

**KOMIK DIGITAL DALAM PEMBELAJARAN MENULIS: PENGARUH WEBTOON
BERTEMA HOROR TERHADAP KEMAMPUAN MENULIS TEKS NARATIF**

***DIGITAL COMICS IN TEACHING WRITING: THE EFFECT OF HORROR-THEMED
WEBTOON ON NARRATIVE WRITING ABILITY***

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Abstract

Among the productive skills targeted in English language teaching, narrative writing holds a central position since it trains learners to articulate ideas, arrange events chronologically, and convey experiences in a coherent manner. In practice, however, students frequently struggle to generate ideas, build narrative structures, and apply accurate vocabulary and grammar. This condition points to the need for instructional media capable of engaging learners more actively in the writing process. Horror-themed Webtoon, a form of digital comic, offers such potential through its visual narration, which can spark students' imagination and supply meaningful contexts for composing narrative texts. This research was carried out to examine how horror-themed Webtoon influences the narrative writing ability of students at SMA Negeri 4 Kota Kediri. A quantitative, pre-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design was adopted, involving eleventh-grade students as participants. Narrative writing tests were administered prior to and following the treatment, and the resulting data were examined through descriptive statistics together with a paired-sample t-test. Results showed an increase in students' narrative writing performance following the use of horror-themed Webtoon. The statistical test confirmed a significant gap between pretest and posttest scores, pointing to a positive effect of horror-themed Webtoon on students' narrative writing ability. Overall, horror-themed Webtoon proves to be a useful instructional medium for enhancing students' narrative writing ability. It is therefore recommended that English teachers incorporate Webtoon into their writing lessons, and that subsequent researchers test its effectiveness with wider samples and alternative research designs.

Keywords: horror-themed Webtoon, narrative writing ability, digital comics, EFL learning

Abstrak

Dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris, kemampuan menulis teks naratif menempati posisi penting karena melatih siswa menuangkan gagasan, menyusun alur peristiwa, sekaligus menyampaikan pengalaman secara runtut. Kenyataannya, tidak sedikit siswa yang masih kesulitan mengembangkan gagasan, membangun struktur naratif, serta menggunakan kosakata dan tata bahasa yang sesuai. Kondisi ini menuntut hadirnya media pembelajaran yang mampu mendorong keterlibatan siswa secara lebih aktif dalam proses menulis. Horror-themed Webtoon, sebagai salah satu bentuk komik digital, menawarkan solusi melalui narasi visualnya yang dapat memantik imajinasi siswa dan menghadirkan konteks bermakna bagi kegiatan menulis naratif. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui dampak penggunaan horror-themed Webtoon terhadap kemampuan menulis naratif siswa di SMA Negeri 4 Kota Kediri. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan desain pre-eksperimental berupa one-group pretest-posttest design. Partisipan penelitian adalah siswa kelas XI. Data dikumpulkan melalui tes menulis naratif yang diberikan sebelum dan sesudah perlakuan, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan statistik deskriptif dan uji *paired-sample t-test*. Temuan penelitian memperlihatkan peningkatan kemampuan menulis naratif siswa setelah penggunaan horror-themed Webtoon. Uji statistik mengonfirmasi adanya perbedaan signifikan antara skor pretest dan posttest, yang menunjukkan bahwa horror-themed Webtoon berkontribusi positif terhadap kemampuan menulis naratif siswa. Sebagai kesimpulan, horror-themed Webtoon dapat dianggap sebagai media pembelajaran yang efektif untuk meningkatkan kemampuan menulis naratif siswa dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing (*EFL*).

Kata Kunci: horror-themed Webtoon, kemampuan menulis naratif, komik digital, pembelajaran EFL

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INTRODUCTION

Among the four productive skills emphasized in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction, writing occupies a central role because it allows learners to convey ideas, opinions, and information in a clear manner (Brown, 2001). Beyond serving as a communicative tool, writing also cultivates critical thinking and creativity, both of which are regarded as essential competencies in twenty-first-century education (Fodil-Cherif, 2021). In practice, however, a considerable number of EFL learners continue to face obstacles in arranging their ideas, applying correct grammar, and employing varied vocabulary (Fareed et al., 2016). Such difficulties tend to weaken students' confidence and lower their motivation to take part in writing tasks (Bulqiyah et al., 2021). Consequently, teachers are expected to design instructional strategies that keep students engaged and supported throughout the writing process.

