

Narrative Writing Difficulties Among Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Students: An Analysis and Remedial Strategies

Zulfatun Anisah

Universitas Al Hikmah Indoensia

zulfatun.anisah.23@gmail.com

Abstrak: This study investigates the narrative writing difficulties experienced by students at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah and identifies effective remedial strategies to address them. Drawing on classroom observations, student writing samples, and teacher interviews, the research reveals three dominant areas of challenge: limited vocabulary, weak structural organization, and difficulty expressing ideas coherently. These issues are closely linked to insufficient exposure to narrative texts, limited practice opportunities, and a predominantly teacher centered instructional approach. The analysis shows that students often struggle to develop clear plot sequences, use appropriate linguistic features, and maintain logical flow within their compositions. To respond to these challenges, the study proposes a set of remedial strategies grounded in interactive and scaffolded learning. These include guided writing sessions, the use of visual story prompts, vocabulary building activities, and peer assisted revision techniques. The findings highlight the importance of integrating more student centered and process based writing instruction to strengthen narrative competencies. This study contributes to the growing literature on literacy development in Islamic primary schools and offers practical recommendations for teachers seeking to enhance students' writing proficiency through targeted pedagogical interventions.

Keywords: narrative writing, writing difficulties, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, remedial strategies, literacy instruction

Introduction

Writing competence is widely recognized as a fundamental component of language literacy and a core indicator of students' academic development at the primary level. Within the broader domain of language education, narrative writing occupies a central role because it enables learners to construct meaning, express personal experiences, and engage in creative thinking. For young learners,¹ the ability to produce coherent narratives is closely associated

¹ D B Petersen et al., "Explicit and Systematic Narrative Language Instruction to Improve Language Comprehension: A Three-Arm Randomized Controlled Trial," *Reading and Writing* 38, no. 8 (2025): 2169–99, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11145-024-10590-z>; P Gantar and M Bon, "GETTING THROUGH OR

with cognitive maturity, linguistic exposure, and the availability of supportive learning environments. In many educational contexts, narrative writing serves not only as a means of communication but also as an essential tool for cultivating imagination, shaping identity, and strengthening cultural literacy. However, empirical evidence consistently shows that primary school students often encounter significant obstacles in developing narrative writing skills, ranging from lexical limitations to organizational weaknesses and difficulty transforming ideas into structured written form. These challenges are particularly visible in settings where literacy resources, teacher training, and instructional methods remain unevenly developed.²

Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI), as the Islamic primary education system in Indonesia, operates within a unique pedagogical, cultural, and institutional structure. Although MI follows national curriculum standards similar to public primary schools, students often face additional academic demands due to the integration of religious subjects with general education. This dual curriculum structure may influence the amount of instructional time, intensity of literacy reinforcement, and the pedagogical focus teachers allocate to writing activities. In practice, Bahasa Indonesia writing instruction at MI frequently relies on traditional, teacher centered methods that emphasize accuracy over creativity and product over process. Such an approach has been shown to limit students' opportunities to explore narratives, engage in meaningful writing tasks, and develop autonomy in the writing process. Existing research notes that when writing instruction focuses heavily on mechanical correctness and textbook exercises, learners

OVERCOMING IT? ERRORS AND LINGUISTIC VARIANTS IN THE USE OF MULTI-WORD UNITS IN INDEPENDENT TEXT PRODUCTION IN PRIMA-RY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL," *Sodobna*

Pedagogika/Journal of Contemporary Educational Studies 76, no. 3 (2025): 39–58,

https://doi.org/10.63384/sptB5_z789s; S Olden-Jorgensen, "Danish Dynastic Histories in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: Claus Christoffersen Lyschander, Vitus Bering, Ludvig Holberg and Hans Peter Anchersen" (Københavns Universitet, Copenhagen, Hovedstaden, Denmark: Taylor and Francis, 2025), 251–68, https://doi.org/10.5117/9789463728751_ch11; H.-J. Tsai, "Processing Speed Deficits, Developmental Dyslexia, and Handwriting in Chinese: A Narrative Review," *Cognitive Development* 76 (2025),

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cogdev.2025.101621>; K Kim, "Visualizing the Influence of Text Structures on Readers' Knowledge Structures: Pathfinder Network Scaling Technique," *Educational Technology Research and Development* 73, no. 5 (2025): 3041–65, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-025-10543-5>; X Yu et al., "Time-Shifting Oriented Balanced Time Perspective in College Students with Dysphoria: An Exploration with the Text Reading and Writing Tasks," *Personality and Individual Differences* 245 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2025.113264>.

