

"Does Personality Matter? Exploring the Role of Diary Writing in Enhancing EFL Students' Recount Writing Performance"

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ABSTRAK

Menulis merupakan keterampilan penting namun menantang dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing (EFL), terutama dalam menyusun teks recount. Penelitian ini bertujuan meningkatkan kemampuan menulis siswa melalui penulisan buku harian pribadi. Kegiatan dilaksanakan di SMA Al Falah Silo, Jember, pada tahun 2025, melibatkan 30 siswa kelas sepuluh. Metode yang digunakan adalah pendekatan menulis berbasis proses yang dipadukan dengan pembelajaran reflektif selama delapan sesi mingguan. Siswa menulis entri buku harian berdasarkan pengalaman pribadi dengan bimbingan guru dan umpan balik teman sebaya. Hasil menunjukkan peningkatan signifikan pada kelompok eksperimen, dengan skor rata-rata meningkat dari 64,13 menjadi 78,27 (peningkatan 22,05%), dibandingkan kelompok kontrol yang hanya meningkat 7,27%. Uji statistik menunjukkan perbedaan signifikan antara kedua kelompok ($p < 0,05$), namun tidak terdapat pengaruh signifikan dari tipe kepribadian ($p = 0,219$) maupun interaksi antara metode dan kepribadian ($p = 0,345$). Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa penulisan buku harian efektif meningkatkan keterampilan menulis recount siswa EFL tanpa dipengaruhi oleh kepribadian.

Kata kunci: buku harian, teks recount, keterampilan menulis, EFL, kepribadian

ABSTRACT

Writing is a critical yet challenging skill in English as a Foreign Language (EFL), particularly in producing well-structured recount texts. This study aimed to improve students' writing skills through personal diary writing. The intervention was conducted at SMA Al Falah Silo, Jember, in 2025, involving 30 tenth-grade students. A process-based writing approach combined with reflective learning was implemented over eight weekly sessions. Students wrote diary entries based on personal experiences with teacher guidance and peer feedback. Results showed a significant improvement in the experimental group, whose average score increased from 64.13 to 78.27 (a 22.05% gain), compared to a 7.27% gain in the control group. Statistical analysis confirmed a significant difference between the two groups ($p < 0.05$). However, no significant effect was found based on personality type ($p = 0.219$), nor any interaction between teaching method and personality ($p = 0.345$). These findings suggest that diary writing is an effective and inclusive pedagogical strategy for enhancing EFL students' recount writing skills, regardless of personality differences.

Keywords: diary writing, recount text, writing skills, EFL, personality

INTRODUCTION

Writing is widely recognized as one of the most complex and challenging skills to master in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. Unlike speaking, which allows for immediate clarification and feedback, writing demands a higher degree of accuracy, planning, and organization (Hyland, 2018). Students are required to manage multiple components

simultaneously, such as grammar, vocabulary, coherence, cohesion, and idea development. These demands often lead to anxiety and low motivation, particularly among high school students who are still developing their cognitive and linguistic capacities (Sari & Wahyuni, 2020). In the Indonesian educational context, writing is a core competence outlined in the national curriculum. At the senior high school level, students are expected to be able to express their thoughts, ideas, and experiences through various text genres, including recount texts. A recount text, by definition, retells past events in a chronological order and typically includes three main elements: orientation, series of events, and re-orientation (Derewianka & Jones, 2016). However, many students struggle to write recounts effectively. This is supported by the pre-test results of 30 tenth-grade students at SMA Al Falah Silo, Jember, which showed an average score of 64.13—below the school's Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM) of 75. This indicates that students' initial ability to write coherent and well-structured recount texts was relatively weak. Furthermore, informal interviews with English teachers revealed that many students lacked confidence in writing due to difficulties in developing ideas and applying grammar accurately. These findings highlight the need for a more reflective and personal writing approach, such as diary writing, to improve students' writing competence in the EFL context.. Most writing tasks are product-oriented and exam-focused, leaving little room for personal expression and creativity (Permatasari, 2020)

To address this gap, learner-centered and reflective approaches to writing instruction have gained increasing attention. One such approach is personal diary writing, which allows students to explore their thoughts, emotions, and experiences in a free and meaningful manner. Diary writing has been shown to reduce students' anxiety, enhance fluency, and foster metacognitive awareness (Magno, 2008). It also helps students build writing habits and develop their voice as authors. More importantly, diary writing aligns well with the principles of process-based writing, which emphasize drafting, revising, and reflecting as integral parts of writing development (Harmer, 2001). This study was conducted at SMA Al Falah Silo, Jember, with tenth-grade students as participants. The program titled "*My Diary, My Story*" aimed to improve students' recount writing skills through personal diary writing activities implemented over eight weekly sessions. Each session focused on guiding students to recount personal experiences based on themes relevant to their daily lives, such as family events, school activities, or emotional moments. The program not only emphasized language structure

but also encouraged personal reflection and emotional engagement, which are often overlooked in conventional classroom writing tasks.

