

Writing Narrative Texts Through Genre-Based Pedagogy Using Facebook among the Suku Anak Dalam in Jambi

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ABSTRACT

Narrative writing is not merely a linguistic skill but a medium for preserving cultural memory, expressing identity, and transmitting indigenous knowledge across generations. This study aims to examine the implementation of genre-based pedagogy mediated through *Facebook* in teaching narrative writing among the Suku Anak Dalam (SAD), an indigenous community in Jambi, Indonesia, and to explore its linguistic and socio-cultural impacts. Employing a qualitative case study design grounded in ethnopedology, the research involved eight indigenous learners, two facilitators, and one cultural leader. Data were collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, analysis of students' narrative texts, and digital interactions within a Facebook learning group. The findings show that the three stages of genre pedagogy—modeling, joint construction, and independent construction—supported learners' development of narrative structure, coherence, cultural representation, and reflective meaning-making. While challenges in writing mechanics, such as grammar and punctuation, remained, learners demonstrated meaningful progress in transforming oral storytelling traditions into cohesive written narratives. Beyond linguistic outcomes, the learning process fostered increased motivation, confidence, and cultural pride, and preserved indigenous stories through digital documentation. The study concludes that integrating genre based pedagogy with social media can effectively bridge oral traditions and digital literacy, positioning writing as a form of cultural empowerment for indigenous and marginalized communities.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Literacy in the digital age represents more than the technical ability to read and write; it encompasses narrative competence, cultural expression, creativity, critical thinking, and engagement

in digital communication (UNESCO, 2023). Among these competencies, narrative writing holds a crucial position, enabling individuals and communities to document experiences, transmit cultural values, and preserve collective memory across generations (Assmann, 2011; Bruner, 1991). Narratives are not only linguistic constructs but also cultural archives that serve as a powerful medium for identity construction and social cohesion. They allow communities to articulate their knowledge systems, local wisdom, and historical experiences in formats that are recognized both within and beyond their cultural boundaries (Wertsch, 2002). However, literacy education in indigenous communities with strong oral traditions continues to face serious challenges, especially when formal literacy instruction fails to acknowledge the cultural significance of storytelling as a primary mode of knowledge transmission.

The Suku Anak Dalam (SAD) community in Jambi, Indonesia, is an indigenous group characterized by semi-nomadic lifestyles, strong oral cultural traditions, and a collective knowledge system grounded in communal storytelling and ritual practices (Manurung, 2013). Written literacy remains limited among members of this community, not because of cognitive barriers, but due to contextual factors, including limited access to formal education, socio-cultural mismatch between school-based literacy models and indigenous realities, and the absence of culturally responsive pedagogical approaches. Most educational initiatives targeting SAD have emphasized basic literacy or functional education, without integrating indigenous storytelling traditions into structured learning models. Consequently, literacy learning often feels externally imposed and culturally detached, rather than meaningful, empowering, and culturally affirming.

Genre-based pedagogy offers a systematic, culturally responsive approach to teaching writing by providing explicit instruction on text structures, linguistic features, and communicative purposes through a scaffolded learning cycle of modeling, joint construction, and independent construction (Hyland, 2007; Martin & Rose, 2020). This approach aligns well with indigenous learning modalities, especially in contexts where collaborative learning, repetition, and oral modeling are culturally embedded. It allows learners to see how cultural narratives can be transformed into written texts without losing their authentic voice, meaning, or structure (Angelo dkk., 2022). Facebook, on the other hand, has emerged as a robust digital platform not merely for social interaction but also for collaborative learning, knowledge sharing, and digital storytelling (Greenhow & Robelia, 2009). Its accessibility, familiarity, and interactive features make it particularly suitable for communities transitioning from oral to digital literacies, providing a space where they can share stories, receive feedback, and build confidence in writing (Blattner & Fathi, 2020; Kabilan dkk., 2010).

Previous studies have explored genre-based pedagogy in enhancing writing skills in school settings (Derewianka, 2011; Hyland, 2007) and highlighted the advantages of Facebook for improving motivation, collaboration, and engagement in digital writing contexts (Junco, 2012; Manca & Ranieri, 2023). Research on indigenous education has also addressed oral traditions and informal learning models (Manurung, 2013). However, there remains limited empirical work integrating genre-based pedagogy and Facebook to guide the transformation of indigenous oral storytelling into written narrative literacy within a culturally sensitive, technologically mediated learning environment. The literature reveals a clear gap in the design of pedagogical models that merge indigenous oral traditions, structured writing instruction, and digital storytelling platforms.

