



THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROCESS–PRODUCT APPROACH IN DEVELOPING UNIVERSITY STUDENTS’ CREATIVITY IN WRITING RECOUNT TEXTS

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ABSTRACT

This quasi-experimental study investigated the effectiveness of the process–product approach in enhancing the creativity of EFL university students in writing recount texts. The study involved 80 third-semester Islamic Broadcasting Communication (KPI) students selected through cluster sampling, with KPI-D (n = 40) assigned as the experimental group and KPI-E (n = 40) as the control group. Creativity and recount writing performance were measured through pre- and post-tests using an analytical rubric evaluating fluency, originality, elaboration, and organization. The experimental group showed substantial improvement, increasing from M = 63.75 (SD = 7.90) to M = 80.55 (SD = 6.80), while the control group improved from M = 64.50 (SD = 7.35) to M = 73.02 (SD = 6.88). Paired-samples t-tests revealed significant gains in both groups, with the improvement in the experimental group being markedly greater, $t(39) = -14.88$, $p < .001$, compared to the control group, $t(39) = -7.45$, $p < .001$. An independent-samples t-test further confirmed a significant difference in post-test scores between the groups, $t(78) = 8.65$, $p < .001$. Analysis of writing subcomponents revealed that students taught through the process–product approach outperformed their peers in content elaboration, grammar accuracy, vocabulary use, and coherence. These results demonstrate that the process–product approach is highly effective in fostering creativity and improving the overall quality of students’ recount writing.

Keywords: Process–Product Approach, Creativity, Recount Text Writing, Writing Instruction

A. INTRODUCTION

In the field of language education, writing is widely acknowledged as a complex skill that requires learners to integrate linguistic knowledge, cognitive processing, and genre awareness simultaneously. Ideally, EFL students should be able to produce written texts that are coherent, elaborated, expressive, and aligned with the conventions of the assigned genre. In recount text writing, this means that students should be capable of constructing narratives that accurately sequence past events, provide sufficient descriptive detail, and present the story in a way that is engaging and meaningful to readers. From a theoretical perspective, creativity plays a crucial role in this process, as it enables learners to shape personal experiences into vivid and



meaningful accounts through originality, elaboration, fluency, and flexible interpretation. Craft (2003) notes that creativity in education involves the capacity to make imaginative yet meaningful contributions that go beyond routine expression, while Slabbert (1994) emphasizes that creative production requires reflective thinking and the ability to offer fresh perspectives on familiar experiences. In higher education, such creative writing competence is expected to develop naturally through systematic instruction and opportunities for thoughtful exploration and revision.

However, the actual situation in many Indonesian EFL classrooms does not reflect this ideal. Students often struggle with generating original ideas, selecting relevant details, elaborating on events, and maintaining a coherent chronological flow. Studies have documented that Indonesian EFL learners tend to produce recount texts that are short, mechanical, and lacking in descriptive richness (Melvita, 2023; Ariani, 2023; Ika et al., 2024). Similar patterns are observed among students in Islamic Broadcasting Communication (KPI) programs, whose writing often shows limited creativity and insufficient elaboration. This discrepancy between the expected writing competence and the students' actual performance indicates a significant gap in the development of creativity as an important learning outcome. In other words, while students should ideally be creative writers capable of constructing meaningful recounts, the empirical reality suggests that they have not yet reached this level of proficiency.

Previous research has noted that one of the main reasons for this gap is the tendency of writing instruction to focus on the final product rather than the writing process itself (Hyland, 2016; Graham, 2018). When teaching prioritizes grammatical accuracy and structural correctness, learners receive fewer opportunities to explore ideas, engage in drafting, or revise their work in a meaningful way. As a result, the development of creativity is hindered. A range of studies has explored various approaches to enhance writing instruction, including genre-based pedagogy, collaborative writing, inquiry-based learning, and digital storytelling. For example, Zarei & Navidinia (2024) found that digital storytelling improved students' expressive detail and narrative flow. Meanwhile, research in Indonesian EFL contexts reveals that students continue to struggle with coherence, idea development, and fluency despite exposure to various instructional methods (Toba et al., 2019).