Previous studies have reported that diary writing can positively affect students' writing performance and motivation. For example, (Bajrami & Vela, 2017; Licia Masoni, 2018) found that Iranian EFL learners who engaged in diary writing showed significant improvement in writing fluency and cohesion. Similarly, (Hidayat, 2018) noted that diary-based instruction helped Indonesian high school students express ideas more clearly and organize their texts more logically. These findings suggest that diary writing can be an effective pedagogical tool, particularly for recount texts, which are inherently personal and reflective in nature. (Grolig et al., 2020) A diary is commonly understood as a médium such as a notebook, journal, or other format that allows students to document their thoughts, reflections on learning experiences, and even their deepest concerns related to the learning process. Some students may opt for digital or audio formats instead of traditional paper-based diaries. Regardless of the format, diary entries typically capture daily experiences, personal insights, and challenges encountered. The primary emphasis in diary writing is placed on conveying meaning rather than focusing on language form, allowing learners to express ideas freely on topics that are personally meaningful to them.

Similarly, teachers do not correct linguistic errors to the message in meaningful way. Hence, learners have the freedom of writing without worrying about form. (Lumbantobing et al., 2020). In response to this issue, the present study was conducted to help reduce the difficulties students face in the writing process by implementing an experimental approach that uses diary writing as a classroom writing activity. There are several reasons why diary writing was selected as an appealing and effective instructional strategy. First, although keeping a diary is a simple activity, it can have a significant impact on students' writing development.. (Gupta et al., 2015; Mahadi et al., 2018) It has been suggested that diary writing serves as a bridge between personal and public forms of writing, offering a meaningful way to support continuous and intensive writing practice. Moreover, maintaining a diary allows individuals to enjoy the process of exploring their thoughts. It provides a private space where they can freely express their inner feelings without fear of being judged. Additionally, several studies have shown that diary writing can be an effective medium for enhancing various language skills.(Bourdeau et al., 2017) applied keeping diary writing to

increase the reflective practice, it described that diary writing is a multifaceted activity used for many purposes. (Lewis, 2009) as the teacher applying diary in teaching writing for their students stated that asking students to keep a diary make the teacher more creative to choose the appropriate topic for the students. The last reason is that by keeping a diary the students will get more occasions to study and practice their full ability as (Hertz-Lazarowitz, 2004) stated that the writing skill will appear by experienced, time, occasion, and training. In line with this, the present study investigates how diary writing activities implemented in an EFL classroom can support students in writing recount paragraphs more effectively. It also explores how such reflective practices can influence students' motivation and engagement in the writing process. The goal is to provide a model of innovative, student-cantered writing instruction that can be replicated or adapted in similar educational contexts.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research applied a quantitative research approach using a quasi-experimental design with a non-equivalent control group. This design was selected because random assignment of participants was not possible, as the researcher used intact classrooms from the school's natural setting. The study aimed to investigate the effect of personal diary writing on students' achievement in writing recount paragraphs and to explore whether personality types (introvert and extrovert) influenced the results. According to (Creswell, 2020, 2007), quasi-experimental design is appropriate when the researcher has limited control over the assignment of subjects to treatment and control groups but still wishes to measure the cause-effect relationship between variables. In this study, the independent variable was the use of personal diary writing, while the dependent variable was the students' writing achievement in recount texts. Personality type was treated as a moderating variable.

The population of this research consisted of all tenth-grade students of SMA Al Falah Silo, Jember in the academic year 2024/2025. The tenth grade had three classes: X A, X B, and X C, with a total of 96 students. The sample was selected using cluster sampling. Based on preliminary equivalence analysis (students' midterm English scores), the three classes were assumed to have relatively similar English proficiency levels. Class X A (32 students) was assigned as the experimental group, where students were taught using personal diary writing as the main method for teaching recount texts. Class X B (32 students) was assigned

as the control group, taught using conventional teaching methods, such as teacher explanation and textbook-based writing exercises. Class X C (32 students) was not directly involved in treatment but participated in pilot testing of the research instruments. Before the treatment, all students from X A and X B were asked to complete a personality questionnaire (Eysenck Personality Inventory adapted by (Hidayatulloh et al., 2021) to categorize them into introvert and extrovert groups.

