

# The Effect of Pair Storytelling on Creative Writing Skills in Islamic Elementary Education

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## Abstract

This study aimed to examine the effect of the paired storytelling learning model on the creative writing skills of fifth-grade students at Istiqomah Islamic Elementary School, West Ungaran District, Semarang Regency. A quantitative quasi-experimental design was employed using a nonequivalent control group design. The study involved all 68 fifth-grade students selected through saturated sampling, consisting of 33 students in class V A as the control group and 35 students in class V B as the experimental group. The independent variable was the paired storytelling learning model, while the dependent variable was students' creative writing skills. Data were collected using a creative writing test and analyzed through prerequisite tests, including normality and homogeneity tests, followed by hypothesis testing using a t-test. The results showed that the paired storytelling learning model had a significant effect on students' creative writing skills, as indicated by the t-count value, which was higher than the t-table value ( $5.145 > 2.000$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. These findings indicate that paired storytelling is an effective instructional model for improving elementary students' creative writing skills. The study contributes empirical evidence that collaborative storytelling activities can support students in developing ideas, organizing narratives, and expressing imagination more creatively in written form.

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## Introduction

Global Students' creative writing skills play a crucial role in the learning process in elementary schools, particularly in the Indonesian language subject. The goal of learning Indonesian is to teach students to communicate with others correctly and effectively, both orally and in writing. One important aspect of written communication is creative writing skills, which serve as a means to express ideas, thoughts, imaginations, and feelings in an engaging and meaningful written form. Therefore, creative writing skills, especially for fifth-grade elementary school students, need to be addressed so that they are able to express their thoughts coherently, logically, and creatively (Ahiskali & Maltepe, 2023; Babayigit, 2019; Dalman, 2016; Mata & Gavrilut, 2025).

According to Tarigan (2013), writing is a language skill used to communicate indirectly, allowing someone to convey ideas and thoughts to others through written language. Meanwhile, creative writing is a writing ability that emphasizes not only linguistic aspects, but also aspects of imagination, creativity, and originality in producing a written work (Barton et al., 2024; Carey et al., 2022; Kosasih, 2017). Creative writing skills are a very important aspect in learning Indonesian, so teachers and students must master them (Ayu et al., 2023; Pardede, 2025). Learning Indonesian can train students' imagination and creativity and make it easier for them to express ideas in

written form. However, in reality, many students still experience difficulties in creative writing, such as difficulty finding ideas, developing stories, and lack of confidence in writing. This causes their writing skills to not develop optimally.

Based on the results of the researcher's observations during Internship 3 which was conducted at SD Islam Istiqomah Ungaran, it was found that in learning activities, students' creative writing skills were still at a low level. Observations showed that of the 35 students in the class, only a small number were able to write stories with a coherent and interesting plot. Most students experienced difficulty in developing ideas into a complete story. In the short story writing activity, for example, of the 10 students assigned to write, as many as 7 students produced writing that was still simple, unstructured, and lacked imaginative development. In addition, several students appeared hesitant and needed a long time to start writing.

Researchers also observed that students' low creative writing skills are due to the lack of variety in the learning models currently used. Teachers tend to use conventional learning models, thus providing students with fewer opportunities to practice active and creative writing. This condition results in learning that is less engaging and unable to stimulate student creativity. Therefore, innovative learning models are needed that can actively engage students in the learning process.

One learning model that can be used is paired storytelling. This model is a cooperative learning model that involves students working in pairs to compose and develop a story (Akinkulore Susan Olajoke, 2024; Oktaviani et al., 2021; Stevens & Slavin, 1995). In its implementation, students exchange ideas, complete the story, and develop their imaginations together. This model not only trains listening and creative writing skills but is also highly effective in improving creative writing skills because students are trained to construct a storyline, develop characters, and express ideas in writing.

Research conducted by Akhlaq (2023) shows that the paired storytelling learning model can significantly improve students' language skills, including writing. Another study by Ningsih (2020) also shows that this model can increase active student participation and create a pleasant learning atmosphere. Furthermore, research by Kusuma (2021) states that the use of the paired storytelling model produces better results than conventional learning models in improving language skills.

The paired storytelling learning model has several advantages, including encouraging active interaction between students, enhancing imagination through storytelling activities, and practicing the ability to organize and develop ideas systematically. Furthermore, this model provides opportunities for students to collaborate in creating creative writing, thereby increasing their motivation and confidence in writing (Chen & Yeh, 2025; Huda, 2014; Lee, 2019).