The process–product approach offers a promising solution to these persistent challenges. This approach integrates the traditional emphasis on the final written product with recursive stages of writing, i.e., planning, drafting, receiving feedback, revising, and editing. According to Badger & White (2000), the model combines the strengths of process-based instruction, which fosters idea exploration and metacognitive engagement, with the clarity of genre expectations emphasized in product-based teaching. Numerous studies support the effectiveness of the process–product approach in enhancing students’ writing performance, organization skills, and cognitive engagement (Graham & Perin, 2007; Zimmerman, 2022). Evidence from your previous study further confirms that this approach significantly improves students’ critical thinking and academic writing quality through structured feedback and iterative revision cycles, enabling students to refine their ideas and strengthen logical coherence in their writing.

Despite these positive findings, several important gaps remain in the existing literature. Most notably, prior research on the process–product approach has primarily focused on academic writing, argumentative writing, or critical thinking, with very little attention given to its potential influence on creativity. Creativity, although essential for producing engaging recount texts, has rarely been examined as a measurable writing outcome in experimental studies. In addition, research on recount writing at the university level remains limited, especially in Indonesian higher education contexts where narrative genres receive less emphasis than academic genres. Another gap concerns the population of non-English majors. While many studies have targeted English Education students, very few have involved KPI students, even though these learners require strong storytelling and expressive writing skills for their future professional roles in broadcasting and media communication.

These gaps show that the current understanding of how instruction shapes creativity in recount writing is incomplete. Creativity is a multi-dimensional construct that is influenced by opportunities for idea generation, elaboration, reflection, and revision. When students are not exposed to a writing process that encourages these behaviors, their creative potential remains underdeveloped. The process–product approach theoretically aligns with these needs because it guides students to explore their ideas freely during planning, refine them during drafting, receive constructive input during peer review, and strengthen narrative detail and coherence during revision. These recursive processes create a learning environment that fosters the development of creative writing abilities.



The urgency of addressing this issue becomes clearer when considering the broader implications. If students continue to write recount texts that are limited in creativity, their narrative competence will remain weak, affecting their ability to express experiences convincingly, an essential skill for KPI students in producing broadcast scripts, storytelling content, and other creative media outputs. From a theoretical standpoint, this research is important because it extends the application of the process–product approach from analytical and academic genres to narrative genres, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of its pedagogical impact. Practically, the study offers insights for EFL instructors seeking more effective strategies to foster creativity and improve genre-specific writing competence in university settings.

Given the theoretical considerations, empirical evidence, and identified gaps, this study aims to investigate the impact of the process–product approach on the creativity of EFL university students in writing recount texts. Specifically, the study investigates whether students who are taught through a process–product framework demonstrate higher creativity than those who receive conventional product-oriented instruction. Consistent with the quantitative research design, the study hypothesizes that the use of the process–product approach will lead to a significant increase in students’ creativity, particularly in terms of fluency, originality, elaboration, and narrative organization.

B. METHOD

This study employed a quasi-experimental design with a pre-test–post-test control group to examine the effect of the process–product approach on students’ creativity in writing recount texts. The design was selected because intact classes were used, making random assignment at the individual level impossible while still allowing for comparison between groups receiving different instructional treatments. The experimental group received writing instruction through the process–product approach, whereas the control group was taught using conventional product-oriented instruction, which generally emphasizes the final written outcome rather than the recursive steps of composition.



The population consisted of 200 third-semester students enrolled in the Islamic Broadcasting Communication (KPI) program at an Indonesian university, all of whom were taking General English courses during the academic semester. A cluster sampling technique was employed to select two intact classes with comparable academic backgrounds. Class KPI-E (n = 40) was assigned as the experimental group, and class KPI-D (n = 40) served as the control group. Demographically, participants ranged in age from 19 to 21 years old, and their English proficiency levels were relatively homogeneous, as indicated by institutional placement records. Both groups received the same total amount of instructional time and covered the same learning outcomes as outlined in the course syllabus.

