The Use of Constructivist Approach in Learning Short Stories Writing of Nineth Grade Students of SMP Negeri 2 Nambioman Bapai

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ABSTRACT

Writing skills, better known as composing, are one of the four language skills taught to students who learn languages, one of which is writing short stories. As a productive skill, writing requires students to be able to explore, discover, and express ideas, feelings, experiences, and the appropriate use of language. However, in reality, not all students can show these abilities. This research focuses on the influence of learning to write short stories through a constructivism approach. The purpose of this study is to find out whether the constructivism approach used can help and make it easier for students to improve their short story writing skills before and after using the constructivism approach in writing short stories. In this study, the author uses a quasi-experimental method, without a control class or a comparison class. In the use of all these experiments, the author uses the research design of the initial test, treatment, and final test. Learning to write short stories in the initial test got an average of 69.71 and in the final test got an average of 77.59. In the results oft calculating>t table is obtained 10.001 > 2.028, as well as a significance of 0.00 < 0.05. This proves that the constructivism method is effective and very reliable applied to learning to write short stories. The learning results using the constructivism approach are proven to help students find ideas and thoughts in writing short stories by paying attention to the elements that build short stories (theme, plot, setting) and language (spelling and diction).

Key words: Writing Learning, Short Stories, Constructivism Approach.

INTRODUCTION

The scope of the Indonesian Language subject includes components of language skills and literary skills, encompassing aspects of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These four components serve as the foundation for learning Indonesian at the educational unit level, forming a complete framework that must be taught to students. Writing skills, commonly referred to as composing, represent one of the four essential language skills imparted to students learning a language, particularly in the context of crafting short stories. As a productive skill, writing necessitates that students explore, discover, and articulate their ideas, emotions, and experiences

while employing appropriate language.

However, not all students demonstrate proficiency in these areas, revealing a significant gap between expected outcomes and actual performance. Many students struggle with writing due to a lack of confidence and interest, which can be exacerbated by insufficient opportunities for practice. Additionally, various factors contribute to this challenge, such as students' difficulties in expressing ideas and concepts. This is often rooted in limited writing practice, inadequate knowledge, and a constrained imagination, particularly in the short story creation process. Consequently, the end products of students' writing efforts tend to be unstructured and lack depth, failing to reflect the richness of their potential creativity.

Moreover, traditional teaching methods still dominate the educational landscape, often emphasizing a teacher-centered approach. This conventional learning style typically places the teacher at the center of the learning process, leaving little room for student engagement, exploration, or collaborative learning experiences. As a result, students are frequently passive recipients of information rather than active participants in their own learning. This lack of engagement can further hinder their development of critical writing skills, leading to a cycle of frustration and disinterest in writing.

To address these issues, the author proposes the adoption of the constructivist approach in teaching writing. This method emphasizes active learning, where students construct their own understanding and knowledge through experience and reflection. By facilitating a more interactive and student-centered learning environment, the constructivist approach can effectively engage students, allowing them to connect their personal experiences with the process of writing. It encourages students to take ownership of their learning, fostering creativity and critical thinking skills essential for writing short stories.

Additionally, the constructivist method seeks to enhance students' ability to process information and cultivate their imagination, essential components in crafting compelling narratives. Through collaborative learning experiences, students can share ideas, receive feedback, and engage in discussions that stimulate their creative thinking. This not only helps them overcome the limitations of their knowledge and memory but also encourages them to express themselves more freely and authentically in their writing.

In summary, the shift towards a constructivist approach in teaching writing is crucial for addressing the challenges students face in expressing their thoughts and ideas. By creating a supportive and engaging learning environment, educators can empower students to develop their writing skills and nurture their creativity. This research aims to explore the effectiveness of the constructivist approach in enhancing the short story writing skills of ninth-grade students at SMP Negeri 2 Nambioman Bapai, ultimately contributing to a more dynamic and enriching educational experience in the Indonesian Language subject.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Learning

Learning is a process of change towards a better direction carried out by teachers as instructors or providers of knowledge and educators as recipients of knowledge. According to Sutikno (2005:28) learning is all efforts made by educators to ensure that the learning process occurs in students. In general, a method is defined as a way of doing something. Specifically, a learning method can be defined as a unique way or pattern in utilizing various basic principles of education and various techniques and other related resources so that the learning process occurs in the learner (Gintings, 2010:42).

