

The Effect of the Explicit Instruction Learning Model on the Poetry Writing Skills of Seventh-Grade Students: Evidence from a Junior High School in Bengkulu, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the effect of the Explicit Instruction learning model on the poetry writing skills of seventh-grade students at SMPN 19 Bengkulu, Indonesia. Employing a quasi-experimental design with a nonequivalent control group, the study involved 30 students divided into experimental and control classes. Data were collected through pre-tests and post-tests to measure learning outcomes, supported by instrument validation and reliability testing ($r_{11} = 0.902$). The results indicate that students in the experimental group achieved significantly higher post-test scores ($M = 82.92$) compared to the control group ($M = 71.88$). Independent sample t-test results confirmed a significant difference ($t = 5.043$, $p < 0.05$), suggesting that the Explicit Instruction model fosters more substantial improvement in poetry writing than conventional teaching methods. These findings underscore the pedagogical value of structured, teacher-guided approaches in enhancing literary expression among junior high school learners. Implications for curriculum design and teacher practice are discussed, alongside recommendations for future research.

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Introduction

Language education is a fundamental component of national curricula worldwide because it equips students with the skills necessary for communication, cognitive development, and cultural engagement. Among the four primary language skills listening, speaking, reading, and writing writing is considered the most complex because it requires the integration of linguistic knowledge, cognitive organization, and creative expression (Barbot et al., 2012; Jiang & Kalyuga, 2022; ŞENEL, 2018). Writing not only allows students to convey information and ideas but also fosters critical thinking and reflective learning. In the Indonesian context, writing is emphasized as an essential competency in the national curriculum, particularly in secondary education, where students are expected to demonstrate the ability to produce coherent and meaningful texts across multiple genres (Yeh et al., 2023; Zhai et al., 2023).

Within the broader spectrum of writing, poetry occupies a distinctive position because it integrates linguistic proficiency with aesthetic sensibility. Poetry writing develops students'

creativity, emotional intelligence, and cultural awareness, offering opportunities for learners to articulate feelings, observations, and reflections in nuanced and imaginative ways (Creely et al., 2022; Mardiningrum & Adriyanthi, 2023; Selfa Sastre & Falguera Garcia, 2022). However, despite its pedagogical value, poetry writing is often perceived as challenging by students due to its demand for both linguistic precision and creative originality. Many students in Indonesian secondary schools encounter difficulties in producing poems that are structurally coherent and semantically rich, which suggests a gap in pedagogical approaches to teaching this literary genre (Blake & Snapper, 2022; Mardiningrum & Adriyanthi, 2023).

The quality of student writing outcomes is heavily influenced by instructional models adopted in the classroom. Traditional or conventional methods of teaching in Indonesia often emphasize teacher-centered delivery, memorization, and limited interaction, which constrain student engagement and creativity (Ghafar, 2023; Wang, 2023; Woods & Copur-Gencturk, 2024). Such methods, while effective for delivering factual knowledge, are less conducive to developing higher-order thinking skills and creative expression required for poetry writing. In contrast, innovative pedagogical approaches that emphasize structured guidance and active participation have been found to enhance learning outcomes across diverse educational contexts (Kerimbayev et al., 2023; Vera, 2023).

One such approach is the Explicit Instruction model, which has gained prominence in recent decades for its systematic and direct teaching strategies. Explicit Instruction is characterized by clearly defined learning objectives, structured modeling of tasks, guided practice with feedback, and gradual release of responsibility to learners (Arias-Gundín & García Llamazares, 2021; Carpenter et al., 2022). By providing step-by-step instruction, this model ensures that students build mastery progressively, thereby reducing confusion and supporting the acquisition of complex skills. In literacy education, Explicit Instruction has been shown to improve reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and structured writing tasks (Al Otaiba et al., 2023; Mbambo-Marimirofa & Nadia Phillips, 2023; Salih Alzahrani & Meshal Alhomyani, 2023). In the Asian context, particularly in language classrooms, the model has been reported to facilitate learner engagement and scaffold cognitive processes essential for written expression (Al Otaiba et al., 2023; Zhang & Zhang, 2021).