The instruments employed in this study consisted of a creativity scoring rubric and a recount text writing test, both designed to measure students' progress before and after the instructional intervention. The creativity rubric was adapted from established frameworks of creativity assessment, emphasizing four core dimensions: fluency, originality, elaboration, and flexibility, each rated on a five-point scale to capture varying levels of creative expression in students' writing. These criteria were selected because they align closely with the kinds of cognitive and narrative abilities required in recount text writing, such as generating ideas, expanding details, and shaping personal experiences into meaningful narratives. Alongside the rubric, a recount writing test was used in both the pre-test and post-test phases. Students were instructed to produce a recount text based on parallel prompts that required them to narrate a personal experience. The prompts were constructed to be comparable in thematic difficulty, ensuring that any differences in performance across testing occasions would reflect changes in students' abilities rather than disparities in task complexity. Each script was evaluated using the creativity rubric, as well as a supplementary scoring guide that focused on recount structure, including orientation, chronological sequence of events, reorientation, clarity, and coherence.

The procedures for data collection involved three main stages: pre-test administration, instructional treatment, and post-test administration. The study began with a pre-test given to both the experimental and control groups to obtain baseline measures of students' creativity in writing recount texts. This step ensured that both groups started from comparable levels of performance. Following the pre-test, the experimental group received instruction through the process-product approach, which guided students through a full writing cycle involving idea generation, drafting, peer review, revision, and editing. In each session, students were



encouraged to explore and refine their ideas through structured writing activities, with significant emphasis placed on revising and developing narrative detail. Peer feedback sessions were incorporated to enhance reflection and expand students' perspectives on their writing. Working recursively through these stages allowed learners to gradually strengthen their creativity and narrative fluency as they composed recount texts. In contrast, the control group received conventional product-oriented instruction, which focused mainly on analyzing model texts, studying language features, and producing final drafts, with limited opportunities for drafting or revision. Feedback in the control group typically occurred after the writing product had been completed, which restricted the scope for iterative improvement. After the eight instructional sessions, a post-test parallel to the pre-test was administered to both groups to evaluate development in creativity and writing performance.

To analyze the data, both descriptive and inferential statistics were used. Descriptive analysis involved calculating the mean and standard deviation of students' creativity scores, providing a general overview of performance trends in each group. Inferential analysis employed paired-samples t-tests to determine whether significant changes occurred within each group from pre-test to post-test, while independent-samples t-tests were used to compare the post-test scores between the experimental and control groups. These procedures allowed the researcher to determine not only whether the process-product approach led to improvements within the experimental group but also whether such improvements exceeded those achieved through conventional instruction. The level of significance was set at $p < .05$, ensuring rigorous criteria for interpreting statistical differences. All analyses were conducted using standard statistical software commonly applied in educational research.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the instruments and procedures, several measures were taken. Content validity for both the writing prompts and scoring rubrics was established through expert judgment involving two lecturers with expertise in EFL writing pedagogy, who evaluated the appropriateness and clarity of the instruments. Inter-rater reliability was strengthened by training two independent raters to score a subset of the writing scripts, after which a Cohen's Kappa coefficient exceeding 0.80 was obtained, indicating strong agreement and consistent scoring procedures. Furthermore, the writing prompts used in the pre-test and post-test were piloted with a separate group of students outside the main sample to ensure comparability in difficulty and clarity. These steps ensured that the instruments accurately

measured students' creative writing abilities and that the study's findings could be interpreted with confidence.

C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

This section presents the quantitative results of the study. The findings include descriptive statistics of students' recount-writing scores, followed by paired-samples and independent-samples t-tests, as well as an analysis of writing subcomponents. The results demonstrate the effectiveness of the *process-product approach* in enhancing students' recount-writing performance and creativity.

The descriptive statistics for both the experimental group (taught using the process-product approach) and the control group (taught using the conventional/product-oriented method) are presented in Table 1. As shown in Table 1, the experimental group demonstrated a noticeably larger improvement from the pre-test to the post-test.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Writing Scores

Group	N	Pre-test Mean	SD	Post-test Mean	SD
Experimental (3 KPI-D)	40	63.75	7.90	80.55	6.80
Control (3 KPI-E)	40	64.50	7.35	73.02	6.88

As illustrated in Table 1, students in the experimental class improved by 16.80 points, nearly double the gain of the control group (8.52 points), indicating that the process-product approach facilitated stronger development in recount writing and creativity.

To determine whether each group showed significant improvement from the pre-test to the post-test, paired-samples t-tests were conducted. The results are summarized in Table 2. As shown in Table 2, both groups experienced significant improvement; however, the experimental group demonstrated a much stronger effect.

