



# Animation Movies as Multimodal Input for Improving EFL Students' Narrative Writing Skills

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## Animation Movies as Multimodal Input for Improving EFL Students' Narrative Writing Skills

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## ABSTRACT

**Background.** Narrative writing remains a challenging skill for many EFL students because it requires the ability to generate ideas, organize story events, select appropriate vocabulary, apply grammatical structures, and construct coherent texts. In vocational secondary school contexts, students often experience difficulty transforming ideas into well-structured English narratives due to limited vocabulary, weak sentence construction, and low writing motivation. Animation movies offer multimodal input through visual, auditory, and narrative elements that may support students in understanding story structure and developing written texts.

**Purpose.** This study aimed to improve eleventh-grade students' narrative writing skills through the integration of animation movies as multimodal input in an EFL writing classroom.

**Methods.** The study employed classroom action research based on Kurt Lewin's model, consisting of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The participants were 21 students of class XI TKJ at SMKN 05 Enrekang, Indonesia. Data were collected through writing tests, classroom observations, questionnaires, and teacher interviews. Quantitative data were analyzed using mean scores and mastery percentages, while qualitative data were interpreted descriptively to examine students' engagement and classroom responses.

**Results.** The findings showed a gradual improvement in students' narrative writing performance across the research cycles. The mean score increased from 66.19 in the pre-test to 72.57 in post-test 1 and 77.90 in post-test 2. The percentage of students who achieved the Minimum Mastery Criterion also increased from 28.57% in the pre-test to 47.61% in post-test 1 and 76.19% in post-test 2. Qualitative findings indicated that animation movies helped students generate ideas, identify characters, organize story sequences, understand conflicts and resolutions, and participate more actively in writing activities.

**Conclusion.** Animation movies can serve as effective multimodal input for enhancing EFL students' narrative writing skills. Their effectiveness is stronger when supported by teacher scaffolding, vocabulary guidance, story mapping, and structured writing activities.

## KEYWORDS

Animation movies; EFL writing; multimodal input; narrative text; classroom action research

## INTRODUCTION

Writing is widely recognized as one of the most complex skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning because it requires learners to transform ideas into organized, meaningful, and linguistically acceptable written texts. Unlike receptive skills, writing involves cognitive planning, linguistic selection, genre awareness, text organization, revision, and sensitivity to audience and purpose (Hyland, 2019; Graham, 2019; Graham & Harris, 2018). For secondary school EFL learners, these demands are often intensified by limited vocabulary, weak grammatical control, insufficient exposure to model texts, and low confidence in expressing ideas in English (Teng & Huang, 2019; Bai & Guo, 2021). In many EFL classrooms, students may understand the general topic of writing but still experience difficulty in developing ideas, arranging events, using appropriate tenses, and producing coherent paragraphs (Falihah et al., 2022; Herman et al., 2020). Recent studies in Indonesian EFL contexts also suggest that students' writing development can be supported when instruction provides structured tasks, collaborative engagement, peer feedback, and technology-mediated writing experiences (Ismail, 2025; Jabri et al., 2026). These challenges indicate that writing instruction needs not only linguistic explanation but also meaningful input that can help learners generate, organize, revise, and elaborate ideas before producing written texts.

Narrative writing is particularly important in EFL instruction because it enables students to construct stories, sequence events, introduce characters, develop conflicts, and formulate resolutions. As a genre, narrative text requires learners to understand both

schematic structure and language features, including orientation, complication, resolution, past-tense verbs, temporal connectors, descriptive expressions, and cohesive devices (Hyland, 2019; Han & Hiver, 2018). Although narrative text is often considered familiar and engaging for students, writing a narrative in English remains demanding because learners must connect imagination with linguistic accuracy and textual coherence (Herman et al., 2020; Graham, 2019). Students who lack ideas tend to produce short and fragmented texts, while students with limited vocabulary and grammar often struggle to convert their imagined stories into readable English paragraphs (Falihah et al., 2022; Teng & Huang, 2019). In a related Indonesian EFL classroom study, project-based learning was found to support students' English narrative writing skills by strengthening organization, grammar, word choice, and classroom engagement (Ismail, 2023). Similarly, collaborative story construction through the Exquisite Corpse game improved EFL students' narrative writing performance, particularly in coherence, plot unity, creativity, and narrative awareness (Asbar et al., 2026). Hence, narrative writing instruction should provide learners with accessible story models, visual cues, collaborative opportunities, and structured pathways to transform ideas into written production.