The present research seeks to address this gap by developing and implementing a genre-based pedagogical model integrated with Facebook to facilitate narrative writing among members of the Suku Anak Dalam community. This model is designed not only to improve linguistic proficiency but also to empower indigenous learners to translate their oral narratives into written forms while preserving cultural authenticity. It positions Facebook not only as a digital tool but as a “digital storytelling space” where indigenous identity, tradition, collaboration, and literacy coexist. Through this approach, narrative writing becomes a process of cultural documentation, identity expression, and digital participation.

This study contributes theoretically by extending genre-based pedagogy into indigenous and culturally situated digital spaces, demonstrating how oral traditions can be transformed into written narratives through mediated scaffolding, collaborative meaning-making, and context-sensitive adaptation. The findings highlight that literacy development is not a neutral or purely technical process, but one that is deeply embedded in social, cultural, and communal practices. In this way, the study broadens the concept of literacy from being merely individual, academic, and skills-oriented to one that is cultural, collective, reflective, and empowering for indigenous communities.

In practical terms, this study proposes a contextual learning model that is accessible, flexible, and firmly rooted in local cultural values and lived experiences. The model offers valuable insights for educators, non-governmental organizations, and policymakers seeking to design inclusive, sustainable, and culturally responsive literacy programs for indigenous communities. Furthermore, the study provides the SAD community with tools not only to acquire literacy skills, but also to employ literacy as a medium for cultural preservation, identity reinforcement, increased self-confidence, and meaningful participation in broader digital and social spaces.

2. METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to explore the process and outcomes of genre-based narrative writing instruction within the Suku Anak Dalam community (Creswell, 2014). An ethnopedagogical approach was used to ensure contextual sensitivity and cultural alignment with indigenous traditions, values, and oral storytelling practices (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005). The data consisted of written narrative artifacts produced by learners, observation records, interview transcripts, and digital interactions obtained from the Facebook learning group. The primary data sources included indigenous learners, local facilitators, and cultural leaders, while secondary data included cultural documentation, prior studies, and contextual literacy resources (Miles dkk., 2014). Data were collected using participant observation, semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and digital interaction tracking, all of which are suitable for studying learning processes and sociocultural engagement (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Data were analyzed using a thematic analysis technique focusing on textual structure, linguistic features, cultural content, and social meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Coding, categorization, triangulation, and interpretive analysis were applied to ensure credibility, dependability, and contextual validity.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Finding

The research yielded three main groups of findings: (1) the process of teaching narrative text writing using Facebook with a genre-based pedagogical approach, (2) the development of narrative writing abilities among Suku Anak Dalam (SAD) students, and (3) the social-cultural and affective impacts of the instruction.

Learning Process Through Genre Pedagogy and Facebook

The implementation of genre-based pedagogy mediated by Facebook occurred in three key stages: modeling, joint construction, and independent construction. During the modeling stage, learners were exposed to culturally relevant narrative texts derived from the Suku Anak Dalam's indigenous oral traditions, such as *Melangun*, the *Origin of the Makekal River*, and *The Story of the Tumenggung*. These texts were posted in the Facebook learning group and analyzed collaboratively using comments and discussion threads. Learners began to recognize the organizational structure of narrative texts, including orientation, complication, resolution, and coda, as well as linguistic features such as temporal conjunctions, action verbs, and descriptive language.

In the joint construction stage, students co-constructed narrative texts together with the facilitator through comment-based editing, asynchronous discussion, and collaborative writing. Learners began to experiment with story components, such as characters, setting, conflict, and moral values, and

organize them using the generic structure of narrative texts. This stage also fostered peer interaction, feedback exchange, and shared responsibility in content development.

In the independent construction stage, learners individually produced and uploaded their narrative compositions based on personal experiences, collective memory, and traditional beliefs. The texts displayed increasing levels of structure, coherence, narrative flow, and cultural representation. Learners used Facebook as a publishing platform, which enabled them to receive feedback not only from peers and the teacher but also from community members. This strengthened motivation, confidence, and perceived ownership of writing.

Development of Narrative Writing Skills

The qualitative analysis of students' written narratives revealed a gradual progression in three core aspects: textual structure, content elaboration, and cultural integration. Early writings tended to be linear descriptions of real-life experiences without clear narrative elements. For example, one initial writing said:

"I went to the forest with my father to find honey. The bees came, and we ran away."

This indicates limited awareness of narrative organization and a tendency to reproduce oral speech patterns.

In the middle phase, learners began incorporating orientation and complication. For example:

"One morning in the Makekal forest, I followed my father to look for a bee nest. When he climbed the tall tree, the bees suddenly came out angrily and chased him."

