



Elevating Writing Literacy Skills of Students of SMPN 48 Surabaya Through Writing Fables

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Abstract

This article explains the importance of writing fables, especially to improve writing literacy skills daily life imaginations. This writing is based on community service done to junior high school students in SMPN 48 Surabaya in 2024. The creative capacities of children possess the potential to enhance their comprehension of writing literacy skills through the act of writing fables. Through an exploratory approach within qualitative research, this manuscript underscores fable writing as a mechanism to cultivate literacy skills from describing, exploring, to explaining ideas from their minds to written fables. In conclusion, the practice of writing fables for junior high school students is essential to elevate writing literacy skills regarding the advancement of creativity in the students' understandings of their everyday issues.

Keywords: Fables, Literacy, Writing

INTRODUCTION

Learning English in general can be done in two main ways of literacy, formal and informal. Formal learning takes place in schools, in classrooms, and through widely available teaching. A more informal understanding that refers to everyday life also to comprehend every daily meaning. The formal aspect is more rigid while the informal aspect is more flexible (Genlott & Grönlund, 2013; Mullis et al., 2012). Similarly, the formal aspect shows greater certainty, whereas the informal aspect relies more on a gradual understanding process. The formal aspect is also more indicative of language, seeing what the teacher teaches the students. The informal aspect is more meaningful and based on personal experiences with foreign languages in everyday life contexts. Each formal and informal aspect has its advantages and disadvantages. Of course, the ideal is to combine both. Both of these can also complement each other, especially in terms of foreign languages (Pasopati et al., 2024; Permana et al., 2023).

Community service is important to underline the spread of academic knowledge to wider communities. This idea is also done in English Literature matters especially in urging students from junior high school to gain more understandings about fables. In short, this article is a specific report to community service realized in 2024 in Sekolah Menengah Pertama Negeri (SMPN) 48 Surabaya. The focus of this action is to make students learn how to create such fables based on their own wide imagination. This is also intended to improve their elevating writing literacy based on various imaginations in everyday life.

This community service is a specific method that students can become more conscious of their everyday imagination. Writing proficiency enhances other English language proficiency, including grammar, vocabulary, and even clauses and phrases. It is also a prominent way to create understandings of prolonging writing literacy to students. Literacy should always be promoted to go beyond merely being literate. Literacy in this case is also to connect literature with their understandings of any value in everyday life.

METHOD

This community service initiative is designed to significantly enhance the writing literacy skills specifically pertaining to the composition of fables among junior high school students enrolled at SMP Negeri 48 Surabaya. These particular students exhibit commendable capabilities in the cognitive dimensions of their English language proficiency; however, they simultaneously experience a notable deficiency in practical application and tangible outcomes of these skills within their daily lives. This discrepancy primarily arises from a lack of awareness that the English language can be effectively learned and mastered through the engaging process of writing fables, which serves as both a creative outlet and an educational tool.

The deepening aim of this community service endeavor is to systematically apply writing literacy techniques to fortify English language skills, with a particular emphasis on enhancing writing capabilities. The methodological approach of this community service comprises several crucial steps, beginning with thorough preparatory measures that entail fostering robust communication channels with the educational institution, subsequently guiding the students through the intricate process of fable composition, and culminating in a comprehensive evaluation of the fables produced, alongside assessing their practical application in the students' everyday experiences. This structured and collaborative approach not only seeks to improve the students' writing skills but also aims to instill a deeper appreciation for the English language as a vital component of their academic and social lives. Ultimately, the success of this community service project is related to the active engagement of students, teachers, and community members in a shared commitment to fostering a more literate and expressive generation.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Writing Literature and Its Connections to Literacy Skills

Writing literature gives meaning as a way for any author to express their own intention. By stating so, literature is about how author's imagination is widened and poured into writing. It never comes as it is, but it works and specifies through experience of everyday life (Pasopati et al., 2024; Permana et al., 2023). It is because literature is reflection of humans' identities. Moreover, humans' identities will never leave out of its initial state in everyday issues. Furthermore, literature is also a work in relating imaginative world and real one. It gives wider perspectives in manifesting identities towards its constant actualizations regarding wider issues.