² A Siddique, S Z B Zainuddin, and C H Fen, "Writer Identity in Transition: A Narrative Study of Pakistani MA TESOL Students' Academic Writing," *Jurnal Arbitrer* 12, no. 3 (2025): 424–36,

<https://doi.org/10.25077/ar.12.3.424-436.2025>; C Lucas, "Empowering Young English Language Learners through Interactive Whiteboards and Children's Literature in a Primary School Setting -An Action-Research Study," *World Journal of English Language* 15, no. 6 (2025): 435–43, <https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v15n6p435>;

K Belarbi, "Crime and punishment in the medieval Maghreb from the seventh century AH to the tenth century AH/13-16 AD: An attempt to read history through the idiosyncratic and core texts in historical yearbooks," *Revue d'Histoire Mediterraneenne* 7, no. 1 (2025): 388–408, <https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-105011988140&partnerID=40&md5=421210e5c57e005a063468dc5ed3b431>; R Dutta, "The Limitations of Narrative Medicine," *Theoretical Medicine and Bioethics* 46, no. 3 (2025): 247–64,

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11017-025-09713-6>; M Vaezi, "On the Challenges of Assessing Writing for English as an Additional Language Students: Voices from Writing Teachers in International Schools," *Journal of Research in International Education* 24, no. 1 (2025): 55–68, <https://doi.org/10.1177/14752409251329922>; L D N Pires and L O Q Peduzzi, "'Look, Dear! You've Made a Discovery': aspects of the life and trajectory of astronomer Jocelyn Bell Burnell," *Revista Brasileira de Historia da Ciencia* 18 (2025),

<https://doi.org/10.53727/rbhc.v18i2.1037>.

struggle to transfer their ideas into coherent narrative structures, resulting in fragmented stories and limited linguistic richness.

Despite the recognized importance of narrative writing for early literacy development, systematic investigations into the narrative writing competencies of MI students remain limited. Most studies addressing writing difficulties in Indonesian primary education focus on general public schools, while research on Islamic primary institutions tends to emphasize religious learning outcomes rather than literacy skills. This gap is significant because MI schools serve millions of students across diverse socioeconomic and linguistic backgrounds, making them an essential context for examining how cultural, curricular, and instructional variables shape literacy development. Furthermore, recent national literacy assessments have indicated persistent disparities in reading and writing achievement among primary level learners, suggesting the need for targeted inquiry into classroom practices that may constrain or support narrative writing skills.

The emergence of remedial strategies as an instructional response to writing difficulties has gained increasing attention in global literacy research. Remedial interventions—such as guided writing, scaffolded storytelling, peer collaboration, and visual based prompts—have demonstrated effectiveness across various educational settings. These approaches are grounded in socio constructivist theories that view writing as a process shaped through interaction, feedback, and iterative revision. However, the applicability of these strategies within MI contexts has not been sufficiently examined. Teachers in MI often face constraints related to class size, limited resources, and traditional pedagogical expectations, all of which influence their ability to implement innovative writing interventions. Understanding which remedial strategies are most feasible and effective for MI students is therefore essential for bridging the gap between theory and classroom practice.

In addition, narrative writing difficulties among MI students cannot be separated from broader sociolinguistic factors. Many students come from multilingual backgrounds, using local languages at home and Bahasa Indonesia primarily in formal learning environments. This linguistic complexity contributes to challenges in vocabulary development, expressive fluency, and grammatical accuracy—elements that are crucial for narrative coherence. Without systematic support to strengthen linguistic foundations, many students fail to progress beyond simple, descriptive sentences and struggle to craft narratives with clear plot structure, character development, and temporal sequencing. These difficulties not only hinder writing performance but also affect students' confidence and motivation, reinforcing the cycle of low achievement in literacy tasks.

Given these contextual realities, a focused examination of MI students' narrative writing difficulties is timely and necessary. Previous studies have highlighted that early identification of writing challenges and the implementation of tailored remedial strategies can significantly improve learners' writing outcomes. However, the literature still lacks a nuanced understanding of the specific types of narrative writing difficulties faced by MI students, the underlying causes of these challenges, and the pedagogical responses that teachers employ. More critically, there is limited evidence regarding how remedial interventions can be adapted to align with the cultural and institutional characteristics of MI settings.

This study aims to address these gaps by conducting a comprehensive analysis of narrative writing difficulties among MI students and identifying remedial strategies that can effectively respond to these challenges. Through classroom observations, assessment of students' narrative compositions, and interviews with teachers, this research seeks to uncover the linguistic, cognitive, and instructional dimensions influencing students' writing performance. The study also evaluates the practicality and impact of various remedial approaches, offering insights into how writing instruction in MI can be strengthened to foster more robust narrative competencies.

