

IMPROVING STUDENTS' WRITING SKILL OF NARATIVE TEXT THROUGH FLOWCHART STRUCTURE

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ABSTRACT

English involves four skills, one of which is writing. Writing is a way to convey thoughts and ideas into written form. It is not merely a process of connecting words into sentences or paragraphs, but rather a sequence or series of organized ideas, thoughts, and feelings expressed through words and combined into sentences that form coherent paragraphs in which each sentence is closely related to the next. The urgency of this research lies in the fact that students often do not know how to write effectively and lack confidence in expressing themselves. Second-semester students frequently complain when asked to write and struggle to identify, generate, and translate the ideas in their minds into written English. Other problems commonly encountered include limited understanding of proper grammar, minimal time spent on writing, and the perception that writing is a boring activity. Students' failure in writing is likely influenced by the instructional media used by lecturers during the learning process. Several studies indicate that effective instructional media, such as flowcharts and flip charts, can help students better understand and produce written texts. Flowcharts can simplify the writing process by presenting information visually, assisting students in understanding the steps involved in composing a text. The purpose of this study is to determine whether flowchart structure media can improve students' ability to write narrative texts. The research design employed in this study is Classroom Action Research (CAR), which is a method used to objectively and systematically solve instructional problems. CAR is applied in this study to examine the improvement of students' narrative writing ability. Action research is an important tool that empowers teachers to find their own answers to their instructional questions. Moreover, CAR is useful for improving and modifying teaching and learning processes.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the most demanding skills for learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) because it requires the ability to generate ideas, transform them into written form, and organize them coherently (Sudarmaji et al., 2020). Unlike receptive

skills such as listening and speaking, which develop naturally through exposure, writing demands deliberate cognitive processing, linguistic accuracy, and mastery of genre conventions. Many EFL students struggle with writing as they often lack confidence, have limited grammatical control, and face difficulties in developing and sequencing ideas (Mardin Silalahi & Yusri Puspita Sari, 2021). These challenges are particularly evident in narrative writing, a genre that requires writers to construct logical storylines, organize events chronologically, and maintain coherence throughout the text. Classroom observations frequently show that students hesitate when asked to write, remain silent due to a lack of ideas, or fail to structure a narrative effectively, indicating both linguistic and conceptual challenges.

Pedagogical factors further contribute to these difficulties. Writing instruction in many classrooms relies heavily on teacher-centered approaches, textbook-based explanations, and decontextualized grammar exercises. Such practices provide limited support for students to plan, explore, and develop ideas before writing (CHANTIKA, 2023). As a result, students often perceive writing as boring and difficult, and they tend to produce poorly organized texts. This situation highlights the need for engaging, supportive, and process-oriented instructional media that can scaffold students' cognitive processes during writing.

Research has shown that visual media can play an important role in enhancing students' writing performance. Rahmawati (2010) demonstrated that flowcharts helped students understand narrative texts more effectively, while Aini (2010) found that flip charts supported students in writing English sentences. Visual aids, such as graphic organizers, reduce cognitive load, help students conceptualize and structure ideas, and make learning more interactive (Pertiwi et al., 2018). One visual tool with strong potential for teaching narrative writing is the flowchart structure. Flowcharts use interconnected boxes and arrows to illustrate the sequence of events, making them useful for mapping the orientation, complication, and resolution of a story. As a pre-writing tool, flowcharts assist students in generating ideas, planning storylines, and visualizing narrative progression before writing their drafts (Abdullah et al., 2021).

Despite its potential, the use of varied instructional media remains limited in many EFL classrooms, where teachers rely primarily on textbooks. Students become disengaged, and writing challenges persist because they lack visual scaffolds that support their thinking process (Basonggo, 2016). Therefore, more research is needed to explore how flowchart structures can be used effectively to improve narrative writing skills (Hughes et al., 2019).

This study seeks to address this gap by examining the effectiveness of flowchart structure media in improving students' ability to write narrative texts. Through a Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach, this study investigates how flowcharts support students in planning and organizing their ideas, developing coherent narratives, and improving overall writing performance (Chung et al., 2021). The findings are expected to contribute both theoretically and pedagogically by offering insights into the use of visual media in EFL writing instruction and providing teachers with practical strategies to enhance students' engagement and narrative writing skills.

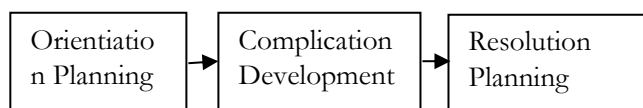


Figure 1. Framework of Flowchart in Narrative Writing Instruction

This framework illustrates that visualizing these components, students can organize ideas, maintain chronological order, and produce more structured and coherent narrative texts (Yulianti et al., 2019). The framework assumes that flowchart-assisted planning leads to better writing outcomes, supporting content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics (Suryadi et al., 2022).