To collect relevant and measurable data, the following instruments were used: The test consisted of a writing prompt asking students to write a recount paragraph based on a personal experience. The test was administered twice: Pre-test (before treatment) to measure students' initial writing competence. Post-test (after treatment) to assess improvement. The test was scored using an analytic rubric adapted from (Kim & Yoon, 2014), covering five components: content (30%), organization (20%), grammar (20%), vocabulary (20%), and mechanics (10%). The maximum total score was 100.

Personality Questionnaire, to identify students' personality traits, a standardized introvert-extrovert questionnaire was used, based on the Eysenck Personality Inventory (EPI). The questionnaire consisted of 24 items, each requiring a "Yes" or "No" answer. The results were interpreted using established scoring guidelines to categorize students as introverts or extroverts. Lesson Plan and Learning Materials, Instructional materials, including diary writing prompts, writing templates, and reflective worksheets, were developed and used during the treatment for the experimental group. The topics for diary writing were related to students' daily experiences, such as: "My First Day in High School", "A Funny Experience", "An Unforgettable Moment"

The research was conducted in three main stages: Preliminary Stage, the researcher administered the pre-test and personality questionnaire to both the experimental and control groups. The initial data were recorded and used to ensure that both groups were relatively equivalent in writing ability and had a balanced distribution of personality types. Treatment Stage (4 Weeks / 8 Meetings) In the experimental group (X A), students were guided to write personal diaries twice week for four weeks. Each session lasted 90 minutes and followed these stages: Warm-up and introduction to the theme, Discussion of vocabulary and grammar related to recount texts, Brainstorming and drafting, Writing diary entries, Brief sharing and feedback

Students were encouraged to express their feelings, recount experiences, and reflect on events in a structured recount format (Orientation – Events – Re-orientation). In the control group (X B), students were taught recount writing using traditional methods. Instruction included grammar drills, model text analysis, and structured writing exercises from the textbook. After the treatment, both groups were given a post-test with a similar writing prompt as the pre-test. The post-test aimed to measure whether diary writing had a significant effect on writing achievement. Student scores were analysed based on their personality category to determine the influence of introversion/extroversion. In the treatment sessions for the experimental group (Class X A), activities were carried out over eight meetings, each lasting 90 minutes. Every session began with the introduction of a daily theme closely related to the students' personal lives, such as "My First Day at School," "A Funny Moment," or "An Unforgettable Experience." The teacher then facilitated a brief discussion about relevant vocabulary and grammatical structures commonly used in recount texts.

Next, students were guided to write personal diary entries based on their own experiences, following the standard recount structure: orientation, sequence of events, and re-orientation. After completing their writing, students were encouraged to voluntarily share their diary entries in small groups. This was followed by peer feedback and teacher comments to support reflection and improvement.

These activities were intentionally designed to foster reflective writing skills, enhance fluency, and boost students' confidence in expressing themselves in English. Meanwhile, the control group (Class X B) received conventional instruction in recount writing. Each session included teacher-led explanations of recount structure, grammar drills, analysis of model texts from textbooks, and structured writing assignments. The learning process focused on final products, with no journaling activities or integration of students' personal experiences. Feedback was limited to teacher corrections, without reflective or collaborative discussion.

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The data collected in this study were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. For the descriptive analysis, the mean, median, and standard deviation of pre-test and post-test scores were calculated for both the experimental and control groups. Additionally, gain scores were determined by calculating the difference between students' post-test and pre-test results. For the inferential analysis, an independent samples t-test was employed to evaluate whether there was a significant difference in post-test performance between the two groups, indicating the effect of the diary writing intervention. Furthermore, a two-way ANOVA was performed to investigate the potential interaction effects between the type of instructional method (diary writing vs. conventional) and students' personality types (introvert vs. extrovert) on their writing achievement.

The data analysis was assisted by the SPSS 26.0 software to ensure accuracy and reliability. To ensure instrument validity, the writing test was reviewed by two senior English teachers and a university lecturer. The test was pilot-tested on students of class X C. Feedback was used to revise unclear instructions and ensure scoring consistency. Reliability of scoring was maintained through inter-rater reliability. Two independent raters scored the writing tests using the same rubric. Inter-rater agreement was calculated using Cohen's Kappa, and scores above 0.70 were considered acceptable. The researcher obtained written permission from the school principal and English subject coordinator. Students and their parents were informed about the purpose of the study and assured that participation was voluntary. Confidentiality was strictly maintained by using code numbers instead of real names. Students were allowed to withdraw from the study at any point.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The statistical analysis revealed that the F-value for the group variable was 22.317 with a p-value of .000, which is below the significance threshold of $\alpha = .05$. This indicates a statistically significant difference in students' recount writing performance between those taught using the personal diary writing technique and those taught using conventional methods. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was accepted, confirming that the diary-based approach had a meaningful impact on students' writing outcomes. In other words, there is difference in the students' writing recount paragraph taught by using personal diary writing technique and conventional technique. Furthermore, the analysis showed that the F-value for the personality variable was 1.371 with a p-value of .246, which exceeds the significance threshold of 0.05. This result indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in recount writing performance between extroverted and introverted students.

