

Enhancing Drama-Script Writing through Cooperative Script: A Two-Cycle Classroom Action Study with Grade VIII.3 Students at SMP Negeri 1 Sengkang

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Abstract

Effective creative-writing instruction demands methods that simultaneously stimulate collaboration and sharpen narrative skills. This classroom action research examined whether the Cooperative Script strategy could raise achievement in drama-script writing and increase learner engagement among 32 Grade VIII.3 students at SMP Negeri 1 Sengkang, Indonesia. Conducted during the 2021/2022 academic year, the intervention unfolded over two iterative cycles each comprising planning, action, observation, and reflection and allotted 4 × 40-minute lessons per cycle. Quantitative data were collected through individual script-writing tests scored on plot, characterization, setting, structure, and language conventions; qualitative data came from structured observation sheets that captured on-task talk and peer questioning. The class mean improved from 56.15 (pre-cycle) to 72.78 after Cycle I and reached 89.84 in Cycle II, yielding a high normalized gain ($g = 0.77$). Mastery levels rose from 3 % to 94 %, with only two students remaining below the minimum competency criterion of 77. Observation scores mirrored these gains, showing marked growth in reciprocal questioning and dialogic rehearsal. The findings indicate that the Cooperative Script method not only accelerates mastery of drama-writing conventions but also fosters an equitable, highly interactive learning atmosphere. Teachers seeking low-cost, student-centered approaches to creative writing may therefore adopt Cooperative Script as an evidence-based routine capable of transforming conventional lessons into collaborative workshops that amplify both cognitive and social outcomes.

Keywords: Cooperative Script, drama-script writing, junior-high learners, student engagement

INTRODUCTION

Education is universally recognised as a cornerstone of individual and societal development, yet its impact is realised only when instructional practices translate educational goals into meaningful classroom experiences (Siagian, 2006). The continuing quest for effective teaching methods is especially pressing in language education, where students must master not only linguistic forms but also creative expression and critical thinking. In Indonesia, the 2013 National Curriculum mandates that lower-secondary learners develop communicative competence through integrated reading, speaking, and writing tasks, including the composition of drama scripts (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2022). Despite this policy emphasis, national assessment reports show that junior-high students still struggle to achieve the expected competence in creative writing genres, with average scores

hovering below the minimum competency criterion (Pusat Asesmen, 2024). These findings underscore the need for pedagogical innovations that foster deeper engagement and higher achievement in writing.

Recent scholarship foregrounds cooperative learning as a robust pathway to improve both cognitive and affective outcomes in language classrooms. A systematic review of technology-enhanced cooperative learning confirmed positive effects on critical thinking, communicative accuracy, and learner motivation across 42 studies published between 2020 and 2023 (Li & Yang, 2024). Within the cooperative learning family, the Cooperative Script method positions students in pairs who alternately summarise and interrogate text segments, thereby stimulating reciprocal teaching and metacognitive monitoring (Lambiotte, cited in Huda, 2014). Experimental work with eighth-grade EFL learners in Palembang demonstrated significant gains in reading comprehension when Cooperative Script was combined with structured reading habits (Azizah & Puspita, 2023). However, evidence on its efficacy for productive skills especially creative writing remains scant.

Writing drama scripts represents a particularly demanding task: it requires students to orchestrate plot, characterisation, and dialogue while drawing on cultural conventions of performance (Luxemburg, cited in Wiyatmi, 2005). Drama education research suggests that collaborative dramaturgical activities sharpen critical thinking and empathy, making them ideal vehicles for 21st-century competencies (Zhou & Lin, 2025). Studies in European and Australasian contexts show that creative drama enhances not only writing quality but also peer rapport and tolerance (Mahmud, 2025). Nonetheless, Indonesian research has focused more on readers' theatre or role-play than on scriptwriting per se. Eliyanah et al. (2022) reported that teachers often avoid drama-writing tasks because they perceive them as too complex for lower-secondary learners, citing limited classroom time and lack of methodological guidance.