Although previous studies have reported the general effectiveness of the paired storytelling model in improving language skills and increasing student participation, most of these studies focus broadly on writing ability without specifically examining its impact on creative writing skills at the elementary school level. In addition, earlier research tends to emphasize classroom engagement and learning atmosphere rather than providing empirical evidence related to how this model systematically develops students' creativity in constructing storylines, characters, and imaginative ideas in written form. Furthermore, there is still limited research that applies this model to fifth-grade students within the context of elementary education and measures its effectiveness through rigorous assessment of creative writing outcomes. This gap indicates the need for a more focused

investigation into how the paired storytelling model directly influences students' creative writing skills in a specific educational setting.

Based on the data analysis, this study aimed to examine the effect of the paired storytelling learning model on the creative writing skills of fifth-grade students at Istiqomah Islamic Elementary School, West Ungaran District, Semarang Regency. The findings demonstrate that the paired storytelling learning model has a significant positive effect on students' creative writing skills, as indicated by the higher achievement of students in the experimental class compared to those in the control class. This study contributes empirical evidence that paired storytelling can be used as an effective and meaningful instructional model in creative writing learning at the elementary school level. In addition, the study provides a practical contribution for teachers by offering an alternative learning model that encourages student interaction, idea development, imagination, and confidence in producing creative written texts.

## Method

This study employed a quantitative research method, namely a quasi-experimental one, involving a control group, but unable to control all external variables that could influence the experiment. The design employed a Nonequivalent Control Group Design (Kim & Steiner, 2016; Reichardt, 2002; Sugiyono 2019). The research design applied in this study was a Quasi-Experimental Design in the form of a Nonequivalent Control Group Design. The location chosen for the study was Istiqomah Islamic Elementary School, West Ungaran District, Semarang Regency. The study was conducted during the even semester of the 2026/2027 academic year.

The independent variable in this study was the paired storytelling learning model, symbolized by (X). The dependent variable was the students' creative writing skills, symbolized by (Y). The population of this study was fifth-grade students of Istiqomah Islamic Elementary School, West Ungaran District, Semarang Regency. The sample for this study included 68 fifth-grade students of Istiqomah Islamic Elementary School. Class V A consisting of 33 students served as the control class and class V B consisting of 35 students served as the experimental class. This study used a saturated sampling technique, a sampling technique in which the entire population will be used as a sample because the number is relatively smaller and still allows for a comprehensive study. With this technique, all students included in the research population will be used as research subjects, so that the results obtained are more representative without any selection based on certain criteria.

Data collection that will be used is a written test to measure creative writing skills in students through the paired storytelling learning model (Sufian et al., 2023; Waluyo et al., 2025; Weyant, 2022). This written test is the main instrument as a data collection tool in the study. The instrument in this study was a creative writing skills assessment rubric, which was validated by two experts teachers of SD Islam Istiqomah Ungaran who were chosen because they had direct experience in teaching Indonesian and understood the characteristics of class V students. Based on the Gregory Test, the validity index of the test instrument is 0.87, which indicates a very high level of validity. Therefore, the instrument is considered highly appropriate and feasible for use in collecting research data.

A normality test can be considered a normal distribution if the significance or probability value is  $>0.05$ . A sample population with a normal distribution is considered to have a significance value  $>0.05$ , while the homogeneity test uses the following decision-making basis: a significance

value  $>0.05$  indicates that the variation in two or more data populations is homogeneous (the same), and a significance value  $<0.05$  indicates that the variation in two or more data populations is not the same (inhomogeneous). The correlation test in this study used a point biserial correlation test because the researcher wanted to determine whether or not the paired storytelling learning model had an effect on creative writing skills. Hypothesis testing was used to test whether the hypothesis used in this study was acceptable or not. First, the hypothesis test was conducted by formulating the following hypothesis:

Ha:  $\mu = 0$ : There is an effect of the paired storytelling learning model on creative writing skills in fifth-grade students of Istiqomah Islamic Elementary School, West Ungaran District, Semarang Regency.

Ho:  $\mu \neq 0$ : There is no effect of the paired storytelling learning model on creative writing skills in grade V students of Istiqomah Islamic Elementary School, West Ungaran District, Semarang Regency.

