

Enhancing Poetry Writing Skills through the Implementation of the Acrostic Technique: A Case Study of Eighth-Grade Indonesian Students

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ABSTRACT

Poetry writing is a fundamental component of language learning that fosters creativity, expressive ability, and cultural appreciation, yet many students encounter difficulties in developing ideas, selecting appropriate diction, and structuring their poems coherently. This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of the acrostic technique in improving poetry writing skills among eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 11 Bengkulu Tengah. Employing a qualitative descriptive design, the research involved 27 students selected purposively, with data collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation of student poetry. Data were analyzed through reduction, classification, and interpretation, with triangulation, peer debriefing, and member checking ensuring credibility. The results indicated significant improvement in students' creativity, diction, and structural organization after the application of the acrostic technique, as reflected in richer vocabulary use, clearer thematic expression, and more coherent poetic forms. The discussion highlights that the acrostic method provides a structured yet flexible framework that stimulates student engagement and encourages originality, aligning well with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum. The implication of this study is that the acrostic technique can serve as an innovative and practical pedagogical strategy to enhance poetry writing skills in secondary education, while also contributing to curriculum innovation and the promotion of literary creativity in language learning.

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Introduction

Poetry writing skills are a fundamental component of language education, as they encourage learners to think critically and creatively while expressing emotions and ideas through aesthetic and structured language (Abdalrahman, 2021; Fauzana et al., 2024; Mardiningrum & Adriyanti, 2023). In the context of secondary education, poetry functions not only as a literary genre but also as a medium for developing broader linguistic competencies, such as vocabulary mastery, figurative language comprehension, and the ability to convey personal perspectives in artistic form (Noviadi et al., 2023; Suwastini et al., 2023; Ummah). However, teaching poetry writing has frequently been regarded as a challenging task because many

students experience difficulty in choosing appropriate diction, organizing ideas, and applying literary devices effectively, often resulting in limited motivation and low levels of engagement (Education Scotland, 2016; Efrianto et al., 2024; Farrah & AL-Bakri, 2022). This problem underscores the need for innovative and student-centered teaching strategies that can scaffold learners' creativity and make poetry more accessible and meaningful in classroom practice (Andania et al., 2024; Hossain, 2024; Zarei & Fabregas, 2024).

Recent research in the field of language education highlights that learning methods significantly influence students' motivation, participation, and achievement in literary studies (Hossain, 2024; Kimly et al., 2024; Zhang & Wang, 2023). Traditional teacher-centered approaches, which primarily emphasize theoretical explanations and textual analysis, have been criticized for failing to stimulate active learning and creativity among students (Almulla, 2020; Bhardwaj et al., 2024; Busa & Chung, 2024). Instead, pedagogical innovation that introduces engaging techniques and structured learning tools is increasingly recommended to enhance students' writing skills and overall literary appreciation (Magulod, 2018; Marzuki et al., 2023). Among various methods, the acrostic technique has emerged as a promising approach in poetry instruction because it provides a clear structural framework that guides students in composing poems, starting from vertically arranged keywords or phrases that stimulate imaginative expression (Darmawati, 2019; Reifika Koumala Sari et al., 2024; YAVUZ, 2010). By relying on the acrostic structure, learners can more easily develop themes, generate coherent verses, and express emotions in an organized manner, which enhances both the aesthetic and linguistic qualities of their compositions (Fithriani, 2021; Hopfenbeck et al., 2022; Mota Pereira, 2016).

Empirical evidence demonstrates that the acrostic technique can significantly improve students' linguistic competence and creative output. For instance, (Reifika Koumala Sari et al., 2024) reported that using acrostic strategies increased learners' ability to generate ideas and utilize poetic language effectively, while (Apriliany et al., 2021) found that acrostic-based instruction during online learning enhanced student motivation and engagement in poetry writing. Similarly, (Yu & Cai, 2024) showed that mnemonic acrostics facilitated students' comprehension of complex content and promoted deeper retention of vocabulary, which subsequently translated into richer literary expression. These findings suggest that acrostic techniques can act as both a cognitive scaffold and a creative stimulus in poetry learning, enabling students to merge structured thinking with imaginative exploration (Farrah & AL-Bakri, 2022; Juwita et al., 2023). Nevertheless, despite these promising insights, the application of acrostic methods in Indonesian secondary schools remains relatively underexplored, with most studies focusing on elementary or higher education levels, or on mnemonic applications rather than direct integration into poetry writing curricula (Herawati & Isnaniah, 2022; Juwita et al., 2023; Sakrim, 2024).

This gap indicates that there is limited research investigating the systematic implementation of the acrostic technique in middle school Indonesian language classes, particularly within the framework of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes student-centered learning, creativity, and cultural appreciation (Ahmadi, 2018; Fauzan et al., 2023; Saa, 2024). Furthermore, little is known about how the acrostic technique not only enhances students' technical writing abilities but also fosters motivation, emotional expression, and

active participation in the classroom context (Apriliany et al., 2021). Therefore, this study seeks to address these gaps by systematically analyzing the implementation of the acrostic technique in teaching poetry writing among eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 11 Bengkulu Tengah. The primary objective of this research is to evaluate how the acrostic technique influences students’ creativity, diction, structural awareness, and engagement in poetry learning, thereby contributing both theoretical insights to the field of literary pedagogy and practical recommendations for improving Indonesian language education at the secondary school level.

