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PENGARUH DIGITAL STORY RETELLING BERBASIS CANVA TERHADAP KETERAMPILAN MENULIS NARATIF SISWA

THE EFFECT OF CANVA-BASED DIGITAL STORY RETELLING ON STUDENTS' NARRATIVE WRITING SKILLS

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Abstract

Writing narrative texts requires EFL learners to generate and organize ideas while controlling vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. This study investigated the effect of Canva-based Digital Story Retelling on the narrative writing skills of eleventh-grade students at SMAN 1 Kediri and explored students' learning experiences during the intervention. The study employed an embedded mixed-methods approach, with a pre-experimental one-group pre-test–post-test design as the quantitative strand. Thirty-five eleventh-grade students were selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through narrative writing tests, classroom observation, a student perception questionnaire, and semi-structured interviews with five students. Writing performance was assessed in content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, the Shapiro–Wilk normality test, and the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test, while qualitative evidence was analyzed descriptively. The mean score increased from 84.17 in the pre-test to 88.00 in the post-test. The Wilcoxon test indicated a statistically significant difference between the two measurements ($Z = -3.065$, $p = 0.002$). Twenty-three students improved, nine students decreased, and three students obtained the same score. Qualitative findings indicated that students perceived the strategy as engaging and helpful for organizing ideas and understanding narrative structure, although some students still experienced difficulty developing the complication and modifying story plots. The findings indicate that Canva-based Digital Story Retelling can serve as a structured instructional strategy for supporting narrative writing in an Indonesian EFL classroom.

Keywords: Canva; Digital Story Retelling; EFL Students; Narrative Writing; Writing Skills

Abstrak

Menulis teks naratif masih menjadi tantangan bagi banyak pembelajar bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing (EFL) karena siswa harus mengembangkan dan mengorganisasi ide sekaligus mengendalikan kosakata, tata bahasa, dan mekanika penulisan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menginvestigasi pengaruh Digital Story Retelling berbasis Canva terhadap keterampilan menulis naratif siswa kelas XI di SMAN 1 Kediri serta mengeksplorasi pengalaman belajar siswa selama penerapan strategi tersebut. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan mixed methods embedded dengan desain kuantitatif pre-eksperimental one-group pre-test–post-test. Sebanyak 35 siswa kelas XI dipilih melalui purposive sampling. Data dikumpulkan melalui tes menulis naratif, observasi kelas, kuesioner persepsi siswa, dan wawancara semi-terstruktur terhadap lima siswa. Kemampuan menulis dinilai berdasarkan isi, organisasi, kosakata, tata bahasa, dan mekanika. Data kuantitatif dianalisis menggunakan statistik deskriptif, uji normalitas Shapiro–Wilk, dan Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test, sedangkan data kualitatif dianalisis secara deskriptif. Nilai rata-rata meningkat dari 84,17 pada pre-test menjadi 88,00 pada post-test. Hasil Wilcoxon menunjukkan perbedaan yang signifikan secara statistik ($Z = -3{,}065$; $p = 0{,}002$). Sebanyak 23 siswa mengalami peningkatan, 9 siswa mengalami penurunan, dan 3 siswa memperoleh nilai yang sama. Temuan kualitatif menunjukkan bahwa siswa memandang Digital Story Retelling berbasis Canva menarik dan membantu dalam mengorganisasi ide, memahami struktur naratif, dan mengekspresikan cerita secara kreatif. Namun, beberapa siswa masih mengalami kesulitan mengembangkan bagian complication dan memodifikasi alur cerita. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa Digital Story Retelling berbasis Canva dapat menjadi strategi yang efektif, terstruktur, dan menarik untuk mendukung pembelajaran menulis naratif di kelas EFL Indonesia.

Kata Kunci: Canva; Digital Story Retelling; Siswa EFL; Menulis Naratif; Keterampilan Menulis

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INTRODUCTION

Writing is a central productive skill in English language learning because it requires learners to communicate ideas in an organized and linguistically appropriate form. Writing involves the simultaneous management of content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics, making it a complex skill for EFL learners (Brown, 2007; Hyland, 2019; Weigle, 2002). Narrative writing adds further demands because learners must arrange events logically and construct a coherent story while maintaining appropriate narrative structure and language features. Narrative texts commonly organize events through orientation, complication, and resolution, supported by language features such as past-tense verbs and temporal expressions (Gerot & Wignell, 1994; Knapp & Watkins, 2005).

Many EFL learners nevertheless experience difficulties in generating ideas, organizing events, selecting appropriate vocabulary, and maintaining grammatical accuracy. In the present research context, students also needed support in developing characters, conflicts, and story sequences. Research on narrative-text instruction in Indonesian EFL classrooms similarly suggests that narrative texts can support writing development while students may still experience vocabulary and language-related difficulties (Qatrinada & Apoko, 2024). These challenges indicate the need for writing instruction that provides meaningful scaffolding without removing students' responsibility to construct and communicate their own ideas.