The increasing use of multimodal resources in language classrooms offers a relevant pedagogical response to these difficulties. Multimodal learning emphasizes the use of more than one semiotic mode, such as image, sound, movement, spoken language, written text, gesture, and spatial arrangement, to support meaning-making (Kress, 2010; Jewitt et al., 2016). From the perspective

of multimedia learning, students may understand and remember information more effectively when verbal and visual information are meaningfully integrated rather than presented through verbal explanation alone (Paivio, 1990; Mayer, 2021; Mayer & Fiorella, 2021). In second language acquisition, multimodal input has also been viewed as valuable because it provides learners with contextualized language exposure supported by visual and auditory information (Montero Perez, 2020; Peters & Webb, 2018). Evidence from multimedia-based language learning also shows that multimedia presentations can enhance linguistic and digital literacy, increase engagement, and encourage collaboration when supported by an appropriate pedagogical framework (Mustakim et al., 2024). For EFL writing, such input can help learners notice story events, identify character actions, understand setting, infer conflict, retain vocabulary, and develop ideas that may later be used in writing (Damanik & Katemba, 2021; Montero Perez, 2020).

Animation movies represent one form of multimodal input that is pedagogically promising for narrative writing instruction. They combine moving images, sound, dialogue, character expressions, plot development, and visual representation of events, thereby making stories more concrete and memorable for learners. Compared with printed narrative texts alone, animation movies may reduce the burden of idea generation because students can observe characters, actions, settings, and conflicts directly before composing their own narrative texts. Several empirical studies have shown that animation videos or movies can support students' writing performance and classroom engagement. Sari et al. (2021) reported that short-animation videos contributed

positively to secondary EFL learners' narrative writing achievement. Pangaribuan and Prayuda (2021) found that animation movies improved students' narrative writing scores and encouraged more active classroom participation. Pongsapan and Patak (2021) also demonstrated that movie trailer media supported improvement in content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics in narrative writing. Similarly, Siahaan et al. (2022) indicated that animated movie media produced better outcomes than textbook-based teaching in narrative writing instruction. These findings are consistent with studies showing that visual and audiovisual media can increase learners' interest, support vocabulary learning, and make writing activities more engaging (Silalahi & Sari, 2021; Damanik & Katemba, 2021). They also resonate with recent EFL writing studies indicating that meaningful media, digital tools, and collaborative writing tasks can enhance students' motivation, creativity, multimodal expression, and writing quality when integrated with clear instructional design (Ismail, 2025; Mustakim et al., 2024).

Despite these contributions, further classroom-based investigation is still needed, especially in Indonesian vocational EFL contexts where students often have varied English proficiency and limited confidence in writing. Previous studies have frequently emphasized the statistical effect of animation or video media on writing scores, but fewer studies have examined how animation movies function as multimodal input within a cyclical classroom action process that includes planning, implementation, observation, reflection, and instructional revision. In addition, many studies report improvement in writing achievement

but provide limited attention to how students' difficulties in idea generation, story organization, and classroom motivation are addressed through the integration of animation movies. This gap is important because writing improvement in EFL classrooms does not occur merely through exposure to attractive media; it requires pedagogically guided use of media, writing prompts, teacher scaffolding, revision, and reflection (Graham, 2019; Hyland, 2019; Han & Hiver, 2018; Teng & Huang, 2019). This argument is supported by studies showing that students' revision skills and writing quality improve when feedback, engagement, and digital literacy are pedagogically mediated rather than treated as isolated technical supports (Jabri et al., 2026). In narrative writing contexts, structured and collaborative story-based instruction has also been shown to strengthen students' ability to negotiate ideas, organize plots, and develop more coherent narratives (Asbar et al., 2026; Ismail, 2023).

The present study was conducted in response to students' difficulties in writing narrative texts at SMKN 05 Enrekang, particularly their lack of ideas, slow sentence construction, limited enthusiasm, and difficulty organizing stories in English. The study integrated animation movies as multimodal input to support students before and during narrative writing activities. Through classroom action research, the study sought to examine how animation movies could improve students' narrative writing skills and how students responded to the use of animation movies in the writing classroom. The focus of this study is not merely on whether students' scores increased, but also on how multimodal story input helped students generate ideas, understand story sequence, organize

narrative elements, and participate more actively in writing instruction. Accordingly, this study contributes to EFL writing pedagogy by offering classroom-based evidence on the use of animation movies as multimodal input for improving narrative writing skills among vocational secondary school students.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **EFL Narrative Writing**

Writing in an EFL context is not merely the ability to arrange words into sentences, but a complex literacy practice that requires the integration of cognitive, linguistic, rhetorical, and social competencies. Students need to plan ideas, select appropriate vocabulary, apply grammatical rules, organize information, and revise their texts based on communicative purposes (Graham, 2019; Hyland, 2019). In second language writing, learners are also required to negotiate meaning across limited linguistic resources and genre expectations, which makes writing more demanding than simple language production (Hyland, 2019; Teng & Huang, 2019). This complexity explains why many EFL students can understand a topic orally but still struggle when asked to express it in written form.

