The Effectiveness of Reading to Learn (R2L) Pedagogy in Teaching News Text Writing at MTsN 3 Jambi City

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Abstract: The Reading to Learn (R2L) pedagogy, consisting of preparatory reading, in-depth reading, collaborative construction, and independent construction, was developed in Australia with the aim of helping students understand academic texts and find useful information within them. This study was designed using a quasi-experimental method with a control group design aimed at testing the extent to which the Reading to Learn (R2L) pedagogy is able to improve students' ability to write well-structured news texts. This study involved 74 seventh-grade students from MTsN 3 Kota Jambi. The research participants were divided into two groups, namely the experimental class (grades VII-9) which consisted of 37 students and the control class (grade VII-4) which also consisted of 37 students. Students in the experimental class were given learning based on the Reading to Learn (R2L) pedagogy, while students in the control class used conventional learning methods. The results of the analysis showed a significance value of 0.000 (Sig. <0.05), which indicates that the Reading to Learn (R2L) pedagogy provides improvements to students' news text writing skills compared to conventional methods. The Reading to Learn (R2L) pedagogy has high flexibility and adaptability to be applied across cultures and languages as a strategic approach, because it is able to bridge the literacy gap while strengthening students' academic text construction skills in various international educational contexts.

Keywords: Independent Curriculum, Reading to Learn (R2L) Pedagogy, Learning Effectiveness, Writing Skills, News Text.

INTRODUCTION

The Reading to Learn (R2L) approach was developed to support Indigenous Australian students in comprehending reading texts and using the information gained to produce writing in appropriate genres [1]–[3]. The development of literacy pedagogy across countries indicates a paradigm shift in language learning—from the mere mastery of structures toward the systematic and equitable development of genre-based literacy competencies. One globally expanding approach is Reading to Learn (R2L), which is designed to provide explicit and staged support for building learners' reading and writing competence [4]. This approach is grounded in systemic functional linguistics and genre-based pedagogy that positions text as the center of learning [1]. In the context of 21st-century education, which emphasizes critical literacy and higher-order thinking, Reading to Learn (R2L) is highly relevant because it offers a structured, explicit, and inclusive instructional framework for all learners, including those experiencing literacy gaps. Low writing proficiency is not confined to one country but has become a global concern in language education. A major obstacle in writing instruction is learners' limited understanding of text structure and their difficulty in developing arguments systematically; therefore, an instructional framework that provides explicit and structured guidance is needed to optimize writing development [5]. In this regard, instruction that delivers explicit and systematic scaffolding can strengthen genre-based literacy development at a broader scale.

In Indonesia, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum provides flexibility for educators to apply contextual and adaptive instructional strategies aligned with learners' needs. The Merdeka Curriculum requires Indonesian language teachers to implement process standards comprehensively across planning,

implementation, and evaluation, as regulated by Permendikbudristek No. 16 of 2022 [6]. This policy emphasizes deep learning that promotes active engagement, creativity, and critical thinking. Within Indonesian language learning, the Phase D Learning Outcomes require students to understand, interpret, and produce various types of texts in accordance with their social and communicative contexts. Consequently, writing is no longer merely a reproductive activity but a constructive process that demands mastery of text structure and comprehensive linguistic awareness.

Nevertheless, writing skills remain a serious challenge. Writing is a complex process involving higher-order cognitive abilities, including diction choice, spelling, effective sentence construction, and inter-paragraph coherence. Findings reported by Andani and Anggraini indicate that students' low proficiency in writing news texts is associated with limited control of linguistic features and text structure [7]. These difficulties suggest that understanding the 5W+1H elements is significantly related to news-writing competence, yet many students still struggle to apply them appropriately. In fact, genre mastery constitutes a fundamental basis for literacy development [8], [9].

From a pedagogical perspective, one factor contributing to suboptimal writing performance is the persistent use of instruction that emphasizes theoretical delivery without systematic stages of text construction. Such a pattern results in declarative knowledge but limited ability to produce texts independently. Supriadin and Turohma reported that writing approaches lacking explicit and staged guidance tend to hinder students from integrating linguistic concepts with authentic writing practices [10]. Therefore, an instructional approach emphasizing explicit guidance and gradual construction is required to enable learners to connect linguistic theory with effective independent writing.

