff, 2005). Furthermore, experiential drama activities are believed to enhance students' understanding of narrative structure, plot development, and character interaction, all of which are essential components of narrative writing (Aitken, 2013). In addition, the integration of visual and auditory representations can enhance learners' comprehension and facilitate idea generation (Mayer, 2002). Therefore, the use of short drama may facilitate students' ability to generate ideas, understand narrative elements, and organize narrative texts more effectively. These findings indicate that drama can create a positive learning environment and contribute to language development.

Despite these positive findings, most previous studies have focused on speaking skills or general language competence. Research investigating the effectiveness of short drama in improving students' writing skills, particularly narrative writing at the junior high school level, remains limited. Furthermore, studies examining which aspects of narrative writing show the greatest improvement after the implementation of short drama are still scarce. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by investigating the effectiveness of using short drama in teaching narrative writing at SMP Swasta Santo Yoseph Medan.

Based on the issues identified and the existing research gap, this study aims to determine whether the use of short drama significantly affects students' narrative writing skills and to identify the aspects of narrative writing that show the greatest improvement following the implementation of short drama.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research approach using a quasi-experimental design to investigate the effectiveness of using short drama for students' narrative text writing skills (Campbell & Stanley, 1963; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The study was conducted at Private Junior High School Santo Yoseph Medan during the 2025/2026 academic year. The research involved an experimental group that received instruction through short drama videos and control group that received conventional instruction.

Respondents*Population and Sample of the Research*

The population of the research consist of all eighth-grade students at Private Junior High School Santo Yoseph, totalling 131 students distributed across four classes VIII-A, VIII-B, VIII-C, and VII-D. The study employed purposive sampling to select the research participants. The population consisted of 131 eighth-grade students distributed across four classes, namely VIII-A, VIII-B, VIII-C, and VIII-D. Two classes were selected based on their relatively similar academic characteristics, English proficiency levels, and classroom learning conditions. Class VIII-D, consisting of 30 students, was assigned as the experimental group, while Class VIII-B, consisting of 30 students, was assigned as the control group. The selection of these classes was intended to ensure comparability between groups and to minimize potential differences that could affect the research outcomes. Therefore, the total number of participants involved in this study was 60 students.

Instruments

The instrument used in this study was a writing test administered as a pre-test and a post-test. The tests required students to write a narrative text based on the given topic. Students' writing performance was assessed using a writing rubric covering five aspects of writing, namely content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. The rubric was used to evaluate students' narrative writing achievement before and after treatment.

Procedures

This study was conducted in four stages. First, a pre-test was administered to both the experimental and control groups to measure student's initial writing skill. Second, the experimental group received treatment though short drama videos, while the control group was taught using conventional methods. This study was conducted in four stages. First, a pre-test was administered to both the experimental and control groups to measure students' initial writing skills. Second, the experimental group received treatment through short drama videos, while the control group was taught using conventional methods. The treatment was conducted in four meetings, with each meeting lasting 2 × 40 minutes. During the treatment sessions, students in the experimental group watched short drama videos and participated in guided discussions to identify narrative elements such as characters, setting, conflict, and resolution. They were then asked to analyse the sequence of events and transform the observed stories into written narrative texts. Meanwhile, students in the control group received conventional instruction through teacher explanation, textbook-based activities, and narrative writing exercises without the use of short drama video. Finally, a post-test was administered to both groups to determine students' narrative writing achievement after the treatment.

Data Analysis

The data were analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics. Descriptive statistics were first employed to determine the mean scores, minimum scores, maximum scores, and standard deviations of both groups. Before conducting hypothesis testing, prerequisite tests were carried out to ensure that the data met the assumptions required for parametric analysis. The normality of the data distribution was examined using the Shapiro-wilk test. After the data were confirmed to be normally distributed and homogeneous, and independent sample t-test was conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference between the post-test

scores of the experimental and control groups. The level of significance was set at 0.05. furthermore, the improvement of students' writing aspects, included content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics, was analysed to identify the aspects that showed the greatest improvement following the implementation of short drama.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Is there a Significant Effect of Using Short Drama on the Narrative Writing Skills of Eighth-Grade Students at Private Junior High School Santo Yoseph Medan?