This reflects initial recognition of narrative structure, including setting, characters, and conflict.

In the final stage, texts displayed more complete narratives, with resolution, evaluative language, and moral reflection. For example:

"After collecting the honey, my father reminded me that we must not take all of it because the bees also need food. From this experience, I learned that nature must be respected, and we should only take what we need."

Students also began using richer vocabulary, descriptive phrases, and culturally embedded expressions. Although errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation remained evident, they did not overshadow the meaningful shift from oral narrative performance to cohesive written texts. Written artifacts increasingly reflected indigenous identity, social values, and the relationship between humans and nature—core dimensions of SAD cultural knowledge.

Sociocultural and Affective Impact

In addition to cognitive development, the learning process demonstrated substantial affective and sociocultural impact. Students who initially felt reluctant to write due to fear of making mistakes gradually displayed increased motivation and confidence. The use of Facebook as a public yet supportive digital learning space encouraged students to share stories not only for academic purposes but also to preserve and share their cultural heritage. Some stories received comments from elders, which validated culture and strengthened learners' sense of belonging and identity.

Students began to perceive writing as a meaningful activity that enabled them to document the wisdom of their ancestors, their landscape experiences, and their indigenous practices. Thus, the act of writing transformed from merely a school task into a form of cultural preservation, identity expression, and digital participation.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that the implementation of genre-based pedagogy mediated through Facebook enabled students to transform their indigenous oral storytelling traditions into academically structured written narratives without losing their cultural authenticity. This transformation shows that literacy development in indigenous contexts is not merely a linguistic shift but a deeper epistemological process in which learners begin to understand writing as a tool for preserving identity, heritage, and

cultural knowledge. The movement from oral to written-digital forms represents a shift not only in literacy mode but in cognitive and sociocultural expression, reinforcing Street (2019) assertion that literacy should be viewed as a social practice influenced by culture, history, and identity. This reflects Papen (2023) argument that writing is not only a cognitive activity but a medium for identity construction and social participation.

Genre-based pedagogy supported this transformation in three stages: modeling, joint construction, and independent construction. During the modeling stage, students were introduced to narrative texts rooted in SAD cultural storytelling, such as stories of forest life, hunting rituals, and traditional ethics, such as melangun. Exposure to culturally grounded narratives helped students recognize that their lived experiences and oral traditions could be meaningfully translated into academic writing. Hyland (2019) emphasizes that genre pedagogy becomes effective when learners can understand how structure, purpose, and language relate to context. Martin & Rose (2020) further explain that genre-based learning is powerful when culture and context function as sources of meaning rather than background elements. In this study, students did not merely learn narrative structures; they understood why stories must begin with orientation, build through complication, and end with resolution and moral reflection.

The joint construction stage marked a shift from individual understanding to social negotiation of meaning. Facebook facilitated collaborative writing, peer review, and dialogic thinking as students posted drafts and received community feedback. Nguyen (2024) found that digital platforms enhance collaborative authorship and allow learners to construct meaning collectively. Acar (2023) describes this process as digital scaffolding, where students receive assistance from peers, teachers, and the community within virtual environments. The SAD learners interacted not only through textual feedback but also through cultural negotiation, reflecting Vygotsky's concept of mediated learning, where knowledge is co-constructed through social interaction. These findings are also consistent with Kabilan dkk. (2010), who observed that Facebook can foster meaningful academic discussion, cultural validation, and collaborative authorship among indigenous learners.

The independent construction stage demonstrated deeper narrative development. Students began incorporating moral reflection, cultural metaphors, and ecological philosophies into their narratives. This aligns with Derewianka's (2020) theory, which holds that narrative development evolves from recounting events to conveying meanings, values, and identities. Students used local expressions, spiritual symbolism, and ecological wisdom, such as beliefs about honeybees, forests, and communal harmony. Martin & Rose (2020) refer to this as ideational meaning-making, in which stories express cultural and philosophical knowledge rather than merely sequences of events. These stories emerged as forms of cultural preservation, aligning with Paris & Alim's (2020) notion of Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy, which holds that education must preserve and enrich cultural identity.

Facebook served not only as a writing space but as a digital cultural archive where indigenous knowledge could be shared, validated, and preserved. Students felt that they were contributing to cultural documentation rather than just completing school assignments. Jernigan (2021) refers to this as Indigenous Digital Storytelling, where learners use digital platforms to document, share, and sustain cultural traditions. Robin (2018) explains that digital storytelling empowers learners to author their own narratives rather than reproduce narratives of dominant cultures. In this study, Facebook became a community literacy space where writing, culture, and identity converged.

