

Improving Students' Narrative Text Writing through Narrative Endings and Story Mountain

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Abstract

Writing skills are an essential part of communication. Good writing skills enable people to deliver their message clearly and efficiently. However, writing in a foreign language is considered the most difficult skill among other skills. Thus, the students face many challenges in writing. Hence, this study aims to investigate narrative ending and story mountain templates in improving students' ability to write narrative text. The study was conducted in SMA Islam Nurul Fikri Boarding School Serang. The participants were grade X Science 4 consists of 27 female students. The method used was classroom action research. The data was gained from observation, the writing tests, and the questionnaires given to the students. The study results based on the observation showed that the students showed more enthusiasm when the teacher applied narrative ending and story mountain template in teaching narrative text. The scores of the students' writing improved from the pre-test, which was 77, cycle 1 was 82, and cycle 2 was 86. The questionnaires revealed that the students enjoyed the writing class using narrative ending and story mountain template. They believed that both techniques were good to improve their writing skills of narrative text. Thus, it can be concluded that narrative ending and story mountain can improve students' writing of the narrative text.

Keywords: *narrative ending, narrative text, story mountain,*

Introduction

Writing skill in English is one of the components of success in English mastery. Learners have to know how to get suitable methods and selective materials to improve their mastery of writing skills. This phenomenon also happens in secondary school learners in Indonesia. English teachers need to improve their students' writing skills accurately within this school learners.

They also need to find the best method and material to deliver that suits the students' situation. Thus, evaluate them to know the effectiveness of that method and materials. This phenomenon also happens at school of Nurul Fikri Boarding School Serang. It could

be a challenging case as the writers investigated the phenomenon of their students' writing learning.

At first, the writers considered problems in teaching writing to the students in class X IPA4. Some of the issues found from the students' reflection after writing class were the wrong choice of stories to write, limited vocabulary, and difficulties in elaborating words. They had many ideas in their mind, and however, when they were about to write in English, they found so many difficulties. Another fact was that they are rarely exposed to reading English text. Hence, they wrote straightforward. In conclusion, they said that reading and writing were not attractive.



Based on that condition, this research implemented narrative ending activities and story mountain to improve students' writing ability. As writing is considered the most challenging skill, the researcher would like to solve the problems in teaching narrative text. The narrative text is a fictional story intended to entertain readers. Thus, by using narrative text as a genre for teaching writing, the students will be more interested and easier to study because the narrative text tells us an exciting story that can make students enjoy reading (Fitriani, 2018). When the students enjoy reading, later they could write and create their own story through narrative ending activities.

The narrative ending is part of creative writing. It emphasizes the creative employs humans in that non-physical realm and what we must have called human imagination (Harper, 2004). These narrative ending activities allow the students to be creative in continuing the story in their version. They are free to write about their ideas, feelings, and opinions.

To support the creative ideas in writing narrative, the writers implemented story mountain template as the media to write. According to Mateer et al (2014), using media engages students, improves knowledge retention, piques students' interest in the subject matter, and emphasizes the relevance of a variety of themes. Story mountain is intended to help the students to stay focused in their writing, as cited in (Pratama et al, 2018).

Thus, the creative ideas in writing narrative text using narrative ending will be more focus by using this template.

Studies about improving students' writing skills of narrative text are a lot. However, there was no research about the narrative ending and story mountain template. Some researchers used story generators or story makers. One of them was a study from Spain (Laclaustra et al, 2014). This R&D research was designed to make a prototype of a story generator. Thus, the design was implemented for some participants to know the quality of the story generator.

Another similar research was Aulianisa (2019). It stated that the design was qualitative research, but she did not specify what method was used in that study. The data was taken from observation, questionnaire, and interview. However, this research was classroom action research, and the data was gained from tests, observation, and questionnaires.

The following study was Mulyani, (2016). This classroom action research was carried out in a university's English department. Nevertheless, this research was held on senior high school students and did not use Task-Based Language Teaching.

Both kinds of research from Aulianisa (2019) and Mulyani (2016) used story generator or story maker applications. They set the story, and the story generator will produce the ending. However, in this research, the students did not use any tools or



applications in designing and writing the story. Thus, the students develop their ideas to continue the story in their writing independently.