Reading to Learn (R2L) pedagogy offers a potential solution through stages of text modeling, guided reading, structural analysis, and joint construction of writing. This approach is designed to build literacy competence through systematic, gradual scaffolding [4]. Empirically, Rahayu and Ningsih identified 13 studies demonstrating the effectiveness of R2L in improving students' writing quality [11]. Other studies at the junior secondary level also show that R2L significantly improves students' descriptive and narrative writing skills [12], [13] and enhances text comprehension and student participation [14].

However, most Indonesian studies have focused on narrative and descriptive genres. Research on the effectiveness of R2L pedagogy in factual genres—particularly news texts—remains limited, especially at the Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) level. Yet, in the context of Indonesia's evolving literacy culture and efforts to align with global standards, strengthening factual genres such as news texts is crucial for developing critical and informative literacy. This gap indicates that research on R2L pedagogy for teaching news-text writing remains relatively scarce compared with broader international studies on genre-based pedagogy.

Accordingly, this study is important because it offers an empirical contribution to the development of genre-based literacy pedagogy. Specifically, this study aims to examine the effectiveness of Reading to Learn (R2L) pedagogy in teaching news-text writing to students at MTsN 3 Jambi City as a representation of the Indonesian educational context.

RESEARCHMETHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach using a quasi-experimental method with a nonequivalent control group design. The research was conducted at MTs Negeri 3 Jambi City during the second (even) semester of the 2025/2026 academic year. The study population comprised all Grade VII students (N = 334) distributed across nine classes. The sample was selected through purposive sampling by considering academic ability equivalence, similar learning characteristics, and the same subject teacher to minimize potential treatment bias. Based on these criteria, two classes were selected as the study sample, each consisting of 37 students, for a total of 74 participants. One class was assigned as the experimental group (Class VII-9), while the other served as the control group (Class VII-4).

Table 1. RESEARCH DESIGN

Group	Pretest	Treatment	Posttest
Experimental	O1	X1	O3
Control	O2	X2	O4

Note:

O_1 and O_2 denote the pretest scores of the experimental and control groups, respectively.

O_3 and O_4 denote the posttest scores of the experimental and control groups, respectively.

X_1 represents the treatment using the Reading to Learn (R2L) pedagogical approach applied to the experimental group.

X_2 represents the conventional instructional approach applied to the control group.

The research instrument was a news-text writing test based on a provided event dataset. Students' writing was assessed using five criteria: completeness of news elements (5W+1H), accuracy of text structure, sentence effectiveness, correctness of spelling and punctuation, and the relevance of the title to the news content. To ensure objectivity, the scoring process involved two raters: the researcher and the subject teacher.

The data were analyzed descriptively by calculating the mean and standard deviation of the pretest and posttest scores for each group. To determine the magnitude of improvement in writing performance, the Normalized Gain (N-Gain) was computed. Prior to hypothesis testing, prerequisite analyses were conducted, including tests of normality and homogeneity of variances.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Description of Research Findings
This study aimed to examine the effectiveness of the Reading to Learn (R2L) pedagogy in teaching news-text writing at MTsN 3 Jambi City. The participants consisted of two Grade VII classes: an experimental group (Class VII-9, n = 37) and a control group (Class VII-4, n = 37). Descriptive statistics were computed from the pretest and posttest scores to obtain the mean and standard deviation as measures of central tendency and dispersion. In addition, the effectiveness of the intervention was evaluated using the Normalized Gain (N-Gain). All descriptive analyses were conducted using SPSS version 25.

Descriptive Statistics of Learning Outcomes
Table 2. Descriptive Statistics Of Pretest And Posttest Scores

Group	N	Test	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min	Max
Experimental (R2L)	37	Pretest	46.22	10.35	30	65
Experimental (R2L)	37	Posttest	81.69	4.93	72	95
Control (Conventional)	37	Pretest	45.41	11.87	30	70
Control (Conventional)	37	Posttest	66.69	13.10	43	90

Source: SPSS v25 output.