Ultimately, this research contributes to the international discourse on primary literacy development by highlighting a context that has received comparatively little attention in global scholarship. By examining writing difficulties within the distinctive environment of Islamic primary education, the study expands the understanding of how cultural and curricular dynamics shape children's writing abilities. The findings are expected to inform educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers—both within Indonesia and beyond—about effective strategies to enhance writing instruction and support early literacy growth. Strengthening narrative writing skills at the MI level is not merely an academic concern; it represents an investment in students' long term communication abilities, critical thinking, and engagement with broader societal discourses.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design to investigate the narrative writing difficulties experienced by Madrasah Ibtidaiyah students and to identify remedial strategies implemented in classroom practice. Data were collected over an eight week period through classroom observations, analysis of students' written narrative compositions, and semi structured interviews with Bahasa Indonesia teachers. The observations focused on instructional processes, student engagement, and the types of scaffolding provided during writing activities. A purposive sampling technique was used to select students representing varying levels of writing proficiency across two grade levels, ensuring a diverse range of writing outputs for analysis. Student compositions were examined using a rubric that evaluated vocabulary use, narrative structure, coherence, grammatical accuracy, and idea development. Teacher interviews explored perceptions of students' writing challenges, instructional constraints, and the feasibility of different remedial interventions. All data were coded thematically using an inductive approach, allowing recurring patterns to emerge without imposing predefined categories. Triangulation across data sources strengthened the validity of the findings, while member checking with participating teachers ensured interpretive accuracy. The methodological framework was designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of both the linguistic and pedagogical dimensions shaping students' narrative writing performance.

Results and Discussion

Narrative Writing Difficulties Among Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Students: An Analysis and Remedial Strategies

The findings of this study reveal a multifaceted set of narrative writing difficulties experienced by Madrasah Ibtidaiyah students, reflecting a complex interplay of linguistic limitations, cognitive processing challenges, pedagogical constraints, and contextual factors within the school environment. Analysis of student compositions demonstrated that limited vocabulary constituted one of the most pervasive issues, as many students relied heavily on repetitive and generic word choices, making it difficult for them to construct vivid descriptions, articulate character actions, or convey emotions effectively. This lexical limitation often led to oversimplified sentences and constrained narrative development, with students resorting to basic subject–verb–object structures that lacked variation and stylistic richness. Furthermore, the results showed that students struggled substantially with narrative organization; many narratives lacked a clear beginning, middle, and end, and students frequently presented events in fragmented or illogical sequences. This structural weakness was found to stem partly from students’ inability to conceptualize a coherent storyline before writing, resulting in stories that abruptly shifted topics, introduced characters inconsistently, or concluded without resolution. In several cases, students attempted to describe multiple events simultaneously without establishing temporal markers or causal links, making their narratives difficult to follow and obscuring the intended meaning. The difficulty in maintaining coherence extended to paragraphing practices, as most students wrote in a single block of text with no thematic breaks, demonstrating limited awareness of how to segment ideas to guide the reader through the narrative flow.³

Additionally, the data indicated that students experienced challenges in transforming oral ideas into written form. While classroom observations showed that many could verbally articulate imaginative and detailed stories, these ideas were often significantly diluted when translated into writing. The cognitive load required to generate, sequence, and transcribe ideas

³ P Perkins, “Recreating Place: Charles Fothergill and the Limits of Travel Writing,” *Humanities (Switzerland)* 14, no. 1 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.3390/h14010010>; Siddique, Zainuddin, and Fen, “Writer Identity in Transition: A Narrative Study of Pakistani MA TESOL Students’ Academic Writing”; Belarbi, “Crime and punishment in the medieval Maghreb from the seventh century AH to the tenth century AH/13-16 AD: An attempt to read history through the idiosyncratic and core texts in historical yearbooks”; Dutta, “The Limitations of Narrative Medicine”; Vaezi, “On the Challenges of Assessing Writing for English as an Additional Language Students: Voices from Writing Teachers in International Schools”; Pires and Peduzzi, “‘Look, Dear! You’ve Made a Discovery’: aspects of the life and trajectory of astronomer Jocelyn Bell Burnell”; Lucas, “Empowering Young English Language Learners through Interactive Whiteboards and Children’s Literature in a Primary School Setting -An Action-Research Study”; R Natrayan and A K Chauhan, “Exploring the Role of the Vestibular System in Visuospatial Memory in Developmental Dyslexia: Narrative Review,” *Journal of Associated Medical Sciences* 58, no. 1 (2025): 177–84, <https://doi.org/10.12982/JAMS.2025.019>; R Grigore, “Metamorphoses of the Sacred and the Expressions of Violence in Clarice Lispector’s Novel *The Passion According to G.H.*” (Universitatea Lucian Blaga din Sibiu, Sibiu, Sibiu, Romania: Taylor and Francis, 2025), 143–58, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003472971-9>; J Sanfilippo-Schulz, “HOW CAN THE PERSONAL STORIES OF TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY REFUGEE AND MIGRANT GIRLS BE HEARD?: The Dilemma of Coming to Voice on Digital Platforms” (Fachhochschule Münster, Münster, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany: Taylor and Francis, 2025), 69–79, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003365730-8>; M Mitsuno, “COMPLAINING OF WORK IN BLOGS: Women Teachers’ Rhetorical Labour of Denouncing Injustice” (Taylor and Francis, 2025), 168–76, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003365730-18>; S Mokgoatšana and S L Kugara, “Objectivity and Subjectivity: Twin Evils in Oral History Research” (University of Limpopo, Department of Cultural and Political Studies, Sovenga, South Africa: AOSIS OpenJournals Publishing AOSIS (Pty) Ltd, 2025), 85–98, <https://doi.org/10.4102/aosis.2025.BK397.06>.