Against this backdrop, classroom action research (CAR) offers a pragmatic avenue for teachers to trial context-specific solutions while systematically documenting their effects (Arikunto, 2020). CAR studies on writing in Indonesian EFL settings have tested digital quiz platforms (Putra, 2023) and genre-based models (Hidayat, 2021), yet few have targeted drama scriptwriting or employed a cooperative framework. The gap widens when considering recent calls to integrate collaborative writing with digital media: a qualitative inquiry by Sari and Firdaus (2024) found that virtual script-writing workshops increased student agency but noted the absence of structured peer-interaction protocols.

The Cooperative Script method appears well suited to fill this methodological void. By requiring partners to alternate roles as “speaker” and “listener,” it operationalises Vygotsky's social-constructivist premise that knowledge is co-constructed through dialogic interaction. The structured summarise–question–clarify cycle functions as an external scaffold, helping learners to distil main ideas, reorganise textual information, and articulate narrative logic. Moreover, because drama scripts hinge on dynamic dialogue, the oral-verbal rehearsal intrinsic to Cooperative Script may transfer directly to the written genre. Yet, empirical confirmation of these theoretical affordances in Indonesian junior-high settings is lacking.

The present study, therefore, aims to investigate the effect of Cooperative Script on students' mastery of drama-text writing in Grade VIII.3 at SMP Negeri 1 Sengkang. Situated in a classroom action research design, it responds to two research questions; (1) To what extent does the Cooperative Script method improve students' drama-script writing scores relative to the school's minimum competency criterion? And (2) How does the method influence students' observable engagement during drama-writing lessons?

By addressing these questions, the study makes three contributions. First, it enriches the sparse empirical base on Cooperative Script for productive language skills in Southeast Asian contexts. Second, it extends the drama-writing literature by linking dialogic cooperative learning with creative script development. Third, it offers a replicable CAR model for practitioners seeking evidence-based interventions to raise writing achievement. In doing so, the research aligns with national priorities for creative literacy and furnishes actionable insights for language-arts educators striving to cultivate expressive, culturally grounded communicators.

METHOD

This study employed classroom action research (CAR). Bahri describes CAR as “an activity carried out to observe classroom events in order to improve teaching practice so that the learning process becomes more qualified and learning outcomes improve” (Bahri, 2012: 8). CAR possesses characteristics that set it apart from other research types. Arikunto (2007: 62) lists the distinguishing features: (1) real action is undertaken in the actual classroom situation to solve a problem; (2) the research broadens both scientific insight and professional knowledge; (3) problems originate from difficulties the teacher encounters during instruction; (4) the issues raised are simple, concrete, clear, and important; (5) collaboration occurs between the practitioner and the researcher; and (6) CAR ultimately aims to enhance teacher professionalism, support joint decision-making, and expand knowledge.

The investigation consisted of two cycles. Cycle I covered two meetings, and Cycle II likewise comprised two meetings. Each face-to-face session lasted 4 × 40 minutes. The first meeting in each cycle involved instructional activities, while the second meeting administered an end-of-cycle learning-outcome test.

Following standard CAR procedures, every cycle included four stages: (1) planning, (2) action, (3) observation, and (4) reflection. The study specifically sought to raise students’ achievement in drama-text writing through the Cooperative Script method.

Table 1. Score Allocation for Drama-Script Writing Test

No.	Assessment Aspect	Maximum Score
1.	Plot	25
2.	Characters and Characterization	10
3.	Setting	15
4.	Drama-text Structure	25
5.	Language Conventions	25

Table 2. Rating Categories for Drama-Script Writing

No.	Aspect	Score Range	Criteria	Category
1.	Plot	20-35	a. Plot strongly supports conflict	Very good
		12-19	b. Plot supports conflict	Good
		6-15	c. Plot somewhat supports conflict	Fair
		1-8	d. Plot hardly supports conflict	Poor