Besides, there was no research about using the story mountain template to write narrative text. However, there was a similarity between story mapping and story mountain. Both were templates to help the students write. One of the researches was from (Yuliana, 2018). It was a quasi-experimental design. The result showed that the story mapping improved students' writing in narrative text. However, this research used a story mountain template, and the research design was classroom action research. The use of this template will be helpful for EFL writers to make them focus and connect the ideas. Based on those considerations, the writers are interested in conducting the research entitled "Improving Students' Narrative Text Writing through Narrative Ending and Story Mountain."

Based on the study's background, the formulation of the problem is as follow: can narrative ending and story mountain improve the students writing skills of narrative text? The result of this research is hopefully beneficial for both teachers and students. Teachers could use narrative ending and story mountain as exciting techniques and media in writing narrative text. Thus, they can improve students' motivation and ability in writing narrative text.

Theoretical Review

Teaching Writing

In this internet era, the ability to write is very crucial. Writing is the dominant communication in our social media life. Thus, writing helps humans to communicate. Writing encourages students to concentrate on using correct words. Because they think as they write; it may well provoke language development as they resolve problems the writer puts into their minds (Harmer, 2004). Students often have more time to ponder than they do when participating in speaking activities when writing.

However, writing in English as L2 is not that simple. For many ESL/EFL students, writing is the most difficult of the four language skills due to its complexity in spelling, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammatical structure (Rao, 2019). Moreover, writing is the most complex and challenging skill. This difficulty is in generating and organizing ideas and translating these ideas into readable texts (Richards & Renandya, 2002). Therefore, they added that the limited capacity of working memory and limited language proficiency might cause those problems in writing. To overcome the problems, the teachers need to build an enjoyable atmosphere to motivate students. The teachers should design the class with a specific goal and reasonable steps to write well.



Assessing Writing

Like any other teaching activity, especially in a formal setting, is followed by an assessment activity, the teaching of writing also requires an assessment phase. The purpose of the assessment phase is to offer information on students' level of achievement and the effectiveness of the educational program (Hyland, 2003). Thus, assessing writing is essential in English language teaching.

However, writing assessment, like language testing in general, is characterized by a blend of theories, concepts, and methodologies drawn from two essential fields of research: applied linguistics and psychometrics (Eckes & Zimmermann, 2017). Thus, writing assessment could be used most effectively with instruction when the criteria for scoring written products were clear to the students and when the students saw an apparent relationship between what they have written and the scores they received.

One way to use writing assessment in instruction is to share the scoring rubrics with students, and the assessment criteria should be public for students and be familiarized with the scoring rubrics to plan their writing effectively. The students would learn the writing assessment, guiding them in writing.

Therefore, the writing assessment should fulfill some requirements. The first was the validity and reliability of the assessment. Next, in evaluating the writing assessment, there are three points that we must

consider that, is rater qualification, quality control procedures, and having a measurement model (Nodoushan, 2014). This study has covered those requirements above.

In this research, the writers were the rater. The rater used analytical scoring Jacobson, the most popular writing scoring rubric (Weigle, 2009). Analytical scoring was chosen because it was more reliable, appropriate for L2 writers, and valuable diagnostic variables on each item. The writer kept the rubric and the scoring guidance from Jacobson. However, the score given to the student was holistic.

Narrative text

Narrative text tells the story of a set of logically and chronologically related events that are brought about or experienced by various factors (Rebecca, 2003). Moreover, the narrative text has an influential social role beyond being a medium for entertainment (Knapp & Watkins, 2005). So, the narrative text has problematic events that must be solved at the end of the story, and the purpose is to entertain the readers.

There are many reasons why it is essential to learn narrative writing. Based on www.k5learning.com, among them are (1) stimulating their imagination and fostering their artistic expression, students can express themselves creatively through a narrative essay; (2) to help students clarify their thinking, teach them to express that in writing in an organized way; and (3) to help them

search for identity, narrative writing helps them explore different characters and settings.

Narrative Ending

There are many names for narrative ending finish the story, narrative endings, or write your conclusion. The term narrative ending does not mean that it discusses only the ending of a story. However, it is about the journey of the story itself.

If the writers cannot pick that one ending, whether because it feels wrong or cannot find it, their writing structure is terrible. This might sound awful, but see the flip side of it: if their ending feels right, it usually means the entire narrative preceding it is also correct.