One of the text types included in the senior high school curriculum in Indonesia is narrative writing, chosen because it trains students to arrange ideas chronologically while observing the appropriate text structure and language features (Kurniawan, 2024). Even so, many learners still find it difficult to generate story ideas, keep their writing coherent, and produce narratives that carry meaning (Pourdana & Asghari, 2021). Such obstacles often lower the overall quality of student writing, signaling the need for instructional media capable of stimulating imagination and supporting idea development (Fareed et al., 2016). Incorporating visual and interactive media into writing lessons may therefore assist students in grasping narrative structures and enhancing their writing performance.

Responding to these challenges requires teachers to bring engaging and meaningful media into writing activities. Webtoon has emerged as one such digital medium gaining traction in English language teaching, being a digital comic platform that merges visual illustration with written narrative in a continuous storyline (Safrina, 2021). By pairing visual and textual information, Webtoon makes it easier for students to grasp narrative elements while prompting them to generate writing ideas (Ratnasari et al., 2018). Its use has also been associated with gains in narrative writing achievement, attributed to the contextual visual support it offers and the higher engagement it fosters during the writing process (Cynthia et al., 2022).

Out of the many Webtoon genres available, the horror theme stands out for teaching narrative writing since it typically presents well-defined story structures, conflicts, and resolutions capable of stirring students' imagination. Its suspenseful plots combined with visual storytelling push students to explore ideas more creatively and craft narratives that hold together (Safrina, 2021). Webcomics in general also supply contextual visual support that assists students in organizing ideas, grasping narrative structures, and raising their writing achievement (Utami & Hamzah, 2025). For these reasons, horror-themed Webtoon appears to hold promise as an instructional medium for strengthening students' narrative writing ability.

A number of earlier studies have pointed to the beneficial role of Webtoon in English language learning, especially in writing instruction. Ratnasari et al. (2018), for instance, noted that Webtoon assisted students in understanding narrative text structures and organizing ideas more effectively when completing narrative writing tasks. In a related finding, Safrina (2021) observed that Webtoon boosted students' participation, vocabulary growth, and idea generation during writing sessions. Meanwhile, Utami & Hamzah (2025) reported that webcomics considerably raised students' narrative writing achievement by offering contextual visual support and heightening engagement across the writing process. Taken together, these results suggest that Webtoon and comparable digital comic media carry substantial potential to advance students' writing development, particularly in the domain of narrative writing.

Even so, the expanding literature on Webtoon in English language learning still leaves several gaps unaddressed. Most existing studies center on Webtoon or digital comics in a general sense, leaving the specific implementation of horror-themed Webtoon as a narrative writing tool largely unexplored. Research examining its effectiveness for Indonesian senior high school students in particular also remains scarce. Building on this gap, the present study sets out to investigate the impact of horror-themed Webtoon on the narrative writing ability of students at SMA Negeri 4 Kota Kediri, with the hope that its findings can inform the integration of digital visual media into EFL writing instruction and offer practical guidance for teachers and future researchers alike.

RESEARCH METHOD

A quantitative approach was applied in this study, specifically a pre-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design, chosen to examine the effect of horror-themed Webtoon on students' narrative writing ability by comparing their performance before and after treatment. Students first completed a pretest, then underwent the treatment, and finally sat for a posttest so that any change in their narrative writing ability could be identified.

A total of 22 eleventh-grade students from SMA Negeri 4 Kota Kediri took part as participants in this research. They were drawn from a single class that underwent the horror-themed Webtoon treatment as part of their narrative writing lessons, with the class itself determined through the school's recommendation and its accessibility to the researcher.