Students' use of Facebook enhanced their motivation and emotional engagement. Initially, many students demonstrated writing anxiety, a common issue among marginalized learners (Blattner & Fathi, 2020). As they began receiving affirmation and feedback from peers, family, and teachers, their confidence grew. Manca & Ranieri (2023) explain that social media platforms create affective scaffolding, where emotional support encourages deeper participation and reduces writing anxiety. Learning became more meaningful when students realized that their writing had cultural and social purpose, not just academic value.

The findings contribute to the understanding of writing as a tool for cultural resilience and environmental literacy. Cunsolo Willox dkk (2013) argue that indigenous digital storytelling reflects ecological relationships, showing how identity, land, and cultural knowledge are interconnected. Students' narratives frequently referenced forests, bees, and spiritual guardians of nature, reflecting indigenous ecological consciousness. Writing helped students articulate these relationships and preserve them in digital form. This also aligns with Baker (2021), who found that writing in indigenous contexts is often linked to land-based knowledge and community values.

The study challenges traditional literacy instruction that prioritizes accuracy over meaning. SAD learners struggled with grammar, punctuation, and spelling, but demonstrated strong narrative coherence, authentic voice, and cultural meaning. Hyland (2019) . argues that academic writing should be assessed holistically rather than solely on surface-level correctness. Martin & Rose (2020) assert that meaningful literacy learning must focus on message quality, identity affirmation, and cultural representation. In culturally rich contexts, the mechanics of writing should support rather than overshadow meaning.

The integration of three frameworks—Genre-Based Pedagogy (Hyland, 2007), Digital Storytelling Pedagogy (B. Robin, 2018), and Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (Paris & Alim, 2020) reveals that each contributes a different dimension: structure, technology, and identity. When combined, they show how writing can develop not only academic competence but also cultural voice and digital empowerment. Saad (2024) explains that literacy in the digital era must combine multimodality, identity, and social engagement to create meaningful literacy experiences. This study provides empirical evidence supporting that claim.

From a pedagogical perspective, this study shows that literacy instruction must be grounded in students' lived experiences, cultural backgrounds, and social realities. Teachers must adopt a culturally responsive approach that values indigenous knowledge as legitimate academic content. Nguyen (2024) emphasizes that writing instruction must move beyond text reproduction toward voice empowerment. Teachers should facilitate writing as a process of identity construction, rather than a test of grammatical accuracy. The study also highlights the significance of using digital platforms for indigenous literacy development. Facebook allowed learners to publish, discuss, and preserve oral stories, transforming literacy from a classroom-based activity into a community-based learning experience. Chen & Tsai (2023) found that learners in digital writing communities develop higher engagement, stronger authorship, and deeper cultural awareness. This study confirms that social media can support literacy that is both academically and culturally meaningful.

Multimodal storytelling emerged as a future possibility. Students expressed interest in creating videos, visual stories, and audio-based recordings of folklore. Gonulal (2022) argues that multimodal literacy allows students to express knowledge through multiple forms, including images, sounds, and narrative voice. Future research could explore how indigenous narratives can be archived through film, podcasts, digital art, or interactive websites.

The study's findings suggest that digital storytelling may help preserve endangered indigenous languages. Some students attempted to integrate SAD phrases into their writing. Cunsolo Willox et al., (2013) note that writing can support community language preservation when used reflectively. Future research could explore the relationship between narrative writing and indigenous language revitalization. The theoretical implications of this study emphasize that literacy cannot be separated from identity, culture, and technology. Genre-based pedagogy alone may not sustain cultural knowledge unless combined with culturally sustaining pedagogy and digital storytelling frameworks.(B. R. Robin, t.t.) emphasize that identity-driven writing can transform learners from passive knowledge recipients to active cultural narrators. This study supports that view.

Taken as a whole, the findings invite us to think about literacy a little differently. Writing, in this context, is not just a neutral academic skill but something shaped by culture, relationships, and everyday life (Eybers, 2025). What happened with the Suku Anak Dalam learners suggests that their progress in writing was closely connected to who they are as a community, where learning emerged

through shared participation and collective practice (Brooks dkk., 2024). Their shared identity, habits of learning together, and deep connection to the forest quietly but powerfully shaped how they wrote. Once writing was no longer treated as an external school demand, it began to feel closer to home. It became another way of telling stories, passing on values, and remembering what matters, functioning as a narrative practice closely aligned with existing oral traditions (Spencer & Pierce, 2023).