## Result and Discussion

### Result

The normality test is used to determine whether the obtained data is normally distributed. The normality test was performed using SPSS version 27 using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov technique. A normal distribution is considered to exist if the significance or probability value is  $>0.05$ . A population sample with a normal distribution is considered to have a significance value  $>0.05$ .

**Table 1.** Normality Test Results Tests of Normality

Class	Kolmogorov-Smirnov		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Post Test Eksperimen	.128	35	.156
Post Test Control	.124	33	.200

Based on the table above, it can be seen that the posttest significance value of the experimental class and the control class is  $> 0.05$ , so the data is normally distributed, so the statistical analysis used is the parametric test.

The homogeneity test is used to determine whether data originates from the same variant group. The decision-making criteria for the homogeneity test are: if the sign  $> 0.05$ , the data is homogeneously distributed; if the sign  $< 0.05$ , the data is not homogeneously distributed.

**Table 2.** Homogeneity Test Results Tests of Homogeneity of Variances

Levene Statistic	df1	Df2	Sig.
2.056	1	66	.156

Based on the table above, it can be seen that the posttest significance value of the experimental class and the control class is  $> 0.05$ , so the data is normally distributed, so the statistical analysis used is the parametric test.

The homogeneity test is used to determine whether data originates from the same variant group. The decision-making criteria for the homogeneity test are: if the sign  $> 0.05$ , the data is homogeneously distributed; if the sign  $< 0.05$ , the data is not homogeneously distributed.

**Table 3.** Homogeneity Test Results

LeveneStatistic	df1	Df2	Sig.
2.056	1	66	.156

Based on the table above, it can be seen that the significance value is 0.156, where this value is  $> 0.05$ , so the data is distributed equally (homogeneous).

The correlation test conducted in this study was a point biserial correlation test using Microsoft Excel. Based on the results, the following data were obtained:

$$\begin{aligned} M1 &= 82,71 \\ M2 &= 69,09 \\ p &= 0,515 \\ q &= 0,485 \\ Sdt &= 11,27 \\ rpb &= 0,757 \\ N-2 &= 66 \\ t \text{ count} &= 9,40 \\ t \text{ table} &= 2,00 \end{aligned}$$

(Complete calculations can be found in the appendix on page 100) The correlation test was performed using the following formula:

$$\begin{aligned} rpb &= \frac{(M1-M2)}{SDt} \sqrt{pq} \\ rpb &= \frac{(82,71-69,09)}{12,74} \sqrt{0,515 \times 0,485} \\ rpb &= \frac{13,62}{12,74} \sqrt{0,2498} \\ rpb &= 1,07 \times 0,50 \\ rpb &= 0,535 \end{aligned}$$

After the rpb value is obtained, the correlation significance test is continued using the t-test with the formula:

$$\begin{aligned} th &= rpb \sqrt{\frac{N-2}{1-rpb^2}} \\ th &= 0,535 \sqrt{\frac{66-2}{1-0,535^2}} \\ th &= 5,145 \end{aligned}$$

Based on the results of the biserial point correlation test, the rpb value was 0.535. In the t test, the th value was 5.145. With a significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$ . The total number of students is 68, then  $df = 68-2 = 66$ . From the t distribution table for the 2-tailed test, the t table value is 2.000. So  $t \text{ count} > t \text{ table}$  ( $5.145 > 2.000$ ) means that there is an influence of the paired storytelling learning model on creative writing skills in class V students of Istiqomah Islamic Elementary School, West Ungaran District, Semarang Regency. Hypothesis testing was conducted to determine whether the proposed hypothesis was accepted or rejected. The hypotheses to be tested were as follows:

- 1) Alternative Hypothesis ( $H_a$ ): It is suspected that the paired storytelling learning model has an effect on the creative writing skills of fifth-grade students at Istiqomah Islamic Elementary School, West Ungaran District, Semarang Regency.
- 2) Null Hypothesis ( $H_o$ ): It is suspected that the paired storytelling learning model has no effect on the creative writing skills of fifth-grade students at Istiqomah Islamic Elementary School, West Ungaran District, Semarang Regency.