Narrative writing is one of the important genres taught in secondary EFL classrooms because it trains students to construct a story through characters, setting, conflict, sequence of events, and resolution. A narrative text commonly requires schematic organization, including orientation, complication, and resolution, supported by language features such as past-tense verbs, temporal conjunctions, action verbs, descriptive words, and cohesive devices (Hyland, 2019; Han & Hiver, 2018). Through narrative writing, students learn not only to retell events but also to organize experience, imagination, and moral meaning into a coherent written text. However, this genre can be difficult for EFL learners because it requires them to combine imagination with textual structure and linguistic accuracy (Falihah et al., 2022; Herman et al., 2020).

Previous studies indicate that students' difficulties in narrative writing are commonly related to limited vocabulary, weak grammar mastery, lack of ideas, difficulty arranging events, and low confidence in writing English sentences (Falihah et al., 2022; Teng & Huang, 2019). These problems are pedagogically significant because narrative writing depends heavily on idea development and chronological organization. When students lack story input, they may produce short, fragmented, and repetitive texts. When they lack vocabulary and grammatical control, they may have ideas but fail to express them accurately. Writing instruction, therefore, needs to provide structured support that helps students move from idea generation to text construction (Graham & Harris, 2018; Graham, 2019).

Genre-based writing instruction has been considered useful in helping EFL learners understand the purpose, structure, and language features of a text. Han and Hiver (2018) explain that genre-based instruction can influence learners' writing development because it provides explicit attention to textual organization and writing-specific psychological factors. In narrative writing, this means that students need exposure to model stories, guided analysis of narrative elements, and opportunities to reconstruct stories using their own language. However, genre instruction should not rely only on teacher explanation or textbook examples. It needs to be supported by meaningful input that can stimulate students' imagination, reduce idea-generation problems, and provide concrete models of narrative events.

### **Multimodal Input in Language Learning**

Multimodal input refers to learning input presented through more than one mode of meaning-making, such as visual images, spoken language, written text, sound, gesture, movement, color, and spatial arrangement. From a social semiotic perspective, communication is not limited to verbal language; meaning is produced through the interaction of multiple semiotic resources (Kress, 2010; Jewitt et al., 2016). In contemporary classrooms, this

perspective is particularly relevant because students increasingly encounter knowledge through digital, visual, and audiovisual forms. Language learning, therefore, can be enriched when learners are exposed to input that combines linguistic and non-linguistic modes.

The cognitive theory of multimedia learning also supports the pedagogical value of multimodal input. Mayer (2021) argues that learners can process information more effectively when words and pictures are meaningfully integrated, provided that the multimedia material is well designed and not cognitively overloaded. In EFL learning, visual and auditory information can help learners connect language forms with concrete contexts, actions, emotions, and events. This is important for writing because students often need contextual support before they are able to generate and organize ideas. Multimodal input can function as a bridge between comprehension and production, helping students observe meaning before transforming it into written language.

Research in second language acquisition has also shown that multimodal input can support language learning by providing contextualized exposure to linguistic forms. Montero Perez (2020) highlights that multimodal input has become an important area in SLA research because learners can draw on visual, auditory, and textual cues when processing language. Similarly, Peters and Webb (2018) found that audiovisual viewing can contribute to incidental vocabulary learning, especially when learners encounter words in meaningful contexts. These findings suggest that audiovisual materials may help EFL students notice vocabulary, expressions, actions, and narrative sequences that can later support their writing.

For writing instruction, multimodal input is valuable because writing does not begin only when students put words on paper. It begins with noticing, interpreting, selecting, and organizing information. When students watch a story through animation, they do not receive abstract explanation only; they

observe characters, settings, conflicts, emotions, and resolutions. These elements can help students build mental representations of the story before writing. In this sense, multimodal input supports pre-writing activities by providing concrete narrative content, visual memory, and vocabulary triggers. It can also reduce students' anxiety because they are not asked to write from an empty idea space.

### **Animation Movies as Media for Narrative Writing**

Animation movies are highly relevant to narrative writing because they naturally present stories through visual movement, sound, dialogue, characters, conflict, and resolution. Unlike static pictures, animation movies show the development of events across time. Unlike written texts alone, they provide visual and auditory cues that can help students understand narrative meaning even when their English proficiency is limited. This makes animation movies potentially useful as multimodal input for EFL students who struggle to generate ideas and organize narrative texts.