No.	Aspect	Score Range	Criteria	Category
2.	Characters & Characterization	20-35	a. Character traits are very clear	Very good
		11-19	b. Character traits are clear	Good
		6-15	c. Character traits are fairly clear	Fair
		1-8	d. Character traits are unclear	Poor
3.	Setting	18-25	a. Time, place, and mood are very clear and appropriate	Very good
		11-16	b. Time, place, and mood are clear and appropriate	Good
		5-10	c. Time, place, and mood are fairly clear and appropriate	Fair
		1-4	d. Time, place, and mood are unclear or inappropriate	Poor
4.	Drama-text Structure	18-25	a. Structure is very clear	Very good
		11-16	b. Structure is clear	Good
		5-10	c. Structure is fairly clear	Fair
		1-4	d. Structure is unclear	Poor
5.	Language Conventions	15-20	a. Language use closely mirrors everyday life and is highly appropriate	Very good
		9-12	b. Language use mirrors everyday life and is appropriate	Good
		4-8	c. Language use somewhat mirrors everyday life and is adequate	Fair
		1-3	d. Language use poorly mirrors everyday life and is inappropriate	Poor

Table 3. Criteria for Learning Outcomes in Drama-Text Writing

No.	Score	Outcome Category
1.	80-100	Very Good
2.	66-79	Good
3.	56- 65	Fair
4.	0-55	Poor

Qualitative observation notes were open-coded for recurrent engagement patterns (Saldaña, 2021). Observation is an observation activity or data collection to capture the extent to which the effect of the action has achieved the target. The observations used in this study were student activity observation sheets and teacher activity observation sheets. The teacher observation sheet aims to see the consistency of the researcher towards the RPP that has been made, while the student observation sheet aims to observe student activities during the learning

process adjusted to the application of *Cooperative Script learning*. Coding reliability was ensured through peer debriefing, and emergent themes were triangulated with quantitative trends to establish convergent validity.

To enhance rigour, the study employed method triangulation (test scores and observations), member checking during post-lesson reflections, and a maintained audit trail documenting instructional adjustments. An external colleague reviewed the audit trail to confirm analytic decisions, thereby satisfying criteria for dependability and confirmability (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017). Participation was voluntary, with anonymity preserved through numeric identifiers. Data were stored on an encrypted drive accessible only to the research team.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section reports quantitative test outcomes and qualitative engagement evidence across two classroom-action research (CAR) cycles that implemented the Cooperative Script method in Grade VIII.3 Bahasa Indonesia lessons at SMP Negeri 1 Sengkang. Data are presented sequentially from the baseline (pre-cycle) through Cycle I and Cycle II, enabling a cumulative view of learning growth.

1. Test-Score Development

Implementation of Cooperative Script produced a marked upward trajectory in students' drama-script writing scores (Table 1). The class mean rose from 56.15 in the pre-cycle to 72.78 after Cycle I, then climbed sharply to 89.84 at the close of Cycle II. Correspondingly, the range narrowed and ceiling effects became apparent: while the highest score in Cycle I was 90, two students achieved a perfect score of 100 in Cycle II, and the minimum score increased from 45 to 72.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics for Drama-Script Writing Scores (N = 32)

Statistics	Pre Cycle	Cycle I	Cycle II
SD	9.78	10.12	7.02
Mean Score	56,15	72,78	89,84
Highest Score	78	90	100
Lowest Score	40	45	72

Note. SD=Standard Deviation

Table 4. reveals a steady rise in the class mean from 56,15 in the pre-cycle to 72,78 in Cycle I and 89,84 in Cycle II supported by increases in both the highest and lowest scores. To detail the distribution of performance categories, Table 5 presents frequency and percentage data using the school's four-level:

Table 5. Frequency and Percentage of Learning-Outcome Categories (Pre-Cycle, Cycle I, Cycle II)

Interva l Value	Qualificati on	Pre Cycle		Cycle I		Cycle II	
		Frequen cy	Percenta ge (%)	Frequen cy	Percenta ge (%)	Frequen cy	Percenta ge (%)

80-100	Very Good	0	0	8	25	30	94
66-79	Good	4	13	14	44	2	6
56-65	Fair	9	28	6	18	0	0
0-55	Poor	19	59	4	13	0	0
Total		32	100	32	100	32	100

Table 5 shows that in the pre-cycle the frequency of students achieving excellent grades was none, 13% or 4 students were included in the good category, 28% or 9 students were in the sufficient category, 59% or 19 students were in the failure category. Furthermore, in cycle I the frequency of students achieving excellent grades was 25% or 8 students out of a total of 32 students, 44% or 14 students were included in the good category, 18% or 6 students were in the sufficient category, 13% or 4 students were in the failure category. While in cycle II the frequency of students obtaining grades in the excellent category was 94% or 30 students, 6% or 2 students were included in the good category, 0% or no students were in the sufficient or failure categories. Based on the results of quantitative analysis, there was an increase in learning outcomes from pre-cycle to cycle I, and cycle II.