The hypothesis testing in this study used a two-tailed test. The two-tailed test can be described as follows:



**Figure 1.** Two-Part Test Results

In the t-test, the t-count value was 5.145 and the t-table value was 2.000, and as can be seen from the figure above, it can be concluded that  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted. This means that there is an influence of the paired storytelling learning model on creative writing skills in fifth-grade students of Istiqomah Islamic Elementary School, West Ungaran District, Semarang Regency.

### **Discussion**

The findings of this study indicate that the paired storytelling learning model has a positive effect on students' creative writing skills. Students in the experimental class achieved a higher posttest mean score than those in the control class, showing that learning activities involving pair interaction, idea exchange, oral storytelling, and collaborative story development can support students in constructing more coherent, imaginative, and structured written texts. This result suggests that creative writing in elementary education is not merely an individual linguistic activity but also a socially mediated process in which students develop ideas through interaction, discussion, and peer support.

This finding is consistent with recent global studies emphasizing that creative writing instruction in primary and language education should provide students with opportunities to explore ideas, organize narratives, and express imagination through meaningful learning activities. Barton et al. (2024), through a systematic review of creative writing teaching in primary schools, highlight that effective creative writing pedagogy requires reflective, dialogic, and process-oriented instruction rather than mechanical writing practice. In line with this view, the paired storytelling model supports students' creative writing because it allows them to develop narrative ideas through oral exchange before transforming them into written form. This process helps students reduce writing anxiety, clarify the sequence of events, and enrich the content of their stories through peer interaction.

The results also align with Carey et al. (2022), who argue that narrative writing assessment should move beyond conventional correctness and include elements such as craft, imagination, narrative structure, and meaningful expression. In the present study, the paired storytelling model strengthened students' ability to develop storylines, organize ideas coherently, and use more creative expressions in writing. This supports the view that creative writing instruction should not only focus on grammar and spelling but also on the development of narrative quality, originality, and communicative meaning. Therefore, the improvement found in the experimental class can be interpreted as evidence that collaborative storytelling provides a practical bridge between oral narrative construction and written creative production.

Furthermore, the findings are supported by Ahıskalı and Maltepe (2023), who reported that creative writing activities can improve learners' narrative text composition skills by encouraging imagination, textual organization, and expressive language use. The paired storytelling model used in this study reflects similar pedagogical principles because students were encouraged to build stories through shared imagination and mutual response. This interactional process enabled students to generate ideas more easily and structure them into written narratives. In this sense, paired storytelling functions not only as a cooperative learning strategy but also as a creative literacy activity that integrates listening, speaking, thinking, and writing.

Recent global literature also stresses the importance of innovative approaches in creative writing instruction. Mata and Gavrilut (2025) explain that creative writing skills can be strengthened through educational approaches that stimulate student engagement, imagination, and active participation. The results of the present study support this argument because students who learned through paired storytelling were more actively involved in the writing process than those who experienced conventional instruction. The model created a learning environment in which students could share ideas, negotiate meanings, and develop their stories with peer support. Such conditions are essential for elementary school students, who often need social stimulation and concrete interaction before producing independent written work.

The findings of this study are also relevant to Indonesian local studies on paired storytelling and creative writing. Ningsih (2020) found that the paired storytelling cooperative learning model significantly improved fifth-grade students' creative writing skills in Indonesian language learning. This is in line with the present study, which also focused on fifth-grade students and showed that paired storytelling was more effective than conventional instruction. The similarity between these findings confirms that paired storytelling is appropriate for elementary school contexts because it encourages students to become more active, confident, and imaginative in writing activities.

Similarly, Kusuma, Husniati, and Setiawan (2021) reported that the paired storytelling method improved elementary students' creative writing skills by encouraging students to organize ideas and develop stories through interaction. The present study strengthens this finding by showing that the model can be applied effectively in an Islamic elementary school context. The use of paired storytelling enabled students to discuss story ideas, complete narrative sequences, and express imagination in writing. Therefore, the model is not only relevant for general elementary education but also adaptable to Islamic elementary education, where collaborative and communicative learning can be integrated into Indonesian language instruction.

The results also correspond with Oktaviani, Mustika, and Sudrajat (2021), who showed that cooperative storytelling methods can support students in writing short stories. Their study emphasized that storytelling-based cooperation helps students develop ideas and improve their ability to construct narrative texts. The present study extends this finding by focusing specifically on creative writing indicators, including diction, cohesion and coherence, sentence structure, creativity and originality, and spelling and punctuation. This more specific assessment focus provides a clearer picture of how paired storytelling contributes to different dimensions of students' creative writing performance.