Writing

Writing is one of the language skills that must be mastered by writers. Through writing competence, a person can communicate his ideas effectively to others. According to Kasnadi (2016:1), writing is a literary genre that should not be easy and is in great demand. The steps taken to facilitate the initial writing process according to Pranoto (2004:23-42), namely:

a. Determine your writing style/characteristics
b. Using selected words that suit our soul
c. Pay attention to grammar and punctuation
d. Avoid long-winded story openings. Write the story opening as briefly as possible but hint at the overall content of the story or write a kind of excerpt that makes the reader curious.
e. Don't hesitate or be shy
f. Avoid revising before the writing is finished.

Short Stories

According to Goldberg (2004), a short story is defined as a narrative that spans only a few pages, often approaching the length of a novella. The storytelling within a short story typically emphasizes mood—focusing on the feelings of the reader and characters—over plot, which refers to the sequence of events that occur. The basic elements of a short story can be categorized into intrinsic and linguistic components.

The intrinsic elements include plot, character, mood or atmosphere, theme, style, point of view, and setting, as noted by Sumarjdjo (2004). The theme represents the core idea of a story. As Sumardjo (2004) argues, an author aims not merely to tell a story but to convey a message to readers. Plot, on the other hand, encompasses the events that occur in the narrative. According to Sumardjo (2004), every event has a cause, which drives the plot forward.

When it comes to characters, Aziez and Abdul (2010) point out that short stories typically feature a limited number of characters, necessitating concise descriptions due to space constraints. Syarifani (2009) further elaborates that a story is essentially a sequence of events crafted by the author. The setting or background is another critical element. As noted by Sumardjo (2004), the setting in fiction goes beyond simply indicating when and where an incident occurs; it also encapsulates the essence of a region, including its cultural nuances, the mentality of its people, their lifestyles, and more.

In addition to intrinsic elements, linguistic aspects play a crucial role in writing. Spelling, for instance, is fundamental to written language. Mahmudi (2013) explains that spelling serves as a guide for accurately representing words through letters, adhering to grammatical rules, which encompass phonological, morphological, and syntactic aspects. Word choice, or diction, is another significant linguistic element. Achmadi (1988) describes diction as a broad term that encompasses the appropriateness, correctness, economy, and clarity of word selection. Good diction enhances the overall quality of writing and impacts how ideas are communicated to readers.

Furthermore, the constructivist approach is a vital educational model that emphasizes active learning. According to Karli (2007), in a constructivist learning environment, students engage mentally in constructing their knowledge based on their existing cognitive frameworks. This process involves providing students with complex and realistic tasks, project assignments, and sufficient support to complete their work. Students are encouraged to investigate real-world issues, draw their conclusions, and present their findings. Lastly, constructivist learning encompasses experiences, negotiation (or the exchange of ideas), and interpretation, as noted by Harsanto (2011). This learning paradigm promotes active participation and collaborative knowledge construction, making it an effective strategy for enhancing students' understanding and skills in various subjects, including writing.

METHOD

Design and Sample

The research method is a plan in learning that includes the selection, arrangement, determination of teaching materials that will be given to students, accompanied by assessment and provision of remedial as a benchmark for achieving goals. This study uses a quantitative approach because the data processing is in the form of numbers in statistics. According to Sugiyono (2005:15), quantitative research can be interpreted as data in the form of numbers, or qualitative data that is numbered (scoring). The population of this study was students of class IX SMP Negeri 2 Nambioman Bapai. In this study, the author took samples randomly in the form of a lottery (random). Thus, the sample to be taken in this study is a population that is considered to represent (homogeneous) as a whole and is determined based on the results of the lottery.

The sample in this study was class IX.9, which consisted of 37 students. Sampling was done randomly, taken from 10% of the total number of students. The determination of 10% is based on the thinking of Arikunto (2002:112) in Gani (2013:186) who said that if the population members are more than one hundred people, the number of samples can be drawn as much as 10% - 15% or 20% - 30%. However, if the population is less than one hundred people, then all members of the population should be used as samples.

Instrument and Procedure

To obtain the required data, the researcher conducted a series of studies with the following techniques:

1. Literature review
    This technique is an initial stage before the author conducts research. This activity is carried out by reading literature books or other sources related to research problems, learning education and grammar.

2. Test
The test technique used is a performance test, namely a short story writing performance test. This instrument is used to measure students' abilities, namely to obtain a clearer picture of students' abilities in the subject matter given by the teacher as a measuring tool for the level of success of a learning process.