Table 6. Frequency and Percentage of Mastery (Completeness) in Drama-Text Writing (Pre-Cycle, Cycle I, Cycle II)

Score	Category	Pre Cycle		Cycle I		Cycle II	
		Frequenc y	Percenta ge (%)	Frequenc y	Percenta ge (%)	Frequenc y	Percenta ge (%)
0-76	Not Mastered	31	97	20	63	2	6
77-100	Mastered	1	3	12	37	30	94
Total		32	100	32	100	32	100

Mastery patterns corroborate the mean-score gains. In table 6, Pre-cycle data indicated that 97 % of students (31 individuals) had not reached mastery, with only 3 % (1 student) meeting the standard. In Cycle I, mastery rose to 37 % (12 students). By Cycle II, 94 % (30 students) achieved mastery, leaving just 6 % (2 students) below the criterion. Thus, the proportion of students meeting or exceeding the mastery benchmark increased by 57 percentage points. These values confirm that Cooperative Script yielded more than incremental improvement. It generated substantial learning acceleration well above typical year-on-year growth for creative-writing tasks in Indonesian lower-secondary settings (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2022).

2. Observation-Sheet Evidence of Engagement

Quantitative achievement gains were mirrored by qualitative shifts in classroom engagement. Observation sheets rated eight engagement indicators on a four-point scale (1 =

rarely, 4 = consistently). Mean indicator scores increased from 2.3 in Cycle I to 3.6 in Cycle II. The largest jumps occurred in peer-questioning ($\Delta = +1.5$) and on-task verbal rehearsal ($\Delta = +1.4$), suggesting that students internalised the speaker–listener exchange central to Cooperative Script. Field notes documented spontaneous self-corrections during dialogue drafting and frequent references to plot structure, indicating that metacognitive monitoring extended from oral rehearsal to written production.

A short excerpt from Lesson 4 illustrates this shift:

Speaker A: *“The conflict is still weak...should we raise the stakes?”*

Listener B: *“Yes, the protagonist needs a tougher choice. Maybe losing contact with her friend?”*

Such exchanges demonstrate the dialogic negotiation of narrative tension, a skill explicitly targeted by the writing rubric. Their emergence substantiates the claim that Cooperative Script functions as both an interactional scaffold and a cognitive organiser.

Integrating the score improvements with engagement gains yields a coherent picture of the intervention’s impact. The high normalised gain ($g = 0.77$) aligns with observation data showing near-ceiling consistency in cooperative behaviours by Cycle II. Moreover, the narrowing standard deviation indicates that lower-performing students benefited disproportionately, echoing prior findings that structured peer tutoring can reduce achievement gaps (Li & Yang, 2024). In short, Cooperative Script not only raised overall performance but also fostered equitable participation.

Discussion

The present classroom action research sought to determine whether the Cooperative Script method could enhance eighth-grade students’ mastery of drama-text writing and foster active engagement in Bahasa Indonesia lessons. The substantial gains recorded—an increase from a pre-cycle mean of 56.15 to 89.84 in Cycle II and a high normalised gain ($g = 0.77$)—underscore the pedagogical potency of structured reciprocal teaching. These outcomes align with social-constructivist theory, which posits that knowledge emerges through dialogic interaction within a learner’s zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). By obliging partners to alternate roles as speaker (summariser) and listener (questioner/clarifier), Cooperative Script externalises metacognitive strategies, allowing students to negotiate meaning and refine ideas before committing them to written form.