Despite these promising findings, research on the application of Explicit Instruction to poetry writing in Indonesian secondary schools remains limited. Previous studies have largely concentrated on narrative or expository genres, highlighting how explicit scaffolding can improve organization, coherence, and argumentation (Al Otaiba et al., 2023; Arias-Gundín & García Llamazares, 2021; Mbambo-Marimirofa & Nadia Phillips, 2023). While these studies demonstrate the efficacy of the model in enhancing structured writing tasks, they provide little insight into its potential to support more creative and expressive forms of writing such as poetry. Furthermore, few empirical studies have systematically compared the outcomes of Explicit Instruction with conventional teaching methods in the specific domain of poetry writing, leaving a gap in both theory and practice (Blake & Snapper, 2022; Ghafar, 2023; Selfa Sastre & Falguera Garcia, 2022; Wang, 2023).

Addressing this gap is crucial because poetry not only contributes to linguistic and cognitive development but also nurtures affective and cultural dimensions of learning that are integral to holistic education (Mbambo-Marimirofa & Nadia Phillips, 2023; Zhang & Zhang, 2021)..

Without effective pedagogical strategies, students may remain disengaged from poetry writing, thereby missing opportunities for creative growth and cultural literacy. Moreover, as Indonesia continues to implement curriculum reforms emphasizing higher-order thinking skills and 21st-century competencies, the integration of innovative instructional models such as Explicit Instruction becomes increasingly relevant (OECD, 2021; UNESCO, 2021).

Therefore, this study aims to examine the effect of the Explicit Instruction learning model on the poetry writing skills of seventh-grade students in an Indonesian junior high school. Specifically, it seeks to determine whether Explicit Instruction produces significant improvement in student learning outcomes compared to conventional teaching methods. By focusing on poetry writing, the study not only extends existing research on Explicit Instruction to a relatively underexplored literary genre but also provides practical insights for educators and policymakers seeking to enhance language and literature instruction in Indonesia.

Methods

This study employed a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design, specifically the nonequivalent control group design, to evaluate the effect of the Explicit Instruction learning model on students' poetry writing skills. The research was conducted at SMPN 19 Bengkulu during the first semester of the 2022/2023 academic year and involved two intact seventh-grade classes. The experimental group received instruction through the Explicit Instruction model, while the control group was taught using conventional methods. Although randomization at the student level was not feasible, the use of intact classes preserved ecological validity within the school setting.

Data were collected using pre-tests and post-tests to measure students' ability to write poetry. The pre-test was administered prior to the intervention to establish baseline competencies, and the post-test was conducted after the treatment to evaluate progress. Test instruments were developed in accordance with curriculum indicators, covering idea development, structure, diction, and mechanics. Content validity was assured through expert review, while a pilot study with 24 students tested item quality. Five low-performing items were discarded, resulting in 20 valid test items. Reliability testing produced a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.902, indicating very high internal consistency.

The treatment was implemented over four instructional sessions spanning two weeks, with each session lasting approximately two to three hours. In the experimental group, the Explicit Instruction model followed four phases: (1) presentation of objectives and teacher modeling, (2) guided practice with feedback, (3) reinforcement through collaborative discussion, and (4) independent practice with gradual release of responsibility. In contrast, the control group covered identical content using traditional teacher explanation and textbook exercises, with minimal student interaction.

Data analysis combined descriptive and inferential techniques. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) summarized student performance, while independent samples *t*-tests compared post-test scores between groups. Normality (Shapiro-Wilk) and homogeneity of variance (Levene's test) were checked before conducting hypothesis testing. The significance level was set at $\alpha = 0.05$, and effect sizes (Cohen's *d*) were calculated to interpret the strength of observed differences. All analyses were performed using SPSS software.

Ethical considerations were observed by obtaining permission from school authorities and informed consent from students and guardians. Participant anonymity and confidentiality were strictly maintained, and data were used solely for research purposes. Through this methodological framework, the study aimed to provide reliable empirical evidence regarding the role of Explicit Instruction in enhancing students’ poetry writing outcomes.

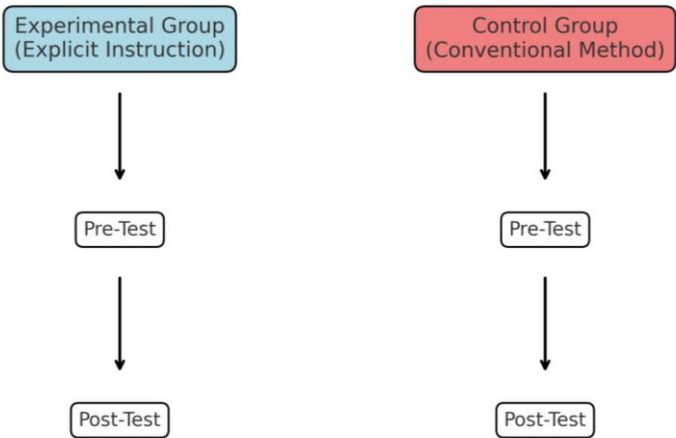


Figure 1. Research Design Scheme

As shown in Figure 1, the study involved two intact seventh-grade classes. The experimental group (EG) received instruction through the Explicit Instruction model, while the control group (CG) was taught using conventional methods. Both groups were administered pre-tests and post-tests to measure their poetry writing ability. This structure allowed for a direct comparison of learning gains between the two groups, thereby ensuring the validity of the quasi-experimental design.