Thus, the narrative ending challenges children to think of a different end. This activity could be a different ending altogether or a description of what happens later. They build their creativity in developing their story. They could add more characters, problems, and solutions in their writing.

Hence, these kinds of activities allow students to create their narrative endings. There are no tools or apps for this, such as a story generator. Instead, the students will explore their ideas, feelings, and thoughts to continue their own stories. This narrative ending activity will build students' communication, creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration. Hence, the narrative ending is classified as creative writing as the goal is to create the continuation of the story. Therefore, the teachers need to introduce

narrative endings to know various ways to end the story.

There are lots of ways of narrative endings. These are gathered from Nannini (2018) Circular Ending, Surprise Ending/Twist, Lesson or Moral Ending, Cliff hanger Ending, Question Ending, Funny Thought/Humour Ending, Image ending, Dialogue ending, Reflection Ending, and Warm Fuzzy/ Capturing Emotion Ending.

Story Mountain

Story mountain is one of the graphic writing organizers. Graphic organizers effectively encouraged selecting, organizing, and integrating cognitively in concluding (Ponce & Mayer, 2014). These visual learning tools reveal the structure of concepts and their relationships.

Story mountain is a graphic writing organizer just like story mapping. In addition, story mapping is a story structure. It is a visible depiction of the story by writing the crucial elements of the story such as character, setting, plot, and theme (Tabatabaei & Radi, 2013). Both story mapping and story mountain look alike and have the same function.

Thus, the design was the differences between the story mountain and the story mapping. The Story mountain builds to a powerful climax or challenge that must be surmounted before the story can be resolved and concluded on the other side of the 'mountain.' The mountain's outline depicts the typical 'rise and fall' plot arc.



By using this template, the students can focus on their writing. As narrative ending is considered as creative writing, thus this template will help them focus on each part of narrative text. The guidelines on the top of each block help the students develop their writing to be cohesive and coherent.

There were no previous studies on improving students' narrative text writing through narrative endings and story mountain. However, some similar studies were as follows. The first was a study by (Laclaustra et al, 2014). The writers described a story generator prototype that uses a multi-agent system and a planner to stimulate and generate a story. The result of the study stated that simply the story generator worked well on the simple modifications. It could cause a fair amount of different, although related, stories.

The second study was from Aulianisa,(2019) and the third study was from Mulyani, (2016). Both studies' result was that cartoon story maker was good for the students to improve writing narrative text. The fourth study was from Yuliana (2018), which stated that the story mapping improved students' writing in narrative text. Thus, the difference among those researches is that this research used narrative ending and story mountain.

Method

Classroom action research was the method used in this study. Action research is a problem-solving strategy that uses real action in the innovative development process

that "try as we go along" to detect and solve problems (Arikunto, 2010). The parties involved in these activities can support each other in the process. So, based on those theories, this research would like to solve the problems in writing narrative text through the narrative ending and the use of story mountain template in class X Science 4 SMA Islam Nurul Fikri. This research was carried out in SMA Islam Nurul Fikri Boarding School Serang. The subject of the study was 27 students of class X IPA 4, the class was chosen as the participation level, and the average score was low. This research was conducted from October 2021 to January 2022.

The data analysis technique was done by analyzing the findings of the pre-and post-tests on writing skills and observations and questionnaire evaluations and then presenting them as numerical data. This research's data collection techniques were tests (pre-test, post-test in cycles 1 and 2), observation, and questionnaire methods. The pre-test and post-test methods were used to measure the progress in writing skills. Observations were used to investigate students' behavior on the research, and questionnaires were used to understand students' perception toward narrative ending activities and the use story mountain template to improve students' ability to write narrative text.

There were four procedures to conduct the action research. They were as follows: plan, collect data, analyze and reflect (Henning, Stone & Kelly, 2009). In the

planning session, the researchers made lesson plans, instruments, and tasks using narrative endings and story mountain templates to improve the students' writing skills. The study was intended to be conducted in five meetings.

In the second procedure, collecting data (action or implementation), the data taken from the teaching and learning process implementations. In the pre-test, students wrote free topics of any narrative texts they had known. Then in cycle 2, they got an explanation about the narrative ending. Thus, they were assigned to write a narrative text based on their preferred ending or their chosen narrative ending. In cycle 3, they wrote another narrative text using assigned narrative endings chosen by the teachers. Both cycles 1 and 2 were held in 4 meetings. In this stage, the students designed their writing outline then wrote the complete writings using narrative ending and story mountain.