As shown in Table 2, the two groups demonstrated comparable baseline performance on the pretest. The experimental group achieved a mean pretest score of 46.22 (SD = 10.35), while the control group obtained a mean of 45.41 (SD = 11.87). After the intervention, the experimental group that received the R2L pedagogy showed a substantially higher posttest mean of 81.69 (SD = 4.93) compared with the control group taught using conventional instruction, which obtained a posttest mean of 66.69 (SD = 13.10). These results indicate a greater improvement in the group exposed to the R2L approach.

Analysis of Learning Improvement Using N-Gain
N-Gain analysis was applied to quantify the improvement in students' writing performance while controlling for differences in initial ability. As reported in Table III, the experimental group achieved a mean N-Gain of 0.6498, whereas the control group obtained a mean N-Gain of 0.3891. Although both groups fell within the "medium" category based on Hake's criteria, the difference in average gain between the groups was notable ($\Delta = 0.26$). Moreover, no negative gain scores were observed in the experimental group (minimum = 0.38), while the control group still exhibited negative gains (minimum = −0.10), suggesting that some students in the control group did not improve from pretest to posttest.

Table 3. N-Gain Results

Group	Mean N-Gain	Category	Min	Max
Experimental (R2L)	0.6498	Medium	0.38	0.92
Control (Conventional)	0.3891	Medium	−0.10	0.79

Source: SPSS v25 output.

Normality Test

A normality test was conducted to determine whether the N-Gain scores in both groups were normally distributed. Given that the sample size in each group was below 50, the Shapiro–Wilk test was applied. The decision rule was that data are normally distributed when $p > 0.05$. As presented in Table IV, the experimental group yielded $p = 0.565$ and the control group yielded $p = 0.764$. Since both values exceeded 0.05, the N-Gain data in both groups were considered normally distributed, satisfying the normality assumption for parametric testing.

Table 4. Shapiro–Wilk Normality Test (N-Gain Scores)

Group	Statistic	df	Sig. (p-value)	Remark
Experimental (R2L)	0.975	37	0.565	Normal
Control (Conventional)	0.981	37	0.764	Normal

Source: SPSS v25 output.

Homogeneity of Variance Test

Homogeneity of variance was assessed using Levene's test to examine whether the two groups had equal variances. The analysis produced $F = 38.067$ with $p = 0.000$, indicating that the variances were not homogeneous ($p < 0.05$). Because the homogeneity assumption was violated, subsequent mean comparisons were interpreted using the "equal variances not assumed" option (Welch's correction), which adjusts the degrees of freedom to maintain statistical validity.

Table 5. Homogeneity Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Nilai	Equal variances assumed	38,067	,000	-6,519	72	,000
	Equal variances not assumed			-6,519	46,008	,000

Hypothesis Testing

Based on the prerequisite tests, the hypothesis was tested using an independent-samples t-test with the "equal variances not assumed" (Welch) procedure. The results showed $t = −6.758$ with adjusted $df = 54.635$ and Sig. (2-tailed) $= 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating a statistically significant difference between the groups. This finding supports that the R2L pedagogy results in significantly better news-text writing performance compared with conventional instruction in MTsN 3 Jambi City.

Table 6. Hypothesis Testing

Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	16,141	,000	-6,758	72	,000	-,26069	,03858	-,33759	-,18379
Equal variances not assumed			-6,758	54,635	,000	-,26069	,03858	-,33801	-,18337

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and data analyses, it can be concluded that the Reading to Learn (R2L) pedagogy is effective in improving Grade VII students' news-text writing skills at MTsN 3 Jambi City. This effectiveness is reflected in the experimental group's posttest mean score (81.69), which was higher than that of the control group taught through conventional instruction (66.69).

The N-Gain analysis further confirmed stronger improvement in the experimental group, which achieved a mean N-Gain of 0.65 (medium category), compared with 0.39 (medium category) in the control group. Although both groups were classified within the same category, the magnitude of the gain difference indicates that the R2L-based instruction produced more optimal learning outcomes than the conventional approach.

Furthermore, hypothesis testing yielded a Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.000 (p < 0.05), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_0) and acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (H_1). Therefore, there is a statistically significant difference in news-text writing performance between students taught using the R2L approach and those taught using conventional methods.

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