Several empirical studies support the use of animation movies or audiovisual media in writing instruction. Martono et al. (2014) found that animation movies improved students' narrative writing skills and classroom situation by helping students organize ideas, use appropriate vocabulary, construct more grammatical sentences, and apply mechanics more accurately. Pangaribuan and Prayuda (2021) reported that animation movies improved students' writing scores in narrative texts and made students more active and enthusiastic during learning. Pongsapan and Patak (2021) found that movie trailer media significantly improved students' writing components, including content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. Siahaan et al. (2022) also showed that animated movie media produced better narrative writing outcomes than textbook-based instruction.

The pedagogical strength of animation movies lies in their capacity to support both cognitive and affective dimensions of

writing. Cognitively, animation movies provide students with storylines that can guide the organization of narrative texts. Students can identify who the characters are, where the story happens, what problem occurs, and how the problem is solved. These elements correspond to the generic structure of narrative text. Animation movies also expose students to repeated actions, descriptive scenes, and expressions that may help them develop vocabulary and sentence content. Affectively, animation movies can increase interest and reduce boredom because students experience writing as a response to a meaningful story rather than as a mechanical grammar task (Damanik & Katemba, 2021; Silalahi & Sari, 2021).

However, animation movies should not be treated as automatically effective media. Their effectiveness depends on instructional design, teacher guidance, movie selection, task clarity, and follow-up writing activities. Mayer's (2021) multimedia learning theory reminds teachers that multimedia materials need to be selected and organized carefully so that students can process the information effectively. If the movie is too long, too linguistically complex, or unrelated to the writing task, students may become passive viewers rather than active writers. For that reason, animation movies should be integrated with pre-viewing, while-viewing, and post-viewing activities. Students need guiding questions, vocabulary support, story mapping, and writing prompts so that the movie functions as input for writing production.

In narrative writing instruction, animation movies can be used through several pedagogical stages. Before viewing, the teacher may introduce key vocabulary, characters, and the purpose of the writing task. During viewing, students may be asked to note important events, character actions, setting, conflict, and resolution. After viewing, students may reconstruct the story using their own words, organize the story according to narrative structure, and revise their writing based on feedback. Such stages align with process-oriented writing instruction because students move from

planning to drafting, revising, and producing a final text (Graham, 2019; Graham & Harris, 2018). They also align with genre-based pedagogy because students are guided to understand the structure and language features of narrative texts (Hyland, 2019; Han & Hiver, 2018).

### Synthesis and Research Position

The literature suggests that EFL narrative writing requires more than grammatical knowledge; it requires idea development, genre awareness, organization, vocabulary use, and motivation. Studies on writing instruction emphasize the need for explicit guidance, strategy-based learning, and meaningful practice (Graham, 2019; Hyland, 2019; Teng & Huang, 2019). Studies on multimodality and multimedia learning indicate that students may benefit from input that combines verbal, visual, and auditory modes (Kress, 2010; Jewitt et al., 2016; Mayer, 2021; Montero Perez, 2020). Meanwhile, empirical studies on animation movies and video-based media show positive effects on students' writing performance, classroom engagement, and ability to organize narrative ideas (Martono et al., 2014; Pangaribuan & Prayuda, 2021; Pongsapan & Patak, 2021; Siahaan et al., 2022).

Based on these perspectives, animation movies can be positioned not merely as entertainment or supplementary classroom media, but as multimodal input that supports the process of narrative writing. Their contribution is particularly relevant for EFL students who have difficulty generating ideas, sequencing events, and expressing stories in English. By providing concrete story models, animation movies can help students connect visual imagination with written production. The present study, therefore, examines the integration of animation movies in a classroom action research framework to improve EFL students' narrative writing skills. This study contributes to the discussion by showing how animation movies can be pedagogically organized as writing input, how students' writing performance changes across cycles, and how students respond to the use of

audiovisual story media in an Indonesian vocational secondary school context.

## METHOD

### Research Design

This study employed classroom action research (CAR) to improve EFL students' narrative writing skills through the integration of animation movies as multimodal input. Classroom action research was selected because the study aimed not only to describe students' writing problems but also to implement pedagogical actions, observe classroom changes, and reflect on the effectiveness of the intervention. The research followed Kurt Lewin's action research model, which consists of four cyclical stages: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. This model enabled the researcher to identify students' writing difficulties, design instructional actions, evaluate students' progress, and revise the teaching strategy in the following cycle.

