



Enhancing Paragraph Completeness through MASS and MISS Techniques in English Academic Writing

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ABSTRACT

This research article aims to investigate the impact of targeted instructional strategy on students' paragraph writing abilities. The primary objective is to determine whether implementing MASS and MISS techniques can significantly enhance the clarity and coherence of students' writing. The research employs a pre-experimental design, involving a one-group pre-test and post-test approach to assess the effectiveness of the treatment. Initially, students' paragraph writing abilities were evaluated via a pre-test, which established a baseline for their competencies across various writing dimensions, including structure, coherence, and syntax. The subsequent treatment, which included explicit instruction in placing MASS and MISS within paragraph writing, directly addressed the difficulties students faced in constructing structured essays and conveying ideas clearly. Post-treatment analysis revealed a significant enhancement in students' abilities to organize and articulate their thoughts in writing. The results indicated that the implementation of MASS and MISS not only improved the depth of their content but also the overall coherence and flow of their paragraphs. Statistical analysis demonstrated a substantial increase in post-test scores compared to pre-test scores, suggesting that the instructional techniques effectively addressed the weaknesses previously observed in student writing. Moreover, the effectiveness of the MASS and MISS techniques illustrates the potential for structured approaches to transform students' writing experiences.

■ **Keywords:** paragraph writing, unity and completeness, major and minor supporting sentence

Introduction

In the realm of English academic writing, the structure and coherence of paragraphs are crucial for effectively communicating ideas. The roles of Major Supporting Sentences (MASS) and Minor Supporting Sentences (MISS) in enhancing paragraph completeness are pivotal yet underexplored areas in pedagogical research. While techniques to aid paragraph writing are prevalent, there is a noticeable gap in academic literature investigating how specifically implementing MASS and MISS strategies can significantly elevate paragraph writing quality among students in non-native English contexts. This gap is particularly relevant given the unique obstacles faced by learners in achieving coherence and appropriate structure in their writing (Bram & Angelina, 2022; Yunus et al., 2024; (Khati, 2024).

Researches have shown that students often struggle with various aspects of writing, particularly in constructing clear and cohesive paragraphs (Fauzan et al., 2022; Zahid et al., 2023). Addressing these challenges, educational frameworks focusing on explicit instruction in paragraph structure—including the use of topic, supporting, and concluding sentences—are vital for enhancing not only students' writing skills but also their overall academic performance (Anggraini & Lume, 2021; Kahraman & Bölükbaş, 2024). Techniques like deconstructing paragraphs using mentor texts have been acknowledged as beneficial, indicating that a focused approach on MASS and MISS may lead to substantial improvements in students' writing competency (Herusatoto, 2018).

Despite existing pedagogical strategies, many students still encounter difficulties in executing effective academic writing due to insufficient training in coherent structure (Dewi et al., 2023). The application of sequential paragraph strategies has demonstrated a positive impact on students' writing skills, highlighting the need for targeted instructional models that focus specifically on supporting sentences (Subekti, 2022). Therefore, this study aims to fill the research gap by exploring how the intentional demonstration of MASS and MISS can enhance students' paragraph writing capabilities, thereby contributing to their overall academic literacy.

Moreover, it is crucial to recognize that the challenges faced by students are not solely linguistic but often rooted in cultural and contextual factors (Aldabbus, 2022). Implementing innovative teaching methods, such as collaborative learning, can further support students in mastering paragraph writing by increasing their engagement with the material (Maulida et al., 2022). This comprehensive instructional approach allows for the practical application of MASS and MISS techniques, empowering students to develop clearer and more effective paragraphs.

In essence, this study investigates the effectiveness of employing MASS and MISS techniques in English paragraph writing as a method to improve the completeness and coherence of students' paragraphs. The findings aim to provide empirical support for integrating these techniques into academic writing curricula, thereby contributing to pedagogical strategies that address both the cognitive and contextual complexities faced

by students in English as a Foreign Language context (Bhowmik, 2021). By aligning instructional practices with the identified needs of students, this research seeks to enhance overall educational outcomes in academic writing.

Methods

The research design for this study on enhancing paragraph completeness through Major Supporting Sentence (MASS) and Minor Supporting Sentence (MISS) techniques is a pre-experimental design, specifically employing a one-group pre-test and post-test methodology. This design allows for evaluating the effectiveness of the MASS and MISS teaching techniques on students' paragraph writing skills by measuring their performance before and after the intervention. The pre-test would establish a baseline measurement of students' existing paragraph writing competencies, while the post-test would evaluate any improvements resulting from the instructional methods applied during the study. By implementing this design, the research aims to establish a clearer causal relationship between the teaching techniques and student outcomes.