Story retelling provides one possible form of scaffolding because learners reconstruct a story they have read or viewed in their own words. Retelling requires learners to identify important events, understand their sequence, and reproduce the story coherently. Research has shown that structured retelling can strengthen learners' understanding of story structure and content, suggesting that retelling can support the transition from comprehension to productive language use (Vretudaki et al., 2023). In EFL writing contexts, digital storytelling has also been associated with improvements in writing performance and more positive attitudes toward writing (Alemi et al., 2022).

Digital technology can strengthen story-based learning by adding visual and multimedia support. Digital storytelling has been described as a meaningful technology-supported approach that can encourage creativity, active participation, and communication of ideas (Robin, 2008; Sadik, 2008). Yang and Wu (2012) likewise found that digital storytelling can support academic achievement, critical thinking, and learning motivation. In the present study, Canva was used as the digital platform through which students organized text and visual elements while reconstructing an existing narrative.

The present study distinguishes Digital Story Retelling from conventional digital storytelling. Digital storytelling commonly involves creating and presenting a story through digital media, whereas Digital Story Retelling in this study begins with an existing narrative that students understand, reconstruct, and modify using their own language and ideas. This distinction provides a more structured starting point for learners who find independent story generation difficult. The treatment also incorporated brainstorming and collaborative discussion so that students could identify characters, settings, conflicts, and sequences before composing their narratives.

Recent research provides support for the use of digital storytelling and story-based activities in writing instruction. Alemi et al. (2022) reported that digital storytelling improved EFL learners' writing skills and positively influenced their attitudes and motivation toward writing. Ngoi et al. (2024) found that digital storytelling supported English narrative writing among less successful learners, addressing difficulties related to vocabulary, story structure, grammar, and motivation. Ölmez and Can Aran (2025) also found that digital storytelling significantly improved high school students' English writing skills, although its effect on foreign-language anxiety was not statistically significant. However, research specifically examining Canva-based Digital Story Retelling for narrative writing among Indonesian senior high school students remains limited. The present study therefore investigates this strategy in an Indonesian EFL classroom.

Accordingly, the study addressed two questions: (1) Does Canva-based Digital Story Retelling significantly affect the narrative writing skills of eleventh-grade students at SMAN 1 Kediri? and (2) How does the strategy affect students' narrative writing process and learning experiences? The study was expected to contribute empirical evidence for technology-enhanced writing instruction and practical guidance for teachers seeking an accessible, structured approach to narrative writing.

METHOD

This study employed an embedded mixed-methods approach in which quantitative evidence served as the primary strand and qualitative evidence was embedded to explain students' learning experiences. The quantitative component used a pre-experimental one-group pre-test–post-test design. The design consisted of a pre-test (O1), treatment (X), and post-test (O2). The research was conducted at SMAN 1 Kediri with 35 eleventh-grade students selected through purposive sampling. The broader population consisted of approximately 400 eleventh-grade students distributed across ten classes.

The primary instrument was a narrative writing test administered before and after the treatment. Students' writing was assessed analytically in five components: content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. The same scoring procedure and rubric were used for the pre-test and post-test to ensure comparability. Supporting instruments consisted of classroom observation, a Likert-scale student perception questionnaire, and semi-structured interviews with five selected students.

The treatment was implemented in three meetings. The first meeting introduced narrative text, including its social function, generic structure, and language features, followed by exposure to a digital story and discussion of its characters, setting, events, conflict, and resolution. The second meeting emphasized story retelling, brainstorming, group discussion, chronological organization, and the creation of Digital Story Retelling products using Canva. Students also received peer and teacher feedback. The third meeting required students to apply the learned strategy more independently, refine their digital retelling, and produce narrative writing for the post-test.

Quantitative data were summarized using the mean, median, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum scores. The Shapiro–Wilk test was used to examine normality because the sample consisted of fewer than 50 students. Since the pre-test data did not meet the normality assumption, the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test was used to determine whether the difference between pre-test

and post-test scores was statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Questionnaire, observation, and interview data were analyzed descriptively to identify recurring patterns concerning engagement, motivation, confidence, idea organization, and difficulties experienced during the treatment.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Students' Narrative Writing Performance

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores

Statistic	Pre-Test	Post-Test
N	35	35
Mean	84.17	88.00
Median	86	89
Standard Deviation	6.42	4.01
Minimum	54	78
Maximum	89	95

The descriptive results show a clear increase in students' narrative writing performance after the treatment. The mean score rose from 84.17 to 88.00, representing an increase of 3.83 points. The median also increased from 86 to 89. In addition, the standard deviation decreased from 6.42 to 4.01, indicating that post-test performance was less dispersed. The minimum score increased from 54 to 78, while the maximum score increased from 89 to 95. Thus, the improvement was not limited to the highest-performing students; the lower end of the score distribution also moved upward.