In the third procedure, analyzing (Observation), the researchers collect data related to the application of writing, the strategies, and the teacher's way in solving the problem and student's work. Observations were held during the teaching and learning process. This study used a questionnaire, an observation, and a test.

The last procedure is the reflection. The writer and the teacher worked together to discover the mistakes or obstacles during the action in each cycle. The reflection phases consisted of a three-step process. The first step was interpreting data and explaining the

observation result. The writers and teacher found a variety of explanations which was helpful in the second step of the reflection process; they will decide ways to be applied in the next cycle as the problem-solving in the previous cycle and arrange the second lesson plan. The third phase in the reflection process is to justify new teaching practices using statistics, best practices, educational research, or educational theory to back them up.

The data analysis technique was carried out by analyzing the results of the pre-test and post-test (cycle 1 and 2) by using Jacobs et al. (1981) scoring profile taken from *Assessing Writing's* book (Weigle, 2009). Observations and questionnaire evaluations were then described in the form of numerical data.

Result

Based on the student's writing test, it was found that the students showed progress from the pre-test, cycle 1, and cycle 2.

Table 1. The Average Scores of Students' Writing

Pre-test	Cycle 1	Cycle 2
77	82	86

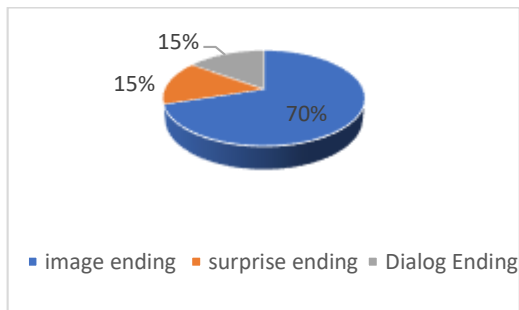
Based on the table, we could see that the students showed good progress in writing narrative text. In the pre-test, the average score was 77, then in cycle 2, it improved to 82, and in cycle 3, it improved to 86. Students were assigned to write the story they already knew in the pre-test. In cycle 1, the teacher gave an opening of a story. Thus, the students were asked to continue using their chosen

narrative ending. In cycle 2, the students were assigned to continue the story using assigned narrative endings by the teacher.

The Result of Observations

From the observations conducted in the pre-test, students were not interested in writing narrative text that they had known. They stated to the teacher that it was boring. In cycle 1 they were thrilled and engaged in the learning process. When the teacher showed famous movies and the students analyzed how the story ended, they were enthusiastic. Thus, the students were assigned to continue an opening paragraph in this cycle. They were free to choose the narrative ending they liked. The students were enthusiastic.

Figure 2. Narrative Endings in Cycle 1



From the table and the figure above, we could see that in cycle 1, when they were free to choose their endings, mainly they chose image ending that was 19 students or 70%. The rest chose surprise ending 15% and dialog ending 15%. This result was an interesting fact that they chose only three of them among the ten kinds of narrative endings.

Nevertheless, Table 1 about the writing results showed that the students progressed in cycles 1 and 2, with 4 points from 82 to 86.

The progress included writing assessments' five aspects: content, organization, language use, vocabulary, and mechanics. Although in cycle 2 they said that they did not like doing the assigned one, they showed good performance. Perhaps, they considered that assigned activity as a challenge.

Students' Perspective Toward Narrative Ending and Story Mountain Template

Based on the questionnaire's analysis, the students showed positive responses toward implementation of narrative ending and story mountain in writing narrative text. More than 90% of students expressed that they enjoyed and benefited from the learning activity of narrative ending, as shown in table 2.

Table 2. Students' Perception toward Narrative Endings

Questions	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
I have never heard about narrative ending before	55,6%	37%	7,40%
I wonder why stories in novels or films use different endings	100%	0%	0%
I enjoy the narrative ending activities in my class	96%	4%	0%
I give my full attention during the narrative ending activities	92,6%	7.40%	0%
Narrative ending activities challenged me to be creative in expanding the story.	92,6%	7.40%	0%
Now I know many variations in narrative ending	96%	4%	0%
The stories used for story ending is appropriate for students	100%	0%	0%
I prefer to choose writing narrative ending in my own choice	96%	4%	0%
I believe that narrative endings improved my writing skills.	96%	4%	0%
Narrative ending is good in improving the 4CS : Communication, collaboration, Creativity, and Critical Thinking	96%	4%	0%

From table 2, we could see that more than half of the students did not know about narrative ending before. However, every time they read stories or watch movies, they wonder why the endings were different. This condition indicated that they were critical. So, when they learned about kinds of narrative endings from famous movies, they enjoyed the activity that was 96% or 26 students out of 27. Therefore, they gave full attention during the class.

