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## **The Role of Life Maps in Writing Student Essays**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study aims to describe the students' ability in essays writing based on life maps. Students write their essays based on their interpretation of the life map. Students self-expressions, which are ideas, thoughts, feelings, imagination, and intuition are developed based on the life map that previously written. As a non-academic text, essays able to facilitate the writers' creativity in languages proficiency. Moreover, the Life Map is used as a tool to change the negative stigma, from a boring subject into a fun subject so that its role as a personality subject can be realized. The descriptive qualitative research method is used to achieve these objectives. The research subjects are 34 first-semester students of the Indonesian Language and Literature Education Program. Data in the form of language units in the essay are analyzed and interpreted for their role. While the reflective lectures journals are used as secondary data. The results showed that all students (100%) recognized the life map as a motivator for them to take Indonesian language courses. This finding is also strengthened by other evidence, which are the observation sheets that capture the students' responsive and creative attitude in creating life maps and transform them into an essay form. Student language creativity can be identified in the foreword words of the essays that usually consists of wisdom words of life values. These expressions mark the students' commitment to a meaningful life.

**Keywords:** Life maps, Student, Essay

### **INTRODUCTION**

Today the role of maps is very important in various fields of life. There are world maps, concept maps from Tony Buzan, digital maps Hati, Suprayogi & Sasmito (2013) and other maps. This study examines one map, which is a life map (Ibrahim, 2004). Ideally, life must be organized and well planned. The arrangement of the life plan is commonly called the life map. Analogous to the map of life, even writing activities, ideally an activity structuring ideas, feelings, dreams, imagination, and so on. With this analogy, this study seeks to examine the role of life maps in student writing activities, especially essay writing. Essay writing is one type of self-expression activities. This activity is relevant to Indonesian lecture material in Higher Education (Nurwardani et.al., 2006). Efforts to foster self-expression and academic abilities are carried out in a variety of ways, ranging from studying teaching materials Wardani (2018), learning media Suryaman (2010), to Student Learning Centers Rejeki et.al. (2018).

Why does writing an essay need to be facilitated with a life map? Any writing skills still need to be fought for up to now, because writing skills are still considered difficult (Kinkead & Ugan, 1984; Nofiyanti, Sukmawati & Zenab, 2018). Previous studies, life maps can improve the ability to write complex procedure text high school students (Maryam & Adawiyah, 2019). With this success, this study assumes that life maps can be empowered in essay writing activities. What is the role of life maps in student essay writing activities? That question is a problem in this study. Considering that in addition to being considered difficult, in general, Indonesian language learning is still considered boring (Ansoriyah & Rahmat, 2018). Therefore, this lecture writing must be able to change the paradigm from boring to fun.

A person to become skilled must be given hands-on experience and lots of practice. This is in line with the opinion of Sellers Napitupulu (2010) who states that creative writing exercises can help students develop writing habits and skills that ultimately produce good writing for each type of writing (genre). Indonesian teaching materials for Higher Education compiled are dominated by writing, academic and non-academic skills. If viewed in terms of difficulties, of course, the academic text is more difficult. Considering this study was conducted at the beginning of the semester, the first and second meetings of the lecture, it focuses on easier skills, namely writing essays as one type of non-academic text.

An essay is a short article that is compiled based on the view of the author so that it is subjective (Maryam, 2007). Furthermore, Maryam explained that in the essay, the writer was given the freedom to

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look at various aspects of his interest so that the unique form and content of the essay is very possible. The winning essay will depend on the creativity of the writers' language. In this study too, students are given freedom. To be able to express themselves, students previously compiled a life map.

To prepare a superior generation of Indonesia, this study seeks to facilitate students to reveal a life map that is the agenda of student life activities. The objectives of this study clearly describe the following points. a) match between the life map and the essay, b) the benefits of the essay for the reader. Both of these objectives were pursued in this study. As the Indonesian subject is known as one of the personality courses, essay writing in this study is also one of the achievements of lectures regarding attitudes and values, knowledge, general skills, and special skills (Suwandi, et.al., 2016).