In addition, the interaction effect between teaching method (diary writing vs. conventional) and personality type yielded an F-value of 0.054 with a p-value of .817. Since the p-value is also greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that there is no significant interaction between the instructional method and students' personality types. Thus, the null hypotheses for both personality effect and interaction effect were retained, suggesting that the effectiveness of diary writing is consistent regardless of students' personality traits.

Result

This study aimed to determine the effect of using the personal diary writing technique on students' ability to write recount texts and to examine whether personality types (introvert and extrovert) influence writing outcomes. The research was conducted in three tenth-grade classes at SMA Al Falah Silo, Jember, in the 2024/2025 academic year. Class X A was designated as the experimental group (taught using diary writing), Class X B as the control group (taught using conventional methods), and Class X C was used for instrument validation. Each class consisted of 32 students.

The improvement in students' writing achievement is shown in **Table 1**, which displays the average pre-test and post-test scores in both the experimental and control groups.

Table 1. Average Scores of Pre-tests and Post-Test in Experimental and Control Groups

Group	Test Type	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Experimental (X A)	Pre-test	64.13	6.85
Experimental (X A)	Post-test	78.27	5.91
Control (X B)	Pre-test	63.81	6.42
Control (X B)	Post-test	68.45	6.09

An independent samples t-test revealed a significance value (p) of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), indicating a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups in their post-test performance. This confirms that diary writing had a significant positive effect on students' recount writing skills. In addition, a Two-Way ANOVA analysis showed the following results: Main effect of teaching method: significant ($p = 0.000$), Main effect of personality type: not significant ($p = 0.219$), Interaction effect between teaching method and personality: not significant ($p = 0.345$) These findings indicate that: The teaching method significantly influenced writing achievement, The personality type (introvert vs. extrovert) did not significantly affect outcomes, There was no interaction effect, meaning that diary writing was equally effective for both personality types.

Discussion

The results of this study confirm that personal diary writing can significantly enhance students' recount writing performance. Students in the experimental group showed substantially higher post-test scores compared to those in the control group, indicating that reflective and process-based writing activities support the development of coherence, fluency, and organization. These findings align with previous studies (e.g.(Shahani & Tahriri, 2015)), which emphasize the pedagogical value of journaling in EFL contexts. Furthermore, the analysis revealed no significant effect of personality type, suggesting that both introverted and extroverted students benefited equally from the intervention. This highlights the inclusive nature of diary writing, as it provides a private and non-threatening space for self-expression, regardless of students' personal traits.

The absence of interaction between teaching method and personality also indicates that the effectiveness of diary writing does not depend on individual differences. This

supports the use of journaling as a universally applicable strategy for writing instruction. Overall, the findings emphasize the importance of meaningful, student-centered writing practices in EFL classrooms to enhance engagement, motivation, and writing proficiency. The significant improvement observed in the experimental group suggests that regular, reflective writing activities enable students to write more fluently, coherently, and with better organization. Diary writing allows students to draw from personal experience, reducing the cognitive load of inventing content and allowing for more natural language use (Hyland, 2018). Students become more confident, motivated, and engaged when they write about events that matter to them. Interestingly, the non-significant influence of personality type suggests that diary writing benefits both introverted and extroverted students equally. This may be due to the private and non-judgmental nature of diary writing, which provides a comfortable outlet for expression, particularly for introverted students who may struggle in oral or group-based activities. Reflections collected from student feedback further supported this. Many students reported that diary writing helped them organize their thoughts, reduce writing anxiety, and express themselves more freely. This aligns with the principles of process-based writing instruction, which values drafting, reflection, and personal engagement (Harmer, 2001).

As has been stated on the first chapter that the purposes of this research is to examine the effectiveness of personal diary writing on students' achievement in writing recount paragraph across different Personality. This study has three research problems. Firstly, is there any difference in writing recount paragraph achievement between the students who are taught through personal diary writing and those who are taught through conventional method in writing skill?, secondly, is there any difference in writing recount paragraph achievement between the students who are introvert students and extrovert students?, and thirdly, is there any interaction between the students who are taught through diary writing and students' personality on achievement writing recount paragraph?