There are two main perceptions regarding writing in literature. The first one is that any imagination is totally pure. So, any writing could be done merely based on pure imagination of the author. Any novelty could also be derived as long as the author intends to create a literature out of nothingness. Therefore, pure imagination may also create any literature of any related social conditions (Kim, 2020; Li et al., 2021). The second one is more relative in cultural meanings. This literature is made by regarding any social circumstances, including what the author assumes and even what the audience thinks. This sense finds its novelty in recreating rather than purely creating such literature. From those two aspects, the latter is more commonly used especially for those who would like to write such literature based on everyday experience (Kim, 2020; Li et al., 2021).

In matter of literacy, writing is a crucial skill to be obtained by any student. Its importance is clear; it shapes better creativity of students to gain more knowledge by exploring their skills of writing. By writing, they do not only read, but also imagine and pour their minds into any following work (Castro & Barrera, 2019; Pinto et al., 2012). Improvement in literacy skills also finds its consequences as it is needed to deal with various aspects of advancement in information and technology. If students cannot deal with the advancement, they will only follow the trends without knowing what they understand in daily experience (Castro & Barrera, 2019; Pinto et al., 2012).

Furthermore, the enhancement of literacy skills must be initiated from a significantly early age in the educational trajectory of children, as this foundational period plays a pivotal role in shaping their future academic endeavors. It is immensely beneficial for students to cultivate these skills, which in turn leads to improved performance not only within the confines of the classroom but also in the broader context of their daily lives, as evidenced by various observations in real-world scenarios. This approach is harmoniously aligned with the understanding that fostering a deeper commitment to achieving a superior education is essential for holistic development. Additionally, it is widely recognized that students who experience delays in the critical phases of reading and writing development during their formative years often face substantial challenges as they progress through their educational journey, particularly as the complexity and length of texts increase in subsequent academic levels (Shao & Purpur, 2016; Sukma et al., 2017).

Engaging in writing activities serves as a vital mechanism for students to comprehend the intricate structures that constitute effective writing and to translate these theoretical understandings into practical applications within their own written work. This is primarily due to the fact that writing involves a comprehensive grasp of the alphabets and spelling conventions, which are indispensable components in the acquisition of foreign languages, such as English, that require a nuanced understanding of linguistic structures (Shao & Purpur, 2016; Sukma et al., 2017). The development of these literacy skills not only facilitates academic success but also empowers individuals to navigate the complexities of communication in an increasingly globalized society. Consequently, the imperative of addressing literacy skills at an early stage cannot be overstated, as it lays the groundwork for lifelong learning and intellectual engagement (Shao & Purpur, 2016; Sukma et al., 2017). Indeed, educational stakeholders must prioritize literacy initiatives that address these foundational skills to ensure that all students have the opportunity to thrive academically and personally.

International benchmark on literacy includes four levels, low (locate and retrieve information), intermediate (make straightforward references), high (make inferences and interpretations with text-based support), and advanced (integrate ideas and information across texts to provide reasons and explanations) (Genlott & Grönlund, 2013; Mullis et al., 2012). Interestingly, all of those levels could be gained step by step through skills of writing. By writing, information is located and being used as further references in writing. Interpretations of everyday life could also be done through its pouring in writing literature. Reasons and explanations regarding explorations of characters, plots, and settings are also flourished in the writing process of literature.

In this case, writing fables is also in line with the effort in improving literacy skills. A fable can be characterized as a fictitious narrative that intricately weaves together a series of events in which animals are anthropomorphized, allowing them to engage in dialogue and perform actions reminiscent of human behavior. The creation of this particular genre of literature is predicated upon a series of essential steps that serve to guide the author in the crafting of a compelling narrative (Shao & Purpur, 2016; Sukma et al., 2017). The initial and arguably most critical step in this creative process involves the formulation of characters, which is of paramount importance as these figures will serve as the central focal point around which the entire fable revolves. Additionally, it is imperative to always document any and all actions that these various characters will undertake throughout the course of the narrative, as their interactions and developments are vital to the progression of the story (Arwen & Haq, 2021; Nippold et al., 2020).