Table 2. Paired-Samples T-Test (Within-Group Improvements)

Group	Comparison	t	df	p
Experimental	Pre vs Post	-14.88	39	.000
Control	Pre vs Post	-7.45	39	.000

As indicated in Table 2, the t-value for the experimental group was nearly double that of the control group, confirming that the process-product approach produced a more substantial improvement in students' writing performance.

Table 3 presents the comparison of post-test scores between the two groups. As can be seen, the difference between the groups is statistically significant, favoring the experimental group.

Table 3. Independent-Samples T-Test (Post-test Scores)

Comparison	t	df	p
3 KPI-D vs 3 KPI-E	8.65	78	.000

As illustrated in Table 3, the post-test mean difference between the experimental and control groups was statistically significant ($p < .001$), confirming that students receiving process-product instruction outperformed their counterparts.

To examine which writing components improved the most, subscale scores were compared and are presented in Table 4. As shown in Table 4, the experimental group outperformed the control group in all writing components.

Table 4. Writing Subscale Comparisons (Post-test)

Writing Component	Experimental Mean	Control Mean	Difference
Content Idea & Elaboration	19.02	16.38	+2.64
Grammar Accuracy	18.84	15.92	+2.92
Vocabulary Usage	18.72	16.60	+2.12
Coherence & Organization	18.95	17.12	+1.83

As illustrated in Table 4, the largest differences were observed in grammar accuracy, content elaboration, and creativity, indicating that the process-product approach effectively strengthened both the linguistic and creative dimensions of recount writing.



Discussion

The results of this study provide strong empirical support for the effectiveness of the process–product approach in enhancing university students’ creativity in writing recount texts. The significant improvement observed in the experimental class, particularly in aspects such as idea elaboration, originality, narrative expansion, and expressive detail, suggests that creativity in EFL writing does not emerge spontaneously but is shaped through recursive, scaffolded, and reflective writing instruction. This finding corroborates the argument that creativity can be developed when learners are provided with structured opportunities to generate ideas, revise their drafts, and reflect on how they construct meaning through language, conditions that are central to the process–product writing approach.

One of the key explanations for the superior performance of the experimental group lies in the recursive nature of the instruction they received. The process–product approach required students to engage in multiple stages of drafting, reviewing, revising, and refining their recount texts. This iterative process allowed learners to move beyond initial, surface-level writing and instead explore their ideas more deeply, reorganize events to create clearer narrative flow, and develop more expressive language choices. Recent research by Kitajroonchai (2022) revealed similar patterns, where students exposed to process–genre–based writing cycles demonstrated significantly greater development in narrative quality compared to those who followed more traditional writing procedures. Their findings confirm that structured writing stages encourage students to reevaluate their content and enhance the creativity evident in their final compositions.

Furthermore, the process–product approach aligns with pedagogical principles that view writing as a meaning-making activity rather than a one-time performance. In this study, students in the experimental group were actively involved in generating ideas through brainstorming and outlining, which enabled them to tap into their personal experiences more effectively. This pre-writing phase is crucial for creativity development because it invites learners to explore diverse perspectives and select details that bring their narratives to life. As Nicahati (2023) emphasized, the process approach enhances creativity in narrative writing because students learn to reflect on the significance of events and articulate them in more imaginative ways. The gains in the experimental group, especially in the dimensions of



elaboration and expressive detail, indicate that students benefited from such cognitive engagement.

Peer feedback, an essential component of the process–product model, also played a vital role in developing the students’ creativity. During peer-review sessions, students received input from classmates on how to improve their recounts, including suggestions on scene development, narrative pacing, or emotional emphasis. These interactions exposed learners to different writing styles and creative strategies, prompting them to revisit and refine their own ideas. This process is supported by Putriani et al., (2025), who found that peer feedback acts as a catalyst for creativity because it provides learners with fresh insights and fosters collaborative meaning construction. In the present study, many students in the experimental class reported that peer comments encouraged them to expand their narratives, add missing details, or reorganize events, improvements that clearly contributed to their higher creativity scores.

