



FIFTH-GRADE STUDENTS' CREATIVITY IN WRITING THREE-PARAGRAPH SHORT STORIES AT SDN 1 SELAJAMBE

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ABSTRACT

Primary education plays a vital role in cultivating students' creativity by fostering exploration, experimentation, imagination, and critical thinking. However, structured practices in writing three-paragraph short stories—commonly referred to as pentigraf—remain uncommon at the elementary level, particularly at SDN 1 Selajambe, Cisaat District, Sukabumi Regency. This study aims to analyze the creative capacity of fifth-grade students in composing pentigraf, with a focus on their cognitive process, language use, and the influence of the learning environment. Employing a qualitative case study method, data were collected through observation, student writing samples, and documentation, involving all 30 students in the class. The findings show that students were able to construct short narratives that reflect intrinsic story elements, cultural dimensions, and social environment influences. Observations also indicate that students were familiar with fundamental narrative components, such as plot structure and character development. The writing process allowed students to sharpen their creativity in forming coherent plots, creating relatable characters, and selecting life-relevant themes. These results affirm that elementary students possess the potential to develop creative literacy through concise narrative forms. The study highlights the pedagogical significance of integrating short-form creative writing to strengthen expressive and imaginative capabilities in early education.

Keywords: creativity, primary education, three-paragraph story, pentigraf, narrative literacy

INTRODUCTION

At the stage of language development of elementary school students, students begin to show proficiency in using compound sentences, more varied word choices, and more complex narrative structures than preschool children (Maarif and Prasetyo, 2020). The resulting short stories often reflect students' understanding of everyday life, moral values, and worldviews that they acquire through direct observation or experience. For example, stories about friendship, family, or pets are often found, colored by simple yet meaningful language.

At the elementary school level, students are at the concrete to abstract operational stage of cognitive development, which affects how they understand the world and put it into writing. In short stories, students often describe personal experiences, observations of the environment, or fantasy stories that are influenced by reading, media, and social

experiences. This phenomenon shows that students not only use language skills, but also integrate logical, creative, and emotional thinking skills in the writing process.

Basic education plays an important role in creating an environment that supports student creativity through providing opportunities to explore, experiment, develop imagination, and train critical thinking skills (Maarif & Prasetyo, 2020). Teachers as facilitators have the responsibility to provide relevant stimuli, such as interesting story themes, examples of inspirational short stories, or shared reading activities. This process not only encourages students to think creatively but also teaches narrative structure, effective language use, and moral values that can be internalized through stories. For example, students are taught about the importance of having a clear storyline, interesting characters, and moral messages that benefit readers (Samadan *et al.*, 2024).

However, difficulties in developing creativity in writing short stories in elementary schools are often caused by learning methods that are less flexible or less varied (Hindra Kurniawan *et al.*, 2024). Some students may find it difficult to express their ideas because they rarely read, have limited vocabulary, or lack encouragement to imagine. In addition, a curriculum that is dense and emphasizes academic lessons often reduces opportunities for creative activities such as writing stories.

Pentigraf is an acronym for three-paragraph short story. *Pentigraf* are actually a form of *flash fiction*, which is short fictional prose, although there is no standard measure of brevity (Saputra *et al.*, 2023 ; Tjahjono, 2020). The three-paragraph short story is a short story genre that is very popular among Indonesians in the midst of the outbreak of flash fiction. The *Pentigraf* form is limited to three paragraphs, but all story elements must still be presented in a *Pentigraf*.

The creativity of writing three-paragraph short stories has not been done much at the elementary school level, especially pentigraph learning at SDN 1 Selajambe, Cisaat District, Sukabumi Regency. Through interviews and observations conducted in class V of SDN 1 Selajambe on January 16, 2025, information was obtained that students had never written a three-paragraph short story. However, students have studied and written short stories in Indonesian language subjects. Students experience difficulties in developing ideas, determining the plot, and using good vocabulary when writing short stories. In the end, students only imitate existing short stories or depend on the teacher and students can only use the word "I" as a character in writing short stories.

Based on pre-research interview data with the fifth grade teacher at SDN 1 Selajambe, it was found that students lacked creativity in writing short stories due to low student literacy and the absence of factors that inspired students to write short stories. The lack of interest and motivation in participating in learning to write short stories also triggers low creativity in writing short stories. Students often complain when asked to write short stories, so that in learning to write short stories in Indonesian language subjects students have not produced short stories that are interesting to read.