The subsequent phase in this comprehensive literary process involves the construction of the narrative plot; this particular endeavor mandates that the author devise a detailed outline which intricately outlines the chronological sequence of events as the characters endeavor to fulfill their aspirations and undertake various actions throughout the storyline. To effectively sustain the reader's interest and to seamlessly weave an element of suspense into the narrative fabric, it becomes imperative to integrate conflicts that are pertinent to the overarching narrative. It should also pose significant challenges to the characters in ways that are both meaningful and thought-provoking (Arwen & Haq, 2021; Nippold et al., 2020).

Moreover, the various settings in which these pivotal events transpire must be articulated with great care and precision, as this serves to enhance the readers' comprehension and deepens their appreciation of the contextual nuances inherent within the fable. The culminating step in this complex and layered process is the actual composition and further elaboration of the fable itself, wherein the author must engage in a thoughtful and reflective writing practice. It is of paramount importance for authors to cultivate an open and flexible mindset, thereby avoiding an excessive preoccupation with the initial draft, as this approach may reveal opportunities to incorporate new and compelling conflicts or even to introduce additional characters into the evolving narrative landscape as it unfolds and matures (Arwen & Haq, 2021; Nippold et al., 2020).

Additionally, the dynamic interplay between the characters, their conflicts, and the settings should be continuously re-evaluated and refined, ensuring that each component of the narrative contributes cohesively to the overarching thematic elements (Arwen & Haq, 2021; Nippold et al., 2020). Ultimately, this writing process not only enriches the narrative structure but also fosters a profound engagement with the audience, thereby elevating the artistic merit of the fable in its entirety. By stating so, fables find its crucial points in becoming aforementioned literary works that are suitable in elevating literacy skills. It is because writing fables is not only about to describe, but also to build a world in which animals may live in imagination reflected from real life.

Writing Fables, Literacy, and Everyday Life

Nama: Frea Maulidiana
Kelas: VIII-C
Sekolah: SMPN 48 Surabaya

Tokoh:
Stegosaurus : Stego
Dinosaurus : Bro
Kelinci : Beni

Dimana : Aku?

Suatu hari si kancil sedang menanam wortel saat menanam wortel si kancil haus dan bermal untuk minum di sungai. Tapi sungai tersebut berwarna ungu si kancil bingung dan mencoba menjelajah tengahnya dan tiba-tiba dia masuk ke dunia zaman purba.

Saat di sana dia bertemu hewan yang menurut dia aneh dan asing, tapi dia juga ingat bahwa dunia di sana sangat bersih tanpa gedung-gedung hanya pepohonan. Tiba-tiba dia dibatangi suatu dinosaurus kelinci tersebut kaget dan gemetar. Dinosaurus tersebut memperkenalkan diri. Dinosaurus yg berkahar panjang bernama Bro, dan di sampingnya (lemanya) bernama Stego. Kelinci tersebut memperkenalkan diri "Perkenalkan aku Beni" dengan tokoh yg gemetar. Kelinci tersebut bilang ke dinosaurus tersebut ingin kembali ke dunianya karena Beni telah di sini.

Dinosaurus bernama Bro menyambut "salam datang" Beni menjawab "dari balik pohon itu" Beni pun menjelaskan apa yg terjadi. Stego dan Bro pun membantu Beni untuk kembali ke dunianya. Mereka berjalan jalan sampai akhirnya menemukan genangan air yg berwarna ungu. Beni gembris dia berteriak kasih kepada Stego dan Bro karena membantunya. Beni pun masuk ke genangan tersebut dan kembali ke dunianya. Beni senang karena bisa kembali dan menemukan teman baru yg baik.