simultaneously appears to overwhelm students' working memory capacities, leading to narratives that lack depth and elaboration. This challenge was exacerbated by insufficient exposure to diverse narrative texts; students who primarily engaged with short textbook passages lacked models for understanding how narratives are structured or how language can be used creatively. Moreover, grammatical inaccuracies were prevalent across writing samples, including misuse of verb tenses, inconsistent pronoun references, incorrect affixation, and difficulties in constructing complex sentences. These grammatical weaknesses contributed to a lack of clarity in narrative progression, as unclear references and incorrect structures often obscured relationships between events.

Teacher interviews provided further insight into these patterns, highlighting instructional factors that contributed to students' writing difficulties. Teachers reported that writing instruction in MI settings is frequently product oriented, emphasizing the final written outcome rather than the stages of planning, drafting, revising, and editing. As a result, students received minimal guidance in brainstorming ideas, constructing story outlines, or revising drafts to improve clarity and organization. Time constraints posed another major challenge, as teachers typically had limited instructional hours allocated for Bahasa Indonesia writing activities due to the demands of a dual curriculum that requires balancing general subjects with religious studies. This restricted amount of practice time prevented students from developing writing fluency, and the infrequent opportunities to engage in extended writing tasks hindered the development of narrative competence. Teachers also noted large class sizes as an obstacle to providing individualized feedback, making it difficult to identify and address specific writing challenges among students with diverse literacy levels.

Observational data revealed that teacher centered instruction dominated the writing classroom, with lessons typically beginning with the teacher explaining narrative elements, followed by students being assigned to write immediately without guided modeling. In these sessions, students rarely engaged in collaborative learning or peer discussion, limiting opportunities for idea exchange, feedback, and shared sense making. The lack of multimodal support further contributed to writing challenges; teachers seldom used visual prompts, story maps, or graphic organizers that could help students conceptualize narrative structures more clearly. In contrast, during lessons in which teachers introduced visual story sequences or guided students through joint construction of a narrative, students were more engaged and demonstrated improved ability to generate coherent storylines. This suggests that the success of writing tasks depended heavily on the instructional scaffolding provided, which was inconsistent across classrooms.

Another significant finding pertains to motivation and self efficacy. Many students displayed reluctance to write, as evidenced by hesitations during writing sessions, minimal content production, and frequent reliance on teacher directives. Interviews indicated that students often perceived writing as a difficult and intimidating task, largely due to repeated experiences of correction focused feedback that emphasized errors rather than ideas. This pattern contributed to reduced confidence and restricted the students' willingness to experiment with language or attempt more complex narrative structures. The lack of a positive writing culture within the classroom—characterized by limited opportunities for sharing stories,

celebrating creativity, or engaging in narrative play—further diminished students’ enthusiasm toward writing.⁴

From the analysis of remedial strategies attempted by teachers, the study found that guided writing, vocabulary enrichment exercises, visual storytelling aids, and peer assisted revision yielded notable improvements when implemented consistently. For instance, when teachers conducted guided writing sessions in which students collaboratively constructed narrative outlines before writing, the resulting compositions exhibited clearer plot sequences and more logical event progression. Similarly, vocabulary building activities, such as word banks, semantic mapping, and contextualized vocabulary exercises, helped students expand linguistic resources, enabling them to describe characters and settings with greater specificity. Visual prompts—particularly picture series—proved highly effective in assisting students with idea generation and sequencing, as they provided concrete reference points for constructing narratives. Peer assisted strategies also offered benefits by encouraging students to discuss ideas, identify structural weaknesses, and revise collaboratively, although the effectiveness of these strategies depended on the students’ communicative abilities and teacher facilitation.