Results and Discussion

Result

Learning Outcomes of the Experimental Group (Explicit Instruction)

The experimental group, which was taught using the Explicit Instruction model, demonstrated a marked improvement in poetry writing skills. The mean pre-test score was 57.71, which increased to 82.92 in the post-test, representing a gain of 25.21 points. Statistical testing confirmed that this improvement was significant ($t = 15.694, p < 0.05$). These results indicate that students in the experimental class benefited substantially from the structured, step-by-step guidance of the Explicit Instruction approach.

Table 1. Pre-test and Post-test Results of the Experimental Group

Test Type	Mean Score	t-value	p-value	Conclusion
Pre-Test	57.71			
Post-Test	82.92	15.694	0.000	Significant improvement

Learning Outcomes of the Control Group (Conventional Method)

In the control group, which received conventional instruction, student progress was less pronounced. The mean pre-test score was 69.58, which increased slightly to 71.88 in the post-test, yielding a modest gain of 2.30 points. Although the improvement was statistically significant ($t = 5.131, p < 0.05$), the magnitude of change was minimal compared to the experimental group.

Table 2. Pre-test and Post-test Results of the Control Group

Test Type	Mean Score	t-value	p-value	Conclusion
Pre-Test	69.58			
Post-Test	71.88	5.131	0.000	Significant improvement (small gain)

Comparative Analysis Between Experimental and Control Groups

A direct comparison of the two groups’ post-test results revealed a substantial difference. The experimental group achieved a mean score of 82.92, while the control group scored 71.88, resulting in a difference of 11.04 points. Independent sample t-test analysis indicated that this difference was statistically significant ($t = 5.043, p < 0.05$), with an effect size indicating a strong instructional impact.

Table 3. Comparism of Post-test Results Between Experimental and Control Groups

Group	Mean Score	Mean Difference	t-value	p-value	Conclusion
Experimental	82.92				
Control	71.88	11.04	5.043	0.000	Significant difference

Visualization of Learning Gains

To further illustrate these findings, Figure 2 presents a comparison of pre-test and post-test mean scores for both groups.

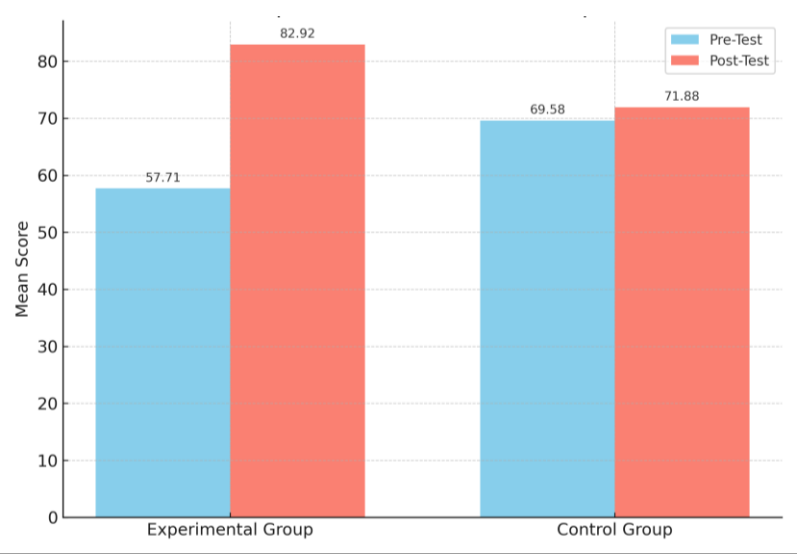


Figure 2. Comparison of pre-test and post-test mean scores for experimental and control groups
Note: EG = Experimental Group; CG = Control Group.