Di Sebuah TUMAH ada E-kus yang sedang lajar. E-kus pun mencari makanan dan tidak menemukannya E-kus hampir putus asa dan di saat itu E-kus melihat Rabi. Rabi milik si kucing pun ia ambil Namanya ia lakuk membantunya kucing yang sedang terdilar Pulas. E-kus pun dengan berani mengunsi Makanan si kucing.

Tiba-tiba kucing yang terdilar pun bangun. E-kus yang panik berlari, kucing yang melihat E-kus berlari. Sambil menaham Rabi. Milik itu pun mengijar E-kus. E-kus yang melihat kucing yang mengijarnya pun seakan panik dan E-kus pun meninggalkan Makanan hasil curianya tersebut.

Ti E-kus yang berlari. Sekecang mungkin pun menjadi sangat Parit karena kucing sudah ada di dekatnya dan hampir saja menangkap E-kus. Untung saja E-kus berhasil lolos dari tangkapan sang kucing.

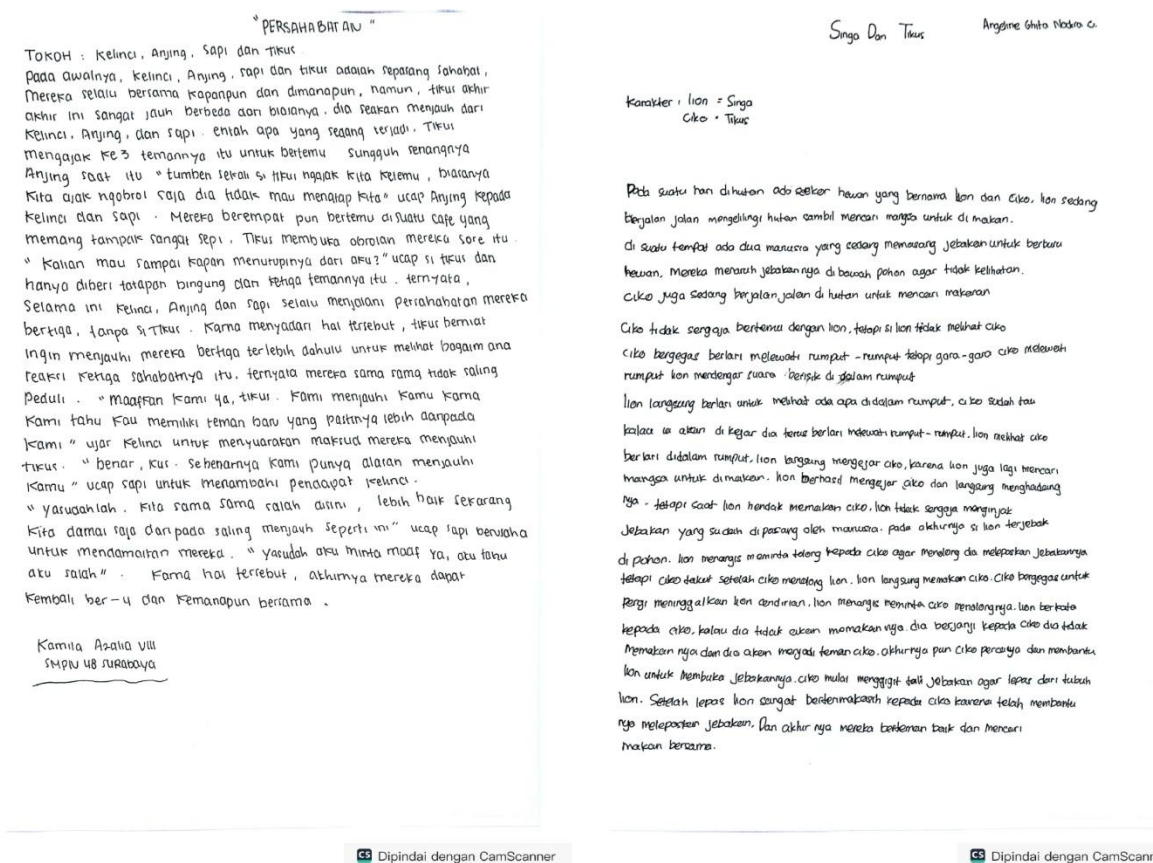
E-kus berlari dalam runak nya. E-kus sudah tidak berani lagi untuk mencuri Makanan lagi.