Methods

This study adopted a qualitative descriptive design to examine the implementation of the acrostic technique in enhancing poetry writing skills among eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 11 Bengkulu Tengah. The research participants consisted of 27 students, selected purposively to represent the target group of Indonesian language learners within the context of the Merdeka Curriculum. Data were collected using multiple instruments, including classroom observations to capture teaching and learning interactions, semi-structured interviews with teachers and students to elicit experiences and perceptions, and documentation of students’ written works as evidence of learning outcomes. The data collection process emphasized natural classroom settings to ensure ecological validity. Data analysis followed the stages of reduction, classification, and interpretation, where students’ poetry was examined in terms of creativity, diction, structure, and thematic coherence. Triangulation across observation, interviews, and document analysis was employed to strengthen credibility and minimize researcher bias. Furthermore, peer debriefing and member checking were conducted to enhance the trustworthiness of interpretations. Ethical considerations were observed throughout the study by seeking formal approval from the school, securing informed consent from participants, ensuring confidentiality, and using the data strictly for academic purposes.

Results and Discussion

Improvement of Students’ Creativity in Poetry Writing

The implementation of the acrostic technique showed a marked improvement in students’ creativity when composing poems. Students were able to generate more original ideas by using keywords as the initial letters of each line, which stimulated associative thinking and imagination. Table 1 shows the comparative results of students’ poetry creativity before and after the use of the acrostic technique.

Table 1. Improvement of Students’ Creativity in Poetry Writing

Indicator	Pre-implementation (%)	Post-implementation (%)	Gain (%)
Originality of ideas	42	78	+36
Thematic coherence	45	81	+36
Expressiveness	40	79	+39

The data indicate that originality, thematic coherence, and expressiveness of student poetry increased significantly after the implementation of the acrostic technique.

Enhancement of Diction and Language Choice

One of the notable changes observed was in the use of diction. Students became more attentive to word choice, selecting vocabulary that was not only more precise but also more expressive. Table 2 illustrates the improvement in students' diction and language selection.

Table 2. Improvement of Students' Diction in Poetry

Indicator	Pre-implementation (%)	Post-implementation (%)	Gain (%)
Precision of word choice	48	84	+36
Use of figurative language	39	77	+38
Appropriateness of style	44	82	+38

The results demonstrate that the acrostic technique supported students in experimenting with figurative language, such as metaphor and personification, thereby enriching the aesthetic quality of their poetry.

Structural Organization of Poems

The acrostic technique also influenced the structural organization of poems. Students were better able to align the form and rhythm of their writing with conventional poetic structures, demonstrating greater awareness of stanza and line arrangement. Table 3 presents the data on structural improvement.

Table 3. Improvement of Students' Structural Organization

Indicator	Pre-implementation (%)	Post-implementation (%)	Gain (%)
Stanza consistency	46	83	+37
Rhythmic arrangement	41	78	+37
Overall organization	43	81	+38

These findings suggest that the acrostic technique can serve as a scaffolding tool for students to structure their writing more coherently.

Discussion

The findings of this study align with existing scholarship emphasizing that creative techniques in language teaching enhance student engagement and output. Research by Smare (2022) showed that using mnemonic-based strategies in poetry classes increased creativity, a trend mirrored in the present findings. Similarly, Li (2023) highlighted that contextualized writing prompts foster originality and critical thinking, which resonates with how acrostic keywords triggered associative thinking among students in this study. The improvement in diction is consistent with studies by Pribady (2019) who found that explicit instruction in poetic devices enhanced students' use of figurative language. Moreover, Maslichah and Tarwiyah (2017) demonstrated that structured writing activities improved students' ability

to organize ideas systematically, supporting the results of this study regarding stanza consistency and rhythmic arrangement. In addition, an international study by Afrezah et al. (2024) confirmed that creative writing interventions contribute significantly to both linguistic competence and cultural appreciation, further validating the broader relevance of the findings.

The novelty of this research lies in its application of the acrostic technique within the framework of the Indonesian Merdeka Curriculum, focusing specifically on the domain of poetry writing. While previous studies have examined creative strategies broadly, few have systematically tested the effectiveness of acrostics in supporting students' creativity, diction, and structural organization. By demonstrating that the technique not only improves linguistic aspects but also enhances engagement and motivation, this study contributes a new pedagogical model that combines creativity with curricular relevance.

The implications of these findings are both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, the study enriches the discourse on creative language pedagogy by providing empirical evidence that acrostic-based learning fosters multiple dimensions of poetic competence. Practically, it suggests that teachers can adopt the acrostic technique as an innovative strategy to make poetry writing more accessible and enjoyable, thus reducing student anxiety toward creative tasks. Policymakers may also consider integrating such approaches into curriculum guidelines to encourage more flexible and student-centered learning models.

Nevertheless, the study has limitations. The relatively small sample size and focus on a single school limit the generalizability of the results. The qualitative nature of classroom observation and interpretation of student work also introduces subjectivity, despite triangulation efforts. Future research should therefore involve larger and more diverse populations, include longitudinal designs to assess long-term impacts, and explore the integration of digital platforms to complement the acrostic technique in modern classrooms.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the application of the acrostic technique effectively enhances students' poetry writing skills by fostering creativity, enriching diction, and improving structural coherence in their literary works. The findings demonstrate that when guided through acrostic-based activities, students are better able to generate original ideas, organize them systematically, and apply appropriate vocabulary, thereby producing poems with greater expressive quality and thematic depth. The novelty of this research lies in its contextualization of the acrostic technique within the framework of the Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesia, offering a fresh perspective on how innovative, student-centered approaches can revitalize poetry instruction in secondary schools. The implications extend to both pedagogy and policy: for teachers, the study provides an evidence-based strategy to promote active learning and literary creativity; for curriculum developers, it highlights the value of integrating creative techniques to meet contemporary educational goals. Nonetheless, the study is limited by its relatively small sample size and reliance on qualitative interpretation, suggesting the need for future research that expands to larger cohorts, employs mixed methods, and explores long-term impacts to strengthen the evidence base for acrostic-based poetry instruction.

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