2. METHODS

A This study employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design to investigate the effectiveness of using flowchart structure media in improving students' ability to write narrative texts. Classroom Action Research was chosen because it allows the teacher-researcher to identify real problems occurring in the classroom, implement instructional interventions, and evaluate their impact through a cyclical and reflective process (Imran, 2022). The model of CAR used in this study follows the framework proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart, which consists of four interconnected stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection (Kusumawati et al., 2020). The research was conducted in two cycles, with each cycle designed to refine the instructional strategy based on the results of the previous one (Rossa et al., 2021).

The research was carried out in a second-semester class of the English Education Department at a private university in Indonesia. The class comprised a heterogeneous group of students with varied English proficiency levels. They were selected purposively because preliminary observations revealed that they experienced significant challenges in narrative writing, such as difficulties in generating ideas, structuring events logically, and maintaining coherence. As both the teacher and researcher, the author facilitated the instructional activities and simultaneously documented the learning process (Sagita et al., 2008).

Multiple instruments were used to collect data. The primary instrument was a series of writing tests administered before the intervention (pre-test), at the end of Cycle 1, and at the end of Cycle 2. These tests required students to write narrative texts, which were evaluated analytically using a rubric adapted from Jacobs et al. in Weigle (2002). The rubric assessed five components: content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics (Lestari & Sihombing, 2022). In addition to the writing tests, observational data were gathered through an observation checklist and field notes that recorded students' engagement, behavior, challenges encountered during the lesson, and the teacher's implementation of the flowchart media (Imelda et al., 2019). Documentation such as photographs, students' worksheets, and classroom materials supported the description and interpretation of classroom events.

The procedure of the research unfolded across two cycles. In the planning stage of Cycle 1, lesson plans were created to introduce narrative structure and incorporate flowchart media as a pre-writing tool. During the action stage, students were guided to

understand the orientation, complication, and resolution of a narrative. They were shown how to use flowcharts to brainstorm ideas and map out the sequence of events before writing their drafts. The observation stage involved monitoring the learning process, noting student participation, and identifying difficulties through checklists and field notes. Reflection on the results of Cycle 1 revealed that while flowcharts helped students generate ideas, many students needed clearer examples and more explicit guidance in developing detailed story components. These reflections informed adjustments for Cycle 2.

Cycle 2 involved improved instructional strategies, including providing more detailed flowchart models, offering extended time for brainstorming, and facilitating peer discussions to help students refine their storylines. The actions in Cycle 2 aimed to strengthen students' understanding of narrative progression and enhance their ability to convert flowchart ideas into coherent written texts. Observations during Cycle 2 showed increased participation, improved organization of ideas, and greater confidence among students (Ratnasari, 2017). The cycle ended with a post-test that demonstrated substantial improvement in narrative writing performance compared to the previous tests.

Data analysis in this study used both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitatively, students' writing scores from the pre-test, Cycle 1 post-test, and Cycle 2 post-test were compared by calculating the mean scores to determine improvements in the five writing components. Qualitative data from observations, field notes, and documentation were analyzed using thematic analysis, focusing on patterns related to student engagement, the effectiveness of flowchart media, and classroom interactions. These qualitative insights enriched the interpretation of the quantitative findings and provided a deeper understanding of the instructional process (Gabriela, 2021).

To maintain the credibility and trustworthiness of the research, several validation techniques were employed. Data triangulation was used by comparing findings from multiple sources: writing tests, observations, and documentation. Member checking was conducted during reflections to ensure that interpretations were aligned with classroom realities (Saefullah, 2020). Peer debriefing with fellow lecturers helped refine the instructional plans and confirm the accuracy of the analysis. Additionally, an audit trail was maintained throughout the study to document the procedures, materials, and decisions made during the research process (Serungke et al., 2023).

Overall, the research method was designed to systematically examine how flowchart structure media could enhance students' narrative writing skills while simultaneously improving classroom practices through reflective teaching.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aimed to examine the improvement of fifth-semester students' narrative writing ability through the use of flowchart structure as a pre-writing instructional medium. Data were collected through pre-tests, post-tests, observations, and interviews. The findings show that flowchart activities significantly helped students improve their

ability to develop plot structure, organize ideas, and produce more coherent and cohesive narratives (Pembelajaran, 2023).

Improvement of Students' Writing Ability

The pre-test results revealed that many students struggled with:

1. identifying the narrative structure (orientation–complication–resolution),
2. developing conflicts,
3. maintaining a consistent point of view,
4. using sequence markers appropriately,
5. and arranging paragraphs logically.