This study aims to analyze the creativity of fifth grade students of SDN 1 Selajambe in writing three-paragraph short stories, focusing on the ability to determine the intrinsic elements in the content of the story, as well as the influence of the learning environment on their work. Through this research, it is expected to reveal students' creative patterns, supportive learning strategies, and challenges faced in writing short stories. The focus of this research on grade V students of SDN 1 Selajambe reflects an effort to understand the development of their creativity in the concrete to abstract operational stage, which is relevant to literacy-based learning.



METHOD

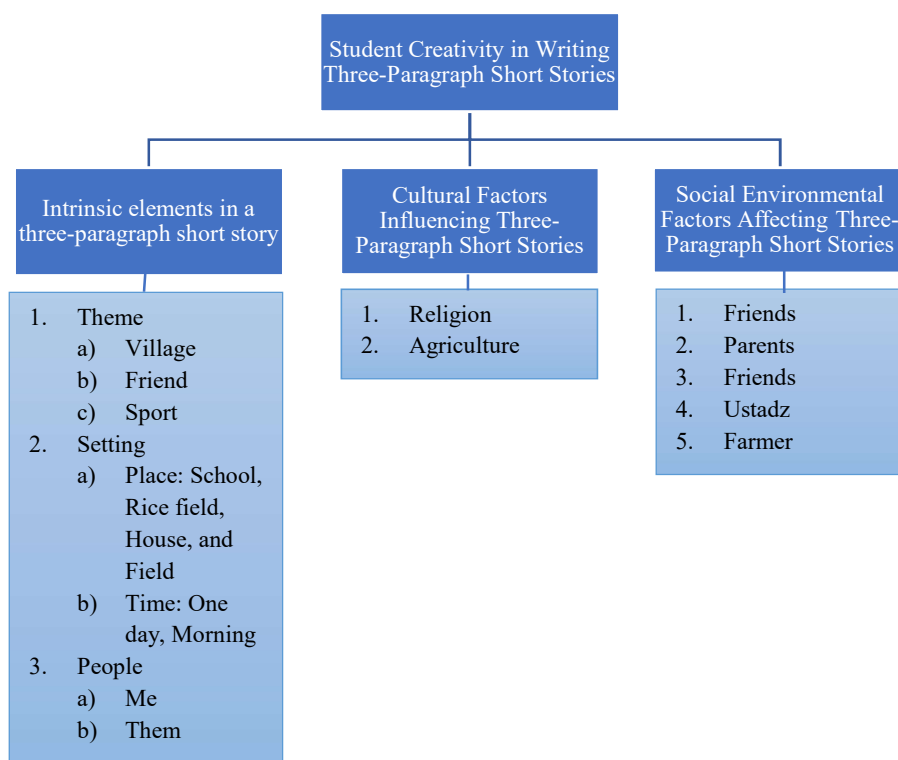
The type of research used in this study is qualitative using a case study approach. Case studies are often used to gain an in-depth understanding of a particular phenomenon, group or individual in a real-life context. This approach provides researchers with the opportunity to explore various aspects of the situation under study in a comprehensive and in-depth manner.

This study is located at SDN 1 Selajambe, Cisaat Subdistrict, Sukabumi Regency. This study aims to examine the creativity of fifth grade students in writing three-paragraph short stories. The source of data used in this research is student work in the form of three-paragraph short story writing products.

To obtain data in accordance with what researchers need in this study, the results of student writing products and qualitative research type data collection are needed, namely by using interview, observation and documentation methods. Data collection technique is "the most strategic step in research, because the main purpose of research is to get data". The data analysis technique used in this research is a technique by making a picture that is done by (a) data reduction or simplification, (b) data presentation, and (c) conclusion drawing.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on interviews with the homeroom teacher of grade V at SDN 1 Selajambe regarding the creativity of grade V students at SDN 1 Selajambe in writing three-paragraph short stories. The interviewee was Mrs. Siti Nuraeni, S.Pd., the homeroom teacher of grade V at SDN 1 Selajambe, and the study was also based on the writing products of grade V students at SDN 1 Selajambe. The findings of this study are as follows:



1. Intrinsic elements in the Three Paragraph Short Stories of Fifth Grade Students at SDN 1 Selajambe.

Table 1. Findings on Intrinsic Elements in Three-Paragraph Short Stories

Theme	Setting		Characters
	Place	Time	
a. Village	a. School	a. One day	a. I
b. Friend	b. Rice field	b. In the morning	b. They
c. Sport	c. House		
	d. Field		