Data collection relied on a narrative writing test used at both the pretest and posttest stages, in which students composed a narrative text based on a set topic. Their writing was scored using the ESL Composition Profile constructed by Jacobs et al. (1981), covering five writing components: content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. This analytic rubric remains a common choice in EFL writing assessment given the thorough criteria it offers for judging students' writing quality (Setyowati et al., 2020).

The data-gathering process consisted of three stages, namely pretesting, treatment, and posttesting. First, the pretest established the students' initial level of narrative writing ability. This was followed by two treatment sessions in which horror-themed Webtoon served as the instructional medium for narrative writing activities, with its visual and textual elements drawn on to help students generate ideas and grasp narrative text structures. Once the treatment sessions concluded, the posttest was administered to capture students' narrative writing ability following the intervention.

Data analysis was carried out with the help of IBM SPSS Statistics. Descriptive statistics were first used to profile students' pretest and posttest performance, followed by a normality test to check whether the data distribution met the assumption of normality. A paired-sample t-test was subsequently run to establish whether the pretest and posttest scores differed significantly following the implementation of horror-themed Webtoon.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

To give an overview of students' narrative writing performance both before and after the horror-themed Webtoon treatment, descriptive statistics were computed, with the outcomes summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Pretest and Posttest Scores

Test	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-test	22	76.64	3.334	0.711
Post-test	22	84.68	4.138	0.882

Table 1 shows that the pretest mean stood at 76.64, rising to 84.68 at the posttest. This upward shift points to better narrative writing performance following the use of horror-themed Webtoon, with the posttest mean surpassing the pretest mean by roughly eight points and thereby signaling an improvement in students' narrative writing ability after treatment. Even so, since descriptive statistics alone only depict the direction of change, additional statistical testing was still needed to confirm whether the gap between pretest and posttest scores was statistically significant.

Prior to hypothesis testing, the data were first checked for normal distribution. Given that the sample comprised fewer than 50 participants, the Shapiro-Wilk test was selected for this purpose, with its outcomes displayed in Table 2.

Table 2. Results of the Shapiro-Wilk Normality Test

Test	Statistics	Df	Sig.
Pre-test	0.942	22	0.211
Posttest	0.979	22	0.842

Table 2 reports a significance value of 0.211 for the pretest and 0.842 for the posttest. As both figures exceed the 0.05 threshold, the pretest and posttest data can be regarded as normally distributed, satisfying the normality assumption required before proceeding with a paired-sample t-test to examine the significance of the score difference.

A paired-sample t-test was then carried out to establish whether the pretest-posttest score difference reached statistical significance, with its results laid out in Table 3.

Table 3. Results of the Paired-Sample t-Test

Pair	Mean Difference	Std. Deviation	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pretest-Posttest	-8.045	3.397	-11.095	21	.000

According to Table 3, the mean difference between pretest and posttest scores reached -8.045, with the paired-sample t-test producing a significance value of .000, well below the 0.05 threshold. On

this basis, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected in favor of the alternative hypothesis (H_1), confirming a statistically significant difference between students' pretest and posttest scores following the horror-themed Webtoon treatment. This outcome indicates that horror-themed Webtoon exerted a significant, positive influence on students' narrative writing ability.

DISCUSSION

This study's findings point to a positive effect of horror-themed Webtoon on students' narrative writing ability, evident from the rise in posttest scores recorded after treatment. Through its combination of visual and textual elements, the Webtoon gave students contextual support that helped them grasp narrative structures and generate writing ideas. This aligns with Alobaid (2021), who argued that multimedia learning environments merging visual and verbal information help students understand material better and enhance their writing performance by supplying meaningful learning contexts. Following the learning activities, students were consequently able to produce narrative texts that were better organized and more coherent.

Such results echo earlier studies confirming the effectiveness of Webtoon in writing instruction. Ratnasari et al. (2018), for example, found that Webtoon strengthened students' grasp of narrative text structures and their ability to organize ideas. In a similar vein, Sari et al. (2023) reported that Webtoon-based activities lifted students' motivation and creativity in narrative writing. This study lends further support to these results, showing that Webtoon can function as an effective medium for developing students' narrative writing ability.

