



Exploring the Role of Fairy Tale-Based Pedagogy in Developing EFL Students' Narrative Writing Competence

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Abstract

Writing competence is considered one of the most challenging skills for EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners due to difficulties in generating ideas, organizing texts, and applying appropriate linguistic features. This study aims to explore the role of fairy tale-based pedagogy in developing EFL students' narrative writing competence at the English Department of Institut Agama Islam Darul A'mal (IAIDA) Lampung. This research employed a quasi-experimental design involving experimental and control groups. The participants were undergraduate students enrolled in the English Department, who were selected to examine the effectiveness of fairy tale-based instruction in improving their narrative writing performance. Data were collected through writing tests administered before and after the treatment. The experimental group received writing instruction using fairy tales as learning materials, while the control group was taught using conventional writing techniques. The findings revealed that students who received fairy tale-based pedagogy demonstrated significant improvement in their narrative writing competence compared to those who received conventional instruction. Fairy tales provided meaningful contexts, stimulated students' creativity, enhanced vocabulary development, and helped learners understand the organization and linguistic features of narrative texts. The study concludes that fairy tale-based pedagogy can be an effective instructional approach for improving EFL learners' narrative writing skills and can be integrated into English writing courses to promote students' creativity and writing achievement.

Keywords: fairy tale-based pedagogy; narrative writing; EFL learners; writing competence; English language teaching

INTRODUCTION

English language proficiency has become an essential competence in higher education, particularly for students majoring in English language studies. Among the four language skills, writing is often regarded as one of the most complex skills to acquire because it requires learners to generate ideas, organize information coherently, apply appropriate vocabulary, and use accurate grammatical structures. Unlike speaking, which allows immediate interaction and negotiation of meaning, writing requires careful planning and the ability to construct meaningful texts independently. Therefore, developing students' writing competence has become a significant concern in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts.

In EFL classrooms, narrative writing is one of the important genres that enables students to express experiences, imagination, and ideas through written language. Narrative texts require learners to understand specific structures, including orientation, complication, and resolution, as well as linguistic features such as past tense, descriptive vocabulary, and sequential expressions. However, many EFL learners experience difficulties in producing effective narrative texts due to limited vocabulary knowledge, lack of confidence in expressing ideas, and insufficient understanding of text organization. These challenges indicate the need for innovative teaching approaches that can provide meaningful learning experiences and encourage students' creativity in writing.

The teaching of writing should not only focus on grammatical accuracy but also encourage students to develop ideas and engage actively in the writing process. Effective writing instruction requires learning materials that are interesting, contextual, and relevant to students' experiences. When learners are exposed to meaningful texts, they are more likely to develop their imagination, expand vocabulary, and understand how texts are constructed. Therefore, selecting appropriate instructional materials plays an important role in supporting students' writing development, particularly in EFL learning environments.

Fairy tales represent one of the potential pedagogical resources that can support students' narrative writing development. Fairy tales contain familiar story structures, imaginative elements, moral values, and engaging characters that can stimulate learners' interest in writing. Through fairy tale-based activities, students

can analyze narrative patterns, identify language features, and develop their own stories based on creative ideas. Furthermore, fairy tales provide authentic examples of narrative texts that help learners understand how events are organized and presented in written form.

The integration of fairy tales into writing instruction reflects a learner-centered approach in which students actively participate in constructing meaning. Fairy tale-based pedagogy allows learners to interact with stories, discuss ideas, retell events, and transform existing narratives into their own written compositions. Such activities may increase students' motivation and reduce anxiety commonly associated with writing tasks. By creating an enjoyable and supportive learning environment, fairy tales may contribute to improving students' confidence and competence in narrative writing.

Previous studies have indicated that the use of storytelling and narrative-based materials can positively influence students' language development, including vocabulary acquisition, creativity, and writing performance. However, many studies have focused on elementary or secondary school learners, while research exploring fairy tale-based pedagogy among university-level EFL students remains relatively limited. Moreover, further investigation is needed to understand how fairy tales function as an instructional strategy in developing narrative writing competence within Indonesian higher education contexts.

In the context of the English Department at Institut Agama Islam Darul A'mal (IAIDA) Lampung, improving students' writing competence is an important academic objective. As future English teachers and language professionals, students are expected to possess strong writing abilities that enable them to communicate ideas effectively in academic and professional settings. Nevertheless, students may still encounter challenges in developing well-organized and meaningful narrative texts. Therefore, exploring alternative pedagogical approaches, such as fairy tale-based instruction, is necessary to provide effective strategies for enhancing students' writing achievement.