Based on the research results obtained from interviews with resource persons, namely the fifth-grade homeroom teacher and the three-paragraph short story writing products of the VSDN 1 Selajambe class, it shows that students are able to identify and determine the intrinsic elements in the three-paragraph short stories they write. Although only some of the intrinsic elements they understand, many of the students are able to describe and emphasize the intrinsic elements in the story according to their own creativity. This was later reinforced by Saifur Rohman who stated that these elements provide an overview of how a character moves in a story because of his motives. As with the theme, students showed significant development in the context of literature learning. This indicates that students are able to understand the concept of theme practically and apply it in their written works. The selection of themes close to everyday life, such as 'Village, Friend, and Sport', reflects students' sensitivity to their environment and personal experiences.

Students not only understand the theme as a theoretical concept, but are also able to relate it to their own life experiences. Thus, the short stories produced are not just imaginative depictions, but also reflect values and experiences that are relevant to students' daily lives. This shows that literature learning that facilitates the identification of themes based on students' real experiences can enrich the meaning of their written works and improve the quality of the stories produced.

Then, it is seen that the selection of the setting by the students is not done randomly, but based on the concrete experiences they have. This shows that students are able to utilize their knowledge and memories of the surrounding environment as a source of inspiration in writing. Settings such as schools and rice fields are not only physical settings, but also act as elements that strengthen the meaning of the story, create a more real atmosphere, and make it easier for readers to imagine the storyline.

The use of familiar settings also shows that students have good observation skills of the details of everyday life. They are able to capture important elements of their environment, such as atmosphere, activities, or social relationships, and then put them into narrative form. This is an indicator that students' imagination does not rely entirely on fantasy, but also builds on the reality they experience, which is then developed into creative works.

Furthermore, the use of time settings such as "*one day*" and "*in the morning*" by students shows their understanding of the basic structure of a story. Although the use of these time expressions is relatively simple and common, it reflects students' awareness that every story needs a clear time frame so that the flow of events can be conveyed coherently and easily understood by readers. This shows that students have understood the role of time setting as one of the important elements that help build



the context of the story and provide direction for the development of events in the story.

The choice of a common time setting also shows that students tend to draw inspiration from their daily lives, so that the stories created are not only a place to channel their imagination, but also reflect the real experiences they have had. In other words, students are able to utilize their daily experiences to form a logical and coherent story framework, although they have not explored more complex variations of time setting.

In addition, students' ability to determine the character elements has developed sufficiently at the basic stage. The use of the character "I" as the main character shows that students understand the importance of point of view in storytelling, especially the first-person point of view that allows them to tell experiences or imaginations in a more personal and emotional way. In addition, the presence of supporting characters such as "they" or friends in the story indicates that students also understand the role of other characters in supporting the plot and enriching the course of the story, although the depiction still tends to be simple.

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that grade V students of SDN 1 Selajambe already have a fairly good basic understanding of the intrinsic elements of a three-paragraph short story, especially theme, setting, time and place, and character. Students are able to choose a theme that is relevant to their daily lives, utilize a familiar place and time setting, and determine the main and supporting characters although in a simple form. This shows that the learning process of writing short stories has succeeded in raising students' awareness of the importance of story elements in building a complete and meaningful plot.

2. Cultural Domain Factors Affecting Three-Paragraph Short Story Writing Products

Table 2. Findings on Cultural Factors Influencing Three-Paragraph Short Stories

No	Cultural Domain	Number of Students
1.	Religion	3
2.	Agriculture	4

The results show that the three-paragraph short story writing products produced by fifth grade students of SDN 1 Selajambe predominantly reflect the influence of factors from the cultural domain that are close to their daily lives. This finding shows that students' imagination and creativity in writing are closely related to the cultural background they experience directly. This is in line with Sumari who states that the social and cultural conditions of society can influence the creation of literary works in which the short story is created or the setting of the story. In other words, what they write is inspired by things that are familiar in everyday life.

The cultural elements that appear most often in the students' three-paragraph short stories can be grouped into three main domains. First, the religious domain, which is reflected through the depiction of Quran recitation, religious school, or other religious activities that are part of students' daily routines. Second, the agricultural domain, which includes typical rural activities such as plowing rice fields, playing in the fields, or interacting with the surrounding natural environment

The findings show that students' cultural domain plays an important role in shaping the construction of their imaginations and creative ideas in writing stories. The concrete experiences they gain from the surrounding environment become the

main source of inspiration in their work. This is in line with the view that children at primary school age tend to express what they see, feel and experience directly in their written works. Thus, it can be concluded that local culture not only shapes students' social identity but also supports the development of their literacy skills and creativity, especially in writing three-paragraph short stories.