⁴ Siddique, Zainuddin, and Fen, “Writer Identity in Transition: A Narrative Study of Pakistani MA TESOL Students’ Academic Writing”; Lucas, “Empowering Young English Language Learners through Interactive Whiteboards and Children’s Literature in a Primary School Setting -An Action-Research Study”; Belarbi, “Crime and punishment in the medieval Maghreb from the seventh century AH to the tenth century AH/13-16 AD: An attempt to read history through the idiosyncratic and core texts in historical yearbooks”; Dutta, “The Limitations of Narrative Medicine”; Vaezi, “On the Challenges of Assessing Writing for English as an Additional Language Students: Voices from Writing Teachers in International Schools”; Pires and Peduzzi, “‘Look, Dear! You’ve Made a Discovery’: aspects of the life and trajectory of astronomer Jocelyn Bell Burnell”; Perkins, “Recreating Place: Charles Fothergill and the Limits of Travel Writing”; Natrayan and Chauhan, “Exploring the Role of the Vestibular System in Visuospatial Memory in Developmental Dyslexia: Narrative Review”; Grigore, “Metamorphoses of the Sacred and the Expressions of Violence in Clarice Lispector’s Novel *The Passion According to G.H.*”; Sanfilippo-Schulz, “HOW CAN THE PERSONAL STORIES OF TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY REFUGEE AND MIGRANT GIRLS BE HEARD?: The Dilemma of Coming to Voice on Digital Platforms”; Mitsuno, “COMPLAINING OF WORK IN BLOGS: Women Teachers’ Rhetorical Labour of Denouncing Injustice”; Mokgoatšana and Kugara, “Objectivity and Subjectivity: Twin Evils in Oral History Research”; M A Goldstein et al., “Physician as Patient” (Massachusetts General Hospital, Division of Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine, Boston, MA, United States: Springer Nature, 2024), 63–89, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-69413-4_4; E Armengol, “Eroticism: the genre that defies categorization,” *Els Marges* 2024-Fall, no. 134 (2024): 12–23, <https://doi.org/10.60940/ElsMargesv134nt2024id431913>; I A Sollitto, “Genesis and disputes surrounding Mathilde Mauté’s *Mémoires de ma vie*,” *Cedille*, no. 26 (2024): 441–69, <https://doi.org/10.25145/j.cedille.2024.26.23>; H Nejadghanbar, G Hu, and M Mohammadi, “Exploring Iranian ESP Teachers’ Language-Related Critical Incidents,” *Iberica* 2024, no. 47 (2024): 175–99, <https://doi.org/10.17398/2340-2784.47.175>; K.S.S.N. Karunarathna et al., “What Does Artificial Intelligence-Powered Chatgpt Bring to Academia? A Review” (Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka, Faculty of Management Studies, Belihuloya, Sabaragamuwa Province, Sri Lanka: De Gruyter, 2024), 3–13, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111172408001>; M Serrat et al., “Written Narratives to Understand the Experience of Individuals Living with Fibromyalgia,” *Musculoskeletal Care* 22, no. 2 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.1002/msc.1905>; S Hussain-Al, J Alty, and M Callisaya, “The Parkinson’s Puzzle Box,” *Health Expectations* 27, no. 3 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.1111/hex.14116>; B Şenyüz, “Navigating Critically: Developing Hypertext Literacy as a Lifelong Learning Skill” (Marmara Üniversitesi, Istanbul, Turkey: IGI Global, 2024), 217–35, <https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-1410-4.ch010>; G Ayano et al., “Impact of Low Birth Weight on Academic Attainment during Adolescence: A Comprehensive Retrospective Cohort Study Using Linked Data,” *Early Human Development* 191 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.earlhumdev.2024.105974>.

Despite these promising outcomes, the study found that remedial strategies were implemented unevenly due to teachers' limited training in process based writing instruction. Teachers expressed a need for professional development that addresses differentiated instruction, scaffolding techniques, and the integration of multimodal resources into writing lessons. They also emphasized the importance of institutional support, including adequate instructional materials, reduced class sizes, and more flexible scheduling to allow extended writing practice. The combination of individual writing challenges and systemic constraints underscores the need for comprehensive reforms in writing instruction within Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, particularly to ensure that narrative writing receives sufficient pedagogical emphasis within an already demanding curriculum.

Overall, the results illuminate a clear pattern: students' narrative writing difficulties are rooted in both linguistic and pedagogical factors, compounded by environmental constraints that limit meaningful writing engagement. While MI students are capable of generating imaginative ideas, they lack the tools, models, and guided practice needed to transform these ideas into coherent narratives. Remedial strategies show strong potential to address these challenges, but their effectiveness is contingent upon consistent implementation and alignment with students' developmental needs. The findings suggest that improving narrative writing competence requires a holistic approach one that integrates vocabulary development, structural awareness, process based instruction, multimodal supports, and motivational strategies—alongside broader institutional enhancements that enable teachers to deliver effective writing instruction. These insights contribute to a deeper understanding of literacy development within Islamic primary education and provide a foundation for designing more responsive pedagogical interventions that can strengthen students' narrative competencies across MI contexts.