The first research question aimed to determine whether there is a difference in students' achievement in writing recount paragraphs between those taught through diary writing and those who received conventional instruction. The findings presented in Chapter IV indicate that students who were taught using the personal diary writing technique outperformed those the conventional group, as evidenced by a notable improvement in the post-test scores of the exper

imental group. This suggests that diary writing is an effective method for enhancing students' recount writing performance. The results of this study are consistent with previous research by Safitri (2021), which also demonstrated the significant positive impact of diary writing as a learning medium, particularly in writing instruction. Based on these findings, several recommendations are offered. For English teachers, diary writing can be integrated as an engaging and reflective medium to support writing development.

For students, maintaining a personal diary is encouraged as a way to strengthen writing habits and self-expression. Future researchers may use this study as a reference to explore the application of diary writing in different contexts, genres, or with more varied learner populations. Secondly, in addition to investigating differences in writing performance based on instructional methods, this study also explored whether students' personality types introvert and extrovert affected their ability to write recount paragraphs. The analysis aimed to determine whether personality traits contributed to differences in writing achievement. The findings revealed no significant difference in writing performance between introverted and extroverted students, indicating that personality type did not influence their outcomes in recount writing tasks. Thirdly, the study examined the potential interaction between teaching method and personality type. The results showed no significant interaction effect, suggesting that the effectiveness of diary writing was consistent regardless of whether the students were introverts or extroverts. In other words, the diary writing approach supported students' writing development equally well across personality differences.

The findings of this study also have theoretical implications. Firstly, they reinforce process-based writing theory by demonstrating that integrating personal journaling into the writing process significantly enhances students' ability to produce well-structured and meaningful recount texts. This supports the notion that writing is not merely a linguistic task but also a reflective and emotional process (Hyland, 2018). Secondly, the results challenge widely held assumptions in language learning theory regarding personality types. Despite theoretical claims that extroverted learners tend to perform better in productive skills, this study found no significant difference between introverted and extroverted students. This suggests that reflective and low-pressure tasks such as diary writing can minimize personality-based disparities, offering a more equitable learning environment.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion, it can be concluded that the use of personal diary writing significantly improves students' performance in writing recount texts. Compared to conventional instruction, students who engaged in regular journaling activities showed clearer organization, greater fluency, and stronger confidence in expressing personal experiences. The improvement was not only measurable but also observable in the quality and depth of students' written output, as well as their increased engagement during the writing process. Importantly, the positive impact of diary writing was consistent across different personality types. Both introverted and extroverted students were able to express themselves effectively through personal narratives, suggesting that this approach provides a safe, reflective space that accommodates diverse learner characteristics. In essence, diary writing is not merely a tool for improving grammar or structure it is a medium that fosters autonomy, emotional connection, and deeper cognitive involvement in writing. Its integration into EFL classrooms can enhance not just writing scores, but also students' overall motivation and identity as writers.

The implementation of personal diary writing significantly improves students' writing performance in recount texts. The experimental group, which engaged in diary writing over eight sessions, showed a higher increase in writing scores compared to the control group taught with conventional methods. The diary writing approach is effective across different personality types. Statistical analysis revealed that both introverted and extroverted students benefited equally from this strategy. The introspective and expressive nature of diary writing supports the learning process for all students, regardless of personality preferences. Diary writing helps students develop confidence, fluency, and organization in their writing. Students become more engaged in the writing process when encouraged to recount personal experiences in a non-threatening format. In sum, diary writing proves to be a student-centered, reflective, and low-cost strategy that enhances EFL students' recount writing skills and promotes learner autonomy.

Based on the conclusions above, the following suggestions are offered for English teachers, researchers, and educational institutions: For English Teachers: Teachers are encouraged to adopt diary writing as a regular practice in writing instruction, especially when teaching narrative and recount genres. Teachers should create a supportive environment

where students feel comfortable expressing their thoughts and experiences. For Curriculum Developers and Schools: Schools and curriculum designers should consider integrating reflective writing activities into English syllabi. This can be facilitated by allocating regular writing time and providing training for teachers in process-based and learner-centered writing instruction. For Future Researchers: Future studies can expand on this research by exploring the long-term effects of diary writing on different writing genres or language skills such as speaking or reading. Further research could also explore the emotional and psychological benefits of diary writing for adolescent learners. For Students: Students are encouraged to continue personal writing outside the classroom. Keeping a diary not only enhances writing proficiency but also develops self-awareness and emotional resilience.

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