2. Hypothesis Testing

Table 2. Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test

Rank	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Negative Ranks	9	11.17	100.50
Positive Ranks	23	18.59	427.50
Ties	3	–	–
Total	35	–	–

Table 3. Wilcoxon Test Statistics

Statistic	Value
Z	-3.065
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.002

The Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test produced Z = -3.065 and an Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.002. Because p = 0.002 is lower than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. The rank distribution also indicates that 23 students obtained higher post-test scores, compared with 9 students whose scores decreased and 3 students whose scores remained unchanged. The statistical evidence therefore indicates a significant difference between

students' narrative writing performance before and after the Canva-based Digital Story Retelling treatment.

3. Students' Learning Experiences

The qualitative evidence supported the quantitative result by showing that the treatment created an active and visually supported writing environment. Classroom activities involved watching or reading stories, identifying narrative elements, brainstorming, discussing plot sequences, designing retellings in Canva, presenting products, and receiving feedback. These activities gave students a concrete story framework from which they could develop written narratives rather than requiring them to begin with an entirely blank page.

Students' interview responses indicated that the digital story format was interesting and helped them understand the story before writing. The visual and audiovisual presentation made the sequence of events easier to follow, while the retelling stage encouraged students to reconstruct the story in their own language. Students also described Canva as useful for arranging text and visual elements and for making the task more engaging. These perceptions are consistent with the study's theoretical position that multimedia can provide visual scaffolding and create more meaningful storytelling experiences.

At the same time, the qualitative data revealed that improvement was not uniform for every aspect of narrative construction. Some students still experienced difficulty developing the complication, remembering the complete plot, and deciding how to modify an existing story. One interviewee specifically identified complication as the most difficult section because of uncertainty about what to write. Another suggested that students should be exposed to more examples of fairy tales so they could develop more alternatives when modifying stories. These findings are important because they show that digital media alone does not eliminate writing difficulties; teacher guidance, repeated modeling, and sufficient story references remain necessary.

4. Discussion

The improvement in writing performance can be interpreted through the scaffolding function of story retelling. Because students began with an existing narrative, they could focus on identifying and reconstructing important events, organizing the sequence, selecting language, and expressing the story in their own words. This interpretation is consistent with Vretudaki et al. (2023), who found that structured retelling supported learners' understanding of story structure and story content. It is also consistent with the present interview data, in which students reported that viewing and organizing the story before writing helped them understand the narrative sequence.

The visual component of the treatment provides another plausible explanation for the observed improvement. Canva enabled students to combine written information with images and layouts, making story elements and event sequences more concrete. This use of multimedia is consistent with the broader digital storytelling literature, which emphasizes the value of multimedia for active learning, creativity, and communication (Robin, 2008; Sadik, 2008). Yang and Wu (2012) similarly reported positive effects of digital storytelling on academic achievement, critical thinking, and learning motivation. In the present study, Canva functioned not simply as a presentation tool but as a visual scaffold that students used while reconstructing and organizing narratives.

The findings are also broadly consistent with recent research on digital storytelling and narrative writing. Alemi et al. (2022) found that digital storytelling improved EFL learners' writing skills and positively affected their attitudes and motivation toward writing. Ngoi et al. (2024) reported that digital storytelling could support narrative writing among less successful learners by addressing difficulties related to vocabulary, story structure, grammar, and motivation. Ölmez and Can Aran (2025) likewise found a significant improvement in high school students' English writing skills following digital storytelling, although the difference in foreign-language anxiety was not statistically significant. The present study extends this literature by focusing specifically on Canva-based Digital Story Retelling, in which students reconstruct an existing narrative rather than creating a completely original digital story.

Nevertheless, the results should be interpreted within the limitations of the research design. The study involved one purposively selected class and did not include a control group. Therefore, the significant pre-test–post-test difference provides evidence of improvement following the treatment but does not establish the same level of causal certainty as a randomized controlled or controlled quasi-experimental design. In addition, the qualitative evidence was intended to support interpretation rather than provide an independent measure of learning gain. Future studies could involve larger samples, comparison groups, longer interventions, and more detailed analysis of individual writing components.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The study concludes that Canva-based Digital Story Retelling was associated with a significant improvement in the narrative writing performance of the participating eleventh-grade students at SMAN 1 Kediri. The mean score increased from 84.17 to 88.00, and the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test showed a statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores ($Z = -3.065$, $p = 0.002$). Most students (23 of 35) obtained higher post-test scores. Qualitative evidence further indicated that students found the strategy engaging and helpful for organizing ideas and understanding narrative structure, although some students still needed support in developing complications and modifying plots.

For classroom practice, English teachers may consider using Canva-based Digital Story Retelling as a structured writing activity, particularly when students need support in generating and organizing narrative ideas. The digital task should be combined with explicit instruction on narrative structure, story modeling, brainstorming, peer discussion, feedback, and opportunities to revisit story examples. Future research should involve larger and more diverse samples, comparison groups, longer interventions, and analysis of individual writing components to strengthen evidence concerning the effectiveness and generalizability of the strategy.

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