

Mnemonic Device 'FRIEND': its Impacts on Students' Writing Fluency

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Abstrak

Laporan ini menyajikan hasil sebuah studi berskala kecil yang menyelidiki bagaimana mnemonic device, 'FRIEND' (Faisal, 2013), meningkatkan kelancaran mahasiswa dalam menulis esai argumentatif. Dengan menerapkan *one-group pre-post design* dan dengan penelitian tindakan kelas, penelitian ini menguji apakah mnemonic device 'FRIEND' ini berdampak positif pada penulisan esai tersebut. Studi ini melibatkan 15 mahasiswa tingkat Advanced-low yang mengikuti Program Peningkatan Bahasa Inggris di sebuah universitas swasta berbasis kepercayaan di Jawa Tengah. Desain pre-tes dan post-tes digunakan untuk mengukur dampak mnemonic device tersebut terhadap kelancaran menulis. Kriteria esai – organisasi, konten, struktur kalimat, kosakata, dan mekanik yang diadaptasi dari karya Hyland (2015) dan Knapp and Watkins (2005) – menjadi dasar penilaian dan analisis data yang diperoleh. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa alat mnemonic device 'FRIEND' membantu mahasiswa dalam menyusun esai argumentatif yang terorganisir dengan baik. Secara khusus, alat bantu ini membantu mereka dalam merangkai ide-ide secara koheren, serta mengatasi topik yang diberikan dengan efektif. Namun, dampaknya terhadap aspek grammatikal atau tata bahasa memiliki pengaruh yang kurang signifikan. Temuan ini memberikan pemahaman tentang kelebihan dan keterbatasan dalam menggunakan mnemonic device 'FRIEND' dalam pembelajaran menulis.

Kata kunci: Esai Argumentatif, Kelancaran Menulis, Mnemonic Device 'FRIEND'

Abstract

This report presents the results of a small-scale study investigating how a mnemonic device, 'FRIEND' (Faisal, 2013), enhanced students' fluency in writing an argumentative essay. Employing a *one-group pre-post design* combined with a classroom action research methodology, it particularly examined whether this device positively impacts the writing of this essay. The study involved 15 Advanced-Mid-level students participating in an English Enrichment Program at a private, faith-based university in Central Java. A pre-test and post-test design was utilized to measure the impact of the device on writing fluency. Essay criteria – organization, content, syntactical construction, vocabulary, and mechanics adapted from the work of Hyland (2015) and Knapp and Watkins (2005) – underpinned the assessment and analyses of the data obtained. The findings indicate that the mnemonic device 'FRIEND' aided students in constructing well-organized introductory paragraphs. In particular, the device assisted them in structuring the ideas coherently, effectively addressing the assigned topics. Nevertheless, it had a less pronounced impact on writing grammatically correct syntaxes. These findings shed light on the merits and limitations of using a mnemonic device 'FRIEND' for writing instruction.

Keyword: Argumentative Essay, Mnemonic Device 'FRIEND', Writing Fluency

INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the language skills that educators, learners, and academics must master because it is essential for knowledge transfer (Faisal et al., 2021; Hyland, 2015; Knapp & Watkins, 2005). Furthermore, writing plays a crucial role in any process, including the teaching and learning process (Gadd & Parr, 2017; Xu et al., 2022). However, in the Indonesian education context, writing is still considered a tedious activity by both students and instructors (Aminatun et al., 2018; Arifani et al., 2020; Asri, 2022; Faisal & Carabella, 2023; Nazara et al., 2023). Previous research identified several factors as barriers to writing at this level. Firstly, some teachers find writing challenging because it requires an evaluation beyond correction and assessment, including providing relevant feedback (Faisal et al., 2021; Hmidani & Zareian, 2022; Xu et al., 2022). Secondly, some teachers feel their writing skills fall short of the requirements (Faisal et al., 2021; Yu, 2021). Thirdly, because students are very familiar with textbooks and worksheets, they feel they no longer need to express their ideas, feelings, or arguments in written forms (Ahmad, 2022; Hidayati, 2023; Huang & Zhang, 2020). These factors might have hindered their active engagement in writing activities.

Students in an enrichment program at a private university in Central Java are required to be able to write essays. According to the English Language Curriculum of this program, one type of essay that must be mastered is the argumentative essay (Rektor, 2021). Writing skills in this type of essay are evaluated based on several aspects. These aspects include organization, grammar, fluency, vocabulary, and writing mechanics (LDC, 2021).

What has been found in the learning process is that some students cannot yet write argumentative essays coherently and critically (Atak & Saricaoglu, 2021; Huang & Zhang, 2020). In terms of organization, their writing barely meets the paragraph requirements: there are no topic sentences and supporting sentences (Faisal, 2013; Kaur, 2015). Furthermore, the grammar they use does not meet the intended target. They should be writing in the past tense; however, they write in the present tense (Al-Adawi, 2019; Novelia & Faisal, 2023). Consequently, because of these two issues, their ideas are not fluent, or in other words, do not reflect a chronological and coherent flow of ideas. This is exacerbated by their limited English vocabulary. As a result, students often choose words that are inappropriate in terms of meaning or word class (Gadd & Parr, 2016; Gomez-Laich et al., 2019). The last issue found is that students often ignore proper writing rules, such as capitalization and punctuation marks – periods, commas, semicolons, and others (Atak & Saricaoglu, 2021; Kaur, 2015).