Based on the issues discussed above, this study aims to explore the role of fairy tale-based pedagogy in developing EFL students' narrative writing competence at the English Department of Institut



Agama Islam Darul A'mal (IAIDA) Lampung. Specifically, this study investigates whether the implementation of fairy tale-based instruction can significantly improve students' narrative writing performance compared to conventional writing instruction. The findings of this research are expected to contribute to EFL writing pedagogy by providing empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of fairy tales as an instructional resource for developing students' narrative writing competence.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Writing competence is a fundamental component of language learning that enables learners to communicate ideas, experiences, and knowledge through written forms. In an EFL context, writing is considered a complex productive skill because learners must manage various aspects simultaneously, including content development, organization, vocabulary selection, grammatical accuracy, and mechanics. According to Hyland (2019), writing is not merely the process of producing sentences but a social and cognitive activity that involves constructing meaning according to specific purposes and audiences. Therefore, effective writing instruction should help learners understand both linguistic elements and the communicative functions of written texts.

For EFL learners, developing writing competence often becomes challenging because they have limited exposure to English language environments. Learners frequently encounter difficulties in generating ideas, maintaining coherence, selecting appropriate vocabulary, and applying grammatical rules accurately. These challenges may reduce students' confidence and motivation in writing activities. Consequently, teachers need to provide appropriate instructional strategies and materials that can support learners in overcoming writing difficulties and developing their ability to express ideas effectively.

Narrative writing is one of the important genres taught in English language education because it allows learners to communicate experiences, imagination, and personal perspectives through storytelling. According to Derewianka and Jones (2016), narrative texts generally consist of several structural elements, including orientation, complication, and resolution,

which help writers organize events into meaningful sequences. In addition, narrative writing involves specific linguistic features, such as the use of past tense, action verbs, descriptive expressions, and temporal conjunctions.

In EFL classrooms, narrative writing provides opportunities for students to develop creativity while practicing language structures. Through narrative tasks, learners can explore ideas, construct characters, and organize events into coherent texts. However, many EFL learners struggle with narrative writing because they lack vocabulary resources, have difficulties arranging events logically, and are unfamiliar with appropriate narrative conventions. Therefore, teachers need instructional approaches that provide models and stimulate students' imagination during the writing process.

Fairy tales are traditional narratives that contain imaginative stories, symbolic characters, and meaningful messages. In language education, fairy tales have been widely recognized as valuable teaching materials because they provide authentic examples of narrative structures and expose learners to various vocabulary and expressions. According to Ellis and Brewster (2014), stories can create meaningful contexts for language learning because learners naturally engage with characters, events, and conflicts presented in narratives.

The use of fairy tales in EFL classrooms can support language development by providing students with comprehensible and interesting texts. Through reading and analyzing fairy tales, learners can identify story structures, examine language patterns, and acquire new vocabulary in context. Moreover, fairy tales can encourage students to participate actively in classroom discussions, retelling activities, and creative writing tasks. These activities may help learners develop both linguistic knowledge and writing skills.

Fairy tale-based pedagogy refers to the integration of fairy tales as instructional resources and activities to facilitate learning objectives. This approach emphasizes active engagement with stories through activities such as storytelling, text analysis, rewriting, and creative composition. From a pedagogical perspective, fairy tales provide learners with models of



narrative organization that can guide them in producing their own texts.

The implementation of fairy tale-based pedagogy may enhance students' narrative writing competence in several ways. First, fairy tales provide a clear narrative framework that helps students understand how ideas are structured within a story. Second, they introduce learners to various vocabulary items and sentence patterns that can be adapted in their own writing. Third, the imaginative nature of fairy tales encourages creativity and motivates students to express their ideas more confidently. Therefore, fairy tale-based instruction has the potential to create a supportive environment for improving EFL learners' writing performance.

Several studies have examined the effectiveness of story-based approaches in improving students' language skills, particularly writing competence. Research has shown that storytelling activities can increase students' motivation, expand vocabulary knowledge, and improve their ability to organize written texts. The use of narrative materials allows learners to learn language within meaningful contexts rather than through isolated grammatical exercises.

Previous research has also indicated that fairy tales can positively influence students' narrative writing achievement. By using fairy tales as writing models, students are able to recognize narrative elements and apply them when creating their own stories. However, most previous studies have focused on young learners or secondary school students, while investigations involving university-level EFL learners remain limited. This indicates the need for further research to explore the effectiveness of fairy tale-based pedagogy in higher education contexts.

This study is grounded in the principles of constructivist learning theory, which views learning as an active process where learners construct knowledge through meaningful experiences and interactions. Fairy tale-based pedagogy supports this perspective because students actively engage with stories, interpret meanings, and create new texts based on their understanding.

Furthermore, the study is also related to the process approach to writing, which emphasizes writing as a developmental process involving planning, drafting, revising, and editing. Through fairy tale-based

activities, students are provided with examples and guidance that can support each stage of the writing process. Therefore, integrating fairy tales into writing instruction may contribute to the development of students' narrative writing competence.