Picture 1 and 2

Fables of “Si Pencuri Makanan” and “Di Mana Aku?”

The picture 1 above speaks about a fable entitled *Si Pencuri Makanan*. It tells about a situation in a house where there is a mouse who feels hungry. That mouse finds a cat’s bread and the mouse takes the bread carefully. Suddenly, the cat gets up and catches the mouse. The mouse runs until he is scared to take the food from cat again and the mouse leaves the house. The story speaks about a moral message in prohibition of stealing. It shows that fable can give meanings to any moral message including to underline goodness rather than any trickery in life.

The picture 2 is a writing entitled *Di Mana Aku?*. There is a rabbit planting carrot who feels thirsty and wants to drink at the river. Suddenly, the river becomes purple. Once it touches the rabbit, he enters the dinosaur world. In there, the rabbit feels confused and meets with stego and bro to help the rabbit back to his world. The story speaks about strangeness felt by the rabbit as he enters another world. However, the world is not that bad after all. He meets some new friends who are so nice to him and even helps him to go back to his world. This fable indicates a moral message that any new place is not always bad since people can still find good friendship in there.



Picture 3 and 4
Fables entitled “Persahabatan” and “Singa dan Tikus”

Picture 3 is a story entitled *Persahabatan*. This writing speaks about the crucial points of friendship and how to solve any problem within. This is important as a moral message as having friends is the most beautiful moment in human’s life. Rabbit, dog, cow, and mouse are friends. However, mouse seems to stay away from rabbit, dog, and cow. One day, the mouse invited the rabbit, dog, and cow to meet. Rabbit, dog, and cow are confused. It turns out that it was not the mouse that stayed away from the rabbit, dog, and cow. It was the three of them who stayed away from the mouse. The rabbit, dog, and cow thought that the mouse had found a new friend who was more than the three of them. In the end, the three of them and the mouse apologized and forgave each other. The four of them finally became friends again.

Picture 4 is entitled *Singa dan Tikus*. This narrative revolves around an interaction between a lion and a mouse. Within a forest ecosystem, a lion and a mouse coexisted. On a particular occasion, the lion experienced hunger and sought to procure sustenance. The lion encountered the mouse and formulated the intention to consume it. The lion pursued the mouse until, ultimately, it became ensnared in a trap constructed by humans. The lion implored the mouse for assistance in extricating itself from the trap. Initially, the mouse declined the request due to the lion's predatory intent. However, through the demonstration of benevolence, the mouse ultimately aided the lion in escaping the trap. Ultimately, the mouse and lion established a friendship and collaborated in the search for food. This narrative conveys

the significant message that even the most diminutive of creatures can provide substantial assistance and hold considerable relevance for others. In asserting this, it becomes evident that acts of kindness are prevalent throughout everyone's prolonging surroundings. It is imperative that individuals refrain from belittling or intimidating others, as it is often unpredictable when one may require assistance from those whom they have disparaged in resolving various challenges.

CONCLUSION

The composition of fables may serve as an instrument for investigating the creative capacities of students, particularly those in junior high school. By analyzing the linguistic structure and honing writing abilities, learners can enhance their writing proficiency while simultaneously integrating English into their educational experiences. Furthermore, the English language can be comprehended more effectively as an integral component of daily existence, where essential soft skills should consistently be preserved. This also constitutes a mechanism through which ethical narratives can be further examined within literary creations. Through this community engagement initiative, students from SMPN 48 Surabaya stand to acquire a deeper understanding not only in crafting fables and translating them into English but also in augmenting their writing skills as a means of fostering greater creativity.

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