The study was conducted in two cycles. Each cycle consisted of three meetings and was organized to provide students with repeated exposure to animation movies, guided narrative writing practice, teacher feedback, and reflection. Cycle 1 focused on introducing narrative text, exposing students to animation movies, and guiding them to rewrite the story in their own words. Based on the reflection from Cycle 1, Cycle 2 included additional instructional support, particularly vocabulary assistance, the use of dictionaries, conjunctions, punctuation, and clearer guidance for organizing story events.

### Research Setting and Participants

The research was conducted at SMKN 05 Enrekang, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. The participants were 21 eleventh-grade students of class XI TKJ, consisting of 8 male and 13 female students. This class was selected because preliminary observation and teacher interviews indicated that the students experienced difficulties in writing narrative texts. The main problems included lack of ideas, limited ability to construct English sentences, difficulty organizing story

events, and low enthusiasm in writing activities.

### Instructional Procedure

The intervention used animation movies as multimodal input before students wrote narrative texts. The movies were selected because they presented clear storylines, characters, conflicts, settings, and resolutions that were relevant to narrative writing instruction. In each meeting, students watched an animation movie and then rewrote the story individually in the form of a narrative text. The teacher guided students to identify narrative elements, including orientation, complication, and resolution. Students were also encouraged to pay attention to character actions, time sequence, vocabulary, and moral values.

In Cycle 1, the animation movies used included *Little Mermaid*, *Rapunzel*, and *The Master Magician*. The reflection from this cycle showed that students were more enthusiastic, but some still struggled to organize ideas and manage writing time. Therefore, Cycle 2 provided more explicit support. Students were asked to bring dictionaries, note important vocabulary, and use conjunctions and punctuation more appropriately. The movies used in Cycle 2 included *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, and *Mirror of Matsuyama*.

### Research Instruments

Four instruments were used to collect data: writing tests, observation sheets, questionnaires, and interviews. The writing tests consisted of a pre-test, post-test 1, and post-test 2. The pre-test was used to identify students' initial narrative writing ability before the intervention, while post-test 1 and post-test 2 measured students' improvement after each cycle. Students' writing was assessed using five components: content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics.

Observation sheets were used to record students' participation, enthusiasm, attention, cooperation, and involvement during the teaching and learning process. Interviews were conducted with the English teacher before and after the intervention to

obtain information about students' writing problems and the teacher's response to the use of animation movies. A questionnaire was distributed after the implementation to identify students' perceptions of animation movies as media for learning narrative writing.

### Data Analysis

The study used both quantitative and qualitative data analysis. Quantitative data were obtained from students' writing test scores and questionnaire responses. The students' mean scores were calculated for the pre-test, post-test 1, and post-test 2. The percentage of students who achieved the Minimum Mastery Criterion was also calculated. The criterion of success was achieved when at least 75% of students obtained a score of 75 or above.

Qualitative data were obtained from classroom observations and teacher interviews. These data were analyzed descriptively to explain students' classroom engagement, learning motivation, writing behavior, and responses to the use of animation movies. To strengthen the validity of the findings, the study applied triangulation by comparing data from tests, observations, questionnaires, and interviews. The combination of these data sources enabled a more comprehensive understanding of how animation movies supported students' narrative writing development.

## RESULTS

This section presents the findings of the classroom action research on the use of animation movies as multimodal input for improving EFL students' narrative writing skills. The findings are organized into four parts: students' initial writing performance, improvement after Cycle 1, improvement after Cycle 2, and students' responses to the use of animation movies in narrative writing instruction.

### Students' Initial Narrative Writing Performance

Before the implementation of animation movies, a preliminary study was conducted through teacher interview and pre-test. The interview with the English teacher indicated that students experienced several difficulties in writing narrative texts. The most dominant problems were lack of ideas, difficulty constructing English sentences, limited vocabulary, and low motivation in writing activities. Students often stated that they did not know what to write, and they needed more concrete support before developing a story in English.

The pre-test confirmed these initial problems. Students were asked to write a narrative text based on a familiar story. The result showed that students' narrative writing ability was still below the expected criterion. The mean score of the pre-test was 66.19. Only 6 out of 21 students, or 28.57%, achieved the Minimum Mastery Criterion of 75, while 15 students, or 71.43%, did not reach the criterion. This finding indicated that most students had not yet demonstrated adequate ability in developing narrative texts, particularly in organizing ideas, using appropriate vocabulary, applying grammatical patterns, and maintaining writing mechanics.