As illustrated in Figure 2, the experimental group (EG) exhibited a marked increase in poetry writing performance from the pre-test ($M = 57.71$) to the post-test ($M = 82.92$), representing a gain of 25.21 points. In contrast, the control group (CG) showed only a slight

improvement from the pre-test ($M = 69.58$) to the post-test ($M = 71.88$), yielding a gain of 2.30 points. This visual evidence reinforces the statistical analyses in Tables 2–4, confirming that Explicit Instruction produced significantly greater learning gains compared to conventional methods.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the Explicit Instruction learning model significantly improved students' poetry writing skills compared to conventional instruction, as indicated by the substantial gains in the experimental group relative to the modest improvement observed in the control group. This outcome aligns with Rosenshine, (2012) principles of explicit teaching, which emphasize structured explanations, guided practice, and scaffolding as effective strategies for developing mastery of complex academic skills. Similar to Hughes et al., (2017), who found that explicit guidance supports literacy acquisition, this study confirms that a teacher-centered yet systematically organized model can enhance both the technical and creative aspects of writing.

The results are also consistent with international studies demonstrating that explicit pedagogical models improve literacy learning across genres. For instance, Tsiriotakis et al., (2020), reported that structured writing instruction yields significant gains in organization and language use, while Emilia & Martin, (2023) emphasized that gradual release of responsibility fosters independent learning. In the Indonesian context, Ludy et al., (2016) showed that scaffolding and explicit modeling improve student performance in narrative and expository writing. The present study extends these findings by applying the Explicit Instruction model to poetry, a genre that requires not only cognitive organization but also aesthetic and affective engagement.

Moreover, the results resonate with research highlighting the limitations of conventional instruction. Studies by Carpenter et al., 2022 and Sumarno & Shodikin, 2017 have consistently noted that teacher-centered approaches relying heavily on rote learning and textbook exercises fail to engage students in deeper learning processes. The control group's minimal progress in this study illustrates these limitations, showing that conventional methods may lead to statistically significant improvement due to repeated exposure, but they are insufficient to produce meaningful gains in creative and expressive writing.

The novelty of this study lies in its focus on poetry as the target genre, an area that has received limited empirical attention in Indonesian educational research. While previous studies have concentrated on narrative and expository texts, this research provides evidence that explicit instructional frameworks can also support creative writing, which integrates linguistic proficiency with emotional and cultural expression. By demonstrating that Explicit Instruction enhances students' ability to structure ideas, choose appropriate diction, and apply imagery in poetry, the study shows that structured pedagogy can coexist with creative freedom, thus bridging cognitive and affective dimensions of literacy learning.

The implications of these findings are significant for educational practice and policy. For teachers, adopting Explicit Instruction offers a pedagogical alternative that balances guidance with creativity, enabling students to develop both technical accuracy and artistic expression. For curriculum developers and policymakers, the study suggests that explicit models should be

integrated into language and literature instruction, particularly in contexts where conventional methods remain dominant. Teacher training programs may incorporate workshops on explicit teaching strategies to enhance instructional quality, especially in the domain of creative writing.

Despite its contributions, the study has several limitations. The relatively small sample size and short duration of the intervention constrain the generalizability of the findings. The reliance on a quasi-experimental design with intact classes, while preserving ecological validity, limits the extent to which causal inferences can be drawn compared to randomized designs. Additionally, the focus on cognitive outcomes means that affective dimensions of learning, such as student motivation, self-efficacy, and attitudes toward poetry, were not systematically examined. Future research should address these limitations by involving larger and more diverse samples, extending the intervention period, and incorporating mixed-methods designs that capture both cognitive and affective dimensions of student learning.

Conclusion

The results of this study provide compelling evidence that the Explicit Instruction learning model significantly enhances students' poetry writing skills compared to conventional methods. Students in the experimental group demonstrated substantial gains in post-test scores, both in terms of statistical significance and practical improvement, while the control group exhibited only modest progress. These findings affirm that structured, teacher-led approaches which emphasize clear objectives, guided practice, and systematic feedback can effectively foster both cognitive mastery and creative expression in language learning. The novelty of this study lies in its application of Explicit Instruction to poetry writing, a literary genre that has received limited empirical attention in Indonesian educational research, thereby extending the scope of explicit pedagogical models beyond narrative and expository genres. The implications of this research are twofold: for teachers, Explicit Instruction offers a pedagogical framework to engage students more actively and creatively in literary expression, and for policymakers, it highlights the importance of integrating explicit instructional strategies into curriculum design and teacher training. Nevertheless, the study's limitations particularly its small sample size, short intervention period, and reliance on quasi-experimental design suggest the need for further research with larger and more diverse samples, extended treatment durations, and mixed-methods approaches to capture both cognitive and affective dimensions of student learning.

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