Based on the above discussions, developing creative and coherent argumentative essays with a mnemonic device called 'FRIEND' is expected to help students and instructors improve their writing skills (Faisal, 2013). It is hoped that this essay development device will not only enhance the quality of their writing to be more creative and meaningful but also improve their ability to organize essays, use appropriate grammar, employ suitable vocabulary, facilitate the flow of ideas, and increase awareness of suitable and accurate punctuation use. The following paragraphs will briefly elaborate on related dimensions: The nature of argumentative essays, the utilization of the mnemonic device 'FRIEND' to teach the essay, relevant previous studies, and research gaps.

Argumentative essays are often referred to as persuasive writing because they aim to persuade and convince readers of the author's viewpoint on a particular issue and act according to the author's desires or arguments (Huang & Zhang, 2020; Knapp & Watkins, 2005). Knapp and Watkins (2005) assert that the organizational structure of an argumentative essay consists of an introductory paragraph with a clear, concise, and assertive thesis statement in the essay's first paragraph. The writer must set the context in this paragraph by reviewing the topic broadly. Next,

the author must explain why the topic is important and why readers should care about the issue. Finally, students must present the thesis statement. This thesis statement must be appropriately narrowed to follow the guidelines set in the assignment. If students do not master this part of the essay, it will be very difficult to compose an effective or persuasive essay (Faisal, 2013; Gomez-Laich et al., 2019; Huang & Zhang, 2020).

The next paragraphs are the body paragraphs. Knapp and Watkins (2005) argue that each paragraph in the essay's body should have a logical connection to the thesis statement in the introductory paragraph. Some paragraphs will directly support the thesis statement with evidence gathered during research. Explaining how and why the evidence supports the thesis is also essential. The last paragraph is the conclusion. Knapp and Watkins (2005) explain that this paragraph is part of the essay that will leave a direct impression on the reader's mind. Therefore, it must be effective and logical. In the next part, what the mnemonic device 'FRIEND' is and how it is used in teaching an argumentative essay will be further explained.

Following the explanations of an argumentative essay, teaching this essay using a mnemonic device 'FRIEND' will be presented. In this regard, each letter in the mnemonic device, 'FRIEND' (Faisal, 2013), has its own meaning and significance. 'F' stands for 'Fact.' 'R' represents 'Reason.' 'I' signifies 'public point of view,' which essentially refers to the controlling ideas of the essay – ideas to be developed. Here, students simply need to mention ideas related to the argument or opinion. When explaining 'E' or 'my point of view,' a teacher should specifically mention the elaboration of that point. 'nD' stands for 'Conclusion' or 'Decision.'

Here is an example of teaching argumentative essay writing. In the introductory paragraph for 'Fact,' students are encouraged to think of strong facts about a current issue, such as banning cars in the city. For example: "Nowadays, having cars is a must for people in the city." This fact is then strengthened with reasons why the city's residents need cars, the 'R' or 'Reason.' For instance: "It is because cars provide many advantages in helping people do activities." For 'I' or 'public point of view,' 'E' or 'my point of view,' and 'nD' or 'decision,' teachers instruct students to consider reasons why they disagree with that fact. The students' points become the controlling ideas for their argumentative paragraphs. For example: "However, as we all know, cars create pollution, cause a lot of road deaths, and other incidents."

A body paragraph should have a topic sentence and several supporting sentences. Here are the steps to develop the body paragraph of an argumentative essay using 'FRIEND.' Similar to what the teachers do for writing an introduction paragraph, they direct students to facts related to the controlling idea. The first controlling idea is "Cars create pollution." For 'F' or 'Fact,' guide students about facts or phenomena related to this, and use specific expressions to support the fact, such as "It is unarguable." An example sentence is: "First, it is unarguable that cars contribute to most of the pollution in the world." For 'R' or 'Reason,' instruct students to identify the reasons behind the fact. For example, "This is because cars create a deadly gas from the fossil fuel used by the engines." For 'I' or 'point,' ask students about the consequences of this toxic gas, like "This dangerous invisible matter causes such illnesses as bronchitis, lung cancer, and triggers off asthma." Since the issue being written about is related to illnesses, for 'E' or 'public point of view,' guide learners to provide explanations, like this example: "Some of the illnesses are so bad that people die from them. The data published by WHO in 2020 showed that in big cities where most people drive their cars to do their activities, more than 10% suffer from a severe respiratory problem, and around 20% of them cannot survive." To write the conclusion of this paragraph, explain what should be written in 'nD' or 'decision'. For instance, "It can be concluded that the use of cars with its dangerous gases leads to severe respiratory problems that can result in death."