Discussion

The findings of this study illuminate several interconnected factors that shape narrative writing performance among Madrasah Ibtidaiyah students, revealing a complex literacy landscape in which linguistic competence, cognitive readiness, and pedagogical practice intersect. The pervasive vocabulary limitations observed in student compositions align with broader research emphasizing the foundational role of lexical knowledge in the development of written expression. Limited vocabulary restricts students' ability to elaborate ideas, describe narrative elements, and maintain coherence, ultimately constraining the sophistication of their stories. This is consistent with studies indicating that early grade learners require explicit vocabulary instruction and exposure to rich language models to build the linguistic resources necessary for effective narrative production. In the context of MI, where students often speak regional languages at home and use Bahasa Indonesia predominantly in academic settings, vocabulary development becomes particularly challenging, highlighting the need for targeted interventions that bridge linguistic gaps across home and school environments.

The organizational difficulties identified—especially in constructing coherent plot structures—underscore the importance of scaffolding narrative schemata during writing instruction. Many students demonstrated limited awareness of narrative conventions such as orientation, complication, and resolution, resulting in disjointed storylines and unclear event

progression. This finding supports existing literature emphasizing that young learners benefit from explicit instruction in narrative structure and repeated engagement with model texts. The observed inability to sequence events logically suggests that students require more opportunities to internalize narrative frameworks through guided reading, story mapping, and joint text construction. In MI settings, however, writing instruction remains heavily product oriented, with minimal emphasis on the planning and revision stages critical to developing coherent narratives. This instructional orientation not only limits students' exposure to effective writing processes but also reflects systemic constraints within the MI curriculum, including time limitations and competing subject demands.

The cognitive challenges faced by students—particularly in translating oral ideas into written text—highlight the developmental complexities involved in childhood writing. Writing requires simultaneous management of idea generation, linguistic encoding, mechanical transcription, and structural organization, placing substantial demands on working memory. The disparity between students' oral storytelling abilities and their written outputs suggests that writing tasks may exceed their current cognitive capacity when insufficient scaffolding is provided. This aligns with process based writing theories, which argue that learners require structured support at each stage of writing to reduce cognitive load and facilitate deeper engagement with meaning making. The MI classroom observations revealed that such support is inconsistently implemented; teachers frequently assign writing tasks without modeling or guided practice, leaving students to navigate the complexities of writing independently. This instructional gap highlights the need to shift from a product centered to a process oriented pedagogy, especially for narrative genres that require careful sequencing and elaboration.

The study's findings also point to systemic issues within the instructional environment that hinder writing development. The dominance of teacher centered practices restricts opportunities for collaboration, peer feedback, and dialogic engagement—elements that contemporary literacy research identifies as essential for building writing competence. Furthermore, the limited use of multimodal resources, such as picture sequences and graphic organizers, deprives students of tools that could support idea generation and structural planning. When such resources were used, students demonstrated markedly improved narrative coherence and creativity, reinforcing the importance of multimodal scaffolds for young writers. These results affirm that the integration of visual and interactive supports is not merely beneficial but necessary, particularly in contexts where students face linguistic and cognitive constraints.

Another key dimension emerging from the study concerns motivation and self efficacy. Students' reluctance to write, coupled with their perception of writing as a difficult and punitive task, reflects the emotional barriers that can inhibit literacy development. Feedback practices that emphasize error correction over idea development may inadvertently discourage risk taking and stifle creativity, contributing to a cycle of low confidence and reduced engagement. Research in writing pedagogy consistently demonstrates that positive reinforcement, shared writing experiences, and authentic writing tasks can foster greater student motivation. In MI classrooms, however, such practices appear limited, pointing to a need for creating more

supportive writing environments where students feel encouraged to express their ideas freely and experiment with language.

The remedial strategies identified guided writing, vocabulary enrichment, visual prompts, and peer assisted revision offer promising pathways for addressing the challenges outlined above. Their effectiveness aligns with international evidence demonstrating that process based and scaffolded writing instruction leads to improved writing outcomes in primary students. Guided writing supports learners through the cognitive demands of composing, while visual prompts help them conceptualize storylines and sequence events. Vocabulary enrichment expands linguistic resources, and peer assisted revision develops metacognitive awareness and collaborative problem solving. However, the inconsistent implementation of these strategies in MI underscores the need for stronger teacher professional development in writing pedagogy. Teachers expressed a desire for training in differentiated instruction, scaffolding techniques, and process writing frameworks, suggesting that institutional investment in teacher capacity building would directly enhance writing instruction quality.

The study also raises considerations regarding curricular alignment. The MI dual curriculum, which integrates religious and general subjects, places pressure on instructional time for Bahasa Indonesia literacy development. Writing, especially narrative writing, is a time intensive activity requiring sustained practice, reflection, and feedback. Without adequate curriculum space dedicated to writing processes, improvements in students' narrative skills may remain limited. Thus, curricular planners must consider reallocating instructional time or integrating writing across subject areas to create more opportunities for students to engage in meaningful writing tasks.