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study used the descriptive qualitative method. The research subjects were students of the Indonesian Language and Literature Education Study Program Suryakencana University Semester I who contracted Indonesian subjects as many as 34 people. Relevant to the research objective, this research data is in the form of life maps and language units. The suitability between life maps and essays is determined based on a number of indicators, namely the ability to determine the number of targets, the elaboration of viewpoints, the development of essay content, experiences, ideas, feelings, imagination, and intuition.

After completion, students send it in the online version, which is published by WashApp Group employees. By publishing it in the application, students become motivated to finish it immediately. The essay described is obtained from the results of the Indonesian lecture. At the beginning of the lecture, after students learn about the Semester Lecture Plan, students are asked to draw up a life map. In the second meeting, students were asked to decipher life maps into essays. Each lecture is made a reflective journal which is also a logbook and observation sheet. The data processing is based on aspects that mark the suitability of the life map with the essay and the benefits for the reader.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### *Conformity between the Map of Life with Essays*

An important finding of this study was to obtain a student life map that facilitated essay writing. The assessment is based on the suitability of the life map with the essay. This is seen as very important in an essay (O'Shea, 2000). The following clearly presents one example of the compatibility between the essay and the life map.

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**Figure 1. Life Map**

(1) Hidup itu seperti sepeda. (2) Agar tetap seimbang, maka kau harus terus bergerak tidak hanya berbaring dan menuai mimpi-mimpi semu, tetapi harus bergerak maju, berusaha untuk mengejar cita dan harapan untuk masa depan kelak. (3) Mimpi masa depan yang bahagia adalah hal penting yang harus diwujudkan dalam hidup. (4) Untuk itu kita harus mempunyai keberanian untuk merancang mimpi-mimpi ke depannya. (5) Apakah semua orang berhak bermimpi? (6) Seperti saya yang mempunyai banyak mimpi yang akan saya mulai tahun ini ketika pertama masuk di bangku perkuliahan di Universitas Suryakencana. (7) Hari demi hari saya lewati dengan mulai ikut aktif di keorganisasian dan belajar dengan sungguh-sungguh agar kelak di tahun yang telah saya targetkan saya dapat lulus perkuliahan dengan IPK yang tinggi.

(8) Pada tahun 2024 saya bisa mempunyai teman hidup serta bisa menjadi seorang pengajar (guru) yang bermanfaat bagi murid-murid saya kelak, seperti apa yang telah saya cita-citakan sejak kecil. (9) Cepat diangkat menjadi PNS dan bisa mempunyai rumah juga kendaraan sendiri. (10) Belum cukup sampai disitu, mimpi saya masih banyak. (11) Saya ingin bisa membangun sebuah rumah baca, ingin mempunyai banyak usaha dan membuka lapangan pekerjaan agar tidak banyak orang-orang yang menganggur lagi nantinya. (12) Ingin bisa memberangkatkan haji orang tua, dan mimpi terakhir saya ingin bisa hidup bahagia bersama keluarga dan orang-orang yang saya kasih.

(13) Itulah mimpi-mimpi saya pada sepuluh tahun yang akan data. (14) Semoga semua dapat terwujud, karena saya yakin bahwa sebuah proses tidak akan mengkhianati hasil. (15) Seperti sebuah pembahasan "Rendah gunung, tinggi harapan". (16) Aku seseorang yang memiliki cita-cita besar dan menaruh harapan tinggi kepada sesuatu yaitu mimpiku.

**Figure 2. Essay**

**Figure1 and 2. Relevance between Life Map and Essay**

In the picture above, you can see the change from a life map to an essay. Formally, life maps act as schemata in writing Swales (1990), organizational patterns and mental approaches Atwan R and Vesterman (1987), before they are developed into writing. Indeed a variety of ways to guide developing writing. Some use questions (McCrimmon, 1967). Previously, scientific papers have tested schemata in the form of data charts (Maryam, 2012). The benefits of the scheme can maintain the originality of the writing (Maryam, 2015). The essay opener in Figure 1 is a wise sentence that motivates the writer. Not only these essays, but other essays were also opened with wise words, including the following.