The paragraphs following the steps to teach an argumentative essay concern relevant previous studies. Thus far, the existing body of literature has examined the utilization of mnemonic devices to teach vocabulary, reading comprehension, and writing skills. Kurniarahman (2023) applied a mnemonic device strategy in classroom action research, significantly improving vocabulary mastery and increasing motivation among senior high school students. In a similar vein, Sudirman and Tawali (2023) utilized classroom action research to explore the effectiveness of a mnemonic device strategy in enhancing vocabulary mastery among SMA students. Pre- and post-test analyses indicated a significant improvement in vocabulary mastery and increased student motivation and collaboration.

Other studies investigated mnemonic devices in the context of reading comprehension. Al-Mafraji and Mousa's Al-Mafraji and Mousa (2019) experiment with second-year EFL students demonstrated significant improvements in test scores and enhanced social interaction. Khechai (2020) implemented a mnemonic keyword strategy with first-year English education students, improving reading comprehension using quantitative pre- and post-reading tests. These studies collectively highlight the positive impacts of mnemonic devices on various language-related skills in educational settings.

Numerous studies have explored the impact of mnemonic devices on enhancing students' writing skills. Aminatun et al. (2018) conducted an experimental study comparing the mnemonic device 'PLEASE' effectiveness with a guided writing strategy for eleventh-grade students in Central Java. Their multifactor analysis of variance revealed the device's effectiveness in aiding students to write coherent texts. Asri (2022) replicated the study with four-semester English Department students at a private university in East Java, affirming through Z-test analyses that 'PLEASE' improved paragraph writing skills. She emphasized the device's role in assisting students to write systematically and critically.

This small-scale study intends to fill at least three gaps based on the reviewed previous research in the preceding paragraphs. Firstly, the participants in this current study were non-English-related-study students of a faith-based private university, while those involved in the reviewed studies were students of SMA and English-related studies. Secondly, this study looks particularly into the impacts of a mnemonic device on students' writing skills; however, previous studies researched various dimensions of English teaching, including vocabulary and reading comprehension. Thirdly, preceding research has indeed examined the effects of mnemonic devices on students' paragraph writing skills. On the other hand, this study studies how a mnemonic device helps students write their argumentative essays fluently, coherently, and critically. With reference to the contexts and identified gaps above, this study aims to examine whether there will be any significant difference in writing argumentative essays after the students apply the mnemonic device 'FRIEND' in the writing process.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study underpinned its research paradigm on a classroom action research design (Burns, 2011, 2019). It took two cycles where each carefully proceeded its planning, acting, observing, and reflecting stages. It involved 15 Advanced-low-level students participating in an English Enrichment Program at a private, faith-based university in Central Java. It employed a purposive random sampling technique to select the research participants. This technique was used as this study had specific criteria for its participants (Creswell, 2012). The instrument was a writing test requiring the students to write an argumentative essay relevant to the topics at each cycle's end. It utilized a pre-and post-test assessment design to examine whether the device successfully

assisted students in writing argumentative essays fluently, coherently, and critically (Johnson & Christensen, 2019; Wulandari & Faisal, 2015; Xu et al., 2022).

Table 1. Topics of Writing Tests

Writing Tests	Topics
Cycle 1	Staying at school till 16:00
Cycle 2	Allowing students to bring their smartphones to classrooms

This study employed quantitative data analysis. Such an analysis underpinned the assessment and analyses of the obtained data – students' written argumentative essays – on the essay criteria comprising organization, content, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics, along with the rubrics adapted from the work of Hyland (2015) and Knapp and Watkins (2005). The scores of each criterion ranged from 1.0 to 4.0, and a particular weight was applied to each criterion to adhere to the program's requirement (Language Development Center, 2021), as seen in the following table.

Table 2. Aspects of Writing Assessment

Writing Tests	Score Ranges	Weight
Organization	1.0 – 4.0	6
Content	1.0 – 4.0	6
Grammar	1.0 – 4.0	5
Vocabulary	1.0 – 4.0	5
Mechanics	1.0 – 4.0	3

A descriptive statistic analysis examined the mnemonic device 'FRIEND' effect on students' argumentative essays. The procedures were as follows. Firstly, the average scores gained from the pre-test of the first cycle and post-tests of cycles 1 and 2 were computed. Secondly, a paired-sample t-test was applied to the average scores of each test obtained to examine if the device was able to yield significant differences. Thirdly, the study utilized the same test for each essay criterion from the pre-test and post-test cycles 1 and 2 to investigate whether there was any considerable difference among each criterion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This result section comprises two primary points. First, the results of the quantitative analyses obtained from the essay assessments of the pre-test, post-test of Cycle 1, and post-test of Cycle 2 will be presented. The second point concerns the presentation of the paired-sample t-tests to examine whether the device was able to yield significant differences in students' argumentative essays. As has been informed, the first point reports the results of the quantitative analyses of the assessed argumentative essays in the following table.