### Improvement after Cycle 1

Cycle 1 was implemented in three meetings. In this cycle, animation movies were introduced as learning media to support students' narrative writing activities. Students watched animation movies, identified the storyline, and rewrote the story using their own words. The movies used in Cycle 1 included *Little Mermaid*, *Rapunzel*, and *The Master Magician*. The classroom activities focused on introducing the concept of narrative text, explaining its generic structure, and guiding students to produce a short narrative based on the movie they watched.

The observation results showed that students' enthusiasm increased when animation movies were introduced in the classroom. In the first meeting, students were still relatively passive during the explanation of narrative text. However, their attention improved when the movie was

played. Students became more interested because the story was presented visually and audio visually. They were able to observe the characters, events, setting, and conflict directly. This helped them understand the story more easily than when they only relied on written explanation.

Nevertheless, Cycle 1 also revealed several limitations. Some students still had difficulty organizing the story into a coherent narrative text. Although the movie helped them generate ideas, they were not yet fully able to transform those ideas into structured paragraphs. Some students also needed more vocabulary support and clearer guidance in using conjunctions, punctuation, and past-tense forms. These findings became the basis for instructional revision in Cycle 2.

The post-test 1 result showed an improvement compared with the pre-test. The mean score increased from 66.19 to 72.57. The number of students who achieved the Minimum Mastery Criterion increased from 6 students to 10 students. In percentage terms, the mastery level increased from 28.57% in the pre-test to 47.61% in post-test 1. The percentage of improvement from pre-test to post-test 1 was 9.63%. Although this result showed positive progress, the criterion of success had not yet been achieved because fewer than 75% of the students reached the minimum score. Therefore, the action was continued to Cycle 2.

### Improvement after Cycle 2

Cycle 2 was conducted as a response to the weaknesses identified in Cycle 1. The instructional activities were revised by providing more explicit support for vocabulary, story organization, conjunctions, punctuation, and sentence construction. Students were also asked to bring dictionaries and write important vocabulary while watching the movies. The animation movies used in this cycle included *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, and *Mirror of Matsuyama*.

The observation results indicated that students became more active and confident during Cycle 2. They were more prepared to follow the writing activities and showed

greater willingness to ask questions, take notes, and discuss story elements. The use of dictionaries also helped students translate ideas into English more effectively. Students paid closer attention to the sequence of events in the movie and were more capable of identifying the beginning, problem, and resolution of the story.

The improvement was also reflected in students' writing performance. The mean score increased from 72.57 in post-test 1 to 77.90 in post-test 2. The number of students who achieved the Minimum Mastery Criterion increased from 10 students in post-test 1 to 16 students in post-test 2. This means that 76.19% of the students reached the minimum score in Cycle 2. The percentage of improvement from pre-test to post-test 2 was 17.69%. Since more than 75% of the students achieved the minimum score, the criterion of success was fulfilled, and the classroom action research was stopped at the second cycle. The development of students' writing performance across the three tests is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Students' Narrative Writing Performance across the Tests

| Test Phase  | Mean Score | Students Achieving KKM | Percentage |
|-------------|------------|------------------------|------------|
| Pre-test    | 66.19      | 6 of 21                | 28.57%     |
| Post-test 1 | 72.57      | 10 of 21               | 47.61%     |
| Post-test 2 | 77.90      | 16 of 21               | 76.19%     |

The table shows a gradual improvement in students' narrative writing skills after the integration of animation movies. The increase was not only found in the mean scores but also in the number of students who achieved the Minimum Mastery Criterion. These findings suggest that animation movies helped students develop their narrative writing ability, especially by supporting idea generation, story sequencing, and engagement in writing activities.

### Students' Responses to Animation Movies

The questionnaire results showed that most students responded positively to the use of animation movies in narrative writing instruction. A total of 95.2% of students stated that they enjoyed learning narrative text through animation movies, while 76.2% stated that animation movies made narrative text more interesting. This indicates that the use of animation movies created a more engaging learning atmosphere and reduced students' boredom in writing activities.

The questionnaire also showed that animation movies supported students' idea development. A total of 95.2% of students agreed that watching animation movies helped them organize ideas in writing narrative texts, and 90.5% agreed that the audio and visual elements helped them express ideas in written form. In addition, 81% of students stated that animation movies improved their ability to write narrative texts, while 90.5% felt that watching animation movies helped them write narrative texts more easily.

Students also gave positive responses regarding motivation and suitability of the media. A total of 71.4% of students stated that animation movies increased their motivation to master narrative writing, 76.2% considered animation movies suitable for learning narrative text, and 85.7% viewed animation movies as a learning solution for writing narrative texts. These findings indicate that animation movies functioned not only as visual entertainment but also as meaningful learning input that supported students' writing readiness.