1. Mimpiku teramat tinggi, tapi restu orang tualah yang mesti dijunjung tinggi. (The dream is very high, but the blessing of parents must be upheld.)
2. Simpanlah mimpimu setinggi bintang kejora, dan jangan simpan mimpimu dibawah bumi. (Keep your dreams as high as the Morning Star, and don't keep your dreams below the earth.)

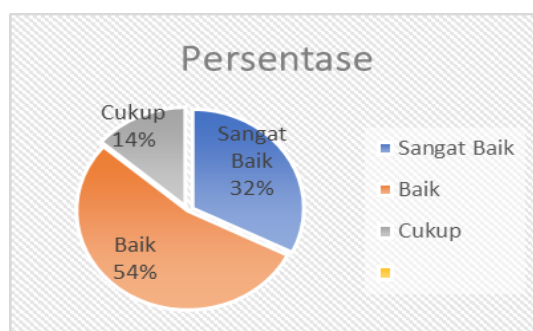
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3. Dalam kerendahan hati ada ketinggian budi, dalam kemiskinan harta ada kekayaan jiwa dalam kesempitan hidup ada kekuasaan ilmu. (In humility there is the height of mind, in poverty there is a wealth of life in the narrowness of life there is the power of science.)

The compiled essay is a type of narrative (Kaul, 2002). The writers write about him, his life plan. The sequence contained in the life map guides the sequence of development in student essays. Guidance in writing is very necessary, remembering to write is not easy, but can be learned (Kinkead & Ugan, 1984). The conformity is marked by (a) the number of targets (points), (b) elaboration of viewpoints, (c) development, (d) experiences, (e) ideas, (f) feelings, (g) imagination, and (h) intuition. Based on the analysis results, the percentage of suitability between the life map and the essay is as follows.

From various aspects, the suitability of the map with the essay, namely aspects of the number of targets, ideas, feelings, elaboration, experience, intuition. Everything in the Good category. The Very Good category is only one aspect, namely the development of essays. In other words, the ability of students to adjust life maps with an average essay Good. Overall, it shows that the suitability of the life map with essays is categorized as Very Good (32%), Good (54%), and Enough (14%). Visually can be described in the following.



**Figure 3. Percentage of Relevance**

The percentage in Figure 3 above is supported by reflective journals and observation sheets that illustrate the enthusiasm of students when they take lectures to write essays with life maps. In class, the students seemed to be actively involved directly in lectures.

#### *Benefits of Essays for Readers*

Relevant to the scientific approach, the final part of the lecture process communicates to other parties. After being collected, the essays are distributed back to be read by other parties. So that there is no jump in learning or assessment Maryam (2007) the initial step of communicating the work to the closest, ie classmates, is peer review. The assessment assigned to the reader is not to provide numerical value, but rather to assess the benefits of the contents of the essay.

The meaningfulness of something will be determined by its usefulness. Likewise, in an essay, ideally, an essay is considered meaningful if the reader can benefit after reading it. Not only written texts, but oral texts can also be taken advantage of for improving language skills (Amalia, 2018). The benefits of the essay according to the readers include: motivating the reader to be brave, don't be afraid of failure, achieve dreams by continuing to learn to achieve the highest knowledge, teach the values of life, teach patience, to achieve those goals there is a process, struggle, God pleases, broadening insight, such as the difference in targets between students and students, using time as well as possible, do not be lazy, and place the prayer of parents, the family is important.

Recognition from the readers it boils down to the benefits of the essay that can strengthen the character. This means that in Indonesian lectures there has been an integration between text, content, and characters.

#### **CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that the life map plays a good role as a guide in developing points of thoughts, feelings, experiences, points of view, imagination, and intuition in essay writing. The benefits of essays for readers are many, namely motivating readers to dare to behave,

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achieve dreams, teach the values of life to broaden horizons, make the best possible time, and look at the prayers of parents and family.

Based on the above, it is implicitly lecturing to write an essay using life maps that have integrated attitudes, knowledge, general and special skills as mandated in Learning Outcomes (Suwandi, et.al., 2016). It is hoped that the essay study can continue on other aspects, both those concerning the author or the authorship.

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