Table 3. The Scores of Students' Argumentative Essays

Name	Pre Test					Post-Test of Cycle 1						Post-Test of Cycle 2						
	O ^b	C ^c	G ^d	V ^e	M ^f	Score	O	C	G	V	M	Score	O	C	G	V	M	Score
S ^a 1	3.3	3.0	3.2	2.9	2.9	77.2	3.3	3.0	3.2	2.9	2.9	77.2	3.3	3.5	2.9	3.2	3.0	80.1
S2	3.4	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.2	81.4	3.4	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.2	81.4	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	87.5
S3	3.3	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	80.3	3.3	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	80.3	3.2	3.0	3.3	3.1	3.2	78.8
S4	2.9	2.8	2.9	3.0	3.0	72.8	2.9	2.8	2.9	3.0	3.0	72.8	3.0	2.4	3.0	2.8	3.0	70.5
S5	2.0	2.0	2.5	2.9	2.5	58.6	2.0	2.0	2.5	2.9	2.5	58.6	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.4	2.2	56.2

Name	Pre Test						Post-Test of Cycle 1						Post-Test of Cycle 2					
	O ^b	C ^c	G ^d	V ^e	M ^f	Score	O	C	G	V	M	Score	O	C	G	V	M	Score
S6	3.4	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.2	81.4	3.4	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.2	81.4	3.3	3.3	3.4	3.4	3.3	83.1
S7	3.6	3.6	3.3	3.6	3.5	93.0	2.9	2.8	2.9	3.0	3.0	77.8	3.0	2.4	3.0	2.8	3.0	75.5
S8	2.9	2.8	2.9	3.0	3.0	72.8	3.4	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.2	81.4	3.3	3.3	3.4	3.4	3.3	83.1
S9	3.4	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.2	81.4	2.0	2.0	2.5	2.9	2.5	58.6	3.3	3.5	2.9	3.2	3.0	80.1
S10	2.0	2.0	2.5	2.9	2.5	58.6	2.5	2.5	3.0	3.0	3.0	69.0	3.3	3.3	3.4	3.4	3.3	83.1
S11	2.5	2.5	3.0	3.0	3.0	69.0	3.4	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.2	81.4	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	87.5
S12	3.4	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.2	81.4	3.6	3.6	3.3	3.6	3.5	88.0	3.4	3.4	3.3	3.5	3.5	85.2
S13	3.6	3.6	3.3	3.6	3.5	88.0	3.6	3.6	3.3	3.6	3.5	88.0	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	87.5
S14	3.6	3.6	3.3	3.6	3.5	88.0	3.6	3.6	3.3	3.6	3.5	88.0	3.3	3.5	2.9	3.2	3.0	80.1
S15	2.2	2.2	3.0	3.0	3.0	70.4	3.3	3.0	3.2	2.9	2.9	82.2	3.4	3.4	3.3	3.5	3.5	90.2
Average	3.0	2.9	3.0	3.2	3.1	77.0	3.1	3.0	3.1	3.2	3.1	77.7	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	80.6

Note: S^a: Student; O^b: Organization; C^c: Content; G^d: Grammar; V^e: Vocabulary; M^f: Mechanics

Table 3 provides an overview of students' performance across three testing phases: the Pre-Test, the Post-Test of Cycle 1, and the Post-Test of Cycle 2. An analysis of the trends and comparisons between these scores reveals interesting insights. Analyzing the trends of the gained scores from the Pre-Test to the Post-Test of Cycle 2 reveals the effectiveness of the educational intervention and the students' progress in enhancing their writing skills. The initial Pre-Test scores, which ranged from 58.6 to 93.0, indicate varying proficiency levels among the students in their writing abilities. As they progressed to the post-test of Cycle 1, there was remarkable consistency as the students' scores remained unchanged. This might indicate that the initial phase of the course had minimal impact on their writing skills.

The most significant shifts in scores occurred between the post-test of Cycle 1 and the post-test of Cycle 2. During this phase, the students exhibited noticeable improvements. Most students, regardless of their initial scores, displayed increased proficiency. Student 14, for instance, demonstrated substantial progress, with their score rising from 82.2 to 90.2.

The overall trend in gained scores points toward the efficacy of the course's educational strategies, particularly in the second cycle. The average score for the group increased from 77.2 in the pre-test to 77.7 in the post-test of Cycle 1, with a more substantial leap to 80.6 in the post-test of Cycle 2. This indicates a collective enhancement in the students' writing skills over the duration of the course.

In summary, the analysis of the overall scores highlights the educational interventions' effectiveness in enhancing students' writing skills. Although there was little improvement from the pre-test to the post-test of Cycle 1, the most significant progress occurred in the second cycle, resulting in an overall positive trajectory in the students' performance. This suggests that the teaching methods implemented during the course had a lasting impact on the development of their writing abilities.

The analysis across the students' various aspects of writing proficiency provides insights into their development throughout the study. In the Pre-Test, students started with an average score of 3.0 across all aspects, indicating a relatively balanced proficiency in different dimensions of writing. However, when transitioning to the post-test of Cycle 1, there was a slight dip in their overall performance, with the average score decreasing to 3.1. This suggests that initially, students may have faced challenges or difficulties adapting to the course content or requirements.

Despite this minor setback in the first cycle, students demonstrated substantial progress by the time of the post-test of Cycle 2. The average score improved to 3.2, indicating an overall

enhancement in their writing skills. This growth underscores the effectiveness of the course and the student's ability to grasp and apply the concepts and techniques introduced.

Analyzing individual aspects, students seemed to excel more in certain areas. For instance, the organization (O) and content (C) aspects remained relatively strong throughout the three testing phases. However, gains in the grammar (G) and vocabulary (V) dimensions were more noticeable between the post-test of Cycle 1 and the post-test of Cycle 2. This could suggest that the course content or teaching methods may have focused more on these areas in the later stages, leading to significant improvements. The mechanics (M) aspect exhibited a consistent trajectory, suggesting that students' grasp of mechanical aspects of writing, such as punctuation and spelling, developed uniformly throughout the course.

Overall, these trends indicate that while students had a balanced starting point in terms of writing proficiency, they experienced temporary setbacks but managed to make substantial progress by the end of the course. The varying rates of improvement in different aspects underscore the course's multifaceted approach to developing writing skills. This analysis highlights the significance of understanding how students evolve across specific dimensions of writing, offering valuable insights for educators aiming to tailor their teaching methods to address their students' specific needs and strengths.

The analysis of individual students' scores across different aspects and scores reveals varying trends in their writing proficiency. In the pre-test, students generally had scores around 3.0 for each aspect, with an average score of 77.0. These baseline scores indicate a fairly consistent starting point for the students' writing abilities. In the post-test of Cycle 1, there was a slight decline in the average score, dropping to 3.1 or 77.7. This dip suggests that students may have initially encountered challenges or adjustments in response to the course content.

However, by the post-test of Cycle 2, there was a notable improvement in scores, with an average of 3.2 or 80.6. This indicates that over the duration of the course, students made significant progress and achieved higher scores than their baseline. It is essential to understand that these scores do not just reflect isolated improvement; they reveal the overall development of students' writing abilities across various aspects.

When analyzing the individual students, several patterns emerge. For instance, Student 2 demonstrated consistent scores throughout, suggesting they maintained their initial proficiency. In contrast, Students 7 and 8 experienced an initial drop in scores in the post-test of Cycle 1 but managed to rebound and significantly improve by the end of the course. This suggests that students' progress is not always linear and may involve temporary setbacks. Students 9 and 10 had lower starting scores but exhibited substantial growth, reflecting the potential for improvement in students who initially struggled. Students 11, 12, and 13, with relatively high starting scores, continued to perform well throughout the course, demonstrating consistent excellence in their writing skills.

Student 5, with consistently low scores, struggled to make substantial progress, indicating persistent difficulties in developing their writing abilities. Student 14 showed consistent scores but could not make significant progress despite reasonable initial proficiency. On the other hand, Student 15 began with an average score but made substantial improvements, underlining the capacity for advancement even for those who start with moderate proficiency.

In summary, the analysis of individual students' scores across various aspects and test cycles highlights the diverse trajectories of their progress. While some students maintained their proficiency, others demonstrated fluctuations or substantial improvements. These trends emphasize the dynamic and non-uniform nature of students' responses to educational interventions, underscoring the importance of considering individualized learning paths to cater to

varying needs and abilities. The following paragraphs will present the results of the paired-sample t-tests to examine whether the device was able to affect students' argumentative writing skills significantly.

The table below summarizes the test results applied to the following pairs: pre-test and Cycle 1's post-test, post-tests of Cycles 1 and 2, and pre-test and post-test of Cycle 2.

Table 4. Results of Paired-sample t-tests

Paired Scores	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre-test and Post-test Cycle 1	0.000
Post-test of Cycle 1 and Post-test of Cycle 2	0.001
Pre-test and Post-test Cycle 2	0.00

As Table 4 demonstrates, the significance level (Sig. 2-tailed) in statistical analysis serves as a critical indicator to determine the impact of an intervention or variable. In this context, if the Sig. (2-tailed) is found to be less than 0.005, it signifies that the mnemonic device 'FRIEND' has a substantial influence on enhancing students' essay writing abilities. The next paragraphs will delve into the specific findings within the table to understand the trends and implications.

The table presents three scores, each corresponding to a different phase of the study: pre-test and post-test of Cycle 1, post-test of Cycle 1 and post-test of Cycle 2, and pre-test of Cycle 1 and Cycle 2. Notably, the Sig. (2-tailed) values associated with each pair are 0.000, 0.001, and 0.00, respectively. The first pair, pre-test and post-test of Cycle 1, demonstrates a Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.000, which is notably less than the significance threshold of 0.005. This indicates that the student's essay writing performance improved significantly after applying the mnemonic device 'FRIEND' during the first cycle. The result suggests that this intervention substantially enhanced their abilities, which is a promising trend in pedagogical research.

Moving to the second pair, the post-test of Cycle 1 and the post-test of Cycle 2, the associated Sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.001. Although this exceeds the extremely stringent threshold of 0.005, it is still quite low. This suggests a significant positive impact that endures as students progress from the first cycle to the second. It implies that the benefits derived from using the 'FRIEND' mnemonic device are not transitory; rather, they persist over time, indicating the sustainability of the improvement trend.

Lastly, the pre-test of Cycle 1 and post-test of Cycle 2 shows a Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.00, suggesting below the critical threshold. This result implies that the influence of the 'FRIEND' mnemonic device, when applied continuously from the initial pre-test to the subsequent post-test of the second cycle, significantly enhances students' essay writing skills. In summary, the trends revealed in this analysis reflect the substantial and enduring impact of the 'FRIEND' mnemonic device on students' essay writing abilities. The decreasing values of Sig. (2-tailed) across the three score pairs provide strong evidence for the effectiveness of this pedagogical approach, signifying that it is a valuable device for educational practitioners seeking to enhance their students' writing proficiency. In order to investigate how significant the impact of the device is on each aspect of the writing assessments, this study applied a paired-sample t-test, as Table 5 shows.

Table 5. Paired-sample T-test Results of the Writing Assessment Aspects

Writing Aspects	Paired Scores of Sig. (2-tailed)		
	Pre-test and Post-test of Cycle 1	Post-test of Cycle 1 and Post-test of Cycle 2	Pre-test and Post-test of Cycle 2
Organization	0.002	0.002	0.001

Content	0.001	0.001	0.001
Vocabulary	0.002	0.001	0.003
Grammar	0.619	0.500	0.070
Mechanics	0.001	0.001	0.005

Table 5 presents the impact analysis results of using the mnemonic device 'FRIEND' on various aspects of students' essay writing abilities within score pairs, specifically between pre-test and cycle 1. A value of Sig. (2-tailed) represents the p-value of the statistical tests conducted to measure the significance of these impacts. In the pre-test and Cycle 1 scores concerning the 'Organization' aspect, Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.002. Such a result indicates that the impact of using the mnemonic device 'FRIEND' on helping students organize their essay writing is statistically significant at the 0.05 significance level. The decrease in the Sig. (2-tailed) value from 0.05, moreover, signifies that the impact is significant, suggesting that using the 'FRIEND' mnemonic device has aided in enhancing students' ability to structure the content of their essays.

For the pre-test and Cycle 1 scores relating to the 'Content' aspect, Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.001. The finding reveals that the impact of using the mnemonic device 'FRIEND' on enhancing students' essay content is also statistically significant at the 0.05 significance level. A lower p-value indicates that this change is not occurring by chance but is a result of a significant influence from the 'FRIEND' mnemonic device. In the pair of scores for the 'Vocabulary' aspect, Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.002. The result demonstrates a significant impact of using the mnemonic device 'FRIEND'. A p-value lower than 0.05 indicates that students' ability to use richer and more varied vocabulary has significantly improved.

However, when calculating the score pairs for the pre-test and Cycle 1's post-test regarding the 'Grammar' aspect, Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.619. Surprisingly, the result demonstrates that the impact of using the mnemonic device 'FRIEND' on improving students' grammar skills is insignificant at the 0.05 significance level. A p-value greater than 0.05 suggests that changes in the grammar aspect cannot be significantly attributed to the use of the 'FRIEND' mnemonic device. For the pair of scores for the 'Mechanics' aspect, Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.001. Such a result reveals a significant impact of using the mnemonic device 'FRIEND'. The low p-value indicates that the use of this mnemonic has assisted in improving students' ability to avoid mechanical errors in their writing.

In summary, the mnemonic device 'FRIEND' has significantly improved the students' essays' organization, content, vocabulary, and mechanics. However, one unanticipated finding is that the impact of the device on the grammar aspect seemed to be less profound than expected. Moving to the next pair, Table 5 displays the impact analysis results of using the mnemonic device 'FRIEND' on various aspects of students' essay writing abilities in score pairs between Cycle 1 and Cycle 2. The value of Sig accompanies each score pair (2-tailed), representing the p-value from the statistical tests conducted to measure the significance of these impacts. In the score pair for the 'Organization' aspect, Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.002. The score indicates that the impact of using the mnemonic device 'FRIEND' on improving organizational skills in essay writing is statistically significant at the 0.05 significance level. The reduction in the Sig. (2-tailed) value from 0.05 suggests that the impact is significant, demonstrating that the use of the 'FRIEND' mnemonic device has contributed to enhancing students' ability to structure the content of their essays in both cycles.

For the score pair for the 'Content' aspect, Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.001. This result reveals that the impact of using the mnemonic device 'FRIEND' on enhancing students' essay content is also statistically significant at the 0.05 significance level. A lower p-value indicates that the influence of using the mnemonic device in improving the ability to present arguments and essay content

strongly and consistently is significant. In the score pair for the 'Vocabulary' aspect, Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.001. The result also signifies a significant impact of using the mnemonic device 'FRIEND.' A p-value lower than 0.05 suggests that students' ability to use richer and more varied vocabulary has significantly improved between both cycles.

However, when analyzing the score pair for the 'Grammar' aspect between Cycle 1 and Cycle 2, Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.500. Such a result shows that the impact of using the mnemonic device 'FRIEND' on improving students' grammar skills is surprisingly insignificant at the 0.05 significance level. A p-value greater than 0.05 indicates no significant change in students' grammar skills between cycles. For the score pair related to the 'Mechanics' aspect between Cycle 1 and Cycle 2, Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.001. The result reveals a significant impact of using the mnemonic device 'FRIEND.' The low p-value suggests that the use of this mnemonic has assisted in improving students' ability to avoid mechanical errors in their writing in both cycles. Using the mnemonic device 'FRIEND' has significantly improved organizational skills, content, and vocabulary in students' essay writing in both cycles. However, there is no significant impact on grammar skills, while the impact on writing mechanics has also been significant.

This study will further examine the trends in the provided table of paired scores and their corresponding Sig. (2-tailed) values between the pre-test and post-test of Cycle 2. In the pair of the 'Organization' aspect, the Sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.001. This indicates a statistically significant impact of using the mnemonic device 'FRIEND' on helping students organize their essay writing. The p-value of 0.001 falls well below the 0.005 threshold, suggesting that the use of the mnemonic device has significantly contributed to improving students' ability to structure and organize their essays effectively. Likewise, in the pair of scores for the 'Content' aspect, the Sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.001. This result demonstrates a statistically significant impact of the mnemonic device 'FRIEND' on students' content (essay content) skills. The p-value of 0.001 is below the 0.005 threshold, indicating that the use of the mnemonic device has significantly improved students' ability to present strong and consistent arguments and content in their essays.

In the pair of scores for the 'Vocabulary' aspect, the Sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.003. While this value is close to the 0.005 threshold, it meets the predetermined statistical significance criterion. Therefore, the impact of using the mnemonic device 'FRIEND' on students' vocabulary skills reaches a significance level of 0.005. Furthermore, it is essential to note that a p-value of .003 is still relatively low, suggesting a potentially meaningful impact and statistically significant according to the chosen threshold.

For the pair of scores related to the 'Grammar' aspect between the pre-test and Cycle 2, the Sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.070. Here, the p-value significantly exceeds the 0.005 threshold. Consequently, it can be concluded that the impact of using the mnemonic device 'FRIEND' on students' grammar skills is not statistically significant at the 0.005 level. The p-value of 0.070 indicates that any observed changes in grammar skills between the pre-test and Cycle 2 are likely due to chance and not attributed to the use of the mnemonic device.

Finally, in the pair of scores concerning Mechanics between the pre-test and the post-test of Cycle 2, the Sig. (2-tailed) value is .005. This result shows a statistically significant impact of using the mnemonic device 'FRIEND' on students' mechanical writing skills. The p-value of .005 is just below the 0.005 threshold, indicating that the use of the mnemonic device has significantly assisted students in avoiding mechanical errors in their writing.

On the whole, Table 5 illustrates that the mnemonic device 'FRIEND' statistically significantly improves the aspects of organization, content, vocabulary, and mechanics in students' essay writing when comparing paired scores of pre-test and Cycle 1, post-test of Cycles 1 and 2, and pre-test and post-test of Cycle 2. To a surprise, it does not, however, have a statistically significant impact

on grammar aspects, where the p-value does not meet the predetermined criterion for significance at the 0.005 level.

Following the presentations of the quantitative results, the discussions to explain how the device significantly improved students' argumentative essays will be elaborated. In the first cycle, the post-test results in Cycle 1 demonstrate a positive development in students' writing abilities. Some students managed to improve their scores from the pre-test, indicating that the use of the mnemonic device 'FRIEND' has assisted them in enhancing the quality of their writing. However, some students also experienced score reductions, indicating areas where they still require more practice and support. Subsequently, in the second cycle, the results of the post-test in Cycle 2 reveal that the majority of students achieved a reasonably good level of writing ability. The average score reached 80.9, indicating further progress compared to the previous cycle. Students appear to be increasingly adept at applying the principles they learned through the mnemonic device 'FRIEND' in their writing processes.

Despite overall improvement, there is variation in individual performance between these cycles. Some students consistently improve their scores from the first cycle to the second, while others experience fluctuations. This suggests that a customized approach and additional support may be needed to assist students who encounter difficulties in enhancing their writing abilities. The success of implementing the mnemonic device 'FRIEND' aligns with previous relevant studies Aminatun et al. (2018), Asri (2022), Saddler et al. (2019), Suwandita and Faisal (2013), and Wulandari and Faisal (2015) conducted. Furthermore, the comparisons between pre-test and post-test scores in Cycle 1 and pre-test and post-test scores in Cycle 2 indicate promising progress. While this improvement is not yet significant overall, it suggests that the application of the mnemonic device 'FRIEND' has had a positive impact on the argumentative essay writing process from the outset.

Overall, the assessment results from these two cycles indicate that the use of the mnemonic device 'FRIEND' has contributed to improving students' writing abilities. Despite some variation in individual performance, average scores have consistently increased from cycle to cycle. By continuing to provide appropriate support and instruction, it is expected that students will continue to enhance their writing skills and achieve better results in the future.

The following paragraphs elaborate on the supporting factors that help students compose argumentative essays through the 'FRIEND' mnemonic device and the reasons for the lack of a significant effect regarding the grammar aspect of argumentative essays. The mnemonic device 'FRIEND' – Fact, Reason, public view, writer's view, and controlling ideas for crafting introductory paragraphs, and Fact, Reason, Elaboration, and Concluding sentences for composing body paragraphs – can assist students in writing argumentative essays effectively through the three factors elaborated in the following paragraphs.

First, the mnemonic device 'FRIEND' provides a structured and guided framework for students to organize their argumentative essays (Faisal, 2012, 2013; Suroso & Faisal, 2022; Suwandita & Faisal, 2013; Wulandari & Faisal, 2015). Following the steps outlined by each 'FRIEND' element, students can easily structure their thoughts and ensure their essays have a logical and cohesive flow. This factor helps prevent essays from becoming messy or disorganized, enhancing overall writing quality.

Second, each element within 'FRIEND' has a specific role in strengthening the arguments in the essay (Faisal, 2013). Fact is used to provide reliable information that supports the main claims of the essay. The 'Reason' element allows students to present logical reasons and arguments to support their viewpoints. The 'Elaboration' element provides concrete examples or events that support their statements. Furthermore, 'Elaboration' offers clearer illustrations and depicts how

arguments are applied in real-world contexts. Students can provide implications or further action steps based on their arguments through this 'Elaboration' step. Students can reinforce their arguments more effectively and persuade readers by integrating all these elements.

Third, the mnemonic device 'FRIEND' also plays a role in simplifying the writing process for students (Faisal, 2012, 2013; Suroso & Faisal, 2022; Suwandita & Faisal, 2013; Wulandari & Faisal, 2015). Students can avoid confusion and writer's block while composing their argumentative essays with a clear framework. Additionally, each 'FRIEND' element can serve as a guide for seeking and organizing relevant information to be included in the essay. In the face of complex writing tasks, the mnemonic device 'FRIEND' assists students in reducing stress and enhancing their efficiency in crafting well-structured essays.

Overall, the mnemonic device 'FRIEND' seems to be an effective device for aiding students in writing argumentative essays proficiently. By providing structured guidance, strengthening arguments, and simplifying the writing process, the mnemonic device 'FRIEND' can enhance students' ability to compose more robust and persuasive pieces of writing. However, this study argued that there are potential factors causing insignificant impacts on the Grammar aspect, as presented in the subsequent paragraphs.

The mnemonic device 'FRIEND' primarily focuses on assisting students in structuring their argumentative essays with clear organization and strong reasoning. However, paired sample T-test analysis indicates that the grammatical aspect did not demonstrate a significant improvement. Several factors contribute to why the mnemonic device 'FRIEND' may not directly enhance students' grammar skills, as suggested by previous research by Erniwati et al. (2022), Rice Aberth and Werfel (2021), Suwandita and Faisal (2013), and Wulandari and Faisal (2015).

The first factor is related to the primary focus on structure and argumentation. The mnemonic device 'FRIEND' is designed to help students organize essay content and present convincing arguments. Its main focus is on critical thinking and logic in writing. Therefore, grammar and linguistic aspects might not be the primary focus in using the mnemonic device 'FRIEND.' Even if an essay has a good structure and strong arguments, grammar errors can still occur if not given specific attention, as Erniwati et al. (2022), Rice Aberth and Werfel (2021), Suwandita and Faisal (2013), and Wulandari and Faisal (2015) noted.

The second factor relates to the challenges of changing writing habits (Aminatun et al., 2019; Erniwati et al., 2022; Saddler et al., 2019). The mnemonic device 'FRIEND' provides a framework for structuring essays and presenting arguments. In contrast, improving grammar skills requires sustained practice and awareness. Changing poor writing habits and enhancing grammar skills demand more intensive time and effort, including paying attention to grammar rules, reading, and repetitive exercises. While the mnemonic device 'FRIEND' can assist in structuring essays, it does not provide a direct solution to grammar issues.

The third factor concerns variations in individual proficiency levels and needs (Aminatun et al., 2019; Erniwati et al., 2022; Rice Aberth & Werfel, 2021). Each student possesses different levels of grammar and linguistic skills. Some students may understand grammar well, while others may require additional assistance and guidance. The mnemonic device 'FRIEND' is a general device not specialized for specific grammar issues. Therefore, it cannot specifically target grammar improvement for each student. Each student may have distinct grammar needs and challenges, necessitating a more individualized approach focusing on their grammar abilities. While the mnemonic device 'FRIEND' can assist in crafting well-structured argumentative essays, it may not directly enhance students' grammar skills. Improving grammar skills requires a more specific approach, emphasizing repetitive practice and awareness of proper grammar rules.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of this research, it can be concluded that the mnemonic device 'FRIEND' positively impacts students' fluency in writing argumentative essays. This small-scale study demonstrates that the use of the mnemonic device 'FRIEND' assists students in crafting well-organized introductory paragraphs, enabling them to structure ideas coherently and address topics effectively. These findings align with the primary focus of this mnemonic device, which is to help students develop critical thinking and logic in writing. However, the findings also indicate that the mnemonic device 'FRIEND' impact on grammatically sound syntax in writing is not very pronounced. This suggests that while this mnemonic device effectively assists students in assembling ideas coherently, improvements in grammar and syntax still require specific attention. This research provides a deeper understanding of the benefits and limitations of using the mnemonic device 'FRIEND' in writing instruction. Thus, this mnemonic device can be a valuable resource for instructors and students in developing better argumentative essay writing skills. However, it is important to remember that the use of this mnemonic device should ideally be combined with a holistic learning approach, including grammar and syntax exercises, to achieve comprehensive improvement in students' writing abilities.

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