The favorable effect of horror-themed Webtoon on narrative writing ability can likely be traced to its particular blend of visual and textual elements. Illustrations, dialogues, and sequential storytelling gave students concrete depictions of narrative components including characters, settings, conflicts, and resolutions, which in turn clarified how a narrative text is built and offered material students could adapt into their own compositions. As a result, students faced fewer obstacles when generating ideas and arranging events into a coherent narrative.

This outcome supports the premise that effective writing instruction ought to furnish learners with meaningful contexts for expressing their ideas. Jubhari et al. (2022) similarly argue that writing skills develop more readily when students obtain sufficient contextual support to organize ideas and convey meaning. In line with this, horror-themed Webtoon in the present study offered contextualized visual and textual input that helped students build more coherent narrative texts.

Beyond that, Webtoon's fusion of visual and textual information supports multimedia learning by letting students process content through more than one channel at once. Its visual representations assist learners in following story sequences and the relationships among events, while the written dialogues supply language input that students can rework into their own narratives. This combination enabled students to develop ideas with greater confidence and organize their writing more effectively across the learning process.

The horror theme itself may also have played a part in sustaining students' engagement throughout the learning process, a point echoed by Darmawanti (2022), who noted that Webtoon offers accessible and engaging learning materials capable of lifting students' motivation and participation in language learning. Horror narratives, with their suspenseful plots and unforeseen twists, tend to seize readers' attention and pique their curiosity, prompting students to follow the storyline closely and explore the narrative elements the Webtoon presents. This heightened involvement gave students inspiration for their own narrative writing, suggesting that an appealing theme can strengthen students' willingness to take part in writing tasks and express ideas more creatively.

These findings are further reinforced by the notion that visual media can ease language learning by delivering contextualized input. Because Webtoon conveys information through both visual and written channels, students were able to process meaning more effectively than they would relying on text alone. Its visual support in particular helped students follow story progression and the relationships between events, both central to narrative writing. Webtoon thus functioned not merely as an entertaining medium but also as a genuine learning resource that supported the growth of students' writing ability.

The use of horror-themed Webtoon in this study is also in line with prior research underscoring the value of digital comics for language learning. Earlier researchers have reported that Webtoon can lift students' motivation, creativity, and writing performance through the meaningful contexts and appealing materials it provides. Building on this body of work, the present study shows that the horror variant of Webtoon, specifically, can likewise be integrated effectively into narrative writing instruction for senior high school students within the Indonesian EFL setting.

These results carry a practical implication: English teachers might consider bringing Webtoon into their writing lessons as an alternative learning medium. Careful selection of Webtoon stories would let teachers offer students engaging material that supports idea generation and narrative text development, while weaving digital media into classroom practice may also foster a more interactive learning atmosphere and draw students into taking a more active role in writing tasks.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

CONCLUSION

This research set out to examine the effect of horror-themed Webtoon on the narrative writing ability of students at SMA Negeri 4 Kota Kediri, and the findings confirm its value as an instructional medium for supporting that development. By blending visual and textual elements, Webtoon supplied meaningful contexts that assisted students in generating ideas, grasping narrative structures, and producing more coherent written texts, while the engaging quality of horror narratives encouraged active participation in writing activities. Horror-themed Webtoon can therefore be regarded as a worthwhile digital learning medium for strengthening narrative writing ability in EFL classrooms.

SUGGESTION

Drawing on these findings, English teachers are encouraged to bring horror-themed Webtoon into narrative writing instruction as a way of creating more engaging and meaningful learning experiences, given that visual storytelling can help students generate ideas and deepen their understanding of narrative text structures. Future researchers, meanwhile, are advised to test the effectiveness of horror-themed Webtoon across larger samples, different educational levels, or alternative research designs so as to build a broader evidence base regarding its impact on students' writing development.

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