The subjects of this research consisted of 26 undergraduate students from the English Language Education program at a designated university. A non-randomized sampling approach was utilized to select a cohort of participants who received the treatment. This sampling method allows for the inclusion of students who are actively enrolled in English Paragraph Writing courses, providing a contextually relevant sample that can genuinely benefit from enhanced instructional techniques.

The data for this study were collected using two primary instruments: the pre-test and post-test assessments, both designed to quantitatively measure students' abilities in producing coherent paragraphs using the MASS and MISS techniques. Implementing a rubric that evaluates various components of paragraph completeness—including topic sentence clarity, the effectiveness of supporting sentences, and overall coherence—will ensure a detailed analysis of the students' performance. Data analysis involved comparing the mean scores of pre-test and post-test results using statistical methods, such as the paired t-test, to determine the significance of any improvements in students' writing skills resulting from the intervention. SPSS 26 was used to measure the data. This structured approach to data analysis aims to provide empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of the teaching techniques employed.

Findings and Discussion

Students' paragraph writing ability before and after the intervention

The findings of this research on enhancing paragraph completeness through the techniques of Major Supporting Sentences (MASS) and Minor Supporting Sentences (MISS) reveal significant insights into students' writing abilities prior to the intervention. The pre-test results indicated that many students struggled with constructing effective paragraphs, primarily due to issues related to the lack of structured supporting sentences and inadequate cohesion among ideas. Analysis of the pre-test data showed that students frequently underutilized MASS and MISS, often resulting in vague topic sentences and unsupported claims within their paragraphs. Analysis of the pre-test results indicated that many students lacked clarity in their topic sentences and struggled to develop support for their main ideas. Most paragraphs demonstrated weak cohesion and insufficient

▪development, making it difficult for the reader to follow the writer's line of reasoning. In conclusion, prior to the treatment, students exhibited considerable challenges in their writing.

Following the implementation of the MASS and MISS techniques, students demonstrated notable improvements in their paragraph writing abilities, as evidenced by the post-test assessment scores. A comparative analysis of the pre-test and post-test scores showed a significant increase in performance, with many students successfully integrating clearer topic sentences and well-structured supporting details within their paragraphs. This improvement can be attributed to the focused instructional strategies employed during the treatment, which emphasized the importance of supporting sentences in reinforcing the main idea of each paragraph. Furthermore, the post-test data illustrated a more pronounced understanding of paragraph coherence and relevance among students, which is critical for effective academic writing. The following figure 1 shows the result of pre and post-test of the students.

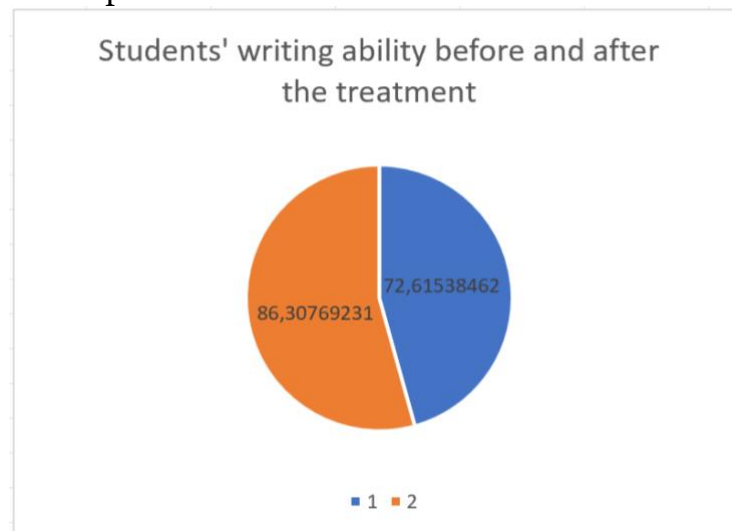


Figure 1. Students' ability before and after the treatment

The effectiveness of the MASS and MISS into writing paragraph instruction

The effectiveness of the MASS and MISS techniques was further substantiated through statistical analysis that compared the pre- and post-test results. Utilizing t-tests to evaluate the gains made by students, the data revealed a statistically significant improvement in paragraph completeness post-treatment. The increase in mean scores from pre-test to post-test reflected not only improvements in the quality of students' writing but also indicated a deeper understanding of paragraph structure and organization. Overall, this research highlights the positive impact of structured instruction in academic writing and serves to reinforce the relevance of MASS and MISS as practical tools for improving paragraph completeness in English academic writing contexts.

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Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	pretest paragraph writing	72.62	26	2.639	.518
	posttest paragraph writing	86.31	26	2.446	.480

The table above shows that the mean score of students' pre-test was 72.62. At the same time, the mean score of the post-test was 86.31. It increased 13,69 points. The mean pre-test and post-test scores showed the students' significance increase for the paragraph writing.