This perspective also challenges the habit of seeing indigenous learners through a deficit lens (Nesterova dkk., 2024). The data make it hard to argue that limited writing proficiency equals limited ability. In fact, many learners showed a strong sense of narrative flow, drawn from long-standing storytelling practices (Iseke, 2013). With the right kind of support, that strength translated into written form. When genre-based pedagogy was connected to real experiences such as family stories, encounters in the forest, or moral lessons learned from elders, writing felt less like replacing old knowledge and more like extending it (Steele dkk., 2024). In this sense, academic genres stopped being abstract templates and started to feel useful for expressing things learners already knew how to say.

Facebook played an unexpectedly central role in making this shift possible. For the learners, it was already part of daily communication, not a foreign educational tool (Barrot, 2018). Because of that, it worked as a gentle bridge between spoken storytelling and written narratives. Learners could post their work, read each other's stories, and respond at their own pace. This kind of interaction fit well with the communal learning style of the Suku Anak Dalam (Ansari & Khan, 2020). Writing moved beyond teacher judgment and became something shared, discussed, and shaped together. Over time, the space felt safer (Jin, 2025). Learners took more risks, experimented with ideas, and slowly began to develop a sense of voice.

There was also something powerful about publishing these stories in a public digital space. When learners shared their narratives online, they were doing more than practicing language. They were making their culture visible in places usually dominated by mainstream voices. Their stories about daily life, beliefs, and traditions stood as quiet statements that these experiences mattered and deserved to be heard. Comments from peers and community members reinforced this message, turning writing into a collective act of recognition and validation.

Another pattern that stood out was the ecological focus of many narratives. Learners often wrote about living respectfully with nature, using forest resources wisely, and maintaining spiritual ties to the land. These themes were not inserted by the curriculum but emerged naturally from their worldview. Writing became a way to articulate environmental ethics and pass on intergenerational knowledge. This suggests that narrative writing in indigenous contexts can support literacy development while also strengthening environmental awareness, without forcing an artificial separation between language, culture, and land.

Of course, the texts were not free from grammatical or mechanical errors. That said, these issues seemed less significant when placed alongside the clarity of ideas, cultural coherence, and depth of reflection shown in the writing. Accuracy appeared to develop slowly, and treating it as the main marker of success too early would likely do more harm than good. Focusing first on meaning-making allowed learners to build confidence and express their cultural perspectives without fear. Formal correctness can follow later, once that foundation is secure.

In the end, this study points to the potential of genre-based pedagogy when it is combined with culturally sustaining practices and digital tools. Writing instruction, under these conditions, shifts away from assimilation and toward empowerment. Writing becomes a social practice, not just a technical exercise. Through it, indigenous learners can document what they know, explore who they are, and take part in digital spaces on their own terms.

Policy implications include the need to incorporate indigenous storytelling and digital literacy into national curricula, particularly for remote or marginalized communities. Governments and educational institutions must recognize digital storytelling as a valid pedagogical tool for language development, cultural preservation, and social inclusion. (Harris, 2017) argue that culturally sustaining schools must promote linguistic and cultural diversity rather than enforce homogeneity.

Future research may investigate the long-term effects of digital storytelling on academic achievement, cultural resilience, self-efficacy, and identity formation. Longitudinal studies may reveal whether Facebook-based storytelling leads to sustained literacy engagement. Jernigan, (2021) argues that digital storytelling has transformative potential but requires continued access, mentorship, and cultural relevance.

4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that narrative writing instruction grounded in genre-based pedagogy and mediated through Facebook can effectively bridge the oral storytelling traditions of the Suku Anak Dalam community with written and digital literacy practices. Through the systematic stages of modeling, joint construction, and independent construction, learners not only developed an understanding of narrative structure, linguistic features, and textual coherence, but were also able to transform their cultural knowledge, oral histories, and lived experiences into authentic and meaningful written narratives. These findings suggest that writing development in indigenous contexts cannot be separated from broader issues of identity formation, cultural continuity, and social interaction, as learners draw upon communal knowledge and shared values in the writing process.

Furthermore, Facebook functioned not merely as a technological tool, but as an interactive digital learning space and a living cultural archive that facilitated collaboration, peer feedback, and sustained engagement. Its use enhanced learners' motivation, confidence, and sense of cultural pride, while simultaneously supporting the documentation and preservation of indigenous stories that have traditionally been transmitted orally across generations. By enabling learners to publish and share their narratives, the platform also fostered a sense of audience awareness and social participation. Overall, this study reinforces the view of literacy as a socio-cultural practice rather than a purely technical skill. Theoretically, it extends the application of genre-based pedagogy into culturally situated digital environments, while practically emphasizing the importance of contextualized, culturally responsive, and digitally mediated writing instruction as a powerful means of empowering indigenous and marginalized communities.

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