The unique finding in this questionnaire was the fact that 96,3% of students preferred writing on their own choice in cycle 1. This situation aligned with the observation that students had more enthusiasm in cycle 1 than in cycle 2. Moreover, the story used in this writing project in cycles 1 and 2 was 100% appropriate, according to the students.

The narrative endings benefited the students because they knew about the variations of the narrative endings (96,3%), and their writing of narrative text was improved. Besides that, the student stated that narrative endings improved their 4Cs learning that was 96%. The students' feeling toward the story mountain template was positive too. We could see from table 3 below.

Table 3. Students' Perception toward Story Mountain

Questions	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
I like using story mountain template in writing narrative text	74,1%	25,9%	0%
I feel confident on writing using Story Mountain template	70,4%	29,6%	0%

story mountain template helps me improve my writing skill of narrative text	96%	4%	0%
Story mountain is good in improving the 4C: Communication, collaboration, Creativity, and Critical Thinking	96%	4%	0%

Table 3 revealed that the students liked using the story mountain template that was 74.1%, and they felt confident writing using it 70,4%. Those who disagreed with story mountain thought that using the template was not enough to express their ideas. Thus, a few of them did not use the template. Their writings were a lot more expanded than the template given. However, they focused on developing the ideas using that template to focus.

From the open questions in the questionnaires asking for their opinion about the narrative ending and story mountain template, they all responded positively. These are some examples.

Student 1: *I enjoyed this project, and learning becomes easier with the format that has been given by miss nana.*

Student 2: *Really fun. I did not know before that movies and stories in books turned out to have a predetermined ending from the start, and there are various kinds of things like that, now I know.*

Student 3: *Project of Narrative Endings and story mountain was cool and unusual to teach students. I enjoyed the process.*

Student 4: *I feel helped and facilitated in making narrative texts. Previously I was confused about how do I end the story and how to make a spectacular ending. Now I guess I feel more creative and more imaginative in developing my narrative text. I also find it easier to write narrative texts because the*



story mountain project helps it. Last but not least, I can get much new vocabulary and add much new diction. Thank you, Miss Nana for your hard work

The result of this research argued the previous literature that writing in a second language may be hampered because of limited second language knowledge and the need to focus on the language rather than content (Weigle, 2009). However, narrative ending as the writing strategy helps the students build the idea or the creativity. Thus, using story mountain as the template in writing narrative text helps the students focus and connect the ideas on each part of the structure. By having the research in 2 cycles, their writings and idea development are improved.

Thus, the result of this research is also in line with the previous research that the use of exciting strategy and media of teaching such as the use of story generator and story mapping is effective in improving students' writing in narrative text. This research using narrative ending and story mountain has proved to be effective in improving students' writing in narrative text in SMA Islam Nurul Fikri Boarding School.

Conclusion

The conclusion is drawn from the result of the students writing, observations, and questionnaire found that narrative endings and story mountain template were good in improving students' writing of the narrative text. The students writing improved from the pre-test, cycle 1, and cycle 2.

Thus, the observation found that they enjoyed the class and focused on the learning. The students knew the variation of narrative endings, and they believed that their writing of narrative text was improved. The questionnaire found that the students gave positive responses toward the implementation of narrative endings and the use of story mountain in improving student's writing of the narrative text.

Some recommendations are made based on the study's findings to improve the quality of English language teaching, particularly in writing skills. Considering the positive effect of the strategy and media used in this study, the researcher suggested teachers use narrative endings and story mountain templates in narrative writing class. Moreover, the students could benefit from narrative endings and story mountain as a medium of English language learning.

Meanwhile, future researchers recommend studying narrative ending and story mountain in other skills such as speaking. The creative ideas in the narrative ending are suitable with the 4Cs in 21st-century learning: Communication, Collaboration, Critical thinking, and Creativity. Thus, the researchers could use other research designs and methods

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