The study contributes to a broader understanding of literacy development in Islamic primary education by highlighting the unique cultural, linguistic, and institutional dynamics shaping writing instruction. While MI students exhibit creativity and strong oral storytelling traditions rooted in cultural practices, these strengths are not fully leveraged within current writing curricula. Integrating culturally relevant narratives, local stories, and Islamic storytelling traditions could enhance student engagement while supporting the development of narrative conventions. This culturally responsive approach has been shown in other contexts to strengthen literacy outcomes by connecting academic learning with students' lived experiences.

Conclusion

This study concludes that narrative writing difficulties among Madrasah Ibtidaiyah students arise from a combination of linguistic limitations, cognitive processing challenges, and instructional constraints within the classroom environment. Students struggle with vocabulary use, narrative organization, coherence, and grammatical accuracy, reflecting insufficient exposure to model texts and limited engagement with process-based writing practices. Teacher-centered instruction, restricted practice time, and minimal scaffolding further hinder students' ability to transform ideas into coherent written narratives. Remedial strategies—such as guided writing, vocabulary enrichment, visual prompts, and peer-assisted

revisiondemonstrated strong potential to improve writing outcomes when implemented consistently and supported by adequate instructional resources. Strengthening writing instruction in MI requires a holistic approach that integrates explicit narrative teaching, multimodal support, and professional development for teachers. By addressing these interconnected factors, schools can foster more effective writing environments and enhance students' narrative competencies.

References

- Armengol, E. "Eroticism: the genre that defies categorization." *Els Marges* 2024-Fall, no. 134 (2024): 12–23. <https://doi.org/10.60940/ElsMargesv134nt2024id431913>.
- Ayano, G, B A Dachew, R Rooney, C M Pollard, and R Alati. "Impact of Low Birth Weight on Academic Attainment during Adolescence: A Comprehensive Retrospective Cohort Study Using Linked Data." *Early Human Development* 191 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.earlhumdev.2024.105974>.
- Belarbi, K. "Crime and punishment in the medieval Maghreb from the seventh century AH to the tenth century AH/13-16 AD: An attempt to read history through the idiosyncratic and core texts in historical yearbooks." *Revue d'Histoire Mediterraneenne* 7, no. 1 (2025): 388–408. <https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-105011988140&partnerID=40&md5=421210e5c57e005a063468dc5ed3b431>.
- Dutta, R. "The Limitations of Narrative Medicine." *Theoretical Medicine and Bioethics* 46, no. 3 (2025): 247–64. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11017-025-09713-6>.
- Gantar, P, and M Bon. "GETTING THROUGH OR OVERCOMING IT? ERRORS AND LINGUISTIC VARIANTS IN THE USE OF MULTI-WORD UNITS IN INDEPENDENT TEXT PRODUCTION IN PRIMA-RY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL." *Sodobna Pedagogika/Journal of Contemporary Educational Studies* 76, no. 3 (2025): 39–58. https://doi.org/10.63384/sptB5_z789s.
- Goldstein, M A, P K Rauch, C Cunningham, E M Herzberg, R L A Adawi Awdish, E Silverman, P Grinspoon, G Romano-Clarke, D V Diamond, and E Kaplan-Liss. "Physician as Patient," 63–89. Massachusetts General Hospital, Division of Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine, Boston, MA, United States: Springer Nature, 2024. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-69413-4_4.
- Grigore, R. "Metamorphoses of the Sacred and the Expressions of Violence in Clarice Lispector's Novel *The Passion According to G.H.*," 143–58. Universitatea Lucian Blaga din Sibiu, Sibiu, Sibiu, Romania: Taylor and Francis, 2025. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003472971-9>.
- Hussain-Al, S, J Alty, and M Callisaya. "The Parkinson's Puzzle Box." *Health Expectations* 27, no. 3 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1111/hex.14116>.
- Karunarathna, K.S.S.N., N J Dewasiri, R Singh, and M S H Rathnasiri. "What Does Artificial Intelligence-Powered Chatgpt Bring to Academia? A Review," 3–13. Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka, Faculty of Management Studies, Belihuloya, Sabaragamuwa Province, Sri Lanka: De Gruyter, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111172408001>.