### Teacher's Reflection on the Use of Animation Movies

The post-interview with the English teacher supported the findings from the tests, observations, and questionnaire. The teacher stated that animation movies helped students become more enthusiastic in learning narrative writing. The teacher also observed that students were more interested because they did not have to imagine the story from nothing; instead, they could use the movie as a pre-writing aid.

Through the movie, students could see the characters, setting, actions, and storyline more clearly.

The teacher further explained that animation movies helped students express their ideas because the visual and auditory elements made the story more concrete. Students who previously struggled to generate ideas were able to write more because the movie provided a clear sequence of events. However, the teacher also noted several technical challenges, such as projector and speaker problems. In addition, some students were too focused on watching the movie and needed reminders to take notes on important vocabulary and story events.

Overall, the findings from the tests, classroom observations, questionnaire, and teacher interview consistently showed that the integration of animation movies improved students' narrative writing skills and classroom engagement. Animation movies helped students generate ideas, understand story structure, organize events, and participate more actively in the writing process. The improvement from pre-test to post-test 2 indicated that animation movies can be used as effective multimodal input for supporting EFL students' narrative writing development.

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study indicate that animation movies contributed positively to the improvement of EFL students' narrative writing skills. The students' mean score increased from 66.19 in the pre-test to 72.57 in post-test 1 and 77.90 in post-test 2. The percentage of students who achieved the Minimum Mastery Criterion also increased from 28.57% to 47.61% and finally to 76.19%. This gradual improvement suggests that animation movies were not only attractive classroom media but also functioned as meaningful multimodal input that supported students' ability to generate ideas, organize story events, and transform narrative content into written texts.

One important interpretation of this finding is that animation movies helped reduce students' difficulty in idea generation. Before

the intervention, students often struggled because they did not know what to write and found it difficult to imagine story events independently. After watching animation movies, students had clearer access to characters, settings, conflicts, actions, and resolutions. This supports the view that writing does not begin only with sentence production but also with the cognitive process of planning, selecting, and organizing ideas (Graham, 2019; Hyland, 2019). In this study, animation movies acted as pre-writing input that enabled students to build mental representations of the story before composing their own narrative texts. This finding is consistent with Pongsapan and Patak (2021), who found that movie-based media improved students' content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics in writing.

The improvement in students' narrative writing can also be explained through the concept of multimodal input. Animation movies combine moving images, sound, dialogue, facial expressions, gestures, setting, and storyline. These semiotic resources help students construct meaning through more than one mode (Kress, 2010; Jewitt et al., 2016). In EFL writing instruction, this is particularly useful because students may not fully understand a story when it is presented only through written explanation. Through animation movies, students could observe how events happened, how characters interacted, and how conflicts were resolved. The visual and auditory modes therefore supported students' comprehension of narrative structure and helped them convert story information into written form.

The findings are also aligned with the cognitive theory of multimedia learning. Mayer (2021) argues that learners can understand information more effectively when verbal and visual materials are meaningfully integrated. In this study, animation movies provided visual and auditory support that helped students process the narrative more concretely. Students did not only hear or read about the story; they saw the sequence of events and listened to the dialogue or narration. This

dual input may have strengthened students' memory of the story and helped them recall important details during writing. The questionnaire results support this interpretation, as most students reported that audio and visual elements helped them express ideas in writing. This finding also corresponds with Paivio's (1990) dual coding theory, which explains that information represented through both verbal and non-verbal systems can be more easily processed and retrieved.

The improvement from Cycle 1 to Cycle 2 further shows that animation movies become more effective when supported by explicit pedagogical scaffolding. In Cycle 1, students were more enthusiastic and had more ideas, but many still struggled to organize the story into coherent narrative paragraphs. This means that exposure to audiovisual media alone was not sufficient. Students still needed guidance in vocabulary, conjunctions, punctuation, sequencing, and the generic structure of narrative text. In Cycle 2, the teacher provided more explicit support by asking students to bring dictionaries, write important vocabulary, pay attention to story sequence, and use conjunctions and punctuation more carefully. The improvement in post-test 2 indicates that multimodal input works better when integrated with teacher scaffolding and process-oriented writing activities. This supports Graham and Harris (2018), who emphasize the importance of strategy instruction and guided writing processes in improving students' writing performance.

The results also confirm the relevance of genre-based writing instruction. Narrative writing requires students to understand orientation, complication, and resolution, as well as the use of past-tense verbs, temporal connectors, action verbs, and descriptive language (Hyland, 2019; Han & Hiver, 2018). Animation movies helped students identify these narrative elements in a concrete way. For example, the beginning of the movie helped students understand orientation, the central problem represented complication, and the ending of the movie represented resolution. This visual representation made

the generic structure of narrative text easier to understand. Students could then use the movie as a model for reconstructing the story in written form.