3. Social Environmental Factors Affecting Three-Paragraph Short Story Writing Products

Table 3. Findings on the Social Environment that Influences the Writing of Three-Paragraph Short Stories

No	Social Environment	Number of Students
1.	Friends	9
2.	Parents	5
3.	Best Friends	5
4.	Teachers	1
5.	Farmers	3

Based on the research results, it is known that the three-paragraph short story writing products produced by grade V students of SDN 1 Selajambe show a strong influence from social environmental factors that are close to their daily lives. This finding shows that the social interactions experienced by students directly become one of the main sources in shaping their imagination, choosing themes, and depicting characters in their writing.

The social environment that appears most often in students' stories includes three important aspects. First, the presence of friends or companions who are described as loyal, supportive, or playmates. This character is often the center of the story or the main character's companion, reflecting the importance of friendship in the social life of elementary school children. Second, the role of parents who are present as caregivers, educators, and advice-givers. The presence of parental figures shows that students view the family as the main source of value, protection and guidance in their lives. Thirdly, the role of the ustadz or Koranic teacher who is often presented as a role model in terms of morals and religious values. This shows that religious learning experiences not only impact students' cognitive aspects, but also shape the moral values that they internalize and reflect in their written work.

This finding is supported by previous research conducted by Susanti (2018), who found that elementary school students tend to take story themes from their closest social environment, such as family, friends, and teachers, because these are sources of inspiration that they can easily understand. A similar study by Nugroho (2020) also showed that elementary school students' writing contains many elements of daily life that they experience directly, such as friendship, learning activities, and religious life. These findings corroborate the results of the current study that the social environment has a very significant role in supporting students' imagination, creativity and literacy skills, especially in the context of writing short stories.

Thus, it can be concluded that the social environment serves not only as a space for interaction but also as a major source of reference that enriches students' writing experiences. This environment helps students hone their skills in building storylines, creating characters and choosing themes that are relevant to their lives, so that their creative literacy skills can develop optimally.



4. The Creativity of Fifth Grade Students at SDN 1 Selajambe in Writing Three-Paragraph Short Stories

The creativity of fifth-grade students at SDN 1 Selajambe in writing three-paragraph short stories shows considerable improvement and reflects their systematically developing literacy skills. Students are able to identify and apply intrinsic elements of stories, such as theme, characters, setting, and time frame. In addition to intrinsic factors, students' creativity in writing is greatly influenced by cultural factors and the social environment that is close to their lives. This reinforces Sumari's (2015) view that the socio-cultural conditions of a community greatly influence the process of literary creation, including in the context of children's writing. The cultural life they experience directly shapes the mindset and imagination that are reflected in their stories.

Overall, the creativity of fifth-grade students at SDN 1 Selajambe in writing three-paragraph short stories is developed through a combination of their ability to understand story elements, local cultural experiences, and supportive social interactions. The written works produced not only serve as a medium for expressing imagination but also reflect the values, norms, and real-life experiences they have encountered. This demonstrates that contextual writing instruction can facilitate students in developing culturally and socially grounded creative literacy. In line with this, Kurniasih (2018) emphasizes that creative literacy at the elementary school level develops optimally when students are given the space to write based on personal experiences and cultural contexts familiar to their lives.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research on the creativity of grade V students of SDN 1 Selajambe in writing three-paragraph short stories, it can be concluded that students have a fairly good basic understanding of the intrinsic elements of short stories, especially themes, place and time settings, and characters. Students' writing products are strongly influenced by the cultural background that they experience firsthand. The cultural elements that emerge include the religious realm and the agricultural realm. Local culture not only shapes students' social identity but also becomes the main source of inspiration that supports the development of their creativity and literacy skills. In addition, students' social environment is one of the important factors that influence their imagination, theme selection and character portrayal in their stories. This environment provides real references that help students build storylines, create characters and develop relevant themes so that their creative literacy skills are optimally developed.

The resulting written work is not only a place to channel imagination, but also a reflection of the values, norms and real experiences they have experienced. This shows that contextualized writing learning can facilitate students in developing creative literacy that is culturally and socially based.

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