The Effect of Short Drama on Students' Narrative Writing Skills

The first research question aimed to determine whether the use of short drama had a significant effect on students' narrative writing skills at SMP S. st. Yoseph Medan. Prior to hypothesis testing, the data were subjected to prerequisite analyses, including normality and homogeneity test. The result of Shapiro-wilk test indicated that the data were normally distributed. Furthermore, the homogeneity test showed a significance value of 0.742, which was higher than 0.05, indicating that the variances of the experimental and control groups were homogeneous. Therefore, the data fulfilled the assumptions required for further statistical analysis.

The descriptive statistics revealed that the mean score of the experimental group increased from 37.57 in the pre-test to 75.38 in the post-test. Meanwhile, the mean score of the control group increased from 37.53 in the pre-test to 55.73 in the post-test. The improvement achieved by the experimental group was considerably positively to students' narrative writing achievement.

Table 1

Group	Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean	Gain Score
Experimental	37.57	75.38	37.81
Control	37.53	55.73	18.20

Table 1 shows that both groups experienced improvement after the instructional treatment. However, the experimental group demonstrated a substantially higher gain score than the control group, indicating that the use of short drama contributed positively to students' narrative writing achievement.

The result of the independent sample t-test demonstrated that the significance value (sig. 2-tailed) was 0.000, which was lower than the significance level of 0.05. In addition, the t-value was -10.487 with a mean difference of -20.100. these findings indicated that the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted. Therefore, there was significant effect of using short drama on students' narrative writing skills. The finding suggest that short drama provided students with meaningful learning experiences through visual and contextual representations of narrative elements. By observing characters, settings, conflicts, and resolutions in short drama videos, students were able to generate idea more easily and organize their writing more effectively. As a result, students demonstrated better performance in constructing narrative text compared to those who learned through conventional teaching methods.

Table 2

Statistical Indicator	Value
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
t-value	10.487
Decision	H_a Accepted

As presented in Table 2, the significance value was lower than the predetermined significance level of 0.05. This result indicates that there was a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups. Therefore, the use of short drama had a significant positive effect on students' narrative writing skills.

These findings are consistent with the study conducted by (Tseng et al., 2021), which reported that the drama-based learning significantly improved students' language skills and learning engagement. The findings also support (Nurhayati, 2016), who found that drama activities enhanced students' understanding of narrative structure and increased their motivation and confidence in writing activities. Therefore, short drama can be considered an effective instructional medium for improving narrative writing skill among junior high school students.

Which Aspects of Narrative Writing Show the Most Significant Improvement Following the Short Drama Intervention?

The findings revealed that the content aspect showed the greatest improvement among the five aspects of writing, followed by organization. The substantial improvement in content may be attributed to the characteristics of short drama, which provides students with clear and meaningful story content. Through the visual presentation of characters, settings, conflicts, and resolutions, students were better able to generate and develop ideas when composing narrative texts. This finding is particularly relevant considering that many students initially experienced difficulties in generating and elaborating ideas for writing. Consequently, the content aspect demonstrated the highest level of improvement.

Organization was the second most improved aspect. This improvement suggests that short drama facilitated students' understanding of narrative text structure and coherence. By observing how a story unfolds from beginning to end, students were better able to organize their ideas logically and construct well-structured narratives. They were able to arrange the orientation, complication, and resolution in a coherent sequence and maintain clear connections between events throughout the story.

In contrast, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics showed relatively lower improvement because these aspects generally require more explicit instruction and sustained practice beyond the scope of the treatment. Since the treatment primarily focused on understanding and reconstructing narrative stories through short drama, greater improvements were observed in content development and text organization than in linguistic accuracy.

CONCLUSIONS

This study investigated the effectiveness of using short drama to improve students' narrative writing skills at a private junior high school. The findings showed that students taught through short drama achieved significantly higher writing scores than those receiving conventional instruction. The experimental group's mean score increased from 37.57 in the pre-test to 75.38 in the post-test, while the control group improved from 37.53 to 55.73. An independent samples *t*-test confirmed a statistically significant difference between the groups ($p < .001$), demonstrating the effectiveness of short drama in enhancing narrative writing achievement. The greatest improvement was found in the content aspect, followed by organization, indicating that students became more capable of generating ideas, developing narratives, and organizing their writing coherently. These findings suggest that the visual and contextual features of short drama provide meaningful support for narrative writing development. Pedagogically, English teachers are encouraged to integrate short drama into writing instruction to promote idea generation, improve narrative structure, increase classroom engagement, and strengthen students' narrative writing skills in EFL classrooms.

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