After the implementation of the flowchart structure, students showed substantial improvement. The distribution of final scores is presented in the following table.

Table 1. Distribution of Students' Writing Scores

Category	Score Range	Number of Students	Percentage
High	≥ 85	12	36%
Medium	75–84	17	52%
Low	≤ 74	4	12%

These results indicate that 88% of students achieved medium to high categories, demonstrating that flowchart activities effectively supported students as they planned and developed their ideas.

The Impact of Flowchart on Narrative Structure

Thematic analysis from observation sheets and analytic scoring rubrics revealed that flowcharts supported students in three major aspects of narrative writing.

a. Organization of Ideas

The flowchart served as a “story map” that guided students to identify:

1. main characters,
2. setting,
3. trigger of conflict,
4. climax,
5. resolution.

Students reported that visualizing the sequence of events helped them understand the connections between parts of the story before they began writing. This finding aligns with Weigle's (2002) assertion that visual planning tools enhance coherence (Widyalaksono et al., 2020).

b. Story Development

Students who previously produced short, fragmented paragraphs began to write longer, more structured narratives with clearer conflicts and resolutions. Flowcharts helped students:

1. avoid repetition,
2. clarify cause–effect relationships,

3. maintain chronological order.

During interviews, most students stated that flowcharts made them “more confident in developing the story” because the structure was already visible and organized.

c. Linguistic Features

Although flowcharts primarily enhance structural organization, improvements were also visible in linguistic aspects such as (Zahro’ et al., 2024):

1. more consistent use of past tense,
2. appropriate use of sequence markers (e.g., first, then, suddenly),
3. more relevant vocabulary choices.

Observations showed that students revised less frequently because their ideas were already well-prepared before writing.

Analysis of Score Changes Across Writing Components

Table 2. Improvement in Each Writing Component

Component	Pre-test (Mean)	Post-test (Mean)	Improvement
Content	62	82	+20
Organization	58	85	+27
Vocabulary	64	80	+16
Grammar	60	78	+18
Mechanics	70	82	+12

The highest improvement was observed in organization (+27), confirming that flowcharts are highly effective for guiding narrative structure.

Students’ Perceptions of Flowchart Structure

Interview data revealed three central themes:

(1) Clarity Before Writing

Students felt that the writing process became easier once they had a visual layout of the plot.

“Usually it’s hard to start, but the flowchart makes the steps clear.”

(2) Reduced Writing Anxiety

Students who previously hesitated to begin writing experienced reduced anxiety.

“I’m not afraid of writing anymore because the flowchart guides me.”

(3) Increased Creativity

Flowcharts did not limit students’ creativity; instead, they encouraged more idea exploration.

“When the plot is clear, I can improvise more freely.”

Discussion of Findings

The findings support several theoretical perspectives:

1. **Cognitive Theory of Writing (Flower & Hayes):**
Visual planning reduces cognitive load and allows students to focus on content development.
2. **Process Writing Approach:**
Flowcharts strengthen the pre-writing stage, which is foundational for effective composition.
3. **Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky):**

Flowcharts act as a mediational tool that helps students internalize narrative structure.

These results are consistent with previous studies indicating that graphic organizers enhance writing quality (e.g., Graham & Harris, 2018). Thus, the flowchart functions not merely as a visual aid but as a cognitive tool that enables learners to organize ideas, plan plot progression, and write more systematically (Isnaeni & Radia, 2021).

4. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the research, it can be concluded that the use of flowchart structure media can improve students' ability in writing narrative texts. The implementation of flowcharts in the writing process helps students organize their ideas systematically, identify the structure of narrative texts, and develop their thoughts into coherent paragraphs. Through the visual representation provided by flowcharts, students become more aware of the sequence of events, the relationship between ideas, and the essential components of narrative writing, such as orientation, complication, and resolution.

The results of the Classroom Action Research indicate that students showed improvement in their writing performance after the implementation of flowchart structure media. The students became more motivated, confident, and actively involved in the writing activities. The use of flowcharts also reduced students' difficulties in generating ideas and arranging sentences, which were previously considered major obstacles in writing narrative texts. Furthermore, students demonstrated better understanding of vocabulary use, sentence organization, and grammatical structures in their writing.

Therefore, flowchart structure media can be considered an effective instructional strategy for improving students' narrative writing skills. It provides students with a clear framework that facilitates the writing process from generating ideas to producing a complete narrative text. This study suggests that English lecturers and teachers can utilize flowchart structures as an alternative teaching medium to create a more effective, engaging, and student-centered writing learning environment.

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