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences							
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	pretest	-	1.123	.220	-14.146	-13.239	-	25	.000
	paragraph	13.69					62.16		
	writing - posttest	2					0		
	paragraph								
	writing								

The table showed the treatment's significance by calculating the pre-test and post-test results for the paragraph writing. The significance value based on the table was 0.000. The level of significance was 0.05. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis was accepted, proving that the technique implemented is effective in enhancing the students' paragraph writing ability. The data result showed that the sig.2-tailed is $0.000 < 0.05$, it can be concluded that MASS and MISS technique was effective.

These findings suggest that effective pedagogical strategies, including explicit instructions on the roles of MASS and MISS, can bridge the gap in writing competencies often observed among students in English academic writing contexts. Consequently, the study advocates for the integration of these techniques into the regular curriculum for writing courses. Additionally, the evidence underscores the role of targeted instruction in addressing specific writing challenges faced by students, thereby helping to cultivate their overall academic literacy. Future research should explore the long-term implications of these techniques and assess their applicability across diverse educational settings and student populations.

- In summary, the study illustrates a clear trajectory of improvement in students' paragraph writing through well-structured instructional techniques and emphasizes the value of ongoing assessment and feedback in fostering academic growth. As institutions seek to enhance writing programs, incorporating evidence-based instructional strategies such as MASS and MISS can be pivotal in advancing students' writing capabilities, equipping them for success in their academic and professional endeavors. Thus, the insights gleaned from this research can serve as foundational knowledge for educators aiming to enhance writing proficiency among their students, ultimately contributing to their overall academic achievement.

Discussion

In the context of this study focused on enhancing paragraph completeness through Major Supporting Sentence (MASS) and Minor Supporting Sentence (MISS) techniques, an assessment of students' writing abilities before the intervention reveals notable deficiencies. Initial observations showed that many students struggled with key elements of paragraph construction, including unclear topic sentences, weak supporting details, and inadequate coherence within paragraphs. The pre-test data indicated that a significant number of students achieved low scores across various components of paragraph writing, such as focus, development, unity, coherence, and correctness (Al-Marrani, 2024; Sarwar et al., 2022). These results underscore the urgent need for effective instructional strategies to address the prevalent issues that hinder students' abilities to communicate their ideas effectively in writing.

Following the implementation of the MASS and MISS techniques, a marked improvement in students' paragraph writing abilities was observed as evidenced by the post-test results. Students demonstrated a clearer understanding of how to structure their paragraphs by effectively using major and minor supporting sentences, which enhanced the depth and clarity of their writing. The post-test scores showed a substantial increase, indicating that students were better able to create well-organized and coherent paragraphs compared to their performance prior to the intervention (Abed, 2023; Herusatoto, 2018). Feedback from students also suggested increased confidence in their writing abilities, as many reported feeling more adept at structuring their thoughts in a logical and cohesive manner.

The effectiveness of the MASS and MISS instructional techniques was further validated through a comparative analysis of the pre-test and post-test results. Statistical analysis using paired t-tests revealed that the difference in scores before and after the treatment was significant ($p < 0.05$), confirming that the intervention had a positive effect on students' writing performance (Ilham, 2024). Such results illustrate the potential of targeted instructional strategies in enhancing paragraph writing skills and reinforce the importance of supporting sentence techniques in developing students' overall academic literacy (Gezahegn & Beyene, 2020). Consequently, this study contributes to existing research by affording educators actionable insights into effective pedagogical practices aimed at improving paragraph writing among English language learners (Artarifah et al., 2024).

In light of these findings, it is apparent that the introduction of structured techniques such as MASS and MISS can fill critical gaps in students' academic writing

competencies. By employing these techniques, educators can better prepare students to tackle various writing challenges often encountered in academic contexts. Future inquiries could explore the long-term retention of these skills and their application across different writing genres, thereby further enriching the pedagogical discourse surrounding English academic writing instruction (Myers et al., 2010). Overall, this study highlights the necessity for continued exploration into innovative teaching methods that facilitate students' mastery of writing skills.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the outcomes of this study emphasize the imperative to continually refine and enhance instructional methodologies for teaching paragraph writing. The combination of MASS and MISS techniques not only addressed immediate student needs but also promoted a deeper understanding of paragraph structure and coherence. As students progress in their academic journeys, mastering these foundational skills will be crucial for their success in both academic and professional writing contexts (Al-Marrani, 2024; Sundari & Leonard, 2021). By adopting and integrating effective strategies into the writing curriculum, educators can make significant strides in advancing students' writing abilities and confidence.

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