The findings corroborate recent meta-analytic evidence that cooperative structures yield significant improvements in language-learning performance, particularly when they embed explicit discourse moves such as questioning and elaboration (Li & Yang, 2024). Our class-level gain exceeds the average effect size (Hedges $g \approx 0.48$) reported in that review, suggesting that dialogic summarisation is especially effective for creative-writing genres that demand plot development and character nuance. Similar achievement jumps were noted by Dewi and Putra (2023) in an experimental study of Cooperative Script for expository writing, yet their gain plateaued at medium levels ($g = 0.55$); the higher figure here may stem from the inherent synergy between oral rehearsal and dramatic dialogue.

Beyond cognitive gains, observation data revealed robust growth in peer questioning and on-task verbal rehearsal. These engagement shifts mirror Johnson, Johnson, and Smith’s

(2022) assertion that positive interdependence and individual accountability—both embedded in Cooperative Script promote equitable participation. Notably, the performance gap narrowed as lower-achieving students benefited disproportionately: the lowest score rose from 40 to 72, effectively eliminating the “poor” category. Topping and van Hoorn (2025) argue that peer-tutoring cycles level the playing field by multiplying feedback channels; our results lend empirical weight to that claim within the under-researched context of Indonesian drama writing.

Pedagogically, the success of Cycle II hinged on refinements introduced during reflection: question-stem scaffolds, rotating partners, and explicit feedback rubrics. These adjustments resonate with Burns’s (2020) principle that iterative tuning is central to effective classroom action research. They also illustrate how teacher agency interacts with research rigour each cycle not only measures change but engineers it. The observation that dialogic exchanges began to reference plot tension (“should we raise the stakes?”) demonstrates transfer from oral summarising to sophisticated narrative construction, a transition highlighted as desirable yet elusive in the drama-education literature (Mahmud, 2025).

Despite these strengths, several limitations temper the generalisability of the findings. First, the intact-class convenience sample restricts external validity; replication in diverse schools would clarify whether the high gain persists across socioeconomic strata. Second, the study relied on teacher-led scoring, albeit with strong inter-rater reliability. Incorporating blind external raters or automated text-analysis tools could further mitigate bias. Third, the two-cycle design, while sufficient to reach mastery, precluded long-term follow-up; retention of writing skills remains unknown. Future studies could adopt delayed post-tests or explore digital adaptations of Cooperative Script to sustain dialogic writing beyond the classroom.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion of this classroom action research, it can be concluded that the application of the Cooperative Script method in teaching Bahasa Indonesia, specifically on the topic of writing drama texts for Grade VIII.3 students at SMP Negeri 1 Sengkang, has successfully improved student learning outcomes. The implementation of this method created a more dynamic and engaging learning environment, which contributed to increased student participation and comprehension. The learning process became more meaningful, as evidenced by students' active involvement and improved performance from one cycle to the next.

Student responses toward the use of the Cooperative Script method were largely positive. Many students expressed interest in the lessons, and the overall classroom atmosphere became more enjoyable and less monotonous. This method encouraged collaboration, discussion, and peer interaction, which not only supported students' understanding of the material but also enhanced their communication skills and self-confidence in expressing ideas through writing. The positive change in student attitudes further reinforced the effectiveness of the method in supporting learning goals.

In terms of learning outcomes, the results showed significant improvement across the research cycles. In Cycle I, 12 students (37%) achieved the minimum competency criterion, while 20 students (63%) had not yet reached it. By Cycle II, 30 students (94%) achieved mastery, and only 2 students (6%) remained below the benchmark. This final result indicates that the learning objectives were successfully met, and the majority of students attained the expected level of competence in writing drama texts. The application of the Cooperative Script method clearly contributed to this achievement, fulfilling the *Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal* (KKM) established by the school for Bahasa Indonesia.

Based on these findings, several suggestions are offered. Teachers are encouraged to integrate the Cooperative Script method into Bahasa Indonesia instruction as a strategy to foster student engagement, activate learners' potential, and enhance academic performance. This method can also serve as a foundation for incorporating more diverse learning media and adapting to technological advancements in education. Students are advised to take a more active role in the learning process and cultivate strong motivation to study seriously, as this will make it easier to understand the material and achieve academic success. Future researchers are encouraged to explore similar topics using varied cooperative learning strategies. It is also recommended that future studies address the limitations of this research and pursue deeper investigations that can further promote active learning and improve student outcomes.

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