Although previous studies have demonstrated the benefits of storytelling and narrative materials in language learning, limited attention has been given to the role of fairy tale-based pedagogy in improving university students' narrative writing competence, particularly in Indonesian EFL contexts. Most existing research has focused on general storytelling activities rather than examining fairy tales as a structured pedagogical approach.

Therefore, this study attempts to fill this gap by investigating the role of fairy tale-based pedagogy in developing EFL students' narrative writing competence at the English Department of Institut Agama Islam Darul A'mal (IAIDA) Lampung. The study assumes that exposure to fairy tale-based instruction can provide students with meaningful models, stimulate creativity, and improve their ability to produce well-organized narrative texts.

METHOD

This study employed a quasi-experimental research design to investigate the role of fairy tale-based pedagogy in developing EFL students' narrative writing competence. A quasi-experimental design was selected because the study aimed to examine the effectiveness of an instructional treatment by comparing students' writing performance before and after the implementation of fairy tale-based instruction. This research design consisted of an experimental group that received the fairy tale-based pedagogy treatment and a control group that received conventional writing instruction.

The participants of this study were EFL students from the English Department of Institut Agama Islam Darul A'mal (IAIDA) Lampung. The participants were selected based on their involvement in English writing courses and their relevance to the objectives of the study. The students participated in narrative writing activities as part of the instructional process. The experimental group was provided with learning activities using fairy tales as the main instructional materials, while the control group followed regular



writing activities without the integration of fairy tale-based learning.

The research instruments used in this study included writing tests administered as pre-test and post-test. The writing test was designed to measure students' narrative writing competence based on several aspects, including content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and writing mechanics. The pre-test was conducted before the treatment to identify students' initial writing abilities, while the post-test was administered after the instructional period to determine the improvement of students' narrative writing performance.

The treatment was conducted through fairy tale-based writing instruction. During the learning process, students were exposed to various fairy tales as models of narrative texts. They were guided to identify the generic structure, language features, characters, settings, and sequence of events presented in the stories. Furthermore, students participated in activities such as analyzing fairy tales, discussing story elements, developing ideas, and creating their own narrative texts based on the patterns and structures they had learned.

The data collection procedure involved administering writing tests to both groups before and after the treatment. The students' written works were collected and evaluated using a writing assessment rubric. The scores obtained from the pre-test and post-test were analyzed to identify differences in students' narrative writing achievement. The comparison between the experimental and control groups was used to determine whether fairy tale-based pedagogy contributed significantly to students' writing development.

The collected data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive analysis was conducted to determine students' mean scores and improvement levels in narrative writing performance. Meanwhile, inferential analysis was applied to examine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups. The findings from the analysis were used to determine the effectiveness of fairy tale-based pedagogy in enhancing EFL students' narrative writing competence at the English Department of Institut Agama Islam Darul A'mal (IAIDA) Lampung.

RESULT

The findings of this study revealed that the implementation of fairy tale-based pedagogy contributed positively to the development of EFL students' narrative writing competence. The data obtained from the pre-test and post-test indicated differences in students' writing performance between the experimental group and the control group. Before the treatment, both groups demonstrated relatively similar levels of narrative writing ability, indicating that the students had comparable initial competence before the instructional intervention was conducted.

The results of the pre-test showed that students in both groups experienced several difficulties in producing narrative texts. The students' writing performances indicated challenges related to generating ideas, organizing events coherently, selecting appropriate vocabulary, and applying accurate grammatical structures. These findings suggested that students required instructional support and appropriate learning materials to improve their ability to construct meaningful narrative texts.

After the implementation of fairy tale-based pedagogy, the experimental group demonstrated noticeable improvement in their narrative writing performance. Students who participated in fairy tale-based activities showed better ability in organizing story elements, developing ideas, and producing more coherent narrative texts. The improvement was reflected in their post-test scores, which were higher compared to their previous writing performance in the pre-test.

In contrast, students in the control group who received conventional writing instruction also showed some improvement in their narrative writing achievement. However, the improvement was relatively lower compared to the experimental group. Although conventional instruction helped students understand basic writing concepts, it provided fewer opportunities for creativity, exploration of ideas, and engagement with meaningful narrative contexts.

The comparison of students' post-test results between the two groups demonstrated that the experimental group achieved higher writing performance than the control group. The statistical analysis indicated that the difference between the two groups was significant, suggesting that the treatment using fairy tale-based



pedagogy had a positive effect on students' narrative writing competence. Therefore, the research hypothesis stating that fairy tale-based instruction improves students' writing performance was supported.