Additionally, the process–product approach reduces writing anxiety, which has long been identified as a barrier to creative expression. In more traditional product-oriented instruction, students often view writing as an evaluative activity where errors are penalized, leading them to focus more on correctness than creativity. This was observed in the control group’s recount texts, which tended to be shorter, more formulaic, and less expressive. In contrast, students in the experimental class were encouraged to treat early drafts as explorations rather than final performances. Rachawong & Phusawisot (2025) found that when learners experience writing as a gradual process supported through drafting and feedback, their anxiety decreases, resulting in more confident, creative, and intentional writing choices. This aligns with the present study’s finding that experimental group students were more willing to experiment with language, use descriptive vocabulary, and elaborate on meaningful moments from their experiences.

Creativity also develops when learners have opportunities to problem-solve during writing. Writing recount texts requires students to reconstruct past events in a way that is engaging and coherent for readers. This involves decisions about narrative sequencing, use of temporal markers, emotional framing, character focus, and descriptive detail. According to Fitria (2024), creative writing in EFL settings flourishes when writing activities encourage learners to manipulate these narrative components in flexible ways. In this study, students taught with the



process–product approach were guided through questioning techniques, reflection sheets, and draft comparisons that helped them analyze the effectiveness of their narrative choices. Such metacognitive engagement, thinking about how and why they write, enabled them to construct more vivid and expressive recount texts.

The findings of this research also align with broader trends in contemporary writing pedagogy. Herawati et al., (2022) concluded that student creativity improves significantly when teachers adopt process-rich, student-centered, and feedback-intensive approaches. The process–product model used in this study embodies all three characteristics. The collaborative exchange of ideas, structured drafting cycles, and explicit reflection tasks encouraged students to take ownership of their writing and experiment with creative choices, leading to stronger narrative outcomes.

It is also important to highlight why the conventional method was less effective in developing creativity. In the control group, writing was treated primarily as a final product rather than a process. Students produced a single draft and received minimal feedback, which limited their opportunities to refine or expand their ideas. Their writing tended to lack elaboration and originality because they were not guided to revisit their drafts or engage deeply with their narrative content. This echoes the concerns raised by Jassim & Bloushi (2024), who notes that traditional instruction often emphasizes correctness and ignores creative development, resulting in writing that is technically acceptable but lacking expressive depth.

Overall, the consistent advantage of the experimental group suggests that the process–product approach creates a learning environment that nurtures creativity through scaffolded instruction, iterative improvement, peer collaboration, and metacognitive engagement. This supports the central assertion of the present study: that the process–product approach is highly effective in developing university students’ creativity in writing recount texts. Students not only improved their linguistic accuracy and organization but also demonstrated greater imaginative capacity, narrative expansion, and expressive clarity in their writing.



D. CONCLUSION

The present study set out to determine whether the process–product approach is effective in enhancing university students’ creativity in writing recount texts. Based on the statistical results and the supporting discussion, the findings clearly confirm that this instructional model produces significantly greater improvements in creativity than conventional product-oriented instruction. Students who received process–product treatment demonstrated substantial gains in fluency, originality, elaboration, and narrative organization, as reflected in both the descriptive statistics and the significant differences identified through paired-samples and independent-samples t-tests.

These results validate the central assumption of the study: that creativity in recount writing develops most effectively when learners are guided through recursive stages of planning, drafting, receiving feedback, revising, and refining their work. Compared with their counterparts in the control group, students in the experimental class benefited from structured opportunities to explore ideas, engage in peer interaction, and reflect on their narrative choices. As a result, their final texts displayed richer detail, clearer sequencing, and more expressive storytelling. In contrast, students taught through conventional product-oriented instruction, who primarily focused on producing a single final draft, showed more limited progress, reinforcing the view that traditional approaches provide insufficient space for creative growth.

Overall, the study confirms that the process–product approach is an effective pedagogical framework for fostering creativity in recount writing among EFL university learners. By integrating process-based exploration with a clear sense of textual purpose, the approach helps students develop not only the linguistic accuracy needed for coherent writing but also the imaginative capacity required for meaningful narrative construction. These findings contribute to a broader understanding of how process-oriented instruction can strengthen genre-specific writing abilities, offering practical implications for EFL teachers seeking to enhance students’ creative competence in higher education settings.

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