In this study, the test was given twice. First, a pre-test to determine students' initial ability in writing short stories. Second, a post-test taken by researchers after conducting a short story writing treatment using a constructivist approach. This study also uses two instruments, namely treatment instruments and data collection.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study examines the implementation of a constructivist approach in teaching short story writing to ninth-grade students at SMP Negeri 2 Nambioman Bapai. The focus of the research is to evaluate the effectiveness of this approach by analyzing the results from an initial test and a final test conducted among 37 students. The study aims to determine whether the constructivist approach successfully enhances students' short story writing skills by comparing the average scores from both tests. To establish a baseline for student performance, an initial test was administered before the introduction of the constructivist approach. This test included fundamental concepts related to short stories, such as elements that comprise a short story, including theme, character, plot, setting, and moral. Students were expected to demonstrate their understanding of these elements as well as their linguistic skills. The average score for this initial assessment was 69.71, which did not meet the minimum graduation standard set by the school.

The analysis of the initial test scores revealed several key insights. For instance, in the short story titled "My First Casting," students were able to convey a clear theme and characterization. The score for the theme was 4, indicating that the story's content aligned well with its title. Additionally, characterization was effectively depicted, earning another score of 4. However, the analysis also identified areas for improvement, particularly in spelling and diction, which received scores of 3 and 2, respectively. Overall, despite individual strengths, the collective performance highlighted a need for enhanced writing skills among students.

Following the initial test, the constructivist approach was implemented in the learning process. The teaching method focused on engaging students actively in their learning, encouraging them to construct knowledge through collaboration and practical application. As a result, a final test was administered to assess the impact of this approach on students' writing abilities. The short story "14th Birthday" was one of the narratives evaluated in this final assessment.

The final test results showed a significant improvement in students' writing skills, with an average score of 77.59. This marked an increase of approximately 44% in student performance compared to the initial test scores. The data indicated that 76% of students met the minimum learning standards after using the constructivist approach, contrasting sharply with the initial test where only 32.43% achieved the same.

The analysis of the final test also highlighted specific areas where students demonstrated growth. The thematic consistency within their stories improved, with students earning a score of 4 for their themes, similar to the initial test. Characterization also showed clarity and depth, with students effectively portraying their characters' traits and emotions. While some linguistic aspects, such as spelling and diction, still presented challenges, the overall progress was evident.

Statistical analysis further supported the effectiveness of the constructivist approach. A paired t-test revealed a t-statistic of 10.011, significantly exceeding the critical t-value of 2.028, with a p-value of 0.000. This statistical evidence reinforces the conclusion that the constructivist method substantially improved students' writing performance.

The results of this study suggest that incorporating a constructivist approach not only enhances students' average scores but also cultivates their writing skills across several dimensions. Students demonstrated a better understanding of thematic development, clearer character portrayal, improved plot structuring, and a more accurate use of language. These findings highlight the importance of employing effective teaching strategies that promote active learning and foster a deeper engagement with the writing process.

In conclusion, the constructivist approach has proven to be a reliable and effective method for teaching short story writing to ninth-grade students at SMP Negeri 2

Nambioman Bapai. The significant improvement in student scores from the initial to the final test indicates that this approach successfully enhances writing proficiency. This study underscores the need for educators to adopt innovative teaching strategies that empower students to take an active role in their learning, ultimately leading to improved academic outcomes in creative writing.

As a recommendation for future research, further studies could explore the long-term impact of the constructivist approach on students' writing skills beyond the classroom setting. Additionally, investigating the integration of technology and digital tools within the constructivist framework may provide valuable insights into enhancing student engagement and learning outcomes in writing.

CONCLUSION

After carrying out all the activities in this research, the author can put forward the following conclusions:
1. The constructivism approach is effectively used in learning to write short stories in class IX of SMP Negeri 2 Nambioman Bapai. This is proven by the results of the t-test calculation between the initial test and the final test which states that t count > t table with a value of 10,001 > 2,028.
2. The constructivist approach can improve the learning outcomes of short story writing in class IX of SMP Negeri 2 Nambioman Bapai. This is evident from the increase in the average score from 69.71 to 77.59.
3. The learning outcomes using the constructivist approach have been proven to help students in finding ideas and concepts in writing short stories by paying attention to the elements that build short stories (theme, characterization, plot, setting) and language (spelling and diction).

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