The affective dimension of the findings is also important. Observation and questionnaire data showed that students became more enthusiastic, more attentive, and more willing to participate in writing activities. This suggests that animation movies helped create a more engaging writing environment. Writing is often perceived by EFL learners as difficult and stressful because it requires accuracy and organization at the same time (Teng & Huang, 2019). However, when writing was connected to animation movies, students experienced the task as more meaningful and less abstract. This finding supports Damanik and Katemba (2021), who argue that digital audiovisual media can support EFL learning by increasing students' interest and exposure to language. It is also in line with Pangaribuan and Prayuda (2021), who found that animation movies improved students' narrative writing scores and classroom participation.

The findings of this study are consistent with several previous studies on animation movies and writing instruction. Martono et al. (2014) reported that animation movies improved students' narrative writing ability by supporting idea development and classroom engagement. Pangaribuan and Prayuda (2021) found that students' writing scores increased after they were taught narrative text through animation movies. Siahaan et al. (2022) showed that animated movie media produced better results than textbook-based media in teaching narrative writing. Similarly, Sari et al. (2021) demonstrated that short-animation videos supported EFL writing achievement in online learning contexts. The present study extends these findings by showing that animation movies can be positioned as multimodal input within a classroom action research cycle, where instructional reflection and revision play an important role in improving students' writing outcomes.

However, the findings also indicate that the use of animation movies has several pedagogical limitations. Some students still did not achieve the Minimum Mastery Criterion at the end of Cycle 2, which suggests that animation movies may not fully overcome all writing difficulties. Students with weak grammar, limited vocabulary, or low writing confidence may require additional individualized support. The teacher interview also indicated several technical challenges, such as projector and speaker problems. In addition, students may become passive viewers if the movie is not accompanied by clear writing tasks. This confirms Mayer's (2021) warning that multimedia materials must be carefully designed and guided to avoid distraction and cognitive overload.

Pedagogically, the study implies that animation movies should be used not merely as entertainment but as structured writing input. Teachers need to design pre-viewing, while-viewing, and post-viewing activities. Before watching, students should be introduced to key vocabulary, characters, and writing objectives. During watching, students should be guided to identify important events, character actions, setting, conflict, and resolution. After watching, students should be supported to develop outlines, draft narrative texts, revise their writing, and receive feedback. In this way, animation movies can become part of a systematic writing pedagogy rather than a supplementary classroom activity.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that animation movies can improve EFL students' narrative writing skills when they are integrated with explicit instruction, guided writing practice, and reflective classroom action. Animation movies provide multimodal story input that helps students generate ideas, understand narrative structure, enrich vocabulary, and increase writing motivation. The improvement across the two cycles shows that effective writing instruction requires both meaningful input and pedagogical scaffolding. This study therefore contributes to EFL writing pedagogy by showing how animation movies can be used as multimodal input to support

narrative writing development in a vocational secondary school context.

## CONCLUSION

This study examined the use of animation movies as multimodal input to improve EFL students' narrative writing skills. The findings show that animation movies contributed positively to students' writing development across the two cycles of classroom action research. Students' mean score increased from 66.19 in the pre-test to 72.57 in post-test 1 and 77.90 in post-test 2. The percentage of students who achieved the Minimum Mastery Criterion also improved from 28.57% before the intervention to 76.19% at the end of Cycle 2. These results indicate that the criterion of success was achieved.

The improvement occurred because animation movies provided students with concrete visual and auditory story input. Through characters, settings, actions, conflicts, and resolutions, students were able to generate ideas more easily and organize story events more coherently. The use of animation movies also increased students' interest, motivation, and classroom participation. However, the findings also indicate that animation movies need to be supported by clear instructional guidance, vocabulary support, writing prompts, and teacher feedback. Without such scaffolding, students may enjoy watching the movies but still struggle to transform the story into well-structured written texts.

Pedagogically, this study suggests that animation movies can be used as meaningful media in EFL narrative writing instruction, especially during pre-writing and drafting activities. Teachers may integrate animation movies through structured stages: introducing key vocabulary, guiding students to identify narrative elements, asking students to note important events, and helping them revise their writing. Future studies may involve larger samples, comparison groups, and longer intervention periods to examine the broader effectiveness of animation movies in EFL writing classrooms.

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### Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

### Author Contributions

Author contributions has been withheld for the purpose of maintaining reviewer anonymity and will be included in the supplementary title page.

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