- Kim, K. “Visualizing the Influence of Text Structures on Readers’ Knowledge Structures: Pathfinder Network Scaling Technique.” *Educational Technology Research and Development* 73, no. 5 (2025): 3041–65. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-025-10543-5>.
- Lucas, C. “Empowering Young English Language Learners through Interactive Whiteboards and Children’s Literature in a Primary School Setting -An Action-Research Study.” *World Journal of English Language* 15, no. 6 (2025): 435–43. <https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v15n6p435>.
- Mitsuno, M. “COMPLAINING OF WORK IN BLOGS: Women Teachers’ Rhetorical Labour of Denouncing Injustice,” 168–76. Taylor and Francis, 2025. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003365730-18>.
- Mokgoatšana, S, and S L Kugara. “Objectivity and Subjectivity: Twin Evils in Oral History Research,” 85–98. University of Limpopo, Department of Cultural and Political Studies, Sovenga, South Africa: AOSIS OpenJournals Publishing AOSIS (Pty) Ltd, 2025. <https://doi.org/10.4102/aosis.2025.BK397.06>.
- Natrayan, R, and A K Chauhan. “Exploring the Role of the Vestibular System in Visuospatial Memory in Developmental Dyslexia: Narrative Review.” *Journal of Associated Medical Sciences* 58, no. 1 (2025): 177–84. <https://doi.org/10.12982/JAMS.2025.019>.
- Nejadghanbar, H, G Hu, and M Mohammadi. “Exploring Iranian ESP Teachers’ Language-Related Critical Incidents.” *Iberica* 2024, no. 47 (2024): 175–99. <https://doi.org/10.17398/2340-2784.47.175>.
- Olden-Jorgensen, S. “Danish Dynastic Histories in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: Claus Christoffersen Lyschander, Vitus Bering, Ludvig Holberg and Hans Peter Anchersen,” 251–68. Københavns Universitet, Copenhagen, Hovedstaden, Denmark: Taylor and Francis, 2025. https://doi.org/10.5117/9789463728751_ch11.
- Perkins, P. “Recreating Place: Charles Fothergill and the Limits of Travel Writing.” *Humanities (Switzerland)* 14, no. 1 (2025). <https://doi.org/10.3390/h14010010>.
- Petersen, D B, M Staskowski, M Foster, K Douglas, A Konishi-Therkildsen, and T D Spencer. “Explicit and Systematic Narrative Language Instruction to Improve Language Comprehension: A Three-Arm Randomized Controlled Trial.” *Reading and Writing* 38, no. 8 (2025): 2169–99. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11145-024-10590-z>.
- Pires, L D N, and L O Q Peduzzi. “‘Look, Dear! You’ve Made a Discovery’: aspects of the life and trajectory of astronomer Jocelyn Bell Burnell.” *Revista Brasileira de Historia da Ciencia* 18 (2025). <https://doi.org/10.53727/rbhc.v18i2.1037>.
- Sanfilippo-Schulz, J. “HOW CAN THE PERSONAL STORIES OF TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY REFUGEE AND MIGRANT GIRLS BE HEARD?: The Dilemma of Coming to Voice on Digital Platforms,” 69–79. Fachhochschule Münster, Munster, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany: Taylor and Francis, 2025. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003365730-8>.
- Şenyüz, B. “Navigating Critically: Developing Hypertext Literacy as a Lifelong Learning Skill,” 217–35. Marmara Üniversitesi, Istanbul, Turkey: IGI Global, 2024.

<https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-1410-4.ch010>.

- Serrat, M, B Sora, P Ureña, H Vall-Roqué, M Edo-Gual, and R Nieto. “Written Narratives to Understand the Experience of Individuals Living with Fibromyalgia.” *Musculoskeletal Care* 22, no. 2 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1002/msc.1905>.
- Siddique, A, S Z B Zainuddin, and C H Fen. “Writer Identity in Transition: A Narrative Study of Pakistani MA TESOL Students’ Academic Writing.” *Jurnal Arbitrer* 12, no. 3 (2025): 424–36. <https://doi.org/10.25077/ar.12.3.424-436.2025>.
- Sollitto, I A. “Genesis and disputes surrounding Mathilde Mauté’s *Mémoires de ma vie*.” *Cedille*, no. 26 (2024): 441–69. <https://doi.org/10.25145/j.cedille.2024.26.23>.
- Tsai, H.-J. “Processing Speed Deficits, Developmental Dyslexia, and Handwriting in Chinese: A Narrative Review.” *Cognitive Development* 76 (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cogdev.2025.101621>.
- Vaezi, M. “On the Challenges of Assessing Writing for English as an Additional Language Students: Voices from Writing Teachers in International Schools.” *Journal of Research in International Education* 24, no. 1 (2025): 55–68. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14752409251329922>.
- Yu, X, L Jin, Y Wang, Y Zhao, J Gong, J Sun, X Li, H Hao, S Wen, and H Lyu. “Time-Shifting Oriented Balanced Time Perspective in College Students with Dysphoria: An Exploration with the Text Reading and Writing Tasks.” *Personality and Individual Differences* 245 (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2025.113264>.