Other Indonesian studies also support the effectiveness of paired storytelling in elementary learning. Muadilah (2022) found that paired storytelling improved students' writing skills by increasing interaction and participation during the learning process. Marlinda et al. (2024) also

reported that the paired storytelling method had a positive influence on Indonesian language writing skills among elementary school students. These studies support the present finding that paired storytelling provides students with opportunities to exchange ideas, receive peer responses, and develop confidence in writing. In the Indonesian elementary school context, where students often experience difficulty beginning a story or developing ideas independently, this model offers a practical solution by making the writing process more collaborative and guided.

The findings are further supported by Mardiyanti and Ngatmini (2023), who emphasized the relevance of paired storytelling for improving listening and story comprehension in elementary schools, and by Rikmasari and Hakim (2023), who highlighted its contribution to students' creative writing skills. These studies indicate that paired storytelling can strengthen multiple language skills simultaneously because students listen, speak, organize ideas, and write within one integrated learning process. The present study confirms this pattern and shows that the model is particularly useful for creative writing because it helps students transform oral story ideas into written narratives. Thus, paired storytelling can be positioned as an integrated literacy model that supports the development of both receptive and productive language skills in elementary education.

Theoretically, this study reinforces constructivist and social-interaction perspectives in language learning, which view writing as a process of meaning construction shaped by interaction, experience, and reflection. The paired storytelling model allows students to construct understanding through dialogue, peer collaboration, and shared narrative development. Practically, the findings imply that Indonesian language teachers can use paired storytelling as an alternative instructional model to improve creative writing skills, especially in elementary classrooms where students still need support in generating ideas, organizing storylines, and building confidence. This model can be implemented through structured stages, such as pairing students, providing story prompts, guiding oral story exchange, asking students to complete or develop stories, and assessing the final writing using clear creative writing indicators.

The implication of this study is that creative writing instruction should be designed as an active, collaborative, and imaginative process rather than a passive task in which students are only asked to write individually. The novelty of this study lies in its specific focus on the effect of paired storytelling on fifth-grade students' creative writing skills in an Islamic elementary school context, with assessment indicators that include diction, cohesion and coherence, sentence structure, creativity and originality, and spelling and punctuation accuracy. Its contribution is therefore both empirical and pedagogical: empirically, it provides evidence that paired storytelling significantly affects creative writing achievement; pedagogically, it offers a classroom-based model that teachers can use to make writing instruction more interactive, enjoyable, and meaningful.

However, this study has several limitations. First, the research was conducted in one Islamic elementary school with a limited number of fifth-grade students, so the findings cannot be generalized to all elementary school contexts. Second, the study used a quasi-experimental design, which means that not all external variables could be fully controlled. Third, the study focused only on creative writing outcomes and did not examine other possible effects, such as students' writing motivation, self-confidence, collaboration skills, or long-term writing development. Future studies are therefore recommended to involve broader samples, different school contexts, mixed-method designs, and additional variables to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of how paired storytelling supports creative literacy development in elementary education.

## Conclusion

Based on the results of data analysis, this study concludes that the paired storytelling learning model has a significant positive effect on the creative writing skills of fifth-grade students at Istiqomah Islamic Elementary School, West Ungaran District, Semarang Regency. The higher achievement of students in the experimental class compared to the control class indicates that paired storytelling can facilitate students in generating ideas, organizing storylines, developing imagination, and expressing thoughts more coherently in written form. Theoretically, this finding strengthens the view that creative writing develops more effectively through interactive and collaborative learning processes, in which students construct meaning through dialogue, peer exchange, and shared storytelling experiences. Practically, this study contributes an alternative instructional model for elementary school teachers to create more active, engaging, and meaningful writing instruction. The novelty of this study lies in its focused examination of paired storytelling in improving creative writing skills among fifth-grade students in an Islamic elementary school context, with attention to specific aspects of writing such as diction, coherence, sentence structure, creativity, originality, and writing accuracy. However, this study is limited to one school, one grade level, and a quasi-experimental design, so the findings should be interpreted within this specific context. Future studies are recommended to involve broader samples, different educational settings, and additional variables such as writing motivation, self-confidence, and long-term writing development to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of paired storytelling in elementary writing instruction.

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