Further analysis of students' writing components showed improvement in several aspects, including content development, organization, vocabulary usage, and language accuracy. Students in the experimental group were able to create more structured narratives by applying appropriate elements of narrative texts, such as orientation, complication, and resolution. They also demonstrated greater ability to express imaginative ideas through written language.

The students' engagement during the learning process also supported the quantitative findings. Classroom observations showed that students actively participated in fairy tale-based activities, including analyzing stories, discussing characters and events, and developing their own narratives. The interesting nature of fairy tales appeared to increase students' motivation and confidence in completing writing tasks.

Overall, the results of this study confirmed that fairy tale-based pedagogy was an effective instructional approach for developing EFL students' narrative writing competence. The findings demonstrated that integrating meaningful stories into writing instruction could provide students with models, inspiration, and linguistic resources that support their writing development.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that fairy tale-based pedagogy plays an important role in improving EFL students' narrative writing competence. The significant improvement demonstrated by the experimental group suggests that fairy tales can function as effective instructional materials for developing students' ability to produce narrative texts. This finding supports the view that meaningful and contextual learning materials can facilitate students' language development, particularly in writing activities.

The improvement in students' narrative writing performance can be attributed to the characteristics of fairy tales as accessible and engaging narrative models. Fairy tales generally contain clear story structures, recognizable characters, conflicts, and resolutions, which help students understand how narratives are

organized. By examining these elements, students were able to develop a better understanding of narrative conventions and apply them when creating their own written texts.

Another possible explanation for the effectiveness of fairy tale-based pedagogy is its contribution to students' vocabulary development. Exposure to fairy tales provided students with various words, expressions, and sentence patterns that could be adapted in their writing. Instead of creating texts based on limited linguistic resources, students were able to expand their vocabulary through meaningful contexts and use more appropriate language choices in their narratives.

The findings also suggest that fairy tale-based instruction enhanced students' creativity and motivation in writing. Writing is often considered a difficult activity among EFL learners because students may experience difficulties in generating ideas. Fairy tales provided imaginative contexts that encouraged students to explore different ideas, create characters, and develop original stories. As a result, students became more confident and actively involved in the writing process.

The higher achievement of the experimental group compared to the control group also highlights the limitations of conventional writing instruction. Traditional approaches that focus mainly on language rules and writing structures may not provide sufficient opportunities for students to develop creativity and meaningful expression. In contrast, fairy tale-based pedagogy combines language practice with imagination and engagement, making writing activities more enjoyable and purposeful.

The findings of this study are also consistent with previous research emphasizing the importance of storytelling approaches in language learning. Story-based instruction has been shown to support language acquisition by providing meaningful input and encouraging interaction with texts. In this study, fairy tales served not only as reading materials but also as tools that guided students through the process of planning, organizing, and producing narrative texts.

From a pedagogical perspective, the implementation of fairy tale-based pedagogy provides valuable implications for EFL teachers, especially those teaching writing courses. Teachers can integrate fairy



tales into writing activities to provide students with examples of effective narratives while encouraging creativity. However, teachers should carefully select fairy tales that are appropriate to students' language levels, cultural backgrounds, and learning objectives.

In conclusion, the findings demonstrate that fairy tale-based pedagogy can be considered an effective approach for improving EFL students' narrative writing competence. By combining linguistic practice, creativity, and meaningful storytelling experiences, fairy tales create supportive conditions for writing development. Therefore, this approach can be recommended as an alternative strategy in English writing instruction, particularly in higher education EFL contexts such as the English Department of Institut Agama Islam Darul A'mal (IAIDA) Lampung.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that fairy tale-based pedagogy provides a positive contribution to the development of EFL students' narrative writing competence at the English Department of Institut Agama Islam Darul A'mal (IAIDA) Lampung. The implementation of fairy tales as instructional materials helped students improve their ability to construct narrative texts by supporting idea development, text organization, vocabulary use, and language accuracy. The findings indicate that students who received fairy tale-based instruction demonstrated better writing performance compared to those who experienced conventional writing instruction.

The effectiveness of fairy tale-based pedagogy can be attributed to its ability to provide meaningful, engaging, and contextual learning experiences. Fairy tales functioned as models of narrative texts that enabled students to understand story structures, identify linguistic features, and develop their creativity in writing. Furthermore, the use of fairy tales encouraged students' motivation and confidence, making the writing process more enjoyable and less challenging for EFL learners.

Based on these findings, fairy tale-based pedagogy can be considered an effective alternative approach for teaching narrative writing in EFL contexts, particularly in higher education settings. English teachers and lecturers are encouraged to integrate story-based materials into writing courses to facilitate students'

creativity and language development. Future studies are recommended to investigate the implementation of fairy tale-based pedagogy with larger populations, different educational levels, and various